÷01-00 The World's Great Sermons

*00 The World's Great Sermons*

VOLUME I

BASIL TO CALVIN

*By Grenville Kleiser*

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FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY NEW YORK AND LONDON

THE WORLD'S GREAT SERMONS

Compiled By

GRENVILLE KLEISER

Formerly of Yale Divinity School Faculty;  
Author of "How to Speak in Public," Etc.

With Assistance from Many of the Foremost Living Preachers and Other  
Theologians

INTRODUCTION BY LEWIS O. BRASTOW, D.D.  
Professor Emeritus of Practical Theology in Yale University

IN TEN VOLUMES

VOLUME. I—BASIL TO CALVIN

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**÷**01-00a PREFACE

The aim in preparing this work has been to bring together the best examples of the products of the pulpit through the Christian centuries, and to present these masterpieces in attractive and convenient form. It is believed that they will be found valuable as instruction to ministers of to-day. They should also be helpful to others who, tho not preachers, yet seek reading of this kind for the upbuilding of personal character and for strengthening their Christian faith.

The sermons have been chosen in some cases for their literary and rhetorical excellences, but in every case for their helpfulness in solving some of the problems of Christian living. No two persons are likely to agree upon "the best" of anything, and readers will probably wish in particular instances that some other clergymen or sermons had been included. It is confidently believed, however, that the list here given is fairly representative of the preaching that characterized the age to which each sermon respectively belongs.

While some of the sermons of the early centuries may not seem exactly fitted to modern needs, it is thought that those presented will repay careful perusal, since they each contain a distinct message for later generations. Moreover, a comparison extending over the whole field of sermonic literature, such as the preacher may make with this collection before him, should prove most valuable as showing what progress and changes have come over homiletic matter and methods. Such a comparison should in fact throw much light on the spirit and conditions of various homiletic periods.

In choosing sermons by living preachers considerable difficulty has been found, not only in deciding upon sermons, but upon preachers. The list might have been extended indefinitely. Whenever possible the preacher, when living, has himself been consulted as to what he considered his most representative sermon.

Thanks are due, and are hereby acknowledged, to numerous clergymen, publishers, librarians, and others who have generously assisted the compiler in this undertaking. Most grateful acknowledgment is also made to the Rev. Epiphanius Wilson and the Rev. W.C. Stiles for valuable editorial assistance.

GRENVILLE KLEISER.

*New York City, October, 1908.*

**÷**01-00b INTRODUCTION

Collections of sermons by noted preachers of different periods are not an altogether uncommon contribution to literature. Italy, Germany, Holland, France, Great Britain and the United States have in this way furnished copious illustrations of the gifts of their illustrious preachers. Such treasures are found in the Latin and even in the Greek Church. Protestant communions especially, in line with the supreme significance which they attach to the work of the pulpit, have thus sought to magnify the calling and to perpetuate the memory and the influence of their distinguished sons. Still more comprehensive attempts have been made to collate the products of representative preachers in different Protestant communions, and thus to bring into prominence various types of sermonic literature. It is in this way that the Christian world has come to know its pulpit princes and to value their achievements.

The collection contained in the volumes before us is, however, more varied and comprehensive, reaching as it does from the fourth to the twentieth century, than any collection known to the writer. In the selection Professor Kleiser has brought to his task a personal knowledge of homiletic literature that is the product of much observation and study during many years, and an enthusiasm for his work that has been fostered by close intercourse in professional service with preachers and theological students. He has had the assistance also of men whose acquaintance with homiletic literature is very extensive, whose critical judgments are sound and reliable and who may be regarded as experts in this branch of knowledge. These volumes, therefore, may be accepted as a judiciously selected collection of sermons by many of the most notable preachers of the ancient and modern Christian world. Their value as illustrating varieties of gift, diversities of method, racial, national and ecclesiastical peculiarities, and above all progress in the science and art of preaching, may well be recognized even by a generation that is likely to regard anything that is more than twenty-four hours old as obsolete.

LEWIS O. BRASTOW.

*Yale University, New Haven, Conn., October, 1908.*

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÷**01-01 BASIL**

**THE CREATION OF THE WORLD**

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Basil, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and styled "The Great," was the founder of Eastern monasticism, defender of the Nicene doctrines and doctor of the Church. He was born at Caesarea in 329, and was thoroughly educated in all that a teacher like Libanius could impart at Rome, and Himerius at Constantinople. Returning home, he plunged into the pleasures of social life, but was induced by his sister to visit the hermits of Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Attracted during his travels to the religious life, he secluded himself in a lonely spot in inclement Pontus.

During his monastic life of seven years (357-364) he formulated the monastic rule still observed by Eastern monks. Ordained presbyter in 364, he labored in founding religious institutions of various kinds. He attracted notice by his growing Nicene predilections, and was elected bishop of his native town (370) and virtual primate of Asia Minor. His conduct in dealing with the Arians was uncompromising yet conciliating. As a theologian he stands next to his brother Gregory and to Athanasius, but he excels them both in the literary charm and variety of his Greek style. He died in 379.

BASIL 329-379

**THE CREATION OF THE WORLD**

*The earth was without form and void.*—Gen 1:2.

In the few words which have occupied us this morning we have found such a depth of thought that we despair of penetrating farther. If such is the forecourt of the sanctuary, if the portico of the temple is so grand and magnificent, if the splendor of its beauty thus dazzles the eyes of the soul, what will be the holy of holies? Who will dare to try to gain access to the innermost shrine? Who will look into its secrets? To gaze into it is indeed forbidden us, and language is powerless to express what the mind conceives.

However, since there are rewards, and most desirable ones, reserved by the just Judge for the intention alone of doing good, do not let us hesitate to continue our researches. Altho we may not attain to the truth, if, with the help of the Spirit, we do not fall away from the meaning of Holy Scripture, we shall not deserve to be rejected, and with the help of grace, we shall contribute to the edification of the Church of God.

"The earth," says Holy Scripture, "was without form and void"—*i.e.*, invisible and unfinished. The heavens and the earth were created together. How, then, is it that the heavens are perfect whilst the earth is still unformed and incomplete? In one word, what was the unfinished condition of the earth and for what reason was it invisible? The fertility of the earth is its perfect finishing; growth of all kinds of plants, the up-springing of tall trees, both productive and unfruitful, flowers' sweet scents and fair colors, and all that which, a little later, at the voice of God came forth from the earth to beautify her, their universal mother.

As nothing of all this yet existed, Scripture is right in calling the earth "without form." We could also say of the heavens that they were still imperfect and had not received their natural adornment, since at that time they did not shine with the glory of the sun and of the moon, and were not crowned by the choirs of the stars. These bodies were not yet created. Thus you will not diverge from the truth in saying that the heavens also were "without form." The earth was invisible for two reasons: it may be because man, the spectator, did not yet exist, or because, being submerged under the waters which overflowed the surface, it could not be seen, since the waters had not yet been gathered together into their own places, where God afterward collected them and gave them the name of sea.

What is invisible? First of all, that which our fleshly eye can not perceive—our mind, for example; then that which, visible in its nature, is hidden by some body which conceals it, like iron in the depths of the earth. It is in this sense that the earth, in that it was hidden under the waters, was still invisible. However, as light did not yet exist, and as the earth lay in darkness because of the obscurity of the air above it, it should not astonish us that for this reason Scripture calls it "invisible."

But the corrupters of the truth, who, incapable of submitting their reason to Holy Scripture, distort at will the meaning of the Holy Scriptures, pretend that these words mean matter. For it is matter, they say, which from its nature is without form and invisible—being by the conditions of its existence without quality and without form and figure. The Artificer submitting it to the working of His wisdom clothed it with a form, organized it, and thus gave being to the visible world.

If the matter is uncreated, it has a claim to the same honors as God, since it must be of equal rank with Him. Is this not the summit of wickedness that utter chaos, without quality, without form or shape, ugliness without configuration, to use their own expression, should enjoy the same prerogatives as He who is wisdom, power, and beauty itself, the Creator and the Demiurge of the universe enjoys? This is not all. If the matter is so great as to be capable of being acted on by the whole wisdom of God, it would in a way raise its hypostasis to an equality with the inaccessible power of God, since it would be able to measure by itself all the extent of the divine intelligence.

If it is insufficient for the operations of God, then we fall into a more absurd blasphemy, since we condemn God for not being able, on account of the want of matter, to finish His own works. The resourcelessness of human nature has deceived these reasoners. Each of our crafts is exercised upon some special matter—the art of the smith upon iron, that of the carpenter on wood. In all there is the subject, the form and the work which results from the form. Matter is taken from without—art gives the form—and the work is composed at the same time of form and of matter.

Such is the idea that they make for themselves of the divine work. The form of the world is due to the wisdom of the supreme Artificer; matter came to the Creator from without; and thus the world results from a double origin. It has received from outside its matter and its essence, and from God its form and figure. They thus come to deny that the mighty God has presided at the formation of the universe, and pretend that he has only brought a crowning contribution to a common work; that he has only contributed some small portion to the genesis of beings; they are incapable, from the debasement of their reasonings, of raising their glances to the height of truth. Here, below, arts are subsequent to matter—introduced into life by the indispensable need of them. Wool existed before weaving made it supply one of nature's imperfections. Wood existed before carpentering took possession of it, and transformed it each day to supply new wants and made us see all the advantages derived from it, giving the oar to the sailor, the winnowing-fan to the laborer, the lance to the soldier.

But God, before all those things which now attract our notice existed, after casting about in His mind and determining to bring into being that which had no being, imagined the world such as it ought to be, and created matter in harmony with the form which He wished to give it. He assigned to the heavens the nature adapted for the heavens, and gave to the earth an essence in accordance with its form. He formed, as he wished, fire, air, and water, and gave to each the essence which the object of its existence required.

Finally he welded all the diverse parts of the universe by links of indissoluble attachment and established between them so perfect a fellowship and harmony that the most distant, in spite of their distance, appeared united in one universal sympathy. Let those men, therefore, renounce their fabulous imaginations, who in spite of the weakness of their argument, pretend to measure a power as incomprehensible to man's reason as it is unutterable by man's voice.

God created the heavens and the earth, but not only one-half of each; He created all the heavens and all the earth, creating the essence with the form. For He is not an inventor of figures, but the Creator even of the essence of beings. Further, let them tell us how the efficient power of God could deal with the passive nature of matter, the latter furnishing the matter without form, the former possessing the science of the form without matter, both being in need of each other; the Creator in order to display his art, matter in order to cease to be without form and to receive a form. But let us stop here and return to our subject.

"The earth was invisible and unfinished." In saying "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" the sacred writer passed over many things in silence—water, air, fire, and the results from them, which, all forming in reality the true complement of the world, were, without doubt made at the same time as the universe. By this silence history wishes to train the activity of our intelligence, giving it a weak point for starting, to impel it to the discovery of the truth.

Thus, we are told of the creation of water; but, as we are told that the earth was invisible, ask yourself what could have covered it and prevented it from being seen? Fire could not conceal it. Fire brightens all about it, and spreads light rather than darkness around. No more was it air that enveloped the earth. Air by nature is of little density and transparent. It receives all kinds of visible objects and transmits them to the spectators. Only one supposition remains: that which floated on the surface of the earth was water, the fluid essence which had not yet been confined to its own place.

Thus the earth was not only invisible; it was still incomplete. Even to-day excessive damp is a hindrance to the productiveness of the earth. The same cause at the same time prevents it from being seen and from being complete, for the proper and natural adornment of the earth is its completion: corn waving in the valleys, meadows green with grass and rich with many-colored flowers, fertile glades and hilltops shaded by forests. Of all this nothing was yet produced; the earth was in travail with it in virtue of the power that she had received from the Creator. But she was waiting for the appointed time and the divine order to bring forth.

"Darkness was upon the face of the deep." A new source for fables and most impious imaginations may be found by distorting the sense of these words at the will of one's fancies. By "darkness" these wicked men do not understand what is meant in reality—air not illumined, the shadow produced by the interposition of a body, or finally a place for some reason deprived of light. For them "darkness" is an evil power, or rather the personification of evil, having his origin in himself in opposition to, and in perpetual struggle with, the goodness of God. If God is light, they say, without any doubt the power which struggles against Him must be darkness, "darkness" not owing its existence to a foreign origin, but an evil existing by itself. "Darkness" is the enemy of souls, the primary cause of death, the adversary of virtue. The words of the prophet, they say in their error, show that it exists and that it does not proceed from God. From this what perverse and impious dogmas have been imagined! What grievous wolves, tearing the flock of the Lord, have sprung from these words to cast themselves upon souls! Is it not from hence that have come forth Marcions and Valentinuses and the detestable heresy of the Manicheans which you may, without going far wrong, call the putrid humor of the churches?

O man, why wander thus from the truth and imagine for thyself that which will cause thy perdition? The word is simple and within the comprehension of all. "The earth was invisible." Why? Because the "deep" was spread over its surface. What is "the deep?" A mass of water of extreme depth. But we know that we can see many bodies through clear and transparent water. How, then, was it that no part of the earth appeared through the water? Because the air which surrounded it was still without light and in darkness. The rays of the sun, penetrating the water, often allow us to see the pebbles which form the bed of the river, but in a dark night it is impossible for our glance to penetrate under the water. Thus, these words, "the earth was invisible," are explained by those that follow; "the deep" covered it and itself was in darkness. Thus the deep is not a multitude of hostile powers, as has been imagined; nor "darkness" an evil sovereign force in enmity with good. In reality two rival principles of equal power, if engaged without ceasing in a war of mutual attacks, will end in self-destruction.

But if one should gain the mastery it would completely annihilate the conquered. Thus, to maintain the balance in the struggle between good and evil is to represent them as engaged in a war without end and in perpetual destruction, where the opponents are at the same time conquerors and conquered. If good is the stronger, what is there to prevent evil from being completely annihilated? But if that be the case, the very utterance of which is impious, I ask myself how it is that they themselves are not filled with horror to think that they have imagined such abominable blasphemies.

It is equally impious to say that evil has its origin from God; because the contrary can not proceed from its contrary. Life does not engender death; darkness is not the origin of light; sickness is not the maker of health. In the changes of conditions there are transitions from one condition to the contrary; but in genesis each being proceeds from its like and from its contrary. If, then, evil is neither uncreated nor created by God, from whence comes its nature? Certainly, that evil exists no one living in the world will deny. What shall we say, then? Evil is not a living animated essence: it is the condition of the soul opposed to virtue, developed in the careless on account of their falling away from good.

Do not, then, go beyond yourself to seek for evil, and imagine that there is an original nature of wickedness. Each of us—let us acknowledge it—is the first author of his own vice.

Among the ordinary events of life, some come naturally, like old age and sickness; others by chance, like unforeseen occurrences, of which the origin is beyond ourselves, often sad, sometimes fortunate—as, for instance, the discovery of a treasure when digging a well, or the meeting of a mad dog when going to the market-place.

Others depend upon ourselves; such as ruling one's passions, or not putting a bridle on one's pleasures; the mastery of anger, or resistance against him who irritates us; truth-telling or lying, the maintenance of a sweet and well-regulated disposition, or of a mood fierce and swollen and exalted with pride. Here you are the master of your actions. Do not look for the guiding cause beyond yourself, but recognize that evil, rightly so called, has no other origin than our voluntary falls. If it were involuntary, and did not depend upon ourselves, the laws would not have so much terror for the guilty, and the tribunals would not be so pitiless when they condemn wretches according to the measure of their crimes.

But enough concerning evil rightly so called. Sickness, poverty, obscurity, death, finally all human afflictions, ought not to be ranked as evils, since we do not count among the greatest boons things which are their opposites. Among these afflictions some are the effect of nature, others have obviously been for many a source of advantage. Let us be silent for the moment about these metaphors and allegories, and, simply following without vain curiosity the words of Holy Scripture, let us take from darkness the idea which it gives us.

But reason asks, Was darkness created with the world? Is it older than light? Why, in spite of its inferiority, has it preceded it? Darkness, we reply, did not exist in essence; it is a condition produced in the air by the withdrawal of light. What, then, is that light which disappeared suddenly from the world so that darkness should cover the face of the deep? If anything had existed before the formation of this sensible and perishable world, no doubt we conclude it would have been in the light. The orders of angels, the heavenly hosts, all intellectual natures named or unnamed, all the ministering spirits, did not live in darkness, but enjoyed a condition fitted for them in light and spiritual joy.

No one will contradict this, least of all he who looks for celestial light as one of the rewards promised to virtue—the light which, as Solomon says, is always a light to the righteous, the light which made the apostle say, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Finally, if the condemned are sent into outer darkness, evidently those who are made worthy of God's approval are at rest in heavenly light. When, then, according to the order of God, the heaven appeared, enveloping all that its circumference included, a vast and unbroken body separating outer things from those which it enclosed, it necessarily kept the space inside in darkness for want of communication with the outer light.

Three things are, indeed, needed to form a shadow: light, a body, a dark place. The shadow of heaven forms the darkness of the world. Understand, I pray you, what I mean, by a simple example—by raising for yourself at midday a tent of some compact and impenetrable material, you shut yourself up in sudden darkness. Suppose that original darkness was like this, not subsisting directly by itself, but resulting from some external causes. If it is said that it rested upon the deep, it is because the extremity of air naturally touches the surface of bodies; and as at that time the water covered everything, we are obliged to say that darkness was upon the face of the deep.

"And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters?" Does this Spirit mean the diffusion of air? The sacred writer wishes to enumerate to you the elements of the world, to tell you that God created the heavens, the earth, water and air, and that the last was now diffused and in motion; or rather, that which is truer and confirmed by the authority of the ancients, by the Spirit of God he means the Holy Spirit. It is, as has been remarked, the special name, the name above all others that Scripture delights to give to the Holy Spirit, and by the Spirit of God the Holy Spirit is meant, the Spirit, namely, which completes the divine and blessed Trinity. You will always find it better, therefore, to take it in this sense. How, then, did the Spirit of God move upon the waters? The explanation that I am about to give you is not an original one, but that of a Syrian who was as ignorant in the wisdom of this world as he was versed in the knowledge of the truth.

He said, then, that the Syriac word was more expressive, and that, being more analogous to the Hebrew term, it was a nearer approach to the Scriptural sense. This is the meaning of the word: by "moved" the Syrians, he says, understand brooded over. The Spirit cherished the nature of the waters as one sees a bird cover the eggs with her body and impart to them vital force from her own warmth. Such is, as nearly as possible, the meaning of these words—the Spirit moved: that is, prepared the nature of water to produce living beings: a sufficient proof for those who ask if the Holy Spirit took an active part in the creation of the world.

"And God said, Let there be light." The first word uttered by God created the nature of light; it made darkness vanish, dispelled gloom, illuminated the world, and gave to all being at the same time a sweet and gracious aspect. The heavens, until then enveloped in darkness, appeared with that beauty which they still present to our eyes. The air was lighted up, or rather made the light circulate mixed with its substance, and, distributing its splendor rapidly in every direction, so dispersed itself to its extreme limits. Up it sprang to the very ether and heaven. In an instant it lighted up the whole extent of the world, the north and the south, the east and the west. For the ether also is such a subtle substance and so transparent that it needs not the space of a moment for light to pass through it. Just as it carries our sight instantaneously to the object of vision, so without the least interval, with a rapidity that thought can not conceive, it receives these rays of light in its uttermost limits. With light the ether becomes more pleasing and the waters more limpid. These last, not content with receiving its splendor, return it by the reflection of light and in all directions send forth quivering flashes. The divine word gives every object a more cheerful and a more attractive appearance, just as when men pour in oil into the deep sea they make the place about them smooth. So, with a single word and in one instant the Creator of all things gave the boon of light to the world.

"Let there be light." The order was itself an operation, and a state of things was brought into being than which man's mind can not even imagine a pleasanter one for our enjoyment It must be well understood that when we speak of the voice, of the word, of the command of God, this divine language does not mean to us a sound which escapes from the organs of speech, a collision of air struck by the tongue; it is a simple sign of the will of God, and, if we give it the form of an order, it is only the better to impress the souls whom we instruct.

"And God saw the light, that it was good." How can we worthily praise light after the testimony given by the Creator to its goodness? The word, even among us, refers the judgment to the eyes, incapable of raising itself to the idea that the senses have already received. But if beauty in bodies results from symmetry of parts and the harmonious appearance of colors how, in a simple and homogeneous essence like light, can this idea of beauty be preserved? Would not the symmetry in light be less shown in its parts than in the pleasure and delight at the sight of it? Such is also the beauty of gold, which it owes, not to the happy mingling of its parts, but only to its beautiful color, which has a charm attractive to the eyes.

Thus, again, the evening star is the most beautiful of the stars: not that the parts of which it is composed form a harmonious whole, but thanks to the unalloyed and beautiful brightness which meets our eyes. And further, when God proclaimed the goodness of light, it was not in regard to the charm of the eye, but as a provision for future advantage, because at that time there were as yet no eyes to judge of its beauty.

"And God divided the light from the darkness." That is to say, God gave them natures incapable of mixing, perpetually in opposition to each other, and put between them the widest space and distance.

"And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night." Since the birth of the sun, the light that it diffuses in the air when shining on our hemisphere is day, and the shadow produced by its disappearance is night. But at that time it was not after the movement of the sun, but following this primitive light spread abroad in the air or withdrawn in a measure determined by God, that day came and was followed by night.

"And the evening and the morning were the first day." Evening is then the boundary common to day and night; and in the same way morning constitutes the approach of night to day. It was to give day the privileges of seniority that Scripture put the end of the first day before that of the first night, because night follows day: for, before the creation of light, the world was not in night, but in darkness. It is the opposite of day which was called night, and it did not receive its name until after day. Thus were created the evening and the morning. Scripture means the space of a day and a night, and afterward no more says day and night, but calls them both under the name of the more important: a custom which you will find throughout Scripture. Everywhere the measure of time is counted by days without mention of nights. "The days of our years," says the Psalmist; "few and evil have the days of the years of my life been," said Jacob; and elsewhere "all the days of my life."

"And the evening and the morning were the first day," or, rather, one day.—(*Revised Vers*). Why does Scripture say "one day," not "the first day?" Before speaking to us of the second, the third, and the fourth days, would it not have been more natural to call that one the first which began the series? If it, therefore, says "one day," it is from a wish to determine the measure of day and night and to combine the time that they contain. Now, twenty-four hours fill up the space of one day—we mean of a day and of a night; and if, at the time of the solstices, they have not both an equal length, the time marked by Scripture does not the less circumscribe their duration. It is as tho it said: Twenty-four hours measure the space of a day, or a day is in reality the time that the heavens, starting from one point, take to return thither. Thus, every time that, in the revolution of the sun, evening and morning occupy the world, their periodical succession never exceeds the space of one day.

But we must believe that there is a mysterious reason for this? God, who made the nature of time, measured it out and determined it by intervals of days; and, wishing to give it a week as a measure, he ordered the week to resolve from period to period upon itself, to count the movement of time, forming the week of one day revolving seven times upon itself: a proper circle begins and ends with itself. Such is also the character of eternity, to revolve upon itself and to end nowhere. If, then, the beginning of time is called "one day" rather than "the first day," it is because Scripture wishes to establish its relationship with eternity. It was, in reality, fit and natural to call "one" the day whose character is to be one wholly separated and isolated from all others. If Scripture speaks to us of many ages, saying everywhere "age of age, and ages of ages," we do not see it enumerate them as first, second, and third. It follows that we are hereby shown, not so much limits, ends, and succession of ages as distinctions between various states and modes of action. "The day of the Lord," Scripture says, "is great and very terrible," and elsewhere, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord: to what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness and not light." A day of darkness for those who are worthy of darkness. No; this day without evening, without succession, and without end is not unknown to Scripture, and it is the day that the Psalmist calls the eighth day, because it is outside this time of weeks. Thus, whether you call it day or whether you call it eternity, you express the same idea. Give this state the name of day; there are not several, but only one. If you call it eternity still it is unique and not manifold. Thus it is in order that you may carry your thoughts forward toward a future life that Scripture marks by the word "one" the day which is the type of eternity, the first-fruits of days, the contemporary of light, the holy Lord's day.

But while I am conversing with you about the first evening of the world, evening takes me by surprize and puts an end to my discourse. May the Father of the true light, who has adorned day with celestial light, who has made to shine the fires which illuminate us during the night, who reserves for us in the peace of a future age a spiritual and everlasting light, enlighten your hearts in the knowledge of truth, keep you from stumbling, and grant that "you may walk honestly as in the day." Thus shall you shine as the sun in the midst of the glory of the saints, and I shall glory in you in the day of Christ, to whom belong all glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

÷01-02 CHRYSOSTOM

02 CHRYSOSTOM

EXCESSIVE GRIEF AT THE DEATH OF FRIENDS

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Chrysostom (that is, "Of the Golden Mouth") was a title given to John, Archbishop of Constantinople. He was born of a patrician family at Antioch about 347, and owed much to the early Christian training of his Christian mother, Anthusa. He studied under Libanius, and for a time practised law, but was converted and baptized in 368. He made a profound study of the Scriptures, the whole of which, it is said, he learned to repeat by heart.

Like Basil and Gregory he began his religious life as a hermit in the desert. After six years he returned to Antioch, where he gained reputation as the greatest preacher in the Eastern Church. Raised to the metropolitan See of Constantinople in 397, his fulminations against the corruptions of the court caused him to be banished, after a stormy ministry of six years. He was recalled in response to popular clamor, but removed again, and shortly after died, in 407. He was a great exegete, and showed a spirit of intellectual liberty which anticipated modern criticism. Sermons to the number of one thousand have been attributed to him.

CHRYSOSTOM 347-407

EXCESSIVE GRIEF AT THE DEATH OF FRIENDS

*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not.*—1Th 4:13.

We have occupied four days in explaining to you the parable of Lazarus, bringing out the treasure that we found in a body covered with sores; a treasure, not of gold and silver and precious stones, but of wisdom and fortitude, of patience and endurance. For as in regard to visible treasures, while the surface of the ground shows only thorns and briers, and rough earth, yet, let a person dig deep into it, abundant wealth discovers itself; so it has proved in respect to Lazarus. Outwardly, wounds; but underneath these, unspeakable wealth; a body pining away, but a spirit noble and wakeful. We have also seen an illustration of that remark of the apostle's—in proportion as the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed.

It would, indeed, be proper to address you to-day, also, on this same parable, and to enter the lists with those heretics who censure the Old Testament, bringing accusations against the patriarchs, and whetting their tongues against God, the Creator of the universe. But to avoid wearying you and reserving this controversy for another time, let us direct the discourse to another subject; for a table with only one sort of food produces satiety, while variety provokes the appetite. That it may be so in regard to our preaching, let us now, after a long period, turn to the blest Paul; for very opportunely has a passage from the apostle been read to-day, and the things which are to be spoken concerning it are in harmony with those that have lately been presented. Hear, then, Paul this day proclaiming—"I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope." The parable of Lazarus is the evangelical chord; this passage is the apostolic note. And there is concord between them; for we have, on that parable, said much concerning the resurrection and the future judgment, and our discourse now recurs to that theme; so that, tho it is on apostolic ground we are now toiling, we shall here find the same treasure. For in treating the parable, our aim was to teach the hearers this lesson, that they should regard all the splendors of the present life as nothing, but should look forward in their hopes, and daily reflect on the decisions which will be hereafter pronounced, and on that fearful judgment, and that Judge who can not be deceived. On these things Paul has counseled us to-day in the passages which have been read to us. Attend, however, to his own words—"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."—I Thess. iv., 13, 14.

We ought here, at the outset, to inquire why, when he is speaking concerning Christ, he employs the word death; but when he is speaking of our decease he calls it sleep, and not death. For he did not say, Concerning them that are dead: but what did he say? "Concerning them that are asleep." And again—"Even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." He did not say, Them that have died. Still again—"We who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them that sleep." Here, too, he did not say—Them that are dead; but a third time, bringing the subject to their remembrance, for the third time called death a sleep. Concerning Christ, however, he did not speak thus; but how? "For if we believe that Jesus died." He did not say, Jesus slept, but He died. Why now did he use the term death in reference to Christ, but in reference to us the term sleep? For it was not casually, or negligently, that he employed this expression, but he had a wise and great purpose in so doing. In speaking of Christ, he said death, so as to confirm the fact that Christ had actually suffered death; in speaking of us, he said sleep, in order to impart consolation. For where resurrection had already taken place, he mentions death with plainness; but where the resurrection is still a matter of hope, he says sleep, consoling us by this very expression, and cherishing our valuable hopes. For he who is only asleep will surely awake; and death is no more than a long sleep.

Say not a dead man hears not, nor speaks, nor sees, nor is conscious. It is just so with a sleeping person. If I may speak somewhat paradoxically, even the soul of a sleeping person is in some sort asleep; but not so the soul of a dead man; that is awake.

But, you say, a dead man experiences corruption, and becomes dust and ashes. And what then, beloved hearers? For this very reason we ought to rejoice. For when a man is about to rebuild an old and tottering house, he first sends out its occupants, then tears it down, and rebuilds anew a more splendid one. This occasions no grief to the occupants, but rather joy; for they do not think of the demolition which they see, but of the house which is to come, tho not yet seen. When God is about to do a similar work, he destroys our body, and removes the soul which was dwelling in it as from some house, that he may build it anew and more splendidly, and again bring the soul into it with greater glory. Let us not, therefore, regard the tearing down, but the splendor which is to succeed.

If, again, a man has a statue decayed by rust and age, and mutilated in many of its parts, he breaks it up and casts it into a furnace, and after the melting he receives it again in a more beautiful form. As then the dissolving in the furnace was not a destruction but a renewing of the statue, so the death of our bodies is not a destruction but a renovation. When, therefore, you see as in a furnace our flesh flowing away to corruption, dwell not on that sight, but wait for the recasting. And be not satisfied with the extent of this illustration, but advance in your thoughts to a still higher point; for the statuary, casting into the furnace a brazen image, does not furnish you in its place a golden and undecaying statue, but again makes a brazen one. God does not thus; but casting in a mortal body formed of clay, he returns to you a golden and immortal statue; for the earth, receiving a corruptible and decaying body gives back the same, incorruptible and undecaying. Look not, therefore, on the corpse, lying with closed eyes and speechless lips, but on the man that is risen, that has received glory unspeakable and amazing, and direct your thoughts from the present sight to the future hope.

But do you miss his society, and therefore lament and mourn? Now is it not unreasonable, that, if you should have given your daughter in marriage, and her husband should take her to a distant country and should there enjoy prosperity, you would not think the circumstance a calamity, but the intelligence of their prosperity would console the sorrow occasioned by her absence; and yet here, while it is not a man, nor a fellow servant, but the Lord Himself who has taken your relative, that you should grieve and lament?

And how is it possible, you ask, not to grieve, since I am only a man? Nor do I say that you should not grieve: I do not condemn dejection, but the intensity of it. To be dejected is natural; but to be overcome by dejection is madness, and folly, and unmanly weakness. You may grieve and weep; but give not way to despondency, nor indulge in complaints. Give thanks to God, who has taken your friend, that you have the opportunity of honoring the departed one, and of dismissing him with becoming obsequies. If you sink under depression, you withhold honor from the departed, you displease God who has taken him, and you injure yourself; but if you are grateful, you pay respect to him, you glorify God, and you benefit yourself. Weep, as wept your Master over Lazarus, observing the just limits of sorrow, which it is not proper to pass. Thus also said Paul—"I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not as others who have no hope. Grieve," says he; "but not as the Greek, who has no hope of a resurrection, who despairs of a future life."

Believe me, I am ashamed and blush to see unbecoming groups of women pass along the mart, tearing their hair, cutting their arms and cheeks—and all this under the eyes of the Greeks. For what will they not say? What will they not declare concerning us? Are these the men who reason about a resurrection? Indeed! How poorly their actions agree with their opinions! In words, they reason about a resurrection: but they act just like those who do not acknowledge a resurrection. If they fully believed in a resurrection, they would not act thus; if they had really persuaded themselves that a deceased friend had departed to a better state, they would not thus mourn. These things, and more than these, the unbelievers say when they hear those lamentations. Let us then be ashamed, and be more moderate, and not occasion so much harm to ourselves and to those who are looking on us.

For on what account, tell me, do you thus weep for one departed? Because he was a bad man? You ought on that very account to be thankful, since the occasions of wickedness are now cut off. Because he was good and kind? If so, you ought to rejoice; since he has been soon removed, before wickedness had corrupted him, and he has gone away to a world where he stands even secure, and there is no reason even to mistrust a change. Because he was a youth? For that, too, praise Him that has taken him, because he has speedily called him to a better lot. Because he was an aged man? On this account, also, give thanks and glorify Him that has taken him. Be ashamed of your behavior at a burial. The singing of psalms, the prayers, the assembling of the (spiritual) fathers and brethren—all this is not that you may weep, and lament, and afflict yourselves, but that you may render thanks to Him who has taken the departed. For as when men are called to some high office, multitudes with praises on their lips assemble to escort them at their departure to their stations, so do all with abundant praise join to send forward, as to greater honor, those of the pious who have departed. Death is rest, a deliverance from the exhausting labors and cares of this world. When, then, thou seest a relative departing, yield not to despondency; give thyself to reflection; examine thy conscience; cherish the thought that after a little while this end awaits thee also. Be more considerate; let another's death excite thee to salutary fear; shake off all indolence; examine your past deeds; quit your sins, and commence a happy change.

We differ from unbelievers in our estimate of things. The unbeliever surveys the heavens and worships them, because he thinks them a divinity; he looks to the earth and makes himself a servant to it, and longs for the things of sense. But not so with us. We survey the heavens and admire Him that made them; for we do not believe them to be a god, but a work of God. I look on the whole creation, and am led by it to the Creator. He looks on wealth, and longs for it with earnest desire; I look on wealth, and contemn it. He sees poverty, and laments; I see poverty, and rejoice. I see things in one light; he in another. Just so in regard to death. He sees a corpse, and thinks of it as a corpse; I see a corpse, and behold sleep rather than death. And as in regard to books, both learned persons and unlearned see them with the same eyes, but not with the same understanding—for to the unlearned the mere shapes of letters appear, while the learned discover the sense that lies within those letters—so in respect to affairs in general, we all see what takes place with the same eyes, but not with the same understanding and judgment. Since, therefore, in all other things we differ from them, shall we agree with them in our sentiments respecting death?

Consider to whom the departed has gone, and take comfort. He has gone where Paul is, and Peter, and the whole company of the saints. Consider how he shall arise, with what glory and splendor. Consider that by mourning and lamenting thou canst not alter the event which has occurred, and thou wilt in the end injure thyself. Consider whom you imitate by so doing, and shun this companionship in sin. For whom do you imitate and emulate? The unbelieving, those who have no hope; as Paul has said—"That ye sorrow not, even as others who have no hope." And observe how carefully he expresses himself; for he does not say, Those who have not the hope of a resurrection, but simply, Those who have no hope. He that has no hope of a future retribution has no hope at all, nor does he know that there is a God, nor that God exercises a providential care over present occurrences, nor that divine justice looks on all things. But he that is thus ignorant and inconsiderate is more unwise than a beast, and separates his soul from all good; for he that does not expect to render an account of his deeds cuts himself loose from all virtue, and attaches himself to all vice. Considering these things, therefore, and reflecting on the folly and stupidity of the heathen, whose associates we become by our lamentations for the dead, let us avoid this conformity to them. For the apostle mentions them for this very purpose, that by considering the dishonor into which thou fallest, thou mightest recover thyself from this conformity, and return to thy proper dignity.

And not only here, but everywhere and frequently, the blest Paul does the same. For when he would dissuade from sin, he shows with whom we become associated by our sins, that, being touched by the character of the persons, thou shouldest avoid such companionship. To the Thessalonians, accordingly, he says, Let every one "possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God." And again—"Walk not as the other Gentiles in the vanity of their mind." Thus also here—"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others who have no hope." For it is not the nature of things, but our own disposition, which makes us grieve; not the death of the departed, but the weakness of those who mourn.

We ought, therefore, to thank God not only for the resurrection, but also for the hope of it; which can comfort the afflicted soul, and bid us be of good cheer concerning the departed, for they will again rise and be with us. If we must have anguish, we should mourn and lament over those who are living in sin, not over those who have died righteously. Thus did Paul; for he says to the Corinthians—"Lest when I come to you God shall humble me among you and that I shall bewail many." He was not speaking of those who had died, but of those who had sinned and had not repented of the lasciviousness and uncleanness which they had committed; over these it was proper to mourn. So likewise another writer admonishes, saying—"Weep over the dead, for the light has failed; and weep over the fool, for understanding has failed" (Eccles. xxii., 10). Weep a little for the dead; for he has gone to his rest; but the fool's life is a greater calamity than death. And surely if one devoid of understanding is always a proper object of lamentation, much more he that is devoid of righteousness and that has fallen from hope toward God. These, then, let us bewail; for such bewailing may be useful. For often while lamenting these, we amend our own faults; but to bewail the departed is senseless and hurtful. Let us not, then, reverse the order, but bewail only sin; and all other things, whether poverty, or sickness, or untimely death, or calumny, or false accusation, or whatever human evil befalls us, let us resolutely bear them all. For these calamities, if we are watchful, will be the occasions of adding to our crowns.

But how is it possible, you ask, that a bereaved person, being a man, should not grieve? On the contrary, I ask, how is it that being a man he should grieve, since he is honored with reason and with hopes of future good? Who is there, you ask again, that has not been subdued by this weakness? Many, I reply, and in many places, both among us and among those who have died before us. Job, for instance; the whole circle of his children being taken away, hear what he says—"The Lord gave; the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." A wonderful saying, even when merely heard; but if you examine it closely, your wonder will greatly increase.

For consider; Satan did not take merely half and leave half, or take the larger number and leave the rest; but he gathered all the fruit, and yet did not prevail in uprooting the tree; he covered the whole sea with waves, and yet did not overwhelm the bark; he despoiled the tower of its strength, and yet could not batter it down. Job stood firm, tho assailed from every quarter; showers of arrows fell, but they did not wound him. Consider how great a thing it was, to see so many children perish. Was it not enough to pierce him to the quick that they should all be snatched away?—altogether and in one day; in the flower of life; having shown so much virtue; expiring as by a stroke of vengeance; that after so many sorrows this last should be inflicted; that the father was fond of them, and that the deceased were worthy of his affection. When a man loses vicious children, he does indeed suffer grief, but not intense grief; for the wickedness of the departed does not allow the sorrow to be poignant. But when children are virtuous, an abiding wound is inflicted, the remembrance is indelible, the calamity is inconsolable; there is a double sting, from nature, and from the virtuous character of the departed.

That Job's children were virtuous, appears from the fact that their father was particularly solicitous in regard to them, and rising up offered sacrifices in their behalf, fearing lest they might have committed secret sins; and no consideration was more important in his esteem than this. Not only the virtue of the children is thus shown, but also the affectionate spirit of the father. Since, therefore, the father was so affectionate, showing not only a love for them which proceeded from nature, but that also which came from their piety, and since the departed were thus virtuous, the anguish had a threefold intensity. Still further; when children are torn away separately, the suffering has some consolation; for those that are left alleviate the sorrow over the departed; but when the whole circle is gone, to what one of all his numerous children can the childless man now look?

Besides these causes of sorrow, there was a fifth stroke. What was that? That they were all snatched away at once. For if in the case of those who die after three or five days of sickness, the women and all the relatives bewail this most of all, that the deceased was taken away from their sight speedily and suddenly, much more might he have been distrest, when thus deprived of all, not in three days, or two, or one, but in one hour! For a calamity long contemplated, even if it be hard to bear, may fall more lightly through this anticipation; but that which happens contrary to expectation and suddenly is intolerable.

Would you hear of a sixth stroke? He lost them all in the very flower of their age. You know how very overwhelming are untimely bereavements, and productive of grief on many scores. The instance we are contemplating was not only untimely, but also violent; so that here was a seventh stroke. For their father did not see them expire on a bed, but they are all overwhelmed by the falling habitation. Consider then; a man was digging in that pile of ruins, and now he drew up a stone, and now a limb of a deceased one; he saw a hand still holding a cup, and another right hand placed on the table, and the mutilated form of a body, the nose torn away, the head crusht, the eyes put out, the brain scattered, the whole frame marred, and the variety of wounds not permitting the father to recognize the beloved countenances. You suffer emotions and shed tears at merely hearing of these things: what must he have endured at the sight of them? For if we, so long after the event, can not bear to hear of this tragedy, tho it was another man's calamity, what an adamant was he to look on these things, and contemplate them, not as another's, but his own afflictions! He did not give way to dejection, nor ask, "What does this mean? Is this the recompense for my kindness? Was it for this that I opened my house, that I might see it made the grave of my children? Did I for this exhibit every parental virtue, that they should endure such a death?" No such things did he speak, or even think; but steadily bore all, tho bereaved of them after bestowing on them so much care. For as an accomplished statuary framing golden images adorns them with great care, so he sought properly to mold and adorn their souls. And as a husbandman assiduously waters his palm-trees, or olives, inclosing them and cultivating them in every suitable way; so he perpetually sought to enrich each one's soul, as a fruitful olive, with increasing virtue. But he saw the trees overthrown by the assault of the evil spirit, and exposed on the earth, and enduring that miserable kind of death; yet he uttered no reviling word, but rather blest God, thus giving a deadly blow to the devil.

Should you say that Job had many sons, but that others have frequently lost their only sons, and that his cause of sorrow was not equal to theirs, you say well; but I reply, that Job's cause of sorrow was not only equal, but far greater. For of what advantage was it to him that he had many children? It was a severer calamity and a more bitter grief to receive the wound in many bodies.

Still, if you wish to see another holy man having an only son, and showing the same and even greater fortitude, call to mind the patriarch Abraham, who did not indeed see Isaac die, but, what was much more painful, was himself commanded to slay him, and did not question the command, nor repine at it, nor say, "Is it for this thou hast made me a father, that thou shouldest make me the slayer of my son? Better it would have been not to give him at all, than having given him thus to take him away. And if thou choosest to take him, why dost thou command me to slay him and to pollute my right hand? Didst thou not promise me that from this son thou wouldst fill the earth with my descendants? How wilt thou give the fruits, then, if thou pluck up the root? How dost thou promise me a posterity, and yet order me to slay my son? Who ever saw such things, or heard of the like? I am deceived; I have been deluded." No such thing did he say, or even think; he said nothing against the command, he did not ask the reasons; but hearing the Word—"Take thy son, thine only son whom thou lovest, and carry him up to one of the mountains which I shall show thee," he complied so readily as even to do more than was commanded. For he concealed the matter from his wife, and he left the servants at the foot of the Mount in ignorance of what was to be done, and ascended, taking only the victim. Thus not unwillingly, but with promptness, he obeyed the command. Think now what it was, to be conversing alone with his son, apart from all others, when the affections are the more fervently excited, and attachment becomes stronger; and this not for one, or two, but for several days. To obey the command speedily would have been wonderful; but not so wonderful as, while his heart was burdened and agitated for many days, to avoid indulging in human tenderness toward his son. On this account God appointed for him a more extended arena, and a longer racecourse, that thou mightest the more carefully observe his combatant. A combatant he was indeed, contending not against a man, but against the force of nature. What language can describe his fortitude? He brought forward his son, bound him, placed him on the wood, seized the sacrificial knife, was just on the point of dealing the stroke. In what manner to express myself properly, I know not; he only would know, who did these things. For no language can describe how it happened that his hand did not become torpid, that the strength of his nerves did not relax, that the affecting sight of his son did not overpower him.

It is proper here, too, to admire Isaac. For as the one obeyed God, so did the other obey his father; and as the one, at God's bidding him to sacrifice, did not demand an account of the matter, so the other, when his father was binding him and leading him to the altar, did not say, "Why art thou doing this?"—but surrendered himself to his father's hand. And then was to be seen a man uniting in his own person the father and the sacrificing priest; and a sacrifice offered without blood, a whole burnt offering without fire, an altar representing a type of death and the resurrection. For he both sacrificed his son and he did not sacrifice him. He did not sacrifice him with his hand, but in his purpose. For God gave the command, not through desire to see the flowing of the blood, but to give you a specimen of steady purpose, to make known throughout the world this worthy man, and to instruct all in coming time that it is necessary to prefer the command of God before children and nature, before all things, and even life itself. And so Abraham descended from the Mount, bringing alive the martyr Isaac. How can we be pardoned then, tell me, or what apology can we have, if we see that noble man obeying God with so much promptness and submitting to Him in all things, and yet we murmur at His dispensations? Tell me not of grief, nor of the intolerable nature of your calamity; rather consider how in the midst of bitter sorrow you may yet rise superior to it. That which was commanded to Abraham was enough to stagger his reason, to throw him into perplexity, and to undermine his faith in the past. For who would not have then thought that the promise which had been made him of a numerous posterity was all a deception? But not so Abraham. And not less ought we to admire Job's wisdom in calamity; and particularly, that after so much virtue, after his alms and various acts of kindness to men, and tho aware of no wrong either in himself or his children, yet experiencing so much affliction, affliction so singular, such as had never happened even to the most desperately wicked, still he was not affected by it as most men would have been, nor did he regard his virtue as profitless, nor form any ill-advised opinion concerning the past.

By these two examples, then, we ought not only to admire virtue, but to emulate and imitate it. And let no one say these were wonderful men. True, they were wonderful and great men. But we are now required to have more wisdom than they, and than all who lived under the Old Testament. For "except your righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Gathering wisdom, then, from all quarters, and considering what we are told concerning a resurrection and concerning these holy men, let us frequently recite it to our souls, not only when we are actually in sorrow, but also while we are free from distress. For I have now addrest you on this subject, tho no one is in particular affliction, that when we shall fall into any such calamity, we may, from the remembrance of what has been said, obtain requisite consolation. As soldiers, even in peace, perform warlike exercises, so that when actually called to battle and the occasion makes a demand for skill, they may avail themselves of the art which they have cultivated in peace; so let us, in time of peace, furnish ourselves with weapons and remedies, that whenever there shall burst on us a war of unreasonable passions, or grief, or pain, or any such thing, we may, well armed and secure on all sides, repel the assaults of the evil one with all skill, and wall ourselves round with right contemplations, with the declarations of God, with the examples of good men, and with every possible defense. For so shall we be able to pass the present life with happiness, and to attain to the kingdom of heaven, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and dominion, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

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THE RECOVERY OF SIGHT BY THE BLIND

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Saint Augustine (Aurelius Augustinus), one of the greatest theological fathers of the Church, was born at Tagaste, 354 A.D., and became devoted to the study of Cicero. As a Manichean he occasioned great anxiety to his mother Monica. Eventually embracing Christianity, he was baptized by Ambrose of Milan (387), on which occasion, tradition says, the Te Deum was composed by himself and his baptizer. Appointed to the See of Hippo in 395, he threw himself into the conflict against heresy and schism, his principal opponents being the Donatists and Pelagians. His sermons, powerful as they are, disappoint the modern reader by their fantastic and allegorical interpretation of Scripture, but his "Confessions," in which he details the history of his early life and conversion, present a wonderful picture of personal experience. He is styled by Harnack "the first modern man." He died at Hippo in 430.

AUGUSTINE 354-430

THE RECOVERY OF SIGHT BY THE BLIND

*Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David.*—Mat 20:30.

I. Ye know, holy brethren, full well as we do, that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the physician of our eternal health; and that to this end we task the weakness of our natures, that our weakness might not last forever. For He assumed a mortal body, wherein to kill death. And, "though He was crucified through weakness," as the apostle saith, yet He "liveth by the power of God." They are the words, too, of the same apostle: "He dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him." These things, I say, are well known to your faith. And there is also this which follows from them, that we should know that all the miracles which He did on the body avail to our instruction, that we may from them perceive that which is not to pass away, nor to have any end. He restored to the blind those eyes which death was sure some time to close; He raised Lazarus to life who was to die again. And whatever He did for the health of bodies, He did it not to this end that they should be forever; whereas, at the last, He will give eternal health even to the body itself. But because those things which were not seen were not believed; by means of those temporal things which were seen, He built up faith in those things which were not seen.

II. Let no one then, brethren, say that our Lord Jesus Christ doeth not those things now, and on this account prefer the former to the present ages of the Church. In a certain place, indeed, the same Lord prefers those who do not see and yet believe to them who see and therefore believe. For even at that time so irresolute was the infirmity of His disciples that they thought that He whom they saw to have risen again must be handled, in order that they might believe. It was not enough for their eyes that they had seen Him, unless their hands also were applied to His limbs, and the scars of His recent wounds were touched: that this disciple, who was in doubt, might cry suddenly when he had touched and recognized the scars, "My Lord and my God." The scars manifested Him who had healed all wounds in others. Could not the Lord have risen again without scars? Yes, but He knew the wounds which were in the hearts of His disciples, and to heal them He had preserved the scars on His own body. And what said the Lord to him who now confest and said, "My lord, and my God?" "Because thou hast seen," He said, "thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." Of whom spake He, brethren, but of us? Not that He spoke only of us, but of those also who shall come after us. For a little while when He had departed from the sight of men, that faith might be established in their hearts, whosoever believed, believed tho they saw Him not, and great has been the merit of their faith; for the procuring of which faith they brought only the movement of a pious heart, and not the touching of their hands.

III. These things, then, the Lord did to invite us to the faith. This faith reigneth now in the Church, which is spread throughout the whole world. And now, He worketh greater cures, on account of which He disdained not then to exhibit those lesser ones. For as the soul is better than the body, so is the saving health of the soul better than the health of the body. The blind body doth not now open its eyes by a miracle of the Lord, but the blinded heart openeth its eyes to the word of the Lord. The mortal corpse doth not now rise again, but the soul doth rise again which lay dead in a living body. The deaf ears of the body are not now opened; but how many have the ears of their heart closed, which yet fly open at the penetrating word of God, so that they believe who did not believe, and they live well who did live evilly, and they obey who did not obey; and we say, "such a man is become a believer," and we wonder when we hear of them whom once we had known as hardened. Why, then, dost thou marvel at one who now believes, who is living innocently, and serving God, but because thou dost behold him seeing, whom thou hadst known to be blind; dost behold him living whom thou hast known to be dead; dost behold him hearing whom thou hadst known to be deaf? For consider that there are those who are dead in another than the ordinary sense, of whom the Lord spoke to a certain man who delayed to follow the Lord, because he wished to bury his father; "Let the dead," said He, "bury their dead." Surely these dead buriers are not dead in body; for if this were so, they could not bury dead bodies. Yet doth He call them dead; where but in the soul within? For as we may often see in a household, itself sound and well, the master of the same house lying dead; so in a sound body do many carry a dead soul within; and these the apostle arouses thus, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." It is the same who giveth sight to the blind that awakeneth the dead. For it is with His voice that the cry is made by the apostle to the dead. "Awake thou that sleepest." And the blind will be enlightened with light, when he shall have risen again. And how many deaf men did the Lord see before His eyes, when He said, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." For who was standing before Him without his bodily ears? What other ears, then, did He seek for, but those of the inner man?

IV. Again, what eyes did He look for when He spake to those who saw indeed, but who saw only with the eyes of the flesh? For when Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us": he understood, indeed, that if the Father were shown him, it might well suffice him; when He that was equal to the Father had sufficed not? And why did He not suffice? Because He was not seen. And why was He not seen? Because the eye whereby He might be seen was not yet whole. For this, namely, that the Lord was seen in the flesh with the outward eyes, not only the disciples who honored Him saw, but also the Jews who crucified Him. He, then, who wished to be seen in another way, sought for other eyes. And, therefore, it was that to him who said, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," He answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He who hath seen Me hath seen the Father also." And that He might in the meanwhile heal the eyes of faith, He has first of all given him instructions regarding faith, that so he might attain to sight. And lest Philip should think that he was to conceive of God under the same form in which he then saw the Lord Jesus Christ in the body, he immediately subjoined, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" He had already said, "He who hath seen me hath seen the Father also." But Philip's eye was not yet sound enough to see the Father, nor, consequently, to see the Son, who is Himself coequal with the Father. And so Jesus Christ took in hand to cure, and with the medicine and salve of faith to strengthen the eyes of his mind, which as yet were weak and unable to behold so great a light, and He said, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" Let not him, then, who can not yet see what the Lord will one day show him, seek first to see what he is to believe; but let him first believe that the eye by which he is to see may be healed. For it was only the form of the servant which was exhibited to the eyes of servants; because if "He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God" could have been now seen as equal with God by those whom He wished to be healed, He would not have needed to empty Himself and to take the form of a servant. But because there was no way whereby God could be seen, but whereby man could be seen there was; therefore, He who was God was made man, that that which was seen might heal that whereby He was not seen. For He saith Himself in another place, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Philip might, of course, have answered and said, Lord, do I see Thee? Is the Father such as I see Thee to be? Forasmuch as Thou hast said, "He who hath seen Me hath seen the Father also?" But before Philip answered thus, or perhaps before he so much as thought it, when the Lord had said, "He who hath seen Me hath seen the Father also," He immediately added, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" For with that eye he could not yet see either the Father, or the Son who is equal with the Father; but that his eye might be healed for seeing, he was anointed unto believing. So, then, before thou seest what thou canst not now see, believe what as yet thou seest not. "Walk by faith," that thou mayest attain to sight. Sight will not gladden him in his home whom faith consoleth not by the way. For, so says the apostle, "As long as we are in the body we are absent from the Lord." And he subjoins immediately why we are still "absent or in pilgrimage," tho we have now believed; "For we walk by faith," he says; "not by sight."

V. Our whole business, then, brethren, in this life is to heal this eye of the heart whereby God may be seen. To this end are celebrated the Holy Mysteries; to this end is preached the Word of God; to this end are the moral exhortations of the Church, those, that is, that relate to the corrections of manners, to the amendment of carnal lusts, to the renouncing the world, not in word only, but in a change of life: to this end is directed the whole aim of the Divine and Holy Scriptures, that that inner man may be purged of that which hinders us from the sight of God. For as the eye which is formed to see this temporal light, a light tho heavenly yet corporeal, and manifest, not to men only, but even to the meanest animals (for this the eye is formed to this light); if anything be thrown or falls into it, whereby it is disordered, is shut out from this light; and tho it encompasses the eye with its presence, yet the eye turns itself away from, and is absent from it; and tho its disordered condition is not only rendered absent from the light which is present, but the light to see which it was formed is even painful to it, so the eye of the heart too, when it is disordered and wounded, turns away from the light of righteousness, and dares not and can not contemplate it.

VI. And what is it that disorders the eye of the heart? Evil desire, covetousness, injustice, worldly concupiscence; these disorder, close, blind the eye of the heart. And yet, when the eye of the body is out of order, how is the physician sought out, what an absence of all delay to open and cleanse it, that they may be healed whereby this outward light is seen! There is running to and fro, no one is still, no one loiters, if even the smallest straw fall into the eye. And God, it must be allowed, made the sun which we desire to see with sound eyes. Much brighter, assuredly, is He who made it; nor is the light with which the eye of the mind is concerned of this kind at all. That light is eternal wisdom. God made thee, O man, after His own image. Would He give thee wherewithal to see the sun which He made, and not give thee wherewithal to see Him who made thee, when He made thee after His own image? He hath given thee this also; both hath He given thee. But much thou dost love these outward eyes, and despisest much that interior eye; it thou dost carry about bruised and wounded. Yea, it would be a punishment to, if thy Maker should wish to manifest Himself unto thee, it would be a punishment to thine eye, before that it is cured and healed. For so Adam in Paradise sinned, and hid himself from the face of God. As long, then, as he had the sound heart of a pure conscience, he rejoiced at the presence of God; when that eye was wounded by sin, he began to dread the divine light, he fled back into the darkness, and the thick covert of trees, flying from the truth, and anxious for the shade.

VII. Therefore, my brethren, since we too are born of him, and as the apostle says, "In Adam all die"; for we were all at first two persons; if we were loath to obey the physician, that we might not be sick; let us obey Him now, that we may be delivered from sickness. The Physician gave us precepts, when we were whole; He gave us precepts that we might not need a physician. "They that are whole," He saith, "need not a physician, but they that are sick." When whole, we despised these precepts, and by experience have felt how to our own destruction we despised His precepts. Now we are sick, we are in distress, we are on the bed of weakness; yet let us not despair. For because we could not come to the Physician, He hath vouchsafed to come Himself to us. Tho despised by man when he was whole, He did not despise him when he was stricken. He did not leave off to give other precepts to the weak, who would not keep the first precepts, that he might not be weak; as tho He would say, "Assuredly thou hast by experience felt that I spoke the truth when I said, Touch not this. Be healed then now, at length, and recover the life thou hast lost. Lo, I am bearing thine infirmity; drink then the bitter cup. For thou hast of thine own self made those my so sweet precepts, which were given to thee when whole, so toilsome. They were despised, and so thy distress began; cured thou canst not be, except thou drink the bitter cup, the cup of temptations, wherein this life abounds, the cup of tribulation, anguish, and suffering. Drink then," He says, "drink, that thou mayest live." And that the sick man may not make answer, "I can not, I can not bear it, I will not drink"; the Physician, all whole tho He be, drinketh first, that the sick man may not hesitate to drink. For what bitterness is there in this cup which He hath not drunk? If it be contumely, He heard it first when He drove out the devils. "He hath a devil, and by Beelzebub He casteth out devils." Whereupon, in order to comfort the sick, He saith, "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household?" If pains are this bitter cup, He was bound, and scourged, and crucified. If death be this bitter cup, He died also. If infirmity shrink with horror from any particular kind of death, none was at that time more ignominious than the death of the cross. For it was not in vain, that the apostle, when setting forth His obedience, added, "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

VIII. But because He designed to honor His faithful ones at the end of the world, He hath first honored the cross in this world; in such wise that the princes of the earth who believe in Him have prohibited any criminal from being crucified; and that cross which the Jewish persecutors with great mockery prepared for the Lord, even kings, His servants, at this day, bear with great confidence on their foreheads. Only the shameful nature of the death which our Lord vouchsafed to undergo for us is not now so apparent, Who, as the apostle says, "Was made a curse for us." And when, as He hung, the blindness of the Jews mocked Him, surely He could have come down from the cross, who, if He had not so willed, had not been on the cross; but it was a greater thing to rise from the grave than to come down from the cross. Our Lord, then, in doing these divine and in suffering these human things, instructs us by His bodily miracles and bodily patience, that we may believe and be made whole to behold those things invisible which the eye of the body hath no knowledge of. With this intent, then, He cured those blind men of whom the account has just now been read in the Gospel. And consider what instruction He has by this cure conveyed to the man who is sick within.

IX. Consider the issue of the thing, and the order of the circumstances. Those two blind men sitting by the wayside cried out, as the Lord passed by, that He would have mercy upon them. But they were restrained from crying out by the multitude which was with the Lord. Now do not suppose that this circumstance is left without a mysterious meaning. But they overcame the crowd who kept them back by the great perseverance of their cry, that their voice might reach the Lord's ears; as tho he had not already anticipated their thoughts. So then the two blind men cried out that they might be heard by the Lord, and could not be restrained by the multitude. The Lord "was passing by," and they cried out. The Lord "stood still," and they were healed. "For the Lord Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What wilt ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto Him, That our eyes may be opened." The Lord did according to their faith, He recovered their eyes. If we have now understood by the sick, the deaf, the dead, the sick, and deaf, and dead within; let us look out in this place also for the blind within. The eyes of the heart are closed; Jesus passeth by that we may cry out. What is meant by "Jesus passeth by?" Jesus is doing things which last but for a time. What is meant by "Jesus passeth by?" Jesus doth things which pass by. Mark and see how many things of His have passed by. He was born of the Virgin Mary; is He being born always? As an infant He was suckled; is He suckled always? He ran through the successive ages of life until man's full estate; doth He grow in body always? Boyhood succeeded to infancy, to boyhood youth, to youth man's full stature in several passing successions. Even the very miracles which He did are passed by; they are read and believed. For because these miracles are written that so they might be read, they passed by when they were being done. In a word, not to dwell long on this, He was crucified; is He hanging on the cross always? He was buried, He rose again, He ascended into heaven, now He dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him. And His divinity abideth ever, yea, the immortality of His body now shall never fail. But nevertheless all those things which were wrought by Him in time have passed by; and they are written to be read, and they are preached to be believed. In all these things, then, Jesus passeth by.

X. And what are the two blind men by the wayside but the two people to cure whom Jesus came? Let us show these two people in the Holy Scriptures. It is written in the Gospel, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also must I bring, that there may be one fold and one Shepherd." Who then are the two people? One the people of the Jews, and the other of the Gentiles. "I am not sent," He saith, "but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." To whom did He say this? To the disciples; when that woman of Canaan, who confest herself to be a dog, cried out that she might be found worthy of the crumbs from the Master's table. And because she was found worthy, now were the two people to whom He had come made manifest, the Jewish people, to wit, of whom He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; and the people of the Gentiles, whose type this woman exhibited, whom He had first rejected, saying, "It is not meet to cast the children's bread to the dogs"; and to whom, when she said, "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table," He answered, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." For of this people also was that centurion of whom the same Lord saith, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel," because he had said, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." So then the Lord even before His passion and glorification pointed out two people, the one to whom He had come because of the promises to the Fathers, and the other whom for His mercy's sake He did not reject; that it might be fulfilled which had been promised to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations be blessed."

XI. Attend, now, dearly beloved. The Lord was passing by, and the blind men cried out. What is this "passing by?" As we have already said, He was doing works which passed by. Now upon these passing works is our faith built up. For we believe on the Son of God, not only in that He is the Word of God, by whom all things were made; for if He had always continued in the form of God, equal with God, and had not emptied Himself in taking the form of a servant, the blind men would not even have perceived Him, that they might be able to cry out. But when he wrought passing works, that is, when He humbled Himself, having become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, the two blind men cried out, Have mercy on us, thou Son of David. For this very thing that He, David's Lord and Creator, willed also to be David's son, He wrought in time, He wrought passing by.

XII. Now what is it, brethren, to cry out unto Christ, but to correspond to the grace of Christ by good works? This I say, brethren, lest haply we cry aloud with our voices, and in our lives be dumb. Who is he that crieth out to Christ, that his inward blindness may be driven away by Christ as He is passing by, that is, as He is dispensing to us those temporal sacraments, whereby we are instructed to receive the things which are eternal? Who is he that crieth out unto Christ? Whoso despiseth the world, crieth out unto Christ. Whoso despiseth the pleasures of the world, crieth out unto Christ. Whoso saith, not with his tongue but with his life, the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world, crieth out unto Christ. Whoso disperseth abroad and giveth to the poor, that his righteousness may endure forever, crieth out unto Christ. For let him that hears, and is not deaf to the sound, sell that ye have, and give to the poor; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not; let him as he hears the sound as it were of Christ's footsteps passing by cry out in response to this in his blindness; that is, let him do these things. Let his voice be in his actions. Let him begin to despise the world, to distribute to the poor his goods, to esteem as nothing worth what other men love, let him disregard injuries, not seek to be avenged, let him give his cheek to the smiter, let him pray for his enemies; if any one who have taken away his goods, let him not ask for them again; if he have taken anything from any man, let him restore fourfold.

XIII. When he shall begin to do all this, all his kinsmen, relations, and friends will be in commotion. They who love the world will oppose him. What madness this! You are too extreme! What! Are not other men Christians? This is folly, this is madness. And other such like things do the multitude; cry out to prevent the blind from crying out. The multitude rebuked them as they cried out; but did not overcome their cries. Let them who wish to be healed understand what they have to do. Jesus is now also passing by; let them who are by the wayside cry out. These are they, who know God with their lips, but their heart is far from Him. These are by the wayside, to whom, as blinded in heart, Jesus gave His precepts. For when those passing things which Jesus did are recounted, Jesus is always represented to us as passing by. For even unto the end of the world there will not be wanting blind men sitting by the wayside. Need then there is that they who sit by the wayside should cry out. The multitude that was with the Lord would repress the crying of those who were seeking for recovery. Brethren, do you see my meaning? For I know not how to speak, but still less do I know how to be silent. I will speak then, and speak plainly. For I fear Jesus passing by and Jesus standing still; and therefore I can not keep silence. Evil and unknown Christians hinder good Christians who are truly earnest and wish to do the commandments of God, which are written in the Gospel. This multitude which is with the Lord hinders those who are crying out, hinders those, that is, who are doing well, that they may not by perseverance be healed. But let them cry out, and not faint; let them not be led away as if by the authority of numbers; let them not imitate those who become Christians before them, who live evil lives themselves, and are jealous of the good deeds of others. Let them not say, "Let us live as these so many live." Why not rather as the Gospel ordains? Why dost thou wish to live according to the remonstrances of the multitude who would hinder them, and not after the steps of the Lord who passeth by? They will mock, and abuse, and call thee back; do thou cry out till thou reach the ears of Jesus. For they who shall persevere in doing such things as Christ hath enjoined, and regard not the multitude that hinder them, nor think much of their appearing to follow Christ, that is of their being called Christians; but who love the light which Christ is about to restore to them more than they fear the uproar of those who are hindering them; they shall on no account be separated from Him, and Jesus will stand still, and make them whole.

XIV. For how are our eyes made whole? That as by faith we perceive Christ passing by in the temporal economy, so we may attain to the knowledge of Him as standing still in His unchangeable eternity. For there is the eye made whole when the knowledge of Christ's divinity is attained. Let your love apprehend this; attend ye to the great mystery which I am to speak of. All the things which were done by our Lord Jesus Christ, in time, graft faith in us. We believe on the Son of God, not on the word only, by whom all things were made; but on this very word, "made flesh that He might dwell among us"; who was born of the Virgin Mary; and the rest which the Faith contains, and which are represented to us that Christ might pass by, and that the blind, hearing His footsteps as He passeth by, might by their works cry out, by their life exemplifying the profession of their faith. But now in order that they who cry out may be made whole, Jesus standeth still. For he saw Jesus now standing still, who says, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." For he saw Christ's divinity as far as in this life is possible. There is then in Christ the divinity, and the humanity. The divinity standeth still, the humanity passeth by. What means "the divinity standeth still?" It changeth not, is not shaken, doth not depart away. For He did not so come to us as to depart from the Father; nor did He so ascend as to change His place. When He assumed flesh, it changed place; but God assuming flesh, seeing He is not in place, doth not change His place. Let us then be touched by Christ standing still, and so our eyes be made whole. But whose eyes? The eyes of those who cry out when He is passing by; that is, who do good works through that faith which hath been dispersed in time, to instruct in our infancy.

XV. Now what thing more precious can we have than the eye made whole? They rejoice who see this created light which shines from heaven, or even that which is given out from a lamp. And how wretched do they seem who can not see this light? But wherefore do I speak, and talk of all these things, but to exhort you all to cry out, when Jesus passeth by. I hold up this light which perhaps ye do not see as an object of love to you, holy brethren. Believe, while as yet ye see it not; and cry out that ye may see. How great is thought to be the unhappiness of men who do not see this bodily light? Does any one become blind; immediately it is said: "God is angry with him, he has committed some wicked deed." So said Tobias's wife to her husband. He cried out because of the kid, lest it had come of theft; he did not like to hear the sound of any stolen thing in his house; and she, maintaining what she had done, reproached her husband; and when he said, "Restore it if it be stolen"; she answered insultingly, "Where are thy righteous deeds?" How great was her blindness who maintaineth the theft; and how clear a light he saw, who commanded the stolen thing to be restored! She rejoiced outwardly in the light of the sun; he inwardly in the light of righteousness. Which of them was in the better light?

XVI. It is to the love of this light that I would exhort you, beloved; that ye would cry out by your works, when the Lord passeth by; let the voice of faith sound out, that Jesus was standing still, that is, the unchangeable, abiding wisdom of God, and the majesty of the Word of God, by which all things were made, may open your eyes. The same Tobias, in giving advice to his son, instructed him to this, to cry out; that is, he instructed him to good works. He told him to give to the poor, charged him to give alms to the needy, and taught him, saying, "My son, alms suffereth not to come into darkness." The blind gave counsel for receiving and gaining sight. "Alms," saith he, "suffereth not to come into darkness." Had his son in astonishment answered him, "What then, father, hast thou not given alms, that thou speakest to me in blindness; art not thou in darkness, and yet thou dost say to me, Alms suffereth not to come into darkness?" But no, he knew well what the light was concerning which he gave his son instruction, he knew well what he saw in the inner man. The son held out his hand to his father, to enable him to dwell in heaven.

XVII. To be brief; that I may conclude this sermon, brethren, with a matter which touches me very nearly, and gives me much pain, see what crowds there are which rebuke the blind as they cry out. But let them not deter you. Whosoever among this crowd desire to be healed; for there are many Christians in name, and in works ungodly; let them not deter you from good works. Cry out amid the crowds that are restraining you, and calling you back, and insulting you, whose lives are evil. For not only by their voices, but by evil works, do wicked Christians repress the good. A good Christian has no wish to attend the public shows. In this very thing, that he bridles his desire of going to the theater, he cries out after Christ, cries out to be healed. Others run together thither, but perhaps they are heathens or Jews? Ah! indeed, if Christians went not to the theaters, there would be so few people there that they would go away for very shame. So then Christians run thither also, bearing the Holy Name only to their condemnation. Cry out then by abstaining from going, by repressing in thy heart this worldly concupiscence; hold on with a strong and persevering cry unto the ears of the Savior, that Jesus may stand still and heal thee. Cry out amid the very crowds, despair not of reaching the ears of the Lord. For the blind man in the Gospel did not cry out in that quarter where no crowd was, that so they might be heard in that direction, where there was no impediment from persons hindering them. Amid the very crowds they cried out; and yet the Lord heard them. And so also do ye even amid sinners, and sensual men, amid the lovers of the vanities of the world, there cry out that the Lord may heal you. Go not to another quarter to cry out unto the Lord, go not to heretics and cry out unto Him there. Consider, brethren, how in that crowd which was hindering them from crying out, even there they who cried out were made whole.

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CHRIST'S REAL BODY NOT IN THE EUCHARIST

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Wyclif, eminent as scholar, preacher, and translator, was born in 1324 in Spresswel, near Richmond, Yorkshire, England. Known as the "Morning Star of the Reformation" he was a vigorous and argumentative speaker, exemplifying his own definition of preaching as something which should be "apt, apparent, full of true feeling, fearless in rebuking sins, and so addrest to the heart as to enlighten the spirit and subdue the will." On these lines he organized a band of Bible preachers who worked largely among the common people.

Much of Wyclif's popularity was due to his clear and simple style. While not a great orator, he introduced a popular method of preaching that was widely copied. He died at Lutterworth in 1384. The Church considered him a heretic, for he taught the right of the individual to form his own opinions after personal study of the Scriptures. He was the first Englishman to translate the Bible systematically into his native Anglo-Saxon. In 1428, by order of Pope Martin V, his bones were exhumed and burned, and the ashes thrown into the river Swale.

WYCLIF 1324-1384

CHRIST'S REAL BODY NOT IN THE EUCHARIST

*This is my body*.—Mat 26:26.

Now understand ye the words of our Savior Christ, as He spake them one after another—as Christ spake them. For He took bread and blest, and yet what blest He? The Scripture saith not that Christ took the bread and blest it, or that He blest the bread which He had taken. Therefore it seemeth more that He blest His disciples and apostles, whom He had ordained witnesses of His passion; and in them He left His blest word, which is the bread of life, as it is written, "Not only in bread liveth man, but in every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Also Christ saith, "I am the bread of life that came down from heaven." And Christ saith also in John, "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." Therefore it seemeth more that He blest His disciples, and also His apostles, in whom the bread of life was left more than in material bread, for the material bread hath an end. As it is written in the Gospel of Matthew xv. that Christ said, "All things that a man eateth go down into the belly, and are sent down into the draught;" but the blessing of Christ kept His disciples and apostles, both bodily and [ghostly] spiritual. As it is written, that none of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, and often the Scripture saith that Jesus took bread and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take ye, eat ye, this is my body that shall be given for you." But He said not this bread is my body, or that bread should be given for the life of the world. For Christ saith, What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before? "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." Also Christ saith in the Gospel, "Verily, verily I say unto you except the wheat corn fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit"

Here men may see by the words of Christ that it behooved that He died in the flesh, and that in His death was made the fruit of everlasting life for all them that believe on Him, as it is written "For as by Adam they all die, even so by Christ shall all live, and every man in his own order; for as one clearness is in the sun, another in the moon, and a star in clearness is nothing in comparison to the sun; even so is the rising again of the dead for we are sown in corruption and shall rise again incorruptible, we are sown in infirmity, and shall rise again in strength; we are sown in natural bodies, and shall rise again spiritual bodies." Then if Christ shall change thus our deadly bodies by death, and God the Father spared not his own Son, as it is written, but that death should reign in him as in us, and that he should be translated into a spiritual body, as the first rising again of dead men; then how say the hypocrites that take on them to make our Lord's body? Make they the glorified body? Either make they again the spiritual body which is risen from death to life or make they the fleshy body as it was before he suffered death? And if they say also that they make the spiritual body of Christ, it may not be so, for what Christ said and did, He did as He was at supper before He suffered His passion; as it is written that the spiritual body of Christ rose again from death to life. Also that He ascended up to heaven, and that He will abide there till He come to judge the quick and the dead. And if they say that they make Christ's body as it was before He had suffered His passion, then must they needs grant that Christ is to die yet. For by all Holy Scriptures He was promised to die, and that He should give lordship of everlasting life.

Furthermore, if they say that Christ made His body of bread, I ask, With what words made He it? Not with these words, *Hoc est corpus meum*; that is to say in English, "This is my body," for they are the words of giving, and not of making, which He said after that He brake the bread; then parting it among His disciples and apostles. Therefore if Christ had made of that bread His body, [He] had made it in His blessing, or else in giving of thanks, and not in the words of giving; for if Christ had spoken of the material bread that He had in His hands when He said, *Hoc est corpus meum*, "This is my body," it was made before, or else the word had been a lie. For if I say, This is my hand, and if it be not a hand, then am I a liar; therefore seek carefully if ye can find two words of blessing, or of giving of thanks, wherewith Christ made his body and blood of the bread and wine. And that all the clerks of the earth know not, for if ye might find or know those words, then should ye wax great masters above Christ, and then ye might be givers of His substance, and as fathers and makers of Him, and that He should worship you, as it is written, Thou shalt worship thy father and mother. Of such as desire such worship against God's law, speaketh St. Paul of the man of sin, that enhanceth himself as if he were God. And he is worshiped over all things as God, and showeth himself as he were God. Where our clergy are guilty in this, judge ye or they that know most, for they say that when ye have said, *Hoc est corpus meum*, that is to say, "This is my body;" which ye call the words of consecration, or else of making; and when they are said over the bread, ye say that there is left no bread, but it is the body of the Lord. So that in the bread there remaineth nothing but a heap of accidents, as witness ruggedness, roundness, savor, touching, and tasting, and such other accidents. Then, if thou sayest that the flesh and blood of Christ, that is to say, his manhood, is made more, or increased by so much as the ministration of bread and wine is, the which ye minister—if ye say it is so—then thou must needs consent that the thing which is not God today shall be God tomorrow; yea, and that the thing which is without spirit of life, but groweth in the field by kind, shall be God at another time. And we all ought to believe that He was without beginning, and without ending; and not made, for if the manhood of Christ were increased every day by so much as the bread and wine draweth to that ye minister, He should increase more in one day by cart-loads than He did in thirty-two years when He was here in earth.

And if thou makest the body of the Lord in those words, *Hoc est corpus meum*; that is to say, "This is my body"; and if thou mayest make the body of the Lord in those words, "This is my body," thou thyself must be the person of Christ, or else there is a false God; for if it be thy body as thou sayest, then it is the body of a false knave or of a drunken man, or of a thief, or of a lecherer, or full of other sins, and then there is an unclean body for any man to worship for God! For even if Christ had made there His body of material bread in the said words, as I know they are not the words of making, what earthly man had power to do as He did? For in all Holy Scripture, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Apocalypse, there are no words written of the making of Christ's body; but there are written that Christ was the Son of the Father, and that He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and that he took flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary, and that He was dead, and that He rose again from death on the third day, and that He ascended to heaven very God and man, and that we should believe in all Scriptures that are written of Him, and that He is to come to judge the quick and the dead, and that the same Christ Jesus, King and Savior, was at the beginning with the Father and the Holy Ghost, making all things of naught, both heaven and earth, and all things that are therein; working by word of His virtue, for He said, Be it done, and it was done, whose works never earthly man might comprehend, either make. And yet the words of the making of these things are written in the beginning of Genesis, even as God spake them; and if ye can not make the work that He made, and have the word by which He made it, how shall ye make Him that made the works? You have no words of authority or power left you on earth by which ye should do this, but ye have feigned this craft of your false errors, which some of you understand not; for it is prophesied, "They shall have eyes and see not, and ears and hear not; and shall see prophesies, and shall not understand, less they be converted; for I hide them from the hearts of those people; their hearts are greatly fatted." And this thing is done to you for the wickedness of your errors in unbelief; therefore be ye converted from the worst sin, as it is written, "When Moses was in the hill with God," the people made a calf and worshiped it as God. And God spake to Moses, "Go, for the people have done the worst sin to make and worship alien gods."

But now I shall ask you a word; answer ye me, Whether is the body of the Lord made at once or at twice? Is it both the flesh and the blood in the host of the bread; or else is the flesh made at one time, and the blood made at another time; that is to say, the wine in the chalice? If thou wilt say it is full and wholly the manhood of Christ in the host of bread, both flesh and blood, skin, hair, and bones, then makest thou us to worship a false god in the chalice, which is unconjured when ye worship the bread; and if ye say the flesh is in the bread, and the blood in the wine, then thou must grant, if thy craft be true, as it is not indeed, that the manhood of Christ is parted, and that He is made at two times. For first thou takest the host of bread, or a piece of bread, and makest it as ye say, and the innocent people worship it. And then thou takest to thee the chalice, and likewise marrest, makest, I would have said, the blood in it, and then they worship it also, and if it be so as I am sure that the flesh and blood of Christ ascended, then are ye false harlots to God and to us; for when we shall be houselled ye bring to us the dry flesh, and let the blood be away; for ye give us after the bread, wine and water, and sometimes clean water unblest, or rather conjured, by the virtue of your craft; and yet ye say, under the host of bread is the full manhood of Christ. Then by your own confession must it needs be that we worship a false god in the chalice, which is unconjured when we worship the bread, and worship the one as the other; but where find ye that ever Christ or any of His disciples taught any man to worship this bread or wine?

Therefore, what shall we say of the apostles that were so much with Christ, and were called by the Holy Ghost; had they forgotten to set it in the creed when they made it, which is Christian men's belief? Or else we might say that they knew no such God, for they believe in no more gods but in Him that was at the beginning, and made of naught all things visible and invisible, which Lord took flesh and blood, being in the Virgin, the same God. But ye have many false ways, to beguile the innocent people with sleights of the fiend.

For ye say that in every host each piece is the whole manhood of Christ, or full substance of Him. For ye say as a man may take a glass, and break the glass into many pieces, and in every piece properly thou mayest see thy face, and yet thy face is not parted; so ye say the Lord's body is in each host or piece, and His body is not parted. And this is a full subtle question to beguile an innocent fool, but will ye take heed of this subtle question, how a man may take a glass and behold the very likeness of his own face, and yet it is not his face, but the likeness of his face; for if it were his very face, then he must needs have two faces, one on his body and another in the glass. And if the glass were broken in many places, so there should be many faces more by the glass than by the body, and each man shall make as many faces to them as they would; but as ye may see the mind or likeness of your face, which is not the very face; but the figure thereof, so the bread is the figure or mind of Christ's body in earth, and therefore Christ said, As oft as ye do this thing do it in mind of me.

Also ye say this, As a man may light many candles at one candle, and yet the light of that candle is never the more nor ever the less; so ye say that the manhood of Christ descendeth into each part of every host, and the manhood of Christ is never the more nor less. Where then becometh your ministrations? For if a man light many candles at one candle, as long as they burn there will be many candles lighted, and as well the last candle as the first; and so by this reason, if ye shall fetch your word at God, and make God, there must needs be many gods, and that is forbidden in the first commandment, Exod. xx. And as for making more, either making less, of Christ's manhood, it lieth not in your power to come there nigh, neither to touch it, for it is ascended into heaven in a spiritual body, which He suffered not Mary Magdalen to touch, when her sins were forgiven to her.

Therefore all the sacraments that are left here in earth are but minds of the body of Christ, for a sacrament is no more to say but a sign or mind of a thing passed, or a thing to come; for when Jesus spake of the bread, and said to His disciples, As ye do this thing, do it in mind of me, it was set for a mind of good things passed of Christ's body; but when the angel showed to John the sacraments of the woman and of the beast that bare her, it was set for a mind of evil things to come on the face of the earth, and great destroying of the people of God. And in the old law there were many figures or minds of things to come. For before Christ, circumcision was commanded by a law; and he that kept not the law was slain. And yet St. Paul saith, "And neither is it circumcision that is openly in the flesh, but he that is circumcised of heart in spirit, not the letter whose praising is not of men, but of God." Peter saith in the third chapter of his epistle, "And so baptism of like form maketh not us safe, but the putting away of the filthiness of the flesh, and the having of good conscience in God by the rising again of our Lord Jesus Christ from death, that we should be made heirs of everlasting life, He went up into heaven, and angels, and powers, and virtues, are made subjects to Him."

And also the Scripture saith of John Baptist, that he preached in the wilderness and said, "A stronger than I shall come after me, and I am not worthy to kneel down and unlace His shoe;" and yet Christ said that he was more than a prophet. See also Isaiah xl., Matt. xi. How may ye then say that ye are worthy to make His body, and yet your works bear witness that ye are less than the prophets? for if ye were not, ye should not teach the people to worship the sacraments or minds of Christ for Christ himself; which sacraments or figures are lawful as God taught them and left them unto us, as the sacrifices or minds of the old law were full good. As it is written, "They that kept them should live in them." And so the bread that Christ brake was left to us for mind of things passed for the body of Christ, that we should believe He was a very man in kind as we are, but as God in power, and that His manhood was sustained by food as ours. For St. Paul saith He was very man, and in form he was found as man. And so we must believe that He was very God and very man together, and that He ascended up very God and very man to heaven, and that He shall be there till He come to doom the world. And we may not see him bodily, being in this life, as it is written, Peter i., for he saith, "Whom ye have not seen ye love, into whom ye now not seeing believe." And John saith in the first chapter of his Gospel, "No man saw God; none but the only begotten Son that is in the bosom of the Father, He hath told it out." And John saith in his first epistle, the third chapter, "Every man that sinneth seeth not him, neither knoweth him." By what reason then say ye that are sinners that ye make God? truly this must needs be the worst sin, to say that ye make God, and it is the abomination of discomfort that is said in Daniel the prophet to be standing in the holy place; he that readeth let him understand.

Also Luke saith that Christ took the cup after that He had supped, and gave thanks and said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood that shall be shed unto the remission of sins for man." Now, what say ye; the cup which He said was the new testament in His blood, was it a material cup in which the wine was that He gave his disciples wine of, or was it His most blest body in which the blest blood was kept till it was shed out for the sins of them that should be made safe by His passion? Needs must we say that He spake of His holy body, as He did when He called His passion or suffering in body a cup, when He prayed to His father, before He went to His passion, and said, "If it be possible that this cup pass from me, but if thou wilt that I drink it, thy will be done?" He spake not here of the material cup in which He had given His disciples drink; for it troubled not Him, but He prayed for His great sufferance and bitter death, the which He suffered for our sins and not for His own. And if He spake of His holy body and passion when He said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood," so He spake of His holy body when He said, "This is my body which shall be given for you," and not of the material bread which He had in His hand. Also in another place He called His passion a cup, where the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him, and asked of Him that her two sons, when He came to His kingdom, might sit one on His right, and one at His left side. And He answered and said, "Woman, thou wottest not what thou asketh; then He said to them, May ye drink of the cup that I shall drink? and they said, Yea, Lord. And He said, Ye shall drink of my cup, but to sit on my right hand or left hand it is not mine to give, but to the Father it is proper." But in that He said, Ye shall drink of my cup, He promised them to suffer tribulation of this world as He did, by the which they should enter into life everlasting, and to be both on his right hand. And thus ye may see that Christ spake not of the material cup, neither of himself, nor of his apostles, neither of material bread, neither of material wine. Therefore let every man wisely, with meek prayers, and great study, and also charity, read the words of God and holy Scriptures; but many of you are like the mother of Zebedee's sons to whom Christ said, "Thou knowest not what thou askest." So, many of you know not what ye ask, nor what you do; for if ye did, ye would not blaspheme God as ye do, to set an alien God instead of the living God. Also Christ saith, "I am a very vine; wherefore then worship ye not the vine God, as ye do the bread? Wherein was Christ a very vine, or wherein was the bread Christ's body, in figurative speech, which is hidden to the understanding? Then if Christ became not a material or an earthly vine, neither did a material vine become His body. So neither the bread, material bread, was changed from its substance to the flesh and blood of Christ."

Have ye not read in John the second, when Christ came into the temple, they asked of Him what token He would show, that they might believe Him. And He answered them, "Cast down this temple, and in three days I shall raise it again;" which words were fulfilled in His rising again from death; but when He said, "Undo this temple," in that that He said this, they were in error, for they understood it fleshly, and had supposed that He had spoken of the temple of Jerusalem, because He stood in it. And therefore they accused Him at His passion full falsely. For He spake of the temple of His blest body, which rose again in the third day. And right so Christ spake of His holy body when He said, "This is my body which shall be given for you," which was given to death, and to rising again to bliss, for all that shall be saved by him. But like as they accused him falsely of the temple of Jerusalem, so now a days they accuse falsely against Christ, and say that Christ spake of the bread that He brake among His apostles; for in that Christ said this, they are deceived, take it fleshly, and turn it to the material bread, as the Jews did to the temple; and on this false understanding they make abomination of discomfort, as is said by Daniel the prophet, and in Matthew xxiv., to be standing in the holy place; he that readeth let him understand.

Now, therefore, pray we heartily to God, that this evil may be made short for the chosen men, as He hath promised in His blest Gospel; and the large and broad way that leadeth to perdition may be stopt, and the straight and narrow way that leadeth to bliss may be made open by Holy Scriptures, that we may know which is the will of God, to serve Him in truth and holiness in the dread of God, that we may find by Him a way of bliss everlasting. So be it.

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05 SAVONAROLA

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Girolamo Savonarola was born at Ferrara in 1452, and was admitted in 1475 into the novitiate of the Dominican Order, where he soon made himself conspicuous for eloquence, and in Florence attracted many hearers by his diatribes against corruption. Florence, having lost its independence as a republic, was completely under the sway of the Medici, who became arrayed against Savonarola, who aimed at establishing an ideal Christian commonwealth. When he attacked the Pope Alexander VI. his doom was practically sealed. In 1495 he was forbidden to appear in the pulpit, and four years later was excommunicated. He rebelled against papal authority, but the people of Florence grew tired of the strict rule of conduct imposed by his teaching, and he was imprisoned and tried for heresy and sedition. On May 23, 1498, he was hanged and his body burned. His puritanism, his bold rebuking of vice, his defiance of every authority excepting that of his own conscience, seem to anticipate the efforts made by Calvin to regenerate Geneva. Both men failed in their splendid attempts at social reformation, but both left an example of heroic altho somewhat short-sighted unselfishness, which has borne fruit in history.

SAVONAROLA 1452—1498

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST[1]

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*While he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven*.—Luk 24:51.

Beloved in Christ Jesus, the wise men of this world divide all created things into two classes; one class they name substances, the other accidents. The substances are those things that exist through themselves without requiring anything else on which to rest, as the earth, water, air, the heavens, animals, stones, plants, and similar things. The accidents can not exist by themselves, but only by resting on something else, as color, odor, taste, and other such things. But because our knowledge is entirely through the senses, and we are able to know anything only when its accidents fall upon our senses, we have, therefore, knowledge of the accidents rather than of the substances. The eyes are for colors, the ears for sounds, the nose for scents, the tongue for flavors, the touch for heat and cold, for hard and soft. Each sense has its own sphere of knowledge and brings what it has perceived before the imagination, and this hands it over to the reason within, which reads and illuminates the productions of the imagination, judges them, and in this way comes to a knowledge of the substances. But the reason has little light if it is separated from the body, for God has joined soul and body together; and so by means of the senses knowledge becomes definite and complete. For if the soul out of the body were richer in knowledge, it would be in vain that it should be in the body. God and nature have done nothing in vain, and therefore the soul's union with the body ministers to its perfection.

The soul's knowledge, however, will not be complete so long as it lives in this mortal body. It does not while here come to the fundamental distinctions and causes of the substances, because it is obliged to know the inner side of things through their externals. Therefore man is able only imperfectly to know an incorporeal substance; how much less can he know the uncreated infinite being of God? But if he can not know the being of God, he will not be able to know many other infinite things which are in Him. We ought therefore not to be surprized that there is much in God which we can not understand, and that very many truths of the faith we can not yet prove since we do not yet know everything. The great God in His rich mercy saw our poor knowledge and came into our flesh and assumed it that He might work for us, die, and rise again from the dead; until after a life full of love He raised Himself above the world of sense into His eternity. But so long as our Redeemer lived with His apostles they loved too much that which they saw of Him, because they were bound down to their senses, and were therefore unable to rise to the knowledge of His Spirit. It was necessary that He should disappear in the heavens that He might lift their souls far above the world of sense up to Himself. Their natural powers could not do this; therefore He gave to His elect a light from above. Ascending on high He led captivity captive, for ascending into the heavens He took with Him the prey which the devil had made of the soul of men ever since the fall of our parents. The Lord has given gifts unto men (Eph. iv. 8), inasmuch as He has imparted to them the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. Now they leave everything of this world, and rise above by following Christ, who gives to them for a light the light of faith. Let us speak this morning of this faith which leads to the Savior.

"Awake thou that sleepest and Christ shall give thee light." Be not held captive by flesh and sense, which hold thee fast in sleep; rise to Christ, He will give thee light. See, His flesh is above. What do ye say to that, ye wise men of this world? Everything that has weight tends downward, but His flesh is of thy heart. Thou hast refused the service of the Lord, who has ascended to prepare for thee the highest glory.

I call upon all men and women, all whose lives are ruined in sorrows and troubles. What do ye fear? He who believes that Christ is above no longer fears anything. Come then all ye into His service. Jesus reproved the unbelief and the hard-heartedness of His disciples, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. Without faith it is impossible to please God. No doubt the apostles said: How can we believe these women? But these women were of pure heart before God, and therefore the Savior reproved His disciples. Ye deserve still sharper reprimands. To the disciples a few women announced the news that He had risen. Ye hear all this, and in addition all the glorious revelations in which the Lord after this manifested Himself on earth. Why do ye not come to serve Christ? Ye do not truly believe, because ye are so full of sin, and despise God's commandments. Ye do not deserve the gift of faith. He who has faith should show it in his deeds, that he may have what he says he has, and may know what he has; namely, the certainty of the divine word, which can not err, the goodness of God, and His guidance into all goodness. On account of thy sins, thou hast not the true light which would have enabled thee to see all goodness. Thou art sunk in vice, drunken with greed and luxury, and all the works of this world. Thou seekest only power and glory. And wherefore? If thou hadst faith, thou wouldst not seek such things, for thou wouldst know that faith would give thee a much higher crown. From these sins have come thy unbelief and thy hardness of heart. Therefore the words of faith do not touch thy heart: it is a heart of stone and iron. Throw off thy load of sin and give thy will to righteousness; then will thy hard-heartedness end, and God will bestow on thee the gift of faith. What wilt thou? Why standest thou so uncertain and irresolute? Why dost thou not hasten to Him, and see how He leaves thy life, how He goes into the heavens, to which He bids thee come up. Leave at length thy sensual life and enter the pathway of Christ. Hesitate no longer, begin to-day, put it not off until to-morrow. If thou hast faith, thou canst not delay longer, and if thy heart is right before God, He will give thee the light of faith which will enable thee to distinguish the false from the true faith, and so when on the right road not to fall into error. Then wilt thou know for thyself that the Gospel makes good men out of those who truly believe, and thine experience will tell thee that thou hast no occasion to doubt.

A story from the Old Testament might perhaps serve as a parable and make clearer what I mean. When Balak heard of Israel's march, he was afraid and sent to call Balaam to curse Israel for him. Balaam set out on his way with his ass, accompanied by an angel of the Lord, because Balaam was going to Balak with an evil intention. The beast sought in vain to turn into the field, and finally fell down between two walls, and suffered under blows and curses, until the prophet saw the angel and perceived his sin. Balak is the devil who would ruin the people of God; by Balaam we can understand the nobles, the prelates, the preachers, the learned, who are held captive by their arrogance. The two servants are those who follow the proud, serve them, and flatter them, especially the lazy clergy and monks, who so far as outward show goes live a virtuous life, but who live for ceremonies and take care not to speak the truth. To these belong many citizens who live apparently virtuously and hide their pride. Because they commit no sins of the flesh which can be noticed, they are full of piety in their outward ceremonies, but within full of arrogance. These are the members of the devil, for the devil neither eats, drinks, nor sleeps, he is neither a miser nor a wanton, but is within full of pride as are these. By the ass we are to understand the simple people. They are led in the way of sin by the ceremonies of the lazy, since they are not thought fit for the worship of the heart, and must be led by masses, penance, and indulgences, and they throw away what might be of profit for money and for candles. The lazy give them council in their sermons: Give some vestment, build a chapel, and thou wilt be freed from any danger of going to hell. Do not believe these mountebanks; no outward act can bring you to Paradise, not even miracles and prophecy, but only the grace of God, if you have humility and love…. Before the ass stood an angel with a sword. This is Christ, who speaks to the ass: Walk no longer in the path of sin, for I have ready for you a great scourge. The ass alone saw the angel; for the simple first hear the word of the Lord, but Balaam and such as are with him will hear nothing of it. The ass left the path of captivity and went out into the field, into the way of the Lord. "For the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hid in a field; which when a man found he sold all that he had and bought that field." So the simple go into the holy field of the Scriptures and say: "Let me look around a little, for the flowers of this field bear fruit." Yea, our fathers, the prophets, apostles, and martyrs bore fruit, they who died with joy for the truth. These are they who go into the field and speak the truth in the face of death. Come into the city, where the nobles and the masters taken captive by sin crowd together, cry the lazy troop of monks: O fathers, it would be well if when you spoke of these things, you touched not this string, by which you allow yourselves to fall into disgrace and disfavor. They have said that already to me. Our persecution begins if we begin to preach. But Jesus was willing to die for the truth of what He said; should we forsake the truth in order not to displease men? No, we will say it in every way, and with Balaam's ass go into the field.

Think not that I am such a fool as to undertake these things without good reason. I call heaven and earth to witness against me if I do not speak the truth. For against all the world is my sermon; every one contradicts it. If I go about with lies, then I have Christ against me; therefore I have heaven and earth against me, and how then could I stand? As such a trifler with holy things how should I dare rise up? Believe me, I speak the truth, I have seen it with my eyes, and touched it with my hands. Believe it! If I speak not the truth, I consign myself body and soul to destruction; but I tell you I am certain of the truth, and I would that all were as I am. I say that of the truth on which I stand, not as tho I wished that others had my failings as well. So come then into the service of Jesus; come to the truth, come here, I bid you. Do ye not know how I explained the revelation of St. John? There were many who said that I spoke too much in detail, and went too deep into it. There stood the angel before the ass, and wanted it to go out into the field, but Balaam smote it; and ye know not how much opposition I must yet undergo. The lazy monks were the first who called me a fool and revolutionist, and on the other side stood the weak and the simple, who said in their innocent faith: "Oh, if we could only do what He teaches!" Then I had war with the citizens and the great judges of this time, whom my manner of preaching did not please. I was between two walls; the angel warned me, threatening eternal death from this road, and I received Balaam's blows. Ye know my persecution and my danger; but I knew that I was on the way to victory and said always: No human being can drive my cause from the world. Balaam, thou leanest thy foot against the walls, but do as thou wilt, I will crush thy foot; I leaned on the wall, on Christ, I leaned on His grace, I hoped; leave off thine anger and threatening, thou canst not get me away from the wall. I say to all of you: Come to the truth, forsake your vice and your malice, that I may not have to tell you of your grief. I say it to you, O Italy, I say it to you, O Rome, I say it to all of you; return and do penance. There stands before you the holy truth; she can not fall; she can not bend or give way; wait not until the blows fall.

In everything am I opprest; even the spiritual power is against me with Peter's mighty key. Narrow is my path and full of trouble; like Balaam's ass, I must throw myself on the ground and cry: "See, here I am; I am ready to die for the truth." But when Balaam beat his fallen beast, it said to him: "What have I done to thee?" So I say to you: "Come here and tell me: what have I done to you? Why do you beat me? I have spoken the truth to you; I have warned you to choose a virtuous life; I have led many souls to Christ." But you answer: "Thou hast spoken evil of us, therefore, thou shouldst suffer the stripes thou deservest." But I named no one, I only blamed your vices in general. If you have sinned, be angry with yourselves, not with me. I name none of you, but if the sins I have mentioned are without question yours, then they and not I make you known. As the smitten beast asked Balaam, so I ask you: "Tell me, am I not your ass? and do you not know that I have been obedient to you up to this very moment, that I have even done what my superiors have commanded, and have always behaved myself peaceably?" You know this, and because I am now so entirely different, you may well believe that a great cause drives me to it. Many knew me as I was at first; if I remained so I could have had as much honor as I wanted. I lived six years among you, and now I speak otherwise, nevertheless I announce to you the truth that is well known. You see in what sorrows and what opposition I must now live, and I can say with Jeremiah: "O, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and contention to the whole earth!" But where is a father or a mother that can say I have led their son into sin; one that can say I have ruined her husband or his wife? Everybody knows my manner of life, therefore it is right for you to believe that I speak the truth which everybody knows. You think that it is impossible for a man to do what the faith I have preached tells him to do: with God it would be easy for you.

The ass alone saw the angel, the others did not; so open your eyes. Thank God, many have them open. You have seen many learned men whom you thought wise, and they have withstood our cause: now they believe; many noted masters who were hard and proud against us: now humility casts them down. You have also seen many women turn from their vanity to simplicity; vicious youths who are now improved and conduct themselves in a new way. Many, indeed, have received this doctrine with humility. That doctrine has stood firm, no matter how attacked with the intention of showing that it was a doctrine opposed to Christ. God does that to manifest His wisdom, to show how it finally overcomes all other wisdom. And He is willing that His servants be spoken against that they may show their patience and humility, and for the sake of His love not be afraid of martyrdom.

O ye men and women, I bid you to this truth; let those who are in captivity contradict you as much as they will, God will come and oppose their pride. Ye proud, however, if you do not turn about and become better, then will the sword and the pestilence fall upon you; with famine and war will Italy be turned upside down. I foretell you this because I am sure of it: if I were not, I would not mention it. Open your eyes as Balaam opened his eyes when the angel said to him: "Had it not been for thine ass, I would have slain thee." So I say to you, ye captives: Had it not been for the good and their preaching, it would have been wo unto you. Balaam said: "If this way is not good, I will return." You say likewise, you would turn back to God, if your way is not good. And to the angel you say as Balaam said: "What wilt thou that we should do?" The angel answers thee as he answered Balaam: "Thou shalt not curse this people, but shalt say what I put in thy mouth." But in thy mouth he puts the warning that thou shouldst do good, convince one another of the divine truth, and bear evil manfully. For it is the life of a Christian to do good and to bear wrong and to continue stedfast unto death, and this is the Gospel, which we, according to the text of the Gospel for today, shall preach in all the world.

What wilt thou have of us, brother? you ask. I desire that you serve Christ with zeal and not with sloth and indifference. I desire that you do not mourn, but in thankfulness raise your hands to heaven, whenever your brother or your son enters the service of Christ. The time is come when Christ will work not only in you but through you and in others; whoever hears, let him say: "Come brother. Let one draw the other. Turn about, thou who thinkest that thou art of a superior mind and therefore canst not accept the faith." If I could only explain this whole Gospel to thee word for word, I would then scourge thy forehead and prove to thee that the faith could not be false and that Christ is thy God who is enthroned in heaven, and waits for thee. Or dost thou believe? Where are thy works? Why dost thou delay about them? Hear this: There was once a monk who spoke to a distinguished man about the faith, and got him to answer why he did not believe. He answered thus: "You yourself do not believe, for if you believed you would show other works." Therefore, to you also I say: If you believe, where are your works? Your faith is something every one knows, for every one knows that Christ was put to death by the Jews, and that everywhere men pray to Him. The whole world knows that His glory has not been spread by force and weapons, but by poor fishermen. O wise man, do you think the poor fishermen were not clever enough for this? Where they worked, there they made hearts better; where they could not work, there men remained bad; and therefore was the faith true and from God. The signs which the Lord had promised followed their teaching: in His name they drove out the devil; they spoke in new tongues; if they drank any deadly drink, they received therefrom no harm. Even if these wonders had not occurred, there would have been the wonder of wonders, that poor fishermen without any miracle could accomplish so great a work as the faith. It came from God, and so is Christ true and Christ is thy God, who is in heaven and awaits thee.

You say you believe the Gospel, but you do not believe me. But the purer anything is, so much the nearer it stands to its end and purpose. The Christian life purifies the heart, and places it very near to the truth. To the Christian life will I lead you, if you would have the knowledge of the truth. If I had wished to deceive you, why should I have given you as the chief of my gifts the means of discovering my fraud? I would be verily a fool to try to impose upon you with a falsehood which you would soon detect; only because I offered you the truth, did I call you. Come here, I fear you not; the closer you examine, the clearer the truth will become to you.

There are some, however, who are ashamed of the cross of Jesus Christ, and say: If we should believe that, we should be despised everywhere, especially by the wisest. But if you would know the truth, look only on the lives of those who would have to cry wo on their unbelief if they should be measured by deeds. If you are ashamed of the cross, the Lord was not ashamed to bear that cross for you, and to die on that cross for you. Be not ashamed of His service and of the defense of the truth. Look at the servants of the devil, who are not ashamed in the open places, in the palaces, and everywhere to speak evil and to revile us. Bear then a little shame only for your Lord; for whoever follows Him will, according to our gospel, in His name drive out the devil; that is, he will drive out his sins, and lead a virtuous life; he will drive out serpents; he will throw out the lazy who come into the houses, and say evil things under the pretense of righteousness, and so are like poisonous serpents. You will see how children can withstand them with the truth of God, and drive them away. If a believer drinks anything deadly it will not hurt him: this deadly drink is the false doctrines of the lazy, from whom, as you contend with them, a little comes also to you. But he who stands unharmed in the faith, cries to you: See that you do good; seek God's glory, not your own. He that does that is of the truth, and remains unharmed. The Lord says further of the faithful: They shall lay their hands on the sick and shall heal them. The hands are the works, and the good lay such hands on the weak that they may support them when they totter. Do I not teach you according to the Gospel? Why do you hesitate and go not into the service of the Lord? Do you ask me still what you ought to do? I will, in conclusion, tell you.

Look to Christ and you will find that all He says concerns faith. Ask the apostle; he speaks of nothing else than of faith. If you have the ground of all, if you have faith, you will always do what is good. Without faith man always falls into sin. You must seek faith in order to be good, or else your faith will become false. Christ commanded His disciples to preach the Gospel to all the world, and your wise men call a man a little world, a microcosm. So then preach to yourself, O man, woman, and child. Three parts the world has in you also. Preach first of all to your knowledge, and say to it: If you draw near this truth, you will have much faith; wherefore do you hesitate to use it? To your will, say: Thou seest that everything passes away; therefore love not the world, love Christ. Thereupon turn to the second part of your world, and say to it: Be thankful, my memory, for the mercies God has shown thee, that thou thinkest not of the things of this world but of the mercy of thy creation, and thy redemption through the blood of the Son of God. Then go to the third part, to thy imagination, and proclaim to it: Set nothing before my eyes but my death, bring nothing before me but the Crucified, embrace Him, fly to Him. Then go through all the cities of thy world and preach to them. First say to thine eyes: Look not on vanity. To thy ears say: Listen not to the words of the lazy, but only to the words of Jesus. To thy tongue say: Speak no more evil. For thy tongue is as a great rock that rolls from the summit of a mountain, and at first falls slowly, then ever faster and more furiously. It begins with gentle murmuring, then it utters small sins, and then greater, until it finally breaks forth in open blasphemy. To thy palate say: It is necessary that we do a little penance. In all thy senses be clean, and turn to the Lord, for He it is who will give you correction and purity. To thy hands say: Do good and give alms; and let thy feet go in the good way. Our reformation has begun in the Spirit of God, if you take it to heart that each one has to preach to himself. Then will we in the name of Jesus drive out the devils of temptation. Yes, call upon Jesus as often as temptation approaches: call upon Him a hundred times and believe firmly, and the temptation will depart. Then will we speak with new tongues; we will speak with God. We shall drive away serpents; the enticement of the senses are these serpents. If we drink anything deadly it will not hurt us; if anger and lust arise in us, at the name of Jesus they will have to give way. We shall lay our hands upon the sick and heal them; with good deeds shall we strengthen the weak soul. If thou feelest thy weakness, flee to God, and He will strengthen; therefore He is thy only refuge. He is thy Savior and thy Lord, who went into the heavens to prepare a place for thee, and to wait thee there. What do you intend to do? Go and follow Jesus, who is praised from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

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THE METHOD AND FRUITS OF JUSTIFICATION

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Martin Luther, leader of the Reformation, was born at Eisleben in 1483, and died there 1546. His rugged character and powerful intellect, combined with a strong physique, made him a natural orator, so that it was said "his words were half battles."

Of his own method of preaching he once remarked:

"When I ascend the pulpit I see no heads, but imagine those that are before me to be all blocks. When I preach I sink myself deeply down; I regard neither doctors nor masters, of which there are in the church above forty. But I have an eye to the multitude of young people, children, and servants, of which there are more than two thousand. I preach to them. When he preaches on any article a man must first distinguish it, then define, describe, and show what it is; thirdly, he must produce sentences from the Scripture to prove and to strengthen it; fourthly, he must explain it by examples; fifthly, he must adorn it with similitudes; and lastly, he must admonish and arouse the indolent, correct the disobedient, and reprove the authors of false doctrine."

LUTHER 1483—1546

THE METHOD AND FRUITS OF JUSTIFICATION

*Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ*.—Gal 4:1-7.

This text touches the very pith of Paul's chief doctrine. The cause why it is well understood but by few is, not that it is so obscure and difficult, but because there is so little knowledge of faith left in the world; without which it is not possible to understand Paul, who everywhere treats of faith with such earnestness and force. I must, therefore, speak in such a manner that this text will appear plain; and that I may more conveniently illustrate it, I will speak a few words by way of preface.

First, therefore, we must understand the doctrine in which good works are set forth, far different from that which treats of justification; as there is a great difference between the substance and its working; between man and his work. Justification pertains to man, and not to works; for man is either justified and saved, or judged and condemned, and not works. Neither is it a controversy among the godly, that man is not justified by works, but righteousness must come from some other source than from his own works: for Moses, writing of Abel, says, "The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering." First, He had respect to Abel himself, then to his offering; because Abel was first counted righteous and acceptable to God, and then for his sake his offering was accepted also, and not he because of his offering. Again, God had no respect to Cain, and therefore neither to his offering: therefore thou seest that regard is had first to the worker, then to the work.

From this it is plainly gathered that no work can be acceptable to God, unless he which worketh it was first accepted by Him: and again, that no work is disallowed of Him unless the author thereof be disallowed before. I think these remarks will be sufficient concerning this matter at present, by which it is easy to understand that there are two sorts of works, those before justification and those after it; and that these last are good works indeed, but the former only appear to be good. Hereof cometh such disagreement between God and those counterfeit holy ones; for this cause nature and reason rise and rage against the Holy Ghost; this is that of which almost the whole Scripture treats. The Lord in His Word defines all works that go before justification to be evil, and of no importance, and requires that man before all things be justified. Again, He pronounces all men which are unregenerate, and have that nature which they received of their parents unchanged, to be righteous and wicked, according to that saying "all men are liars," that is, unable to perform their duty, and to do those things which they ought to do; and "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart are only evil continually"; whereby he is able to do nothing that is good, for the fountain of his actions, which is his heart, is corrupted. If he do works which outwardly seem good, they are no better than the offering of Cain.

Here again comes forth reason, our reverend mistress, seeming to be marvelously wise, but who indeed is unwise and blind, gainsaying her God, and reproving Him of lying; being furnished with her follies and feeble honor, to wit, the light of nature, free will, the strength of nature; also with the books of the heathen and the doctrines of men, contending that the works of a man not justified are good works, and not like those of Cain, yea, and so good that he that worketh them is justified by them; that God will have respect, first to the works, then to the worker. Such doctrine now bears the sway everywhere in schools, colleges, monasteries wherein no other saints than Cain was, have rule and authority. Now from this error comes another: they which attribute so much to works, and do not accordingly esteem the worker, and sound justification, go so far that they ascribe all merit and righteousness to works done before justification, making no account of faith, alleging that which James saith, that without works faith is dead. This sentence of the apostle they do not rightly understand; making but little account of faith, they always stick to works, whereby they think to merit exceedingly, and are persuaded that for their work's sake they shall obtain the favor of God: by this means they continually disagree with God, showing themselves to be the posterity of Cain. God hath respect unto man, then unto the works of man; God alloweth the work for the sake of him that worketh, these require that for the work's sake the worker may be crowned.

But here, perhaps, thou wilt say, what is needful to be done? By what means shall I become righteous and acceptable to God? How shall I attain to this perfect justification? Those the gospel answers, teaching that it is necessary that thou hear Christ, and repose thyself wholly on Him, denying thyself and distrusting thine own strength; by this means thou shalt be changed from Cain to Abel, and being thyself acceptable, shalt offer acceptable gifts to the Lord. It is faith that justifies thee, thou being endued therewith; the Lord remitteth all thy sins by the mediation of Christ His Son, in whom this faith believeth and trusteth. Moreover, He giveth unto such a faith His Spirit, which changes the man and makes him anew, giving him another reason and another will. Such a one worketh nothing but good works. Wherefore nothing is required unto justification but to hear Jesus Christ our Savior, and to believe in Him. Howbeit these are not the works of nature, but of grace.

He, therefore, that endeavors to attain to these things by works shutteth the way to the gospel, to faith, grace, Christ, God, and all things that help unto salvation. Again, nothing is necessary in order to accomplish good works but justification; and he that hath attained it performs good works, and not any other. Hereof it sufficiently appears that the beginning, the things following, and the order of man's salvation are after this sort; first of all it is required that thou hear the Word of God; next that thou believe; then that thou work; and so at last become saved and happy. He that changes this order, without doubt is not of God. Paul also describes this, saying, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and, how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and, how shall they hear without a preacher? and, how shall they preach except they be sent?"

Christ teaches us to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into His harvest; that is, sincere preachers. When we hear these preach the true Word of God, we may believe; which faith justifies a man, and makes him godly indeed, so that he now calls upon God in the spirit of holiness, and works nothing but that which is good, and thus becomes a saved man. Thus he that believeth shall be saved; but he that worketh without faith is condemned; as Christ saith, he that doth not believe shall be condemned, from which no works shall deliver him. Some say, I will now endeavor to become honest. It is meet surely that we study to lead an honest life, and to do good works. But if one ask them how we may apply ourselves unto honesty, and by what means we may attain it, they answer, that we must fast, pray, frequent temples, avoid sins, etc. Whereby one becomes a Carthusian monk, another chooses some other order of monks, and another is consecrated a priest; some torment their flesh by wearing hair-cloth, others scourge their bodies with whips, others afflict themselves in a different manner; but these are of Cain's progeny, and their works are no better than his; for they continue the same that they were before, ungodly, and without justification: there is a change made of outward works only, of apparel, of place, etc.

They scarce think of faith, they presume only on such works as seem good to themselves, thinking by them to get to heaven. But Christ said, "Enter in at the strait gate, for I say unto you, many seek to enter in, and can not." Why is this? because they know not what this narrow gate is; for it is faith, which altogether annihilates or makes a man appear as nothing in his own eyes, and requires him not to trust in his own works, but to depend upon the grace of God, and be prepared to leave and suffer all things. Those holy ones of Cain's progeny think their good works are the narrow gate; and are not, therefore, extenuated or made less, whereby they might enter.

When we begin to preach of faith to those that believe altogether in works, they laugh and hiss at us, and say, "Dost thou count us as Turks and heathens, whom it behooves now first to learn faith? is there such a company of priests, monks, and nuns, and is not faith known? who knoweth not what he ought to believe? even sinners know that." Being after this sort animated and stirred up, they think themselves abundantly endued with faith, and that the rest is now to be finished and made perfect by works. They make so small and slender account of faith, because they are ignorant what faith is, and that it alone doth justify. They call it faith, believing those things which they have heard of Christ; this kind of faith the devils also have, and yet they are not justified. But this ought rather to be called an opinion of men. To believe those things to be true which are preached of Christ is not sufficient to constitute thee a Christian, but thou must not doubt that thou art of the number of them unto whom all the benefits of Christ are given and exhibited; which he that believes must plainly confess, that he is holy, godly, righteous, the son of God, and certain of salvation; and that by no merit of his own, but by the mere mercy of God poured forth upon him for Christ's sake: which he believes to be so rich and plentiful, as indeed it is, that altho he be as it were drowned in sin, he is notwithstanding made holy, and become the son of God.

Wherefore, take heed that thou nothing doubt that thou art the son of God, and therefore made righteous by His grace; let all fear and care be done away. However, thou must fear and tremble that thou mayest persevere in this way unto the end; but thou must not do this as tho it consisted in thy own strength, for righteousness and salvation are of grace, whereunto only thou must trust. But when thou knowest that it is of grace alone, and that thy faith also is the gift of God, thou shalt have cause to fear, lest some temptation violently move thee from this faith.

Every one by faith is certain of this salvation; but we ought to have care and fear that we stand and persevere, trusting in the Lord, and not in our own strength. When those of the race of Cain hear faith treated of in this manner, they marvel at our madness, as it seems to them. God turn us from this way, say they, that we should affirm ourselves holy and godly; far be this arrogance and rashness from us: we are miserable sinners; we should be mad, if we should arrogate holiness to ourselves. Thus they mock at true faith, and count such doctrine as this execrable error; and thus try to extinguish the Gospel. These are they that deny the faith of Christ, and persecute it throughout the whole world; of whom Paul speaks: "In the latter times many shall depart from the faith," etc., for we see by these means that true faith lies everywhere opprest; it is not preached, but commonly disallowed and condemned.

The pope, bishops, colleges, monasteries, and universities have more than five hundred years persecuted it with one mind and consent most obstinately, which has been the means of driving many to hell. If any object against the admiration, or rather the mad senselessness of these men, if we count ourselves even holy, trusting the goodness of God to justify us, or as David prayed, "Preserve Thou me, O Lord, for I am holy," or as Paul saith, "The Spirit of God beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God"; they answer that the prophet and apostle would not teach us in these words, or give us an example which we should follow, but that they, being particularly and specially enlightened, received such revelation of themselves. In this way they misrepresent the Scripture, which affirms that they are holy, saying that such doctrine is not written for us, but that it is rather peculiar miracles, which do not belong to all. This forged imagination we account of as having come from their sickly brain. Again, they believe that they shall be made righteous and holy by their own works, and that because of them God will give them salvation and eternal blessedness.

In the opinion of these men it is a Christian duty to think that we shall be righteous and sacred because of our works; but to believe that these things are given by the grace of God, they condemn as heretical; attributing that to their own works which they do not attribute to the grace of God. They that are endued with true faith, and rest upon the grace of the Lord, rejoice with holy joy, and apply themselves with pleasure to good works, not such as those of Cain's progeny do, as feigned prayers, fasting, base and filthy apparel, and such like trifles, but to true and good works whereby their neighbors are profited.

Perhaps some godly man may think, if the matter be so, and our work do not save us, to what end are so many precepts given us, and why doth God require that they be obeyed? The present text of the apostle will give a solution of this question, and upon this occasion we will give an exposition thereof. The Galatians being taught of Paul the faith of Christ, but afterward seduced by false apostles, thought that our salvation must be finished and made perfect by the works of the law; and that faith alone doth not suffice. These Paul calls back again from works unto faith with great diligence; plainly proving that the works of the law, which go before faith, make us only servants, and are of no importance toward godliness and salvation; but that faith makes us the sons of God, and from thence good works without constraint forthwith plentifully flow.

But here we must observe the words of the apostle; he calls him a servant that is occupied in works without faith, of which we have already treated at large; but he calls him a son which is righteous by faith alone. The reason is this, altho the servant apply himself to good works, yet he does it not with the same mind as doth the son; that is, with a mind free, willing, and certain that the inheritance and all the good things of the Father are his; but does it as he that is hired in another man's house, who hopes not that the inheritance shall come to him. The works indeed of the son and the servant are alike; and almost the same in outward appearance; but their minds differ exceedingly: as Christ saith, "The servant abideth not in the house forever, but the son abideth ever."

Those of Cain's progeny want the faith of sons, which they confess themselves; for they think it most absurd, and wicked arrogancy, to affirm themselves to be the sons of God, and holy; therefore as they believe, even so are they counted before God; they neither become holy nor the sons of God, nevertheless are they exercised with the works of the law; wherefore they are and remain servants forever. They receive no reward except temporal things; such as quietness of life, abundance of goods, dignity, honor, etc., which we see to be common among the followers of popish religion. But this is their reward, for they are servants, and not sons; wherefore in death they shall be separated from all good things, neither shall any portion of the eternal inheritance be theirs, who in this life would believe nothing thereof. We perceive, therefore, that servants and sons are not unlike in works, but in mind and faith they have no resemblance.

The apostle endeavors here to prove that the law with all the works thereof makes us but mere servants, if we have not faith in Christ; for this alone make us sons of God. It is the word of grace followed by the Holy Ghost, as is shown in many places, where we read of the Holy Ghost falling on Cornelius and his family while hearing the preaching of Peter. Paul teaches that no man is justified before God by the works of the law; for sin only cometh by the law. He that trusts in works condemns faith as the most pernicious arrogancy and error of all others. Here thou seest plainly that such a man is not righteous, being destitute of that faith and belief which is necessary to make him acceptable before God and His Son; yea, he is an enemy to this faith, and therefore to righteousness also. Thus it is easy to understand that which Paul saith, that no man is justified before God by the works of the law.

The worker must be justified before God before he can work any good thing. Men judge the worker by the works; God judges the works by the worker. The first precept requires us to acknowledge and worship one God, that is, to trust Him alone, which is the true faith whereby we become the sons of God. Thou canst not be delivered from the evil of unbelief by thine own power, nor by the power of the law; wherefore all thy works which thou doest to satisfy the law can be nothing but works of the law; of far less importance than to be able to justify thee before God, who counteth them righteous only who truly believe in Him; for they that acknowledge Him the true God are His sons, and do truly fulfil the law. If thou shouldst even kill thyself by working, thy heart can not obtain this faith thereby, for thy works are even a hindrance to it, and cause thee to persecute it.

He that studieth to fulfil the law without faith is afflicted for the devil's sake; and continues a persecutor both of faith and the law, until he come to himself, and cease to trust in his own works; he then gives glory to God, who justifies the ungodly, and acknowledges himself to be nothing, and sighs for the grace of God, of which he knows that he has need. Faith and grace now fill his empty mind, and satisfy his hunger; then follow works which are truly good; neither are they works of the law, but of the spirit, of faith and grace; they are called in the Scripture the works of God, which He worketh in us.

Whatsoever we do of our own power and strength, that which is not wrought in us by His grace, without doubt is a work of the law, and avails nothing toward justification; but is displeasing to God, because of the unbelief wherein it is done. He that trusts in works does nothing freely and with a willing mind; he would do no good work at all if he were not compelled by the fear of hell, or allured by the hope of present good. Whereby it is plainly seen that they strive only for gain, or are moved with fear, showing that they rather hate the law from their hearts, and had rather there were no law at all. An evil heart can do nothing that is good. This evil propensity of the heart, and unwillingness to do good, the law betrays when it teaches that God does not esteem the works of the hand, but those of the heart.

Thus sin is known by the law, as Paul teaches; for we learn thereby that our affections are not placed on that which is good. This ought to teach us not to trust in ourselves, but to long after the grace of God, whereby the evil of the heart may be taken away, and we become ready to do good works, and love the law voluntarily; not for fear of any punishment, but for the love of righteousness. By this means one is made of a servant, a son; of a slave an heir.

We shall now come to treat more particularly of the text. Verse 1. "The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, tho he be lord of all." We see that the children unto whom their parents have left some substance are brought up no otherwise than if they were servants. They are fed and clothed with their goods, but they are not permitted to do with them, nor use them according to their own minds, but are ruled with fear and discipline of manners, so that even in their own inheritance they live no otherwise than as servants. After the same sort it is in spiritual things. God made with His people a covenant, when He promised that in the seed of Abraham, that is in Christ, all nations of the earth should be blest. That covenant was afterward confirmed by the death of Christ, and revealed and published abroad by the preaching gospel. For the gospel is an open and general preaching of this grace, that in Christ is laid up a blessing for all men that believe.

Before this covenant is truly opened and made manifest to men, the sons of God live after the manner of servants under the law; and are exercised with the works of the law, altho they can not be justified by them; they are true heirs of heavenly things, of this blessing and grace of the covenant; altho they do not as yet know or enjoy it. Those that are justified by grace cease from the works of the law, and come unto the inheritance of justification; they then freely work those things that are good, to the glory of God and benefit of their neighbors. For they have possest it by the covenant of the Father, confirmed by Christ, revealed, published, and as it were delivered into their hands by the gospel, through the grace and mercy of God.

This covenant Abraham, and all the fathers which were endued with true faith, had no otherwise than we have: altho before Christ was glorified this grace was not openly preached and published: they lived in like faith, and therefore obtained the like good things. They had the same grace, blessing, and covenant that we have; for there is one Father and God over all. Thou seest that Paul here, as in almost all other places, treats much of faith; that we are not justified by works, but by faith alone. There is no good thing which is not contained in this covenant of God; it gives righteousness, salvation, and peace. By faith the whole inheritance of God is at once received. From thence good works come; not meritorious, whereby thou mayest seek salvation, but which with a mind already possessing righteousness thou must do with great pleasure to the profit of thy neighbors.

Verse 2. "But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the Father." Tutors and governors are they which bring up the heir, and so rule him and order his goods that he neither waste his inheritance by riotous living, nor his goods perish or be otherwise consumed. They permit him not to use his goods at his own will or pleasure, but suffer him to enjoy them as they shall be needful and profitable to him. They keep him at home, and instruct him whereby he may long and comfortably enjoy his inheritance: but as soon as he arrives to the years of discretion and judgment, it can not but be grievous to him to live in subjection to the commands and will of another.

In the same manner stands the case of the children of God, which are brought up and instructed under the law, as under a master in the liberty of sons. The law profits them in this, that by the fear of it and the punishment which it threatens, they are driven from sin, at least from the outward work: by it they are brought to a knowledge of themselves, and that they do no good at all with a willing and ready mind as becomes sons; whereby they may easily see what is the root of this evil, and what is especially needful unto salvation; to wit, a new and living spirit to that which is good: which neither the law nor the works of the law is able to give; yea, the more they apply themselves to it, the more unwilling they find themselves to work those things which are good.

Here they learn that they do not satisfy the law, altho outwardly they live according to its precepts. They pretend to obey it in works, altho in mind they hate it; they pretend themselves righteous, but they remain sinners. These are like unto those of Cain's progeny, and hypocrites; whose hands are compelled to do good, but their hearts consent unto sin and are subject thereto. To know this concerning one's self is not the lowest degree toward salvation. Paul calls such constrained works the works of the law; for they flow not from a ready and willing heart; howbeit the law does not require works alone, but the heart itself; wherefore it is said in the first psalm of the blest man, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord: and in His law doth he meditate day and night." Such a mind the law requires, but it gives it not; neither can it of its own nature: whereby it comes to pass that while the law continues to exact it of a man, and condemns him as long as he hath such a mind, as being disobedient to God, he is in anguish on every side; his conscience being grievously terrified.

Then, indeed, is he most ready to receive the grace of God; this being the time appointed by the Father when his servitude shall end, and he enter into the liberty of the sons of God. For being thus in distress, and terrified, seeing that by no other means he can avoid the condemnation of the law, he prays to the Father for grace; he acknowledges his frailty, he confesses his sin, he ceases to trust in works, and humbles himself, perceiving that between him and a manifest sinner there is no difference at all except of works, that he hath a wicked heart, even as every other sinner hath. The condition of man's nature is such that it is able to give to the law works only, and not the heart; an unequal division, truly, to dedicate the heart, which, incomparably excels all other things, to sin, and the hand to the law: which is offering chaff to the law, and the wheat to sin; the shell to God, and the kernel to Satan; whose ungodliness if one reprove, they become enraged, and would even take the life of innocent Abel, and persecute all those that follow the truth.

Those that trust in works seem to defend them to obtain righteousness; they promise to themselves a great reward for this, by persecuting heretics and blasphemers, as they say, who seduce with error, and entice many from good works. But those that God hath chosen, learn by the law how unwilling the heart is to conform to the works of the law; they fall from their arrogancy, and are by this knowledge of themselves brought to see their own unworthiness. Hereby they receive that covenant of the eternal blessing and the Holy Ghost which renews the heart: whereby they are delighted with the law, and hate sin; and are willing and ready to do those things which are good. This is the time appointed by the Father, when the heir must no longer remain a servant, but a son; being led by a free spirit, he is no more kept in subjection under tutors and governors after the manner of a servant; which is even that which Paul teaches in the following:

Verse 3. "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the word." By the word elements thou mayest here understand the first principles or law written; which is as it were the first exercises and instructions of holy learning; as it is said: "As concerning the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God." "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world." "How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage."

Here Paul calls the law rudiments; because it is not able to perform that righteousness which it requires. For whereas it earnestly requires a heart and mind given to godliness, nature is not able to satisfy it: herein it makes a man feel his poverty, and acknowledge his infirmity: it requires that of him by right which he has not, neither is able to have. "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." Paul calls them the rudiments of the world, which, not being renewed by the Spirit, only perform worldly things; to wit, in places, times, apparel, persons, vessels, and such like. But faith rests not in worldly things, but in the grace, word, and mercy of God: counting alike, days, meats, persons, apparel, and all things of this world.

None of these by themselves either help or hinder godliness or salvation. With those of Cain's progeny, faith neither agrees in name or anything else; one of them eats flesh, another abstains from it; one wears black apparel, another white; one keeps this day holy, and another that; every one has his rudiments, under which he is in bondage: all of them are addicted to the things of the world, which are frail and perishable. Against these Paul speaks, "Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as tho living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances: touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh."

By this and other places above mentioned, it is evident that monasteries and colleges, whereby we measure the state of spiritual men as we call them, plainly disagree with the Gospel and Christian liberty: and therefore it is much more dangerous to live in this kind of life than among the most profane men. All their works are nothing but rudiments and ordinances of the world; neither are they Christians but in name, wherefore all their life and holiness are sinful and most detestable hypocrisy. The fair show of feigned holiness which is in those ordinances does, in a marvelous and secret manner, withdraw from faith more than those manifest and gross sins of which open sinners are guilty. Now this false and servile opinion faith alone takes away, and teaches us to trust in, and rest upon, the grace of God, whereby is given freely that which is needful to work all things.

Verse 4. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." After Paul had taught us that righteousness and faith can not come to us by the law, neither can we deserve it by nature, he shows us by whom we obtain it; and who is the author of our justification. The apostle saith, "When the fulness of the time was come"; here Paul speaks of the time which was appointed by the Father to the Son, wherein He should live under tutors, etc. This time being come to the Jews, and ended, Christ came in the flesh; so it is daily fulfilled to others, when they come to the knowledge of Christ, and change the servitude of the law for the faith of sons. Christ for this cause came unto us, that believing in Him we may be restored to true liberty; by which faith they of ancient times also obtained the liberty of the Spirit.

As soon as thou believest in Christ, He comes to thee, a deliverer and Savior; and now the time of bondage is ended; as the apostle saith, the fulness thereof is come.

Verse 6. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Here we see plainly that the Holy Ghost cometh to the saints, not by works, but by faith alone. Sons believe, while servants only work; sons are free from the law, servants are held under the law, as appears by those things that have been before spoken. But how comes it to pass that he saith "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit," etc., seeing it is before said that by the coming of the Spirit we are changed from servants to sons: but here, as tho we could be sons before the coming of the Spirit, he saith "because ye are sons," etc. To this question we must answer, that Paul speaks here in the same manner that he did before, that is, before the fulness of the time came, we were in bondage under the rudiments of the world: all that shall become sons are counted in the place of sons with God: therefore he saith rightly, "because ye are sons," that is, because the state of sons is appointed to you from everlasting, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son," to wit, that He might finish it in you, and make you such as He hath long since of His goodness determined that He would make you.

Now if the Father give unto us His Spirit, He will make us His true sons and heirs, that we may with confidence cry with Christ, Abba, Father; being His brethren and fellow heirs. The apostle has well set forth the goodness of God which makes us partakers with Christ, and causes us to have all things common with Him, so that we live and are led by the same Spirit. These words of the apostle show that the Holy Ghost proceeds from Christ, as he calls Him his Spirit. So God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son, that is, of Christ, for He is the Spirit of God, and comes from God to us, and not ours, unless one will say after this manner, "my Holy Spirit," as we say, "my God," "my Lord," etc. As He is said to be the Holy Spirit of Christ, it proves Him to be God of whom that Spirit is sent, therefore it is counted His Spirit.

Christians may perceive by this whether they have in themselves the Holy Ghost, to wit, the Spirit of sons; whether they hear His voice in their hearts: for Paul saith, He crieth in the hearts which He possesseth, Abba, Father; he saith also, "We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father." Thou hearest this voice when thou findest so much faith in thyself that thou dost assuredly, without doubting, presume that not only thy sins are forgiven thee, but also that thou art the beloved Son of God, who, being certain of eternal salvation, durst both call Him Father, and be delighted in Him with a joyful and confident heart. To doubt these things brings a reproach upon the death of Christ, as tho He had not obtained all things for us.

It may be that thou shalt be so tempted as to fear and doubt, and think plainly that God is not a favorable Father, but a wrathful revenger of sins, as it happened with Job, and many other saints: but in such a conflict this trust and confidence that thou art a son ought to prevail and overcome. It is said "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which can not be uttered; and that He beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." How can it therefore be that our hearts should not hear this cry and testimony of the Spirit? But if thou dost not feel this cry, take heed that thou be not slothful and secure; pray constantly, for thou art in an evil state.

Cain saith, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from Thy face shall I be hid; and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me." This is a dreadful and terrible cry, which is heard from all Cain's progeny, all such as trust to themselves and their own works, who put not their trust in the Son of God, neither consider that He was sent from the Father, made of a woman under the law, much less that all these things were done for their salvation. And while their ungodliness is not herewith content, they begin to persecute even the sons of God, and grow so cruel that, after the example of their father Cain, they can not rest until they slay their righteous brother Abel, wherefore the blood of Christ continually cries out against them nothing but punishment and vengeance; but for the heirs of salvation it cries by the Spirit of Christ for nothing but grace and reconciliation.

The apostle here uses a Syrian and Greek word, saying, Abba, Pater. This word Abba, in the Syrian tongue, signifies a father, by which name the heads of monasteries are still called; and by the same name, hermits in times past, being holy men, called their presidents: at last, by use, it was also made a Latin word. Therefore that which Paul saith is as much as Father, Father; or if thou hadst rather, "my Father."

Verse 7. "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." He saith, that after the coming of the Spirit, after the knowledge of Christ, "thou art not a servant." A son is free and willing, a servant is compelled and unwilling; a son liveth and resteth in faith, a servant in works. Therefore it appears that we can not obtain salvation of God by works, but before thou workest that which is acceptable to Him, it is necessary that thou receive salvation; then good works will freely flow, to the honor of thy heavenly Father, and to the profit of thy neighbors; without any fear of punishment, or looking for reward.

If this inheritance of the Father be thine by faith, surely thou art rich in all things, before thou hast wrought any thing. It is said "Your salvation is prepared and reserved in heaven, to be showed in the last time," wherefore the works of a Christian ought to have no regard to merit, which is the manner of servants, but only for the use and benefit of our neighbors, whereby we may truly live to the glory of God. Lest that any think that so great an inheritance cometh to us without cost (altho it be given to us without our cost or merit), yet it cost Christ a dear price, who, that He might purchase it for us, was made under the law, and satisfied it for us, both by life and also by death.

Those benefits which from love we bestow upon our neighbor, come to him freely, without any charges or labor of his, notwithstanding they cost us something, even as Christ hath bestowed those things which are His upon us. Thus hath Paul called back the Galatians from the teachers of works, which preached nothing but the law, perverting the Gospel of Christ. Which things are very necessary to be marked of us also: for the Pope, with his prelates and monks hath for a long time intruded, urging his laws, which are foolish and pernicious, disagreeing in every respect with the Word of God, seducing almost the whole world from the gospel of Christ, and plainly extinguishing the faith of sons, as the Scripture hath in diverse places manifestly prophesied of His kingdom. Wherefore let every one that desires salvation, diligently take heed of him and his followers, no otherwise than Satan himself.

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**07 LATIMER**

**ON CHRISTIAN LOVE**

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Hugh Latimer, reformer and martyr, was born in Leicestershire, England, in 1485, or two years later than Luther. On completing an education at Cambridge, he took holy orders and preached strenuously in favor of the Lutheran views. As a profound canonist, he was placed on the commission appointed to decide on the legality of Henry VII's marriage with Katharine of Aragon. His decision in favor of Henry gained him a royal chaplaincy and a living.

Appointed Bishop of Worcester in 1535, he preached boldly the reformed doctrines, but lost favor at court, and when Gardiner and Bonner pushed a reactionary movement to the front, he retired from his see (1539). Latimer lived in peaceful retirement under Edward VI, but under Mary he, with other reformers, was arrested and thrown into the Tower. Brought to Oxford for examination, he refused to recant, and was confined for a year in the common prison, and on October 16, 1555, put to death by fire, along with Ridley, at a place opposite Balliol College, where the Martyr's Memorial was subsequently erected.

LATIMER 1485—1555

**ON CHRISTIAN LOVE**

*This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you*.—Joh 15:12.

Seeing the time is so far spent, we will take no more in hand at this time than this one sentence; for it will be enough for us to consider this well, and to bear it away with us. "This I command unto you, that ye love one another." Our Savior himself spake these words at His last supper: it was the last sermon that He made unto His disciples before His departure; it is a very long sermon. For our Savior, like as one that knows he shall die shortly, is desirous to spend that little time that He has with His friends, in exhorting and instructing them how they should lead their lives. Now among other things that He commanded this was one: "This I command unto you, that ye love one another." The English expresses as tho it were but one, "This is my commandment." I examined the Greek, where it is in the plural number, and very well; for there are many things that pertain to a Christian man, and yet all those things are contained in this one thing, that is, love. He lappeth up all things in love.

Our whole duty is contained in these words, "Love together." Therefore St. Paul saith, "He that loveth another fulfilleth the whole law"; so it appeareth that all things are contained in this word love. This love is a precious thing; our Savior saith, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye shall love one another."

So Christ makes love His cognizance, His badge, His livery. Like as every lord commonly gives a certain livery to his servants, whereby they may be known that they pertain unto him; and so we say, yonder is this lord's servants, because they wear his livery: so our Savior, who is the Lord above all lords, would have His servants known by their liveries and badge, which badge is love alone. Whosoever now is endued with love and charity is His servant; him we may call Christ's servant; for love is the token whereby you may know that such a servant pertaineth to Christ; so that charity may be called the very livery of Christ. He that hath charity is Christ's servant; he that hath not charity is the servant of the devil. For as Christ's livery is love and charity, so the devil's livery is hatred, malice and discord.

But I think the devil has a great many more servants than Christ has; for there are a great many more in his livery than in Christ's livery; there are but very few who are endued with Christ's livery; with love and charity, gentleness and meekness of spirit; but there are a great number that bear hatred and malice in their hearts, that are proud, stout, and lofty; therefore the number of the devil's servants is greater than the number of Christ's servants.

Now St. Paul shows how needful this love is. I speak not of carnal love, which is only animal affection; but of this charitable love, which is so necessary that when a man hath it, without all other things it will suffice him. Again, if a man have all other things and lacketh that love it will not help him, it is all vain and lost. St. Paul used it so: "Tho I speak with tongues of men and angels, and yet had no love, I were even as sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal. And tho I could prophesy and understand all secrets and all knowledge; yet if I had faith, so that I could move mountains out of their places, and yet had no love, I were nothing. And tho I bestowed all my goods to feed the poor, and tho I gave my body even that I were burned, and yet had no love, it profiteth me nothing" (I Cor. xiii). These are godly gifts, yet St. Paul calls them nothing when a man hath them without charity; which is a great commendation, and shows the great need of love, insomuch that all other virtues are in vain when this love is absent. And there have been some who taught that St. Paul spake against the dignity of faith; but you must understand that St. Paul speaks here not of the justifying faith, wherewith we receive everlasting life, but he understands by this word faith the gift to do miracles, to remove hills; of such a faith he speaks. This I say to confirm this proposition. Faith only justifieth; this proposition is most true and certain. And St. Paul speaks not here of this lively justifying faith; for this right faith is not without love, for love cometh and floweth out of faith; love is a child of faith; for no man can love except he believe, so that they have two several offices, they themselves being inseparable.

St. Paul has an expression in the 13th chapter of the first of the Corinthians, which, according to the outward letter, seems much to the dispraise of this faith, and to the praise of love; these are his words, "Now abideth faith, hope and love, even these three; but the chiefest of these is love." There are some learned men who expound the greatness of which St. Paul speaketh here as if meant for eternity. For when we come to God, then we believe no more, but rather see with our eyes face to face how He is; yet for all that love remains still; so that love may be called the chiefest, because she endureth forever. And tho she is the chiefest, yet we must not attribute unto her the office which pertains unto faith only. Like as I can not say, the Mayor of Stamford must make me a pair of shoes because he is a greater man than the shoemaker is; for the mayor, tho he is a greater man, yet it is not his office to make shoes; so tho love be greater, yet it is not her office to save. Thus much I thought good to say against those who fight against the truth.

Now, when we would know who are in Christ's livery or not, we must learn it of St. Paul, who most evidently described charity, which is the only livery, saying, "Love is patient, she suffereth long." Now whosoever fumeth and is angry, he is out of this livery: therefore let us remember that we do not cast away the livery of Christ our Master. When we are in sickness, or any manner of adversities, our duty is to be patient, to suffer willingly, and to call upon Him for aid, help and comfort; for without Him we are not able to abide any tribulation. Therefore we must call upon God, He has promised to help: therefore let me not think Him to be false or untrue to His promises, for we can not dishonor God more than by not believing or trusting in Him. Therefore let us beware above all things of dishonoring God; and so we must be patient, trusting and most certainly believing that He will deliver us when it seems good to Him, who knows the time better than we ourselves.

"Charity is gentle, friendly, and loving; she envieth not." They that envy their neighbor's profit when it goes well with him, such fellows are out of their liveries, and so out of the service of God; for to be envious is to be the servant of the devil.

"Love doth not frowardly, she is not a provoker"; as there are some men who will provoke their neighbor so far that it is very hard for them to be in charity with them; but we must wrestle with our affections; we must strive and see that we keep this livery of Christ our master; for "the devil goeth about as a roaring lion seeking to take us at a vantage," to bring us out of our liveries, and to take from us the knot of love and charity.

"Love swelleth not, is not puffed up"; but there are many swellers nowadays, they are so high, so lofty, insomuch that they despise and contemn all others; all such persons are under the governance of the devil. God rules not them with His good spirit; the evil spirit has occupied their hearts and possest them.

"She doth not dishonestly; she seeketh not her own; she doth all things to the commodity of her neighbors." A charitable man will not promote himself with the damage of his neighbor. They that seek only their own advantage, forgetting their neighbors, they are not of God, they have not His livery. Further, "Charity is not provoked to anger; she thinketh not evil." We ought not to think evil of our neighbor, as long as we see not open wickedness; for it is written, "You shall not judge"; we should not take upon us to condemn our neighbor. And surely the condemners of other men's works are not in the livery of Christ. Christ hateth them.

"She rejoiceth not in iniquity"; she loveth equity and godliness. And again, she is sorry to hear of falsehood, of stealing, or such like, which wickedness is now at this time commonly used. There never was such falsehood among Christian men as there is now, at this time; truly I think, and they that have experience report it so, that among the very infidels and Turks there is more fidelity and uprightness than among Christian men. For no man setteth anything by his promise, yea, and writings will not serve with some; they are so shameless that they dare deny their own handwriting; but, I pray you, are those false fellows in the livery of Christ? Have they His cognizance? No, no; they have the badge of the devil, with whom they shall be damned world without end, except they amend and leave their wickedness.

"She suffereth all things; she believeth all things." It is a great matter that should make us to be grieved with our neighbor; we should be patient when our neighbor doth wrong, we should admonish him of his folly, earnestly desiring him to leave his wickedness, showing the danger that follows, everlasting damnation. In such wise we should study to amend our neighbor, and not to hate him or do him a foul turn again, but rather charitably study to amend him: whosoever now does so, he has the livery and cognizance of Christ, he shall be known at the last day for his servant.

"Love believeth all things"; it appears daily that they who are charitable and friendly are most deceived; because they think well of every man, they believe every man, they trust their words, and therefore are most deceived in this world, among the children of the devil. These and such like things are the tokens of the right and godly love; therefore they that have this love are soon known, for this love can not be hid in corners, she has her operation: therefore all that have her are well enough, tho they have no other gifts besides her. Again, they that lack her, tho they have many other gifts besides, yet is it to no other purpose, it does then no good: for when we shall come at the great day before him, not having this livery (that is love) with us, then we are lost; he will not take us for His servants, because we have not His cognizance. But if we have this livery, if we wear His cognizance here in this world; that is, if we love our neighbor, help him in his distress, are charitable, loving, and friendly unto him, then we shall be known at the last day: but if we be uncharitable toward our neighbor, hate him, seek our own advantage with His damage, then we shall be rejected of Christ and so damned world without end.

Our Savior saith here in this gospel, "I command you these things"; He speaketh in the plural number, and lappeth it up in one thing, which is that we should love one another, much like St. Paul's saying in the 13th to the Romans, "Owe nothing to any man, but to love one another." Here St. Paul lappeth up all things together, signifying unto us that love is the consummation of the law; for this commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," is contained in this law of love: for he that loveth God will not break wedlock, because wedlock-breaking is a dishonoring of God and a serving of the devil. "Thou shalt not kill"; he that loveth will not kill, he will do no harm. "Thou shalt not steal"; he that loveth his neighbor as himself will not take away his goods. I had of late occasion to speak of picking and stealing, where I showed unto you the danger wherein they are that steal their neighbor's goods from them, but I hear nothing yet of restitution. Sirs, I tell you, except restitution is made, look for no salvation. And it is a miserable and heinous thing to consider that we are so blinded with this world that, rather than we would make restitution, we will sell unto the devil our souls which are bought with the blood of our Savior Christ. What can be done more to the dishonoring of Christ than to cast our souls away to the devil for the value of a little money?—the soul which He has bought with His painful passion and death. But I tell you those that will do so, and that will not make restitution when they have done wrong, or taken away their neighbor's goods, they are not in the livery of Christ, they are not his servants; let them go as they will in this world, yet for all that they are foul and filthy enough before God; they stink before His face; and therefore they shall be cast from His presence into everlasting fire; this shall be all their good cheer that they shall have, because they have not the livery of Christ, nor His cognizance, which is love. They remember not that Christ commanded us, saying, "This I command you, that ye love one another." This is Christ's commandment. Moses, the great prophet of God, gave many laws, but he gave not the spirit to fulfil the same laws: but Christ gave this law, and promised unto us, that when we call upon Him He will give us His Holy Ghost, who shall make us able to fulfil His laws, tho not so perfectly as the law requires; but yet to the contention of God, and to the protection of our faith; for as long as we are in this world, we can do nothing as we ought to do, because our flesh leadeth us, which is ever bent against the law of God; yet our works which we do are well taken for Christ's sake, and God will reward them in heaven.

Therefore our Savior saith, "my yoke is easy, and my burden is light," because He helpeth to bear them; else indeed we should not be able to bear them. And in another place He saith, "His commandments are not heavy"; they are heavy to our flesh, but being qualified with the Spirit of God, to the faithful which believe in Christ, to them, I say, they are not heavy; for tho their doings are not perfect, yet they are well taken for Christ's sake.

You must not be offended because the Scripture commends love so highly, for he that commends the daughter commends the mother; for love is the daughter, and faith is the mother: love floweth out of faith; where faith is, there is love; but yet we must consider their offices, faith is the hand wherewith we take hold on everlasting life.

Now let us enter into ourselves, and examine our own hearts, whether we are in the livery of God, or not: and when we find ourselves to be out of this livery, let us repent and amend our lives, so that we may come again to the favor of God, and spend our time in this world to His honor and glory, forgiving our neighbors all such things as they have done against us.

And now to make an end: mark here who gave this precept of love—Christ our Savior Himself. When and at what time? At His departing, when He should suffer death. Therefore these words ought the more to be regarded, seeing He Himself spake them at His last departing from us. May God of His mercy give us grace so to walk here in this world, charitably and friendly one with another, that we may attain the joy which God hath prepared for all those that love Him. Amen.

÷01-08 MELANCHTHON

08 MELANCHTHON

THE SAFETY OF THE VIRTUOUS

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Philip Melanchthon (Schwarzerd) was born at Bretten, in Baden, in 1497. His name is noteworthy as first a fellow laborer and eventually a controversial antagonist of Luther. At the Diet of Augsburg, in 1530, he was the leading representative of the Reformation. He formulated the twenty-eight articles of the evangelical faith known as the "Augsburg Confession." The Lutherans of extreme Calvinistic views were alienated by Melanchthon's subsequent modifications of this confession, and by his treatises in ethics. He and his followers were bitterly assailed, but his irenic spirit did not forsake him. He was a true child of the Renaissance, and is styled by some writers "the founder of general learning throughout Europe." While he was never called or ordained to the ministry of the Church, he was in the habit of addressing the local religious assemblies or collegia from time to time, and, being a man of profound piety, his sympathetic and natural style of delivery made him an impressive speaker. He died in 1560, and his body was laid beside that of Martin Luther.

MELANCHTHON 1497—1560

THE SAFETY OF THE VIRTUOUS

*Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*—Joh 10:28.

To Thee, almighty and true God, eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of heaven and earth, and of all creatures, together with Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost—to Thee, the wise, good, true, righteous, compassionate, pure, gracious God, we render thanks that Thou hast hitherto upheld the Church in these lands, and graciously afforded it protection and care, and we earnestly beseech Thee evermore to gather among us an inheritance for Thy Son, which may praise Thee to all eternity.

I have in these, our assemblies, often uttered partly admonitions and partly reproofs, which I hope the most of you will bear in mind. But since I must presume that now the hearts of all are wrung with a new grief and a new pang by reason of the war in our neighborhood, this season seems to call for a word of consolation. And, as we commonly say, "Where the pain is there one claps his hand," I could not, in this so great affliction, make up my mind to turn my discourse upon any other subject. I do not, indeed, doubt that you yourselves seek comfort in the divine declarations, yet will I also bring before you some things collected therefrom, because always that on which we had ourselves thought becomes more precious to us when we hear that it proves itself salutary also to others. And because long discourses are burdensome in time of sorrow and mourning, I will, without delay, bring forward that comfort which is the most effectual.

Our pains are best assuaged when something good and beneficial, especially some help toward a happy issue, presents itself. All other topics of consolation, such as men borrow from the unavoidableness of suffering, and the examples of others, bring us no great alleviation. But the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified for us and raised again, and now sits at the right hand of the Father, offers us help and deliverance, and has manifested this disposition in many declarations. I will now speak of the words: "No man shall pluck my sheep out of my hand." This expression has often raised me up out of the deepest sorrow, and drawn me, as it were, out of hell.

The wisest men in all times have bewailed the great amount of human misery which we see with our eyes before we pass into eternity—diseases, death, want, our own errors, by which we bring harm and punishment on ourselves, hostile men, unfaithfulness on the part of those with whom we are closely connected, banishment, abuse, desertion, miserable children, public and domestic strife, wars, murder, and devastation. And since such things appear to befall good and bad without distinction, many wise men have inquired whether there were any Providence, or whether accident brings everything to pass independent of a divine purpose? But we in the Church know that the first and principal cause of human woe is this, that on account of sin man is made subject to death and other calamity, which is so much more vehement in the Church, because the devil, from the hatred toward God, makes fearful assaults on the Church and strives to destroy it utterly.

Therefore it is written: "I will put enmity between the serpent and the seed of the woman." And Peter says: "Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about and seeketh whom he may devour."

Not in vain, however, has God made known to us the causes of our misery. We should not only consider the greatness of our necessity, but also discern the causes of it, and recognize His righteous anger against sin, to the end that we may, on the other hand, perceive the Redeemer and the greatness of His compassion; and as witnesses to these, His declarations, He adds the raising of dead men to life, and other miracles.

Let us banish from our hearts, therefore, the unbelieving opinions which imagine that evils befall us by mere chance, or from physical causes.

But when thou considerest the wounds in thy own circle of relations, or dost cast a glance at the public disorders in the State, which again afflict the individual also (as Solon says: "The general corruption penetrates even to thy quiet habitation"), then think, first, of thy own and others' sins, and of the righteous wrath of God; and, secondly, weigh the rage of the devil, who lets loose his hate chiefly in the Church.

In all men, even the better class, great darkness reigns. We see not how great an evil sin is, and regard not ourselves as so shamefully defiled. We flatter ourselves, in particular, because we profess a better doctrine concerning God. Nevertheless, we resign ourselves to a careless slumber, or pamper each one his own desires; our impurity, the disorders of the Church, the necessity of brethren, fills us not with pain; devotion is without fire and fervor; zeal for doctrine and discipline languishes, and not a few are my sins, and thine, and those of many others, by reason of which such punishments are heaped upon us.

Let us, therefore, apply our hearts to repentance, and direct our eyes to the Son of God, in respect to whom we have the assurance that, after the wonderful counsel of God, He is placed over the family of man, to be the protector and preserver of his Church.

We perceive not fully either of our wretchedness or our dangers, or the fury of enemies, until after events of extraordinary sorrowfulness. Still we ought to reflect thus: there must exist great need and a fearful might and rage of enemies, since so powerful a protector has been given to us, even God's Son. When He says: "No man shall pluck my sheep out of my hand," He indicates that He is no idle spectator of woe, but that mighty and incessant strife is going on. The devil incites his tools to disturb the Church or the political commonwealth, that boundless confusion may enter, followed by heathenish desolation. But the Son of God, who holds in His hands, as it were, the congregation of those who call upon His name, hurls back the devils by His infinite power, conquers and chases them thence, and will one day shut them up in the prison of hell, and punish them to all eternity with fearful pains. This comfort we must hold fast in regard to the entire Church, as well as each in regard to himself.

If, in these distracted and warring times, we see States blaze up and fall to ruin, then look away to the Son of God, who stands in the secret counsel of the Godhead and guards His little flock and carries the weak lambs, as it were, in His own hands. Be persuaded that by Him thou also shalt be protected and upheld.

Here some, not rightly instructed, will exclaim: "Truly I could wish to commend myself to such a keeper, but only His sheep does He preserve. Whether I also am counted in that flock, I know not." Against this doubt we must most strenuously contend, for the Lord Himself assures us in this very passage, that all who "hear and with faith receive the voice of the gospel are His sheep"; and He says expressly: "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him." These promises of the Son of God, which can not be shaken, we must confidently appropriate to ourselves. Nor shouldst thou, by thy doubts, exclude thyself from this blest flock, which originates in the righteousness of the gospel. They do not rightly distinguish between the law and the gospel, who, because they are unworthy, reckon not themselves among the sheep. Rather is this consolation afforded us, that we are accepted "for the Son of God's sake," truly, without merit, not on account of our own righteousness, but through faith, because we are unworthy, and impure, and far from having fulfilled the law of God. That is, moreover, a universal promise, in which the Son of God saith: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The eternal Father earnestly commands that we should hear the Son, and it is the greatest of all transgressions if we despise Him and do not approve His voice. This is what every one should often and diligently consider, and in this disposition of the Father, revealed through the Son, find grace.

Altho, amid so great disturbances, many a sorrowful spectacle meets thine eye, and the Church is rent by discord and hate, and manifold and domestic public necessity is added thereto, still let not despair overcome thee, but know thou that thou hast the Son of God for a keeper and protector, who will not suffer either the Church, or thee, or thy family, to be plucked out of His hand by the fury of the devil.

With all my heart, therefore, do I supplicate the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who, having been crucified for us, and raised again, sits at the right hand of the Father, to bless men with His gifts, and to Him I pray that He would protect and govern this little church and me therein. Other sure trust, in this great flame when the whole world is on fire, I discern nowhere. Each one has his separate hopes, and each one with his understanding seeks to repose in something else; but however good that may all be, it is still a far better, and unquestionably a more effectual, consolation to flee to the Son of God and expect help and deliverances from Him.

Such wishes will not be in vain. For to this end are we laden with such a crowd of dangers, that in events and occurrences which to human prudence are an inexplicable enigma, we may recognize the infinite goodness and presentness of God, in that He, for His Son's sake, and through His Son, affords us aid. God will be owned in such deliverance just as in the deliverance of your first parents, who, after the fall, when they were forsaken by all the creatures, were upheld by the help of God alone. So was the family of Noah in the flood, so were the Israelites preserved when in the Red Sea they stood between the towering walls of waters. These glorious examples are held up before us, that we might know, in like manner, the Church, without the help of any created beings, is often preserved. Many in all times have experienced such divine deliverance and support in their personal dangers, as David saith: "My father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord taketh me up"; and in another place David saith: "He hath delivered the wretched, who hath no helper." But in order that we may become partakers of these so great blessings, faith and devotion must be kindled within us, as it stands written, "Verily, I say unto you!" So likewise must our faith be exercised, that before deliverance we should pray for help and wait for it, resting in God with a certain cheerfulness of soul; and that we should not cherish continual doubt and melancholy murmuring in our hearts, but constantly set before our eyes the admonition of God: "The peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your heart and mind"; which is to say, be so comforted in God, in time of danger, that your hearts, having been strengthened by confidence in the pity and presentness of God, may patiently wait for help and deliverance, and quietly maintain that peaceful serenity which is the beginning of eternal life, and without which there can be no true devotion.

For distrust and doubt produce a gloomy and terrible hate toward God, and that is the beginning of the eternal torments, and a rage like that of the devil.

Now you must guard against these billows in the soul, and these stormy agitations, and, by meditation on the precious promises of God, keep and establish your hearts.

Truly these times allow not the wonted security and the wonted intoxication of the world, but they demand that with honest groans we should cry for help, as the Lord saith, "Watch and pray that ye fall not into temptation," that ye may not, being overcome by despair, plunge into everlasting destruction. There is need of wisdom to discern the dangers of the soul, as well as the safeguard against them. Souls go to ruin as well when, in epicurean security, they make light of the wrath of God as when they are overcome by doubt and cast down by anxious sorrow, and these transgressions aggravate the punishment. The godly, on the other hand, who by faith and devotion keep their hearts erect and near to God, enjoy the beginning of eternal life and obtain mitigation of the general distress.

We, therefore, implore Thee, Son of God, Lord Jesus Christ, who, having been crucified and raised for us, standest in the secret counsel of the Godhead, and makest intercession for us, and hast said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." I call upon Thee, and with my whole heart beseech Thee, according to Thine infinite compassion, forgive us our sins. Thou knowest that in our great weakness we are not able to bear the burden of our woe. Do Thou, therefore, afford us aid in our private and public necessities; be Thou our shelter and protector, uphold the churches in these lands, and all which serves for their defense and safeguard.

÷01-09 KNOX

09 KNOX

THE FIRST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Knox, the great Scottish reformer, was born at Giffordgate, four miles from Haddington, Scotland, in 1505. He first made his appearance as a preacher in Edinburgh, where he thundered against popery, but was imprisoned and sent to the galleys in 1546. In 1547 Edward VI secured his release and made him a royal chaplain, when he acquired the friendship of Cranmer and other reformers. On the accession of Mary (1553) he took refuge on the Continent. In 1556 he accepted the charge of a church in Geneva, but, after three years of tranquillity, returned to Scotland and became a popular leader of the Reformation in that country. His eloquence lashed the multitude to enthusiasm and acts of turbulent violence. As a preacher his style was direct and fearless, often fiery, and he had a habit of pounding the pulpit to emphasize particular truths. He died in 1572.

KNOX 1505—1572

THE FIRST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

*Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil*.—Mat 4:1.

The cause moving me to treat of this place of Scripture is, that such as by the inscrutable providence of God fall into divers temptations, judge not themselves by reason thereof to be less acceptable in God's presence. But, on the contrary, having the way prepared to victory by Jesus Christ, they shall not fear above measure the crafty assaults of that subtle serpent Satan; but with joy and bold courage, having such a guide as here is pointed forth, such a champion, and such weapons as here are to be found (if with obedience we will hear, and unfeigned faith believe), we may assure ourselves of God's present favor, and of final victory, by the means of Him, who, for our safeguard and deliverance, entered in the battle, and triumphed over His adversary, and all his raging fury. And that this being heard and understood, may the better be kept in memory; this order, by God's grace, we propose to observe, in treating the matter: First, What this word temptation meaneth, and how it is used within the Scriptures. Secondly, Who is here tempted and at what time this temptation happened. Thirdly, How and by what means He was tempted. Fourthly, Why He should suffer these temptations, and what fruits ensue to us from the same.

First, Temptation, or to tempt, in the Scriptures of God, is called to try, to prove, or to assault the valor, the power, the will, the pleasure, or the wisdom—whether it be of God, or of creatures. And it is taken sometimes in good part, as when it is said that God tempted Abraham; God tempted the people of Israel; that is, God did try and examine them, not for His own knowledge, to whom nothing is hid, but to certify others how obedient Abraham was to God's commandment, and how weak and inferior Israelites were in their journey toward the promised land. And this temptation is always good, because it proceeds immediately from God, to open and make manifest the secret motions of men's hearts, the puissance and power of God's word, and the great lenity and gentleness of God toward the iniquities (yea, horrible sins and rebellions) of those whom He hath received into His regimen and care. For who could have believed that the bare word of God could so have moved the heart and affections of Abraham, that to obey God's commandment he determined to kill, with his own hand, his best-beloved son Isaac? Who could have trusted that, so many torments as Job suffered, he should not speak in all his great temptation one foolish word against God? Or who could have thought that God so mercifully should have pardoned so many and so manifest transgressions committed by His people in the desert, and yet that His mercy never utterly left them, but still continued with them, till at length he performed His promise made to Abraham? Who, I say, would have been persuaded of these things, unless by trials and temptations taken of His creatures by God, they had come by revelation made in His holy Scriptures to our knowledge? And so this kind of temptation is profitable, good, and necessary, as a thing proceeding from God, who is the fountain of all goodness, to the manifestation of His own glory, and to the profit of the suffered, however the flesh may judge in the hour of temptation. Otherwise temptation, or to tempt, is taken in evil part; that is, he that assaults or assails intends destruction and confusion to him that is assaulted. As when Satan tempted the women in the garden, Job by divers tribulations, and David by adultery. The scribes and Pharisees tempted Christ by divers means, questions, and subtleties. And of this matter, saith St. James, "God tempteth no man"; that is, by temptation proceeding immediately from Him He intends no man's destruction. And here you shall note, that altho Satan appears sometimes to prevail against God's elect, yet he is ever frustrated of his final purpose. By temptation He led Eve and David from the obedience of God, but He could not retain them forever under His thraldom. Power was granted to Him to spoil Job of his substance and children, and to strike his body with a plague and sickness most vile and fearful, but He could not compel his mouth to blaspheme God's majesty; and, therefore, altho we are laid open sometimes, as it were, to tribulation for a time, it is that when He has poured forth the venom of His malice against God's elect it may return to His own confusion, and that the deliverance of God's children may be more to His glory, and the comfort of the afflicted: knowing that His hand is so powerful, His mercy and good-will so prompt, that He delivers His little ones from their cruel enemy, even as David did his sheep and lambs from the mouth of the lion. For a little benefit received in extreme danger more moves us than the preservation from ten thousand perils, so that we fall not into them. And yet to preserve from dangers and perils so that we fall not into them, whether they are of body or spirit, is no less the work of God than to deliver from them; but the weakness of our faith does not perceive it: this I leave at the present.

Also, to tempt means simply to prove or try without any determinate purpose or profit or damage to ensue; as when the mind doubteth of anything, and therein desires to be satisfied, without great love or extreme hatred of the thing that is tempted or tried. David tempted; that is, tried himself if he could go in harness. (I Sam. xvii.) And Gideon said, "Let not thine anger kindle against me, if I tempt thee once again." So the Queen of Sheba came to tempt Solomon in subtle questions. This famous queen, not fully trusting the report and fame that was spread of Solomon, by subtle questions desired to prove his wisdom; at the first, neither extremely hating nor fervently loving the person of the king. And David, as a man not accustomed to harness, would try how he was able to go, and behave and fashion himself therein, before he would hazard battle with Goliath so armed. And Gideon, not satisfied in his conscience by the first that he received, desired, without contempt or hatred of God, a second time to be certified of his vocation. In this sense must the apostle be expounded when he commands us to tempt; that is, to try and examine ourselves, if we stand in the faith. Thus much for the term.

Now to the person tempted, and to the time and place of his temptation. The person tempted is the only well-beloved Son of God; the time was immediately after His baptism; and the place was the desert or wilderness. But that we derive advantage from what is related, we must consider the same more profoundly. That the Son of God was thus tempted gives instructions to us, that temptations, altho they be ever so grievous and fearful, do not separate us from God's favor and mercy, but rather declare the great graces of God to appertain to us, which makes Satan to rage as a roaring lion; for against none does He so fiercely fight as against those of whose hearts Christ has taken possession.

The time of Christ's temptation is here most diligently to be noted. And that was, as Mark and Luke witness, immediately after the voice of God the Father had commended His Son to the world, and had visibly pointed to Him by the sign of the Holy Ghost; He was led or moved by the Spirit to go to a wilderness, where forty days he remained fasting among the wild beasts. This Spirit which led Christ into the wilderness was not the devil, but the holy Spirit of God the Father, by whom Christ, as touching His human and manly nature, was conducted and led; likewise by the same Spirit He was strengthened and made strong, and, finally, raised up from the dead. The Spirit of God, I say, led Christ to the place of His battle, where He endured the combat for the whole forty days and nights. As Luke saith, "He was tempted," but in the end most vehemently, after His continual fasting, and that He began to be hungry. Upon this forty days and this fasting of Christ do our Papists found and build their Lent; for, say they, all the actions of Christ are our instructions; what He did we ought to follow. But He fasted forty days, therefore we ought to do the like. I answer, that if we ought to follow all Christ's actions, then ought we neither to eat nor drink for the space of forty days, for so fasted Christ; we ought to go upon the waters with our feet; to cast out devils by our word; to heal and cure all sorts of maladies; to call again the dead to life; for so did Christ. This I write only that men may see the vanity of those who, boasting themselves of wisdom, have become fools.

Did Christ fast those forty days to teach us superstitious fasting? Can the Papists assure me, or any other man, which were the forty days that Christ fasted? plain it is he fasted the forty days and nights that immediately followed His baptism, but which they were, or in what month was the day of His baptism, Scripture does not express; and altho the day were exprest, am I or any Christian bound to counterfeit Christ's actions as the ape counterfeits the act or work of man? He Himself requires no such obedience of His true followers, but saith to the apostles, "Go and preach the gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; commanding them to observe and keep all that I have commanded you." Here Christ Jesus requires the observance of His precepts and commandments, not of His actions, except in so far as He had also commanded them; and so must the apostle be understood when he saith, "Be followers of Christ, for Christ hath suffered for us, that we should follow His footsteps," which can not be understood of every action of Christ, either in the mystery of our redemption, or in His actions and marvelous works, but only of those which He hath commanded us to observe. But where the Papists are so diligent in establishing their dreams and fantasies, they lose the profit that here is to be gathered; that is, why Christ fasted those forty days; which were a doctrine more necessary for Christians than to corrupt the simple hearts with superstition, as tho the wisdom of God, Christ Jesus, had taught us no other mystery by His fasting than the abstinence from flesh, or once on the day to eat flesh, for the space of forty days. God hath taken a just vengeance upon the pride of such men, while He thus confounds the wisdom of those that do most glory in wisdom, and strikes with blindness such as will be guides and lanterns to the feet of others, and yet refuse themselves to hear or follow the light of God's word. From such deliver thy poor flock, O Lord!

The uses of Christ's fasting these forty days I find chiefly to be two: The first, to witness to the world the dignity and excellence of His vocation, which Christ, after His baptism, was to take upon Him openly; the other, to declare that he entered into battle willingly for our cause, and does, as it were, provoke his adversary to assault Him: altho Christ Jesus, in the eternal counsel of His Father, was appointed to be the Prince of Peace, the angel (that is, the messenger) of His testament, and He alone that could fight our battles for us, yet He did not enter in execution of it, in the sight of men, till He was commended to mankind by the voice of His heavenly Father; and as He was placed and anointed by the Holy Ghost by a visible sign given to the eyes of men. After which time He was led to the desert, and fasted, as before is said; and this He did to teach us with what fear, carefulness, and reverence the messengers of the Word ought to enter on their vocation, which is not only most excellent (for who is worthy to be God's ambassador?) but also subject to most extreme troubles and dangers. For he that is appointed pastor, watchman, or preacher, if he feed not with his whole power, if he warn and admonish not when he sees the snare come, and if, in doctrine, he divide not the Word righteously, the blood and souls of those that perish for lack of food, admonition, and doctrine shall be required of his hand.

But to our purpose; that Christ exceeded not the space of forty days in His fasting, He did it to the imitation of Moses and Elias; of whom, the one before the receiving of the law, and the other before the communication and reasoning which he had with God in Mount Horeb, in which He was commanded to anoint Hazael king over Syria, and Jehu king over Israel, and Elisha to be prophet, fasted the same number of days. The events that ensued and followed this supernatural fasting of these two servants of God, Moses and Elias, impaired and diminished the tyranny of the kingdom of Satan. For by the law came the knowledge of sin, the damnation of such impieties, specially of idolatry, and such as the devil had invented; and, finally, by the law came such a revelation of God's will that no man could justly afterward excuse his sin by ignorance, by which the devil before had blinded many. So that the law, altho it might not renew and purge the heart, for that the Spirit of Christ Jesus worketh by faith only, yet it was a bridle that did hinder and stay the rage of external wickedness in many, and was a schoolmaster that led unto Christ. For when man can find no power in himself to do that which is commanded, and perfectly understands, and when he believes that the curse of God is pronounced against those that abide not in everything that is commanded in God's law to do them—the man, I say, that understands and knows his own corrupt nature and God's severe judgment, most gladly will receive the free redemption offered by Christ Jesus, which is the only victory that overthrows Satan and his power. And so by the giving of the law God greatly weakened, impaired, and made frail the tyranny and kingdom of the devil. In the days of Elias, the devil had so prevailed that kings and rulers made open war against God, killing His prophets, destroying His ordinances, and building up idolatry, which did so prevail that the prophet complained that of all the true fearers and worshipers of God he was left alone, and wicked Jezebel sought His life also. After this, his fasting and complaint, he was sent by God to anoint the persons aforenamed, who took such vengeance upon the wicked and obstinate idolaters that he who escaped the sword of Hazael fell into the hands of Jehu, and those whom Jehu left escaped not God's vengeance under Elisha.

The remembrance of this was fearful to Satan, for, at the coming of Christ Jesus, impiety was in the highest degree among those that pretended most knowledge of God's will; and Satan was at such rest in his kingdom that the priests, scribes and Pharisees had taken away the key of knowledge; that is, they had so obscured and darkened God's Holy Scriptures, by false glosses and vain traditions, that neither would they themselves enter into the kingdom of God, nor suffer and permit others to enter; but with violence restrained, and with tyranny struck back from the right way, that is, from Christ Jesus Himself, such as would have entered into the possession of life everlasting by Him. Satan, I say, having such dominion over the chief rulers of the visible Church, and espying in Christ, such graces as before he had not seen in man, and considering Him to follow in fasting the footsteps of Moses and Elias, no doubt greatly feared that the quietness and rest of his most obedient servants, the priests, and their adherents, would be troubled by Christ. And, therefore, by all engines and craft, he assaults Him to see what advantage he could have of Him. And Christ did not repel him, as by the power of His Godhead He might have done, that he should not tempt Him, but permitted him to spend all his artillery, and received the strokes and assaults of Satan's temptations in His own body, to the end He might weaken and enfeeble the strength and tyrannous power of our adversary by His long suffering. For thus, methinks, our Master and Champion, Jesus Christ, provoked our enemy to battle: "Satan, thou gloriest of thy power and victories over mankind, that there is none able to withstand thy assaults, nor escape thy darts, but at one time or other thou givest him a wound: lo! I am a man like to my brethren, having flesh and blood, and all properties of man's nature (sin, which is thy venom, excepted); tempt, try, and assault me; I offer you here a place most convenient—the wilderness. There shall be no mortal to comfort me against thy assaults; thou shalt have time sufficient; do what thou canst, I shall not fly the place of battle. If thou become victor, thou shalt still continue in possession of thy kingdom in this wretched world; but if thou canst not prevail against me, then must thy prey and unjust spoil be taken from thee; thou must grant thyself vanquished and confounded, and must be compelled to leave off from all accusation of the members of my body; for to them appertains the fruit of my battle, my victory is theirs, as I am appointed to take the punishment of their sins in my body."

What comfort ought the remembrance of these signs to be to our hearts! Christ Jesus hath fought our battle; He Himself hath taken us into His care and protection; however the devil may rage by temptations, be they spiritual or corporeal, he is not able to bereave us out of the hand of the almighty Son of God. To Him be all glory for His mercies most abundantly poured upon us!

There remains yet to be spoken of the time when our Lord was tempted, which began immediately after His baptism. Whereupon we have to note the mark, that altho the malice of Satan never ceases, but always seeks for means to trouble the godly, yet sometimes he rages more fiercely than others, and that is commonly when God begins to manifest His love and favor to any of His children, and at the end of their battle, when they are nearest to obtain final victory. The devil, no doubt, did at all times envy the humble spirit that was in Abel, but he did not stir up the cruel heart of Cain against him till God declared His favor toward him by accepting his sacrifice. The same we find in Jacob, Joseph, David, and most evidently in Christ Jesus. How Satan raged at the tidings of Christ's nativity! what blood he caused to be shed on purpose to have murdered Christ in His infancy! The evangelist St. Matthew witnesses that in all the coasts and borders of Bethlehem the children of two years old and less age were murdered without mercy. A fearful spectacle and horrid example of insolent and unaccustomed tyranny! And what is the cause moving Satan thus to rage against innocents, considering that by reason of their imperfections they could not hurt his kingdom at that instant? Oh, the crafty eye of Satan looked farther than to the present time; he heard reports by the three wise men, that they had learned by the appearance of a star that the King of the Jews was born; and he was not ignorant that the time prophesied of Christ's coming was then instant; for a stranger was clad with the crown and scepter of Judah. The angel had declared the glad tidings to the shepherds, that a Savior, which was Christ the Lord, was born in the city of David. All these tidings inflamed the wrath and malice of Satan, for he perfectly understood that the coming of the promised Seed was appointed to his confusion, and to the breaking down of his head and tyranny; and therefore he raged most cruelly, even at the first hearing of Christ's birth, thinking that altho he could not hinder nor withstand His coming, yet he could shorten his days upon earth, lest by long life and peaceable quietness in it, the number of good men, by Christ's doctrine and virtuous life, should be multiplied; and so he strove to cut Him away among the other children before He could open His mouth on His Father's message. Oh, cruel serpent! in vain dost thou spend thy venom, for the days of God's elect thou canst not shorten! And when the wheat is fallen on the ground, then doth it most multiply.

But from these things mark, what hath been the practise of the devil from the beginning—most cruelly to rage against God's children when God begins to show them His mercy. And, therefore, marvel not, dearly beloved, altho the like come unto you.

If Satan fume or roar against you, whether it be against your bodies by persecution, or inwardly in your conscience by a spiritual battle, be not discouraged, as tho you were less acceptable in God's presence, or as if Satan might at any time prevail against you. No; your temptations and storms, that arise so suddenly, argue and witness that the seed which is sown is fallen on good ground, begins to take root and shall, by God's grace, bring forth fruit abundantly in due season and convenient time. That is it which Satan fears, and therefore thus he rages, and shall rage against you, thinking that if he can repulse you now suddenly in the beginning, that then you shall be at all times an easy prey, never able to resist his assaults. But as my hope is good, so shall my prayer be, that so you may be strengthened, that the world and Satan himself may perceive or understand that God fights your battle. For you remember that being present with you and treating of the same place, I admonished you that Satan could not long sleep when his kingdom was threatened. And therefore I willed you, if you were in mind to continue with Christ, to prepare yourselves for the day of temptation. The person of the speaker is wretched, miserable, and nothing to be regarded, but the things that were spoken are the infallible and eternal truth of God; without observation of which, life neither can or shall come to mankind. God grant you continuance to the end.

This much have I briefly spoken of the temptation of Christ Jesus, who was tempted; and of the time and place of His temptation. Now remains to be spoken how He was tempted, and by what means. The most part of expositors think that all this temptation was in spirit and in imagination only, the corporeal senses being nothing moved. I will contend with no man in such cases, but patiently will I suffer every man to abound in his own knowledge; and without prejudice of any man's estimation, I offer my judgment to be weighed and considered by Christian charity. It appears to me by the plain text that Christ suffered this temptation in body and spirit. Likewise, as the hunger which Christ suffered, and the desert in which He remained, were not things offered to the imagination, but that the body did verily remain in the wilderness among beasts, and after forty days did hunger and faint for lack of food; so the external ear did hear the tempting words of Satan, which entered into the knowledge of the soul, and which, repelling the venom of such temptations, caused the tongue to speak and confute Satan, to our unspeakable comfort and consolation. It appears also that the body of Christ Jesus was carried by Satan from the wilderness unto the temple of Jerusalem, and that it was placed upon the pinnacle of the same temple, from whence it was carried to a high mountain and there tempted. If any man can show to the contrary hereof by the plain Scriptures of God, with all submission and thanksgiving I will prefer his judgment to my own; but if the matter stand only in probability and opinion of men, then it is lawful for me to believe as the Scripture here speaks; that is, that Satan spake and Christ answered, and Satan took Him and carried Him from one place to another. Besides the evidence of the text affirming that Satan was permitted to carry the body of Christ from place to place, and yet was not permitted to execute any further tyranny against it, is most singular comfort to such as are afflicted or troubled in body or spirit. The weak and feeble conscience of man under such temptations, commonly gathers and collects a false consequence. For man reasons thus: The body or the spirit is vexed by assaults and temptations of Satan, and he troubles or molests it, therefore God is angry with it, and takes no care of it. I answer, tribulations or grievous vexations of body or of mind are never signs of God's displeasure against the sufferer, neither yet does it follow that God has cast away the care of His creatures because He permits them to be molested and vexed for a time. For if any sort of tribulation were the infallible sign of God's displeasure, then should we condemn the best beloved children of God. But of this we may speak hereafter. Now to the temptation.

Verse 2. "And when he fasteth forty days and forty nights, He was afterwards an hungered." Verse 3. 'Then came to Him the tempter,' and said, 'If you be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread,' etc. Why Christ fasted forty days and would not exceed the same, without sense and feeling of hunger, is before touched upon, that is, He would provoke the devil to battle by the wilderness and long abstinence, but He would not usurp or arrogate any more to Himself in that case than God had wrought with others, His servants and messengers before. But Christ Jesus (as St. Augustine more amply declares), without feeling of hunger, might have endured the whole year, or to time without end, as well as He did endure the space of forty days. For the nature of mankind was sustained those forty days by the invisible power of God, which is at all times of equal power. But Christ, willing to offer further occasion to Satan to proceed in tempting of Him, permitted the human nature to crave earnestly that which it lacked, that is to say, refreshing of meat; which Satan perceiving took occasion, as before, to tempt and assault. Some judge that Satan tempted Christ to gluttony, but this appears little to agree with the purpose of the Holy Ghost; who shows us this history to let us understand that Satan never ceases to oppugn the children of God, but continually, by one mean or other, drives or provokes them to some wicked opinions of their God; and to have them desire stones to be converted into bread, or to desire hunger to be satisfied, has never been sin, nor yet a wicked opinion of God. And therefore I doubt not but the temptation was more spiritual, more subtle, and more dangerous. Satan had respect to the voice of God, which had pronounced Christ to be His well-beloved Son, etc. Against this voice he fights, as his nature is ever to do against the assured and immutable Word of God; for such is his malice against God, and against His chosen children, that where and to whom God pronounces love and mercy, to these he threatens displeasures and damnation; and where God threatens death, there is he bold to pronounce life; and for this course is Satan called a liar from the beginning. And so the purpose of Satan was to drive Christ into desperation, that he should not believe the former voice of God His Father; which appears to be the meaning of this temptation: "Thou hast heard," would Satan say, "a voice proclaimed in the air, that Thou wast the beloved Son of God, in whom His soul was pleased; but mayst Thou not be judged more than mad, and weaker than the brainless fool if Thou believest any such promise? Where are the signs of His love? Art Thou not cast out from comfort of all creatures? Thou art in worse case than the brute beasts, for every day they hunt for their prey, and the earth produces grass and herbs for their sustenance, so that none of them are pined and consumed away by hunger; but Thou hast fasted forty days and nights, ever waiting for some relief and comfort from above, but Thy best provision is hard stones! If Thou dost glory in thy God, and dost verily believe the promise that is made, command that these stones be bread. But evident it is that so Thou canst not do; for if Thou couldst, or if Thy God would have showed Thee any such pleasure, Thou mightest long ago have removed Thy hunger, and needest not have endured this languishing for lack of food. But seeing Thou hast long continued thus, and no provision is made for Thee, it is vanity longer to believe any such promise, and therefore despair of any help from God's hand, and provide for Thyself by some other means!"

Many words have I used here, dearly beloved, but I can not express the thousandth part of the malicious despite which lurked in this one temptation of Satan. It was a mocking of Christ and of His obedience. It was a plain denial of God's promise. It was the triumphing voice of him that appeared to have gotten victory. Oh, how bitter this temptation was no creature can understand but such as feel the grief of such darts as Satan casts at the tender conscience of those that gladly would rest and repose in God, and in the promises of His mercy. But here is to be noted the ground and foundation. The conclusion of Satan is this: Thou art none of God's elect, much less His well-beloved Son. His reason is this: Thou art in trouble and findest no relief. There the foundation of the temptation was Christ's poverty, and the lack of food without hope of remedy to be sent from God. And it is the same temptation which the devil objected to Him by the princes of the priests in His grievous torments upon the cross; for thus they cried, "If he be the Son of God, let him come down from the cross and we will believe in him; he trusted in God, let him deliver him, if he have the pleasure in him." As tho they would say, God is the deliverer of His servants from troubles; God never permits those that fear Him to come to confusion; this man we see in extreme trouble; if He be the Son of God, or even a true worshiper of His name, He will deliver Him from this calamity. If He deliver Him not, but suffer Him to perish in these anguishes, then it is an assured sign that God has rejected Him as a hypocrite, that shall have no portion of His glory. Thus, I say, Satan takes occasion to tempt, and moves also others to judge and condemn God's elect and chosen children, by reason that troubles are multiplied upon them.

But with what weapons we ought to fight against such enemies and assaults we shall learn in the answer of Christ Jesus, which follows: But He, answering, said "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God." This answer of Christ proves the sentence which we have brought of the aforesaid temptation to be the very meaning of the Holy Ghost; for unless the purpose of Satan has been to have removed Christ from all hope of God's merciful providence toward Him in that His necessity, Christ had not answered directly to his words, saying, "Command that these stones be made bread." But Christ Jesus, perceiving his art and malicious subtility, answered directly to his meaning, His words nothing regarded; by which Satan was so confounded that he was ashamed to reply any further.

But that you may the better understand the meaning of Christ's answer, we will express and repeat it over in more words. "Thou laborest, Satan," would Christ say, "to bring into my heart a doubt and suspicion of My Father's promise, which was openly proclaimed in My baptism, by reason of My hunger, and that I lack all carnal provision. Thou art bold to affirm that God takes no care for Me, but thou art a deceitful and false corrupt sophister, and thy argument, too, is vain, and full of blasphemies; for thou bindest God's love, mercy, and providence to the having or wanting of bodily provision, which no part of God's Scriptures teach us, but rather the express contrary. As it is written, 'Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proeeedeth out of the mouth of God,' that is, the very life and felicity of man consists not in the abundance of bodily things, or the possession and having of them makes no man blest or happy; neither shall the lack of them be the cause of his final misery; but the very life of man consists in God, and in His promises pronounced by His own mouth, unto which whoso cleaves unfeignedly shall live the life everlasting. And altho all creatures in earth forsake him, yet shall not his bodily life perish till the time appointed by God approach. For God has means to feed, preserve, and maintain, unknown to man's reason, and contrary to the common course of nature. He fed His people Israel in the desert forty years without the provision of man. He preserved Jonah in the whale's belly; and maintained and kept the bodies of the three children in the furnace of fire. Reason and the natural man could have seen nothing in these cases but destruction and death, and could have judged nothing but that God had cast away the care of these, His creatures, and yet His providence was most vigilant toward them in the extremity of their dangers, from which He did so deliver them, and in the midst of them did so assist them, that His glory, which is His mercy and goodness, did more appear and shine after their troubles than it could have done if they had fallen in them. And therefore I measure not the truth and favor of God by having or by lacking of bodily necessities, but by the promise which He has made to me. As He Himself is immutable, so is His word and promise constant, which I believe, and to which I will adhere, and so cleave, whatever can come to the body outwardly."

In this answer of Christ we may perceive what weapons are to be used against our adversary the devil, and how we may confute his arguments, which craftily, and of malice, he makes against God's elect. Christ might have repulsed Satan with a word, or by commanding him to silence, as He to whom all power was given in heaven and earth; but it pleased His mercy to teach us how to use the sword of the Holy Ghost, which is the word of God, in battle against our spiritual enemy. The Scripture which Christ brings is written in the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy. It was spoken by Moses a little before His death, to establish the people in God's merciful providence. For in the same chapter, and in certain others that go before, He reckons the great travail and divers dangers with the extreme necessities that they had sustained in the desert the space of forty years, and yet, notwithstanding how constant God had been in keeping and performing His promise, for throughout all perils He had conducted them to the sight and borders of the promised land. And so this Scripture more directly answers to the temptation of Satan; for thus does Satan reason, as before is said, "Thou art in poverty and hast no provision to sustain thy life. Therefore God takes no regard nor care of Thee, as He doth over His chosen children." Christ Jesus answered: "Thy argument is false and vain; for poverty or necessity precludes not the providence or care of God; which is easy to be proved by the people of God, Israel, who, in the desert, oftentimes lacked things necessary to the sustenance of life, and for lack of the same they grudged and murmured; yet the Lord never cast away the providence and care of them, but according to the word that He had once pronounced, to wit, that they were His peculiar people; and according to the promise made to Abraham, and to them before their departure from Egypt, He still remained their conductor and guide, till He placed them in peaceable possession of the land of Canaan, their great infirmities and manifold transgressions notwithstanding."

Thus are we taught, I say, by Christ Jesus, to repulse Satan and his assaults by the Word of God, and to apply the examples of His mercies, which He has shown to others before us, to our own souls in the hour of temptation, and in the time of our trouble. For what God doth to one at any time, the same appertains to all that depend upon God and His promises. And, therefore, however we are assaulted by Satan, our adversary, within the Word of God is armor and weapons sufficient. The chief craft of Satan is to trouble those that begin to decline from his obedience, and to declare themselves enemies to iniquity, with divers assaults, the design whereof is always the same; that is, to put variance betwixt them and God into their conscience, that they should not repose and rest themselves in His assured promises. And to persuade this, he uses and invents divers arguments. Sometimes he calls the sins of their youth, and which they have committed in the time of blindness, to their remembrance; very often he objects their unthankfulness toward God and present imperfections. By sickness, poverty, tribulations in their household, or by persecution, he can allege that God is angry, and regard them not. Or by the spiritual cross which few feel and fewer understand the utility and profit of, he would drive God's children to desperation, and by infinite means more, he goeth about seeking, like a roaring lion, to undermine and destroy our faith. But it is impossible for him to prevail against us unless we obstinately refuse to use the defense and weapons that God has offered. Yea, I say, that God's elect can not refuse it, but seek for their Defender when the battle is most strong; for the sobs, groans, and lamentations of such as fight, yea, the fear they have lest they be vanquished, the calling and prayer for continuance, are the undoubted and right seeking of Christ our champion. We refuse not the weapon, altho sometimes, by infirmity, we can not use it as we would. It suffices that your hearts unfeignedly sob for greater strength, for continuance, and for final deliverance by Christ Jesus; that which is wanting in us, His sufficiency doth supply; for it is He that fighteth and overcometh for us. But for bringing of the examples of the Scriptures, if God permit, in the end we shall speak more largely when it shall be treated why Christ permitted Himself thus to be tempted. Sundry impediments now call me from writing in this matter, but, by God's grace, at convenient leisure I purpose to finish, and to send it to you. I grant the matter that proceeds from me is not worthy of your pain and labor to read it; yet, seeing it is a testimony of my good mind toward you, I doubt not but you will accept it in good part. God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant unto you to find favor and mercy of the Judge, whose eyes and knowledge pierce through the secret cogitations of the heart, in the day of temptation, which shall come upon all flesh, according to that mercy which you (illuminated and directed by His Holy Spirit) have showed to the afflicted. Now the God of all comfort and consolation confirm and strengthen you in His power unto the end. Amen.

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ENDURING PERSECUTION FOR CHRIST

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Calvin was born in 1509, at Noyon, France. He has been called the greatest of Protestant commentators and theologians, and the inspirer of the Puritan exodus. He often preached every day for weeks in succession. He possest two of the greatest elements in successful pulpit oratory, self-reliance and authority. It was said of him, as it was afterward said of Webster, that "every word weighed a pound." His style was simple, direct, and convincing. He made men think. His splendid contributions to religious thought, and his influence upon individual liberty, give him a distinguished place among great reformers and preachers. His idea of preaching is thus exprest in his own words: "True preaching must not be dead, but living and effective. No parade of rhetoric, but the Spirit of God must resound in the voice in order to operate with power." He died at Geneva in 1564.

CALVIN 1509—1564

ENDURING PERSECUTION FOR CHRIST

*Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp bearing his reproach*.—Heb 13:13.

All the exhortations which can be given us to suffer patiently for the name of Jesus Christ, and in defense of the gospel, will have no effect if we do not feel assured of the cause for which we fight. For when we are called to part with life, it is absolutely necessary to know on what grounds. The firmness necessary we can not possess, unless it be founded on certainty of faith.

It is true that persons may be found who will foolishly expose themselves to death in maintaining some absurd opinions and dreams conceived by their own brain, but such impetuosity is more to be regarded as frenzy than as Christian zeal; and, in fact, there is neither firmness nor sound sense in those who thus, at a kind of haphazard, cast themselves away. But, however this may be, it is in a good cause only that God can acknowledge us as His martyrs. Death is common to all, and the children of God are condemned to ignominy and tortures as criminals are; but God makes the distinction between them, inasmuch as He can not deny His truth. On our part, then, it is requisite that we have sure and infallible evidence of the doctrine which we maintain; and hence, as I have said, we can not be rationally imprest by any exhortations which we receive to suffer persecution for the gospel, if no true certainty of faith has been imprinted in our hearts. For to hazard our life upon a peradventure is not natural, and tho we were to do it, it would only be rashness, not Christian courage. In a word, nothing that we do will be approved of God if we are not thoroughly persuaded that it is for Him and His cause we suffer persecution, and the world is our enemy.

Now, when I speak of such persuasion, I mean not merely that we must know how to distinguish between true religion and the abuses or follies of men, but also that we must be thoroughly persuaded of the heavenly life, and the crown which is promised us above, after we shall have fought here below. Let us understand, then, that both of these requisites are necessary, and can not be separated from each other. The points, accordingly, with which we must commence are these: We must know well what our Christianity is, what the faith which we have to hold and follow, what the rule which God has given us; and we must be so well furnished with such instructions as to be able boldly to condemn all the falsehoods, errors, and superstitions which Satan has introduced to corrupt the pure simplicity of the doctrine of God. Hence, we ought not to be surprized that, in the present day, we see so few persons disposed to suffer for the gospel, and that the greater part of those who call themselves Christians know not what it is. For all are, as it were, lukewarm; and instead of making it their business to hear or read, count it enough to have had some slight taste of Christian faith. This is the reason why there is so little decision, and why those who are assailed immediately fall away. This fact should stimulate us to inquire more diligently into divine truth, in order to be well assured with, regard to it.

Still, however, to be well informed and grounded is not the whole that is necessary. For we see some who seem to be thoroughly imbued with sound doctrine, and who, notwithstanding, have no more zeal or affection than if they had never known any more of God than some fleeting fancy. Why is this? Just because they have never comprehended the majesty of the Holy Scriptures. And, in fact, did we, such as we are, consider well that it is God who speaks to us, it is certain that we would listen more attentively, and with greater reverence. If we would think that in reading Scripture we are in the school of angels, we would be far more careful and desirous to profit by the doctrine which is propounded to us.

We now see the true method of preparing to suffer for the gospel. First, We must have profited so far in the school of God as to be decided in regard to true religion and the doctrine which we are to hold; and we must despise all the wiles and impostures of Satan, and, all human inventions, as things not only frivolous but also carnal, inasmuch as they corrupt Christian purity; therein differing, like true martyrs of Christ, from the fantastic persons who suffer for mere absurdities. Second, Feeling assured of the good cause, we must be inflamed, accordingly, to follow God whithersoever He may call us: His Word must have such authority with us as it deserves, and having withdrawn from this world, we must feel as it were enraptured in seeking the heavenly life.

But it is more than strange that, tho the light of God is shining more brightly than it ever did before, there is a lamentable want of zeal! If the thought does not fill us with shame, so much the worse. For we must shortly come before the great Judge, where the iniquity which we endeavor to hide will be brought forward with such upbraidings that we shall be utterly confounded. For, if we are obliged to bear testimony to God, according to the measure of the knowledge which He has given us, to what is it owing, I would ask, that we are so cold and timorous in entering into battle, seeing that God has so fully manifested Himself at this time that He may be said to have opened to us and displayed before us the great treasures of His secrets? May it not be said that we do not think we have to do with God? For had we any regard to His Majesty we would not dare to turn the doctrine which proceeds from Him into some kind of philosophic speculation. In short, it is impossible to deny that it is our great shame, not to say fearful condemnation, that we have so well known the truth of God, and have so little courage to maintain it!

Above all, when we look to the martyrs of past times, well may we detest our own cowardice! The greater part of those were not persons much versed in Holy Scripture, so as to be able to dispute on all subjects. They knew that there was one God, whom they behooved to worship and serve—that they had been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, in order that they might place their confidence of salvation in Him and in His grace—and that, all the inventions of men being mere dross and rubbish, they ought to condemn all idolatries and superstitions. In one word, their theology was in substance this—There is one God who created all the world, and declared His will to us by Moses and the prophets, and finally by Jesus Christ and His apostles; and we have one sole Redeemer, who purchased us by His blood, and by whose grace we hope to be saved: All the idols of the world are curst, and deserve execration.

With a system embracing no other points than these, they went boldly to the flames, or to any other kind of death. They did not go in twos or threes, but in such bands that the number of those who fell by the hands of tyrants is almost infinite! We, on our part, are such learned clerks that none can be more so (so at least we think), and, in fact, so far as regards the knowledge of Scripture, God has so spread it out before us that no former age was ever so highly favored. Still, after all, there is scarcely a particle of zeal. When men manifest such indifference, it looks as if they were bent on provoking the vengeance of God.

What then should be done in order to inspire our breasts with true courage? We have, in the first place, to consider how precious the confession of our faith is in the sight of God. We little know how much God prizes it, if our life, which is nothing, is valued by us more highly. When it is so, we manifest a marvelous degree of stupidity. We can not save our life at the expense of our confession with out acknowledging that we hold it in higher estimation than the honor of God and the salvation of our souls.

A heathen could say that "It was a miserable thing to save life by giving up the only things which made life desirable!" And yet he and others like him never knew for what end men are placed in the world, and why they live in it. It is true they knew enough to say that men ought to follow virtue, to conduct themselves honestly and without reproach; but all their virtues were mere paint and smoke. We know far better what the chief aim of life should be, namely, to glorify God, in order that He may be our glory. When this is not done, wo to us! And we can not continue to live for a single moment upon the earth without heaping additional curses on our heads. Still we are not ashamed to purchase some few days to languish here below, renouncing eternal kingdom by separating ourselves from Him by whose energy we are sustained in life.

Were we to ask the most ignorant, not to say the most brutish, persons in the world why they live, they would not venture to answer simply that it is to eat, and drink, and sleep; for all know that they have been created for a higher and holier end. And what end can we find if it be not to honor God, and allow ourselves to be governed by Him, like children by good parents; so that after we have finished the journey of this corruptible life, we may be received into His eternal inheritance? Such is the principal, indeed the sole end. When we do not take it into account, and are intent on a brutish life, which is worse than a thousand deaths, what can we allege for our excuse? To live and not know why is unnatural. To reject the causes for which we live, under the influence of a foolish longing for a respite of some few days, during which we are to live in the world, while separated from God—I know not how to name such infatuation and madness!

But as persecution is always harsh and bitter, let us consider how and by what means Christians may be able to fortify themselves with patience, so as unflinchingly to expose their life for the truth of God. The text which we have read out, when it is properly understood, is sufficient to induce us to do so. The apostle says, Let us go forth from the city after the Lord Jesus, bearing His reproach. In the first place, he reminds us, altho the swords should not be drawn against us nor the fires kindled to burn us, that we can not be truly united to the Son of God while we are rooted in this world. Wherefore a Christian, even in repose, must always have one foot lifted to march to battle, and not only so, but he must have his affections withdrawn from the world, altho his body is dwelling in it. Grant that this at first sight seems to us hard, still we must be satisfied with the words of St. Paul (I Thess. iii.), that we are called and appointed to suffer. As if He had said, Such is our condition as Christians; this is the road by which we must go if we would follow Christ.

Meanwhile, to solace our infirmity and mitigate the vexation and sorrow which persecution might cause us, a good reward is held forth: In suffering for the cause of God, we are walking step by step after the Son of God, and have Him for our guide. Were it simply said that to be Christians we must pass through all the insults of the world boldly, to meet death at all times and in whatever way God may be pleased to appoint, we might apparently have some pretext for replying that it is a strange road to go at peradventure. But when we are commanded to follow the Lord Jesus, His guidance is too good and honorable to be refused. Now, in order that we may be more deeply moved, not only is it said that Jesus Christ walks before us as our Captain, but that we are made conformable to His image; so St. Paul says in the eighth chapter to the Romans that God hath ordained all those whom He hath adopted for His children, to be made conformable to Him who is the pattern and head of all.

Are we so delicate as to be unwilling to endure anything? Then we must renounce the grace of God by which He has called us to the hope of salvation. For there are two things which can not be separated—to be members of Christ, and to be tried by many afflictions. We certainly ought to prize such a conformity to the Son of God much more than we do. It is true, that in the world's judgment there is disgrace in suffering for the gospel. But since we know that believers are blind, ought we not to have better eyes than they? It is ignominy to suffer from those who occupy the seat of justice, but St. Paul shows us by his example that we have to glory in scourings for Jesus Christ, as marks by which God recognizes us and avows us for His own. And we know what St. Luke narrates of Peter and John (Acts v., 41); namely, that they rejoiced to have been counted worthy to suffer infamy and reproach for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Ignominy and dignity are two opposites: so says the world, which, being infatuated, judges against all reason, and in this way converts the glory of God into dishonor. But, on our part, let us not refuse to be vilified as concerns the world, in order to be honored before God and His angels. We see what pains the ambitious take to receive the commands of a king, and what a boast they make of it. The Son of God presents His commands to us, and every one stands back. Tell me, pray, whether in so doing are we worthy of having anything in common with Him? there is nothing here to attract our sensual nature, but such notwithstanding are the true escutcheons of nobility in the heavens. Imprisonment, exile, evil report, imply in men's imagination whatever is to be vituperated; but what hinders us from viewing things as God judges and declares them, save our unbelief? Wherefore, let the name of the Son of God have all the weight with us which it deserves, that we may learn to count it honor when He stamps His marks upon us. If we act otherwise our ingratitude is insupportable.

Were God to deal with us according to our desserts, would He not have just cause to chastise us daily in a thousand ways? Nay more, a hundred thousand deaths would not suffice for a small portion of our misdeeds! Now, if in His infinite goodness He puts all our faults under His foot and abolishes them, and instead of punishing us according to our demerit, devises an admirable means to convert our afflictions into honor and a special privilege, inasmuch as through them we are taken into partnership with His Son, must it not be said, when we disdain such a happy state, that we have indeed made little progress in Christian doctrine?

Accordingly, St. Peter, after exhorting us (I Peter iv., 15) to walk so purely in the fear of God, as not to suffer as thieves, adulterers, and murderers, immediately adds, that if we must suffer as Christians, let us glorify God for the blessing which He thus bestows upon us. It is not without cause he speaks thus. For who are we, I pray, to be witnesses of the truth of God, and advocates to maintain His cause? Here we are poor worms of the earth, creatures full of vanity, full of lies, and yet God employs us to defend His truth—an honor which pertains not even to the angels of heaven! May not this consideration alone well inflame us to offer ourselves to God to be employed in any way in such honorable service?

Many persons, however, can not refrain from pleading against God, or, at least, from complaining against Him for not better supporting their weakness. It is marvelously strange, they say, how God, after having chosen us for His children, allows us to be trampled upon and tormented by the ungodly. I answer: Even were it not apparent why He does so, He might well exercise His authority over us, and fix our lot at His pleasure. But when we see that Jesus Christ is our pattern, ought we not, without inquiring further, to esteem it great happiness that we are made like Him? God, however, makes it very apparent what the reasons are for which He is pleased that we should be persecuted. Had we nothing more than the consideration suggested by St. Peter (I Peter i., 7), we were disdainful indeed not to acquiesce in it. He says that since gold and silver, which are only corruptible metals, are purified and tested by fire, it is but reasonable that our faith, which surpasses all the riches of the world, should be so tried.

It were easy indeed for God to crown us at once without requiring us to sustain any combats; but as it is His pleasure that until the end of the world Christ shall reign in the midst of His enemies, so it is also His pleasure that we, being placed in the midst of them, shall suffer their oppression and violence till He deliver us. I know, indeed, that the flesh rebels when it is to be brought to this point, but still the will of God must have the mastery. If we feel some repugnance in ourselves, it need not surprize us; for it is only too natural for us to shun the cross. Still let us not fail to surmount it, knowing that God accepts our obedience, provided we bring all our feelings and wishes into captivity, and make them subject to Him.

When prophets and apostles went to death, it was not without feeling some inclination to recoil. "They shall carry thee whither thou wouldst not," said our Lord Jesus Christ to Peter. (John xxi., 18.) When such fears of death arise within us, let us gain the mastery over them, or rather let God gain it; and meanwhile, let us feel assured that we offer Him a pleasing sacrifice when we resist and do violence to our inclinations for the purpose of placing ourselves entirely under His command: This is the principle war in which God would have His people to be engaged. He would have them strive to suppress every rebellious thought and feeling which would turn them aside from the path to which He points. And the consolations are so ample that it may well be said, we are more than cowards if we give away!

In ancient times vast numbers of people, to obtain a simple crown of leaves, refused no toil, no pain, no trouble; nay, it even cost them nothing to die, and yet every one of them fought for a peradventure, not knowing whether he was to gain or to lose the prize. God holds forth to us the immortal crown by which we may become partakers of His glory: He does not mean us to fight at haphazard, but all of us have a promise of the prize for which we strive. Have we any cause then to decline the struggle? Do we think it has been said in vain that if we die with Jesus Christ we shall also live with Him? Our triumph is prepared, and yet we do all we can to shun the combat.

But it is said that all we teach on this subject is repugnant to human judgment. I confess it. And hence when our Savior declares, "Blest are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake" (Matt, v., 10), He gives utterance to a sentiment which is not easily received in the world. On the contrary, He wishes to account that as happiness which in the judgment of sense is misery. We seem to ourselves miserable when God leaves us to be trampled upon by the tyranny and cruelty of our enemies; but the error is that we look not to the promises of God, which assure us that all will turn to our good. We are cast down when we see the wicked stronger than we, and planting their foot on our throat; but such confusion should rather, as St. Paul says, cause us to lift up our heads. Seeing we are too much disposed to amuse ourselves with present objects, God in permitting the good to be maltreated, and the wicked to have sway, shows by evident tokens that a day is coming on which all that is now in confusion will be reduced to order. If the period seems distant, let us run to the remedy, and not flatter ourselves in our sin; for it is certain that we have no faith if we can not carry our views forward to the coming of Jesus Christ.

To leave no means which may be fitted to stimulate us unemployed, God sets before us promises on the one hand and threatenings on the other. Do we feel that the promises have not sufficient influence, let us strengthen them by adding the threatenings. It is true we must be perverse in the extreme not to put more faith in the promises of God, when the Lord Jesus says that He will own us as His before His Father, provided we confess Him before men. (Matt x., 32; Luke xii., 8.) What should prevent us from making the confession which He requires? Let men do their utmost, they can not do worse than murder us! and will not the heavenly life compensate for this? I do not here collect all the passages in Scripture which bear on this subject: they are so often reiterated that we ought to be thoroughly satisfied with them. When the struggle comes, if three or four passages do not suffice, a hundred surely ought to make us proof against all contrary temptations.

But if God can not will us to Himself by gentle means, must we not be mere blocks if His threatening also fail? Jesus Christ summons all those who from fear of temporal death shall have denied the truth, to appear at the bar of God his Father, and says, that then both body and soul will be consigned to perdition. (Matt. x., 28; Luke xii., 5.) And in another passage He says that He will disclaim all those who shall have denied Him before men. (Matt. x., 33; Luke xii., 10.) These words, if we are not altogether impervious to feeling, might well make our hair stand on end. Be this as it may, this much is certain; if these things do not move us as they ought, nothing remains for us but a fearful judgment. (Heb. x., 27.) All the words of Christ having proved unavailing, we stand convinced of gross infidelity.

It is in vain for us to allege that pity should be shown us, inasmuch as our nature is so frail; for it is said, on the contrary, that Moses, having looked to God by faith, was fortified so as not to yield under any temptation. Wherefore, when we are thus soft and easy to bend, it is a manifest sign, I do not say that we have no zeal, no firmness, but that we know nothing either of God or His kingdom. When we are reminded that we ought to be united to our Head, it seems to us a fine pretext for exemption to say that we are men. But what were those who have trodden the path before us? Indeed, had we nothing more than pure doctrine, all the excuses we could make would be frivolous; but having so many examples which ought to supply us with the strongest proof, the more deserving are we of condemnation.

There are two points to be considered. The first is, that the whole body of the Church in general has always been, and to the end will be, liable to be afflicted by the wicked, as is said in the Psalms (Psalms cxxix., 1), "From my youth up they have tormented me, and dragged the plow over me from one end to the other." The Holy Spirit there brings in the ancient Church, in order that we, after being much acquainted with her afflictions, may not regard it as either new or vexatious when the like is done to ourselves in the present day. St. Paul, also, in quoting from another Psalm (Rom. vii., 36; Psalm xliv., 22), a passage which says, "We have been led like sheep to the slaughter"; shows that that has not been for one age only, but is the ordinary condition of the Church, and shall be.

Therefore, on seeing how the Church of God is trampled upon in the present day by proud worldlings, how one barks and another bites, how they torture, how they plot against her, how she is assailed incessantly by mad dogs and savage beasts, let it remind us that the same thing was done in all the olden time. It is true God sometimes gives her a truce and time of refreshment, and hence in the Psalm above quoted it is said, "He cutteth the cords of the wicked"; and in another passage (Psalm cxxv., 3), "He breaks their staff, lest the good should fall away, by being too hardly pressed." But still it has pleased Him that His Church should always have to battle so long as she is in this world, her repose being treasured up on high in the heavens. (Heb. iii., 9.)

Meanwhile, the issue of her afflictions has always been fortunate. At all events, God has caused that tho she has been prest by many calamities, she has never been completely crusht; as it is said (Psalm vii., 15), "The wicked with all their efforts have not succeeded in that at which they aimed." St. Paul glories in the fact, and shows that this is the course which God in mercy always takes. He says (I Cor. iv., 12) that we endure tribulations, but we are not in agony; we are impoverished, but not left destitute; we are persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but we perish not; bearing everywhere in our body the mortification of the Lord Jesus, in order that His life may be manifested in our mortal bodies. Such being, as we see, the issue which God has at all times given to the persecutions of His Church, we ought to take courage, knowing that our forefathers, who were frail men like ourselves, always had the victory over their enemies by remaining firm in endurance.

I only touch upon this article briefly to come to the second, which is more to our purpose, viz., that we ought to take advantage of the particular examples of the martyrs who have gone before us. These are not confined to two or three, but are, as the apostle says (Heb. xii., 1), "So great a cloud of witnesses." By this expression he intimates that the number is so great that it ought, as it were, completely to engross our sight. Not to be tedious, I will only mention the Jews, who were persecuted for the true religion, as well under the tyranny of King Antiochus as a little after his death. We can not allege that the number of sufferers was small, for it formed, as it were, a large army of martyrs. We can not say that it consisted of prophets whom God had set apart from common people, for women and young children formed part of the band. We can not say that they got off at a cheap rate, for they were tortured as cruelly as it was possible to be. Accordingly, we hear what the apostle says (Heb. xi., 35), that some were stretched out like drums, not caring to be delivered, that they might obtain a better resurrection; others were proved by mockery and blows, or bonds and prisons; others were stoned or sawn asunder; others traveled up and down, wandering among mountains and caves.

Let us now compare their case with ours. If they so endured for the truth which was at that time so obscure, what ought we to do in the clear light which is now shining? God speaks to us with open mouth; the great gate of the kingdom of heaven has been opened, and Jesus Christ calls us to Himself, after having come down to us that we might have him, as it were, present to our eyes. What a reproach would it be to us to have less zeal in suffering for the gospel than those who had only hailed the promises afar off—who had only a little wicket opened whereby to come to the kingdom of God, and who had only some memorial and type of Jesus Christ? These things can not be exprest in a word, as they deserve, and therefore I leave each to ponder them for himself.

The doctrine now laid down, as it is general, ought to be carried into practise by all Christians, each applying it to his own use according as may be necessary. This I say, in order that those who do not see themselves in apparent danger may not think it superfluous as regards them. They are not at this hour in the hands of tyrants, but how do they know what God means to do with them hereafter? We ought therefore to be so forearmed that if some persecution which we did not expect arrives, we may not be taken unawares. But I much fear that there are many deaf ears in regard to this subject. So far are those who are sheltered and at their ease from preparing to suffer death when need shall be that they do not even trouble themselves about serving God in their lives. It nevertheless continues true that this preparation for persecution ought to be our ordinary study, and especially in the times in which we live.

Those, again, whom God calls to suffer for the testimony of His name ought to show by deeds that they have been thoroughly trained to patient endurance. Then ought they to recall to mind all the exhortations which were given them in times past, and bestir themselves just as the soldier rushes to arms when the tempest sounds. But how different is the result. The only question is how to find out subterfuges for escaping. I say this in regard to the greater part; for persecution is a true touchstone by which God ascertains who are His. And few are so faithful as to be prepared to meet death boldly.

It is a kind of monstrous thing, that persons who make a boast of having a little of the gospel, can venture to open their lips to give utterance to such quibbling. Some will say, What do we gain by confessing our faith to obstinate people who have deliberately resolved to fight against God? Is not this to cast pearls before swine? As if Jesus Christ had not distinctly declared (Matt viii., 38) that He wishes to be confest among the perverse and malignant. If they are not instructed thereby, they will at all events remain confounded; and hence confession is an odor of a sweet smell before God, even tho it be deadly to the reprobate. There are some who say, What will our death profit? Will it not rather prove an offense? As if God hath left them the choice of dying when they should see it good and find the occasion opportune. On the contrary, we approve our obedience by leaving in His hand the profit which is to accrue from our death.

In the first place, then, the Christian man, wherever he may be, must resolve, notwithstanding dangers or threatings, to walk in simplicity as God has commanded. Let him guard as much as he can against the ravening of the wolves, but let it not be with carnal craftiness. Above all, let him place his life in the hands of God. Has he done so?

Then if he happens to fall into the hands of the enemy, let him think that God, having so arranged, is pleased to have him for one of the witnesses of His Son, and therefore that he has no means of drawing back without breaking faith with Him to whom we have promised all duty in life and in death—Him whose we are and to whom we belong, even though we should have made no promise.

In saying this I do not lay all under the necessity of making a full and entire confession of everything which they believe, even should they be required to do so. I am aware also of the measure observed by St. Paul, altho no man was ever more determined boldly to maintain the cause of the gospel as he ought. And hence it is not without cause our Lord promises to give us, on such an occasion, "a mouth and wisdom" (Luke xxi., 15); as if he had said, that the office of the Holy Spirit is not only to strengthen us to be bold and valiant, but also to give us prudence and discretion, to guide us in the course which it will be expedient to take.

The substance of the whole is, that those who are in such distress are to ask and obtain such prudence from above, not following their own carnal wisdom, in searching out for a kind of loop-hole by which to escape. There are some who tell us that our Lord Himself gave no answer to those who interrogated Him. But I rejoin, First, That this does not abolish the rule which He has given us to make confession of our faith when so required. (I Peter iii., 15.) Secondly, That He never used any disguise to save His life: and, Thirdly, That He never gave an answer so ambiguous as not to embody a sufficient testimony to all that He had to say; and that, moreover, He had already satisfied those who came to interrogate Him anew, with the view not obtaining information, but merely of laying traps to ensnare Him.

Let it be held, then, as a fixed point among all Christians, that they ought not to hold their life more precious than the testimony to the truth, inasmuch as God wishes to be glorified thereby. Is it in vain that He gives the name of witnesses (for this is the meaning of the word martyr) to all who have to answer before the enemies of the faith? Is it not because He wished to employ them for such a purpose? Here every one is not to look for his fellow, for God does not honor all alike with the call. And as we are inclined so to look, we must be the more on our guard against it. Peter having heard from the lips of our Lord Jesus (John xxi., 18) that he should be led in his old age where he would not, asked, What was to become of his companion John? There is not one among us who would not readily have put the same question; for the thought which instantly rises in our mind is, Why do I suffer rather than others? On the contrary, Jesus Christ exhorts all of us in common, and each of us in particular, to hold ourselves "ready," in order that according as He shall call this one or that one, we may march forth in our turn.

I explained above how little prepared we shall be to suffer martyrdom, if we be not armed with the divine promises. It now remains to show somewhat more fully what the purport and aim of these promises are—not to specify them all in detail, but to show the principal things which God wishes us to hope from Him, to console us in our afflictions. Now these things, taken summarily, are three. The first is, that inasmuch as our life and death are in His hand, He will preserve us by His might that not a hair will be plucked out of our heads without His leave. Believers, therefore, ought to feel assured into whatever hands they may fall, that God is not divested of the guardianship which He exercises over their persons. Were such a persuasion well imprinted on our hearts, we should be delivered from the greater part of the doubts and perplexities which torment us and obstruct us in our duty.

We see tyrants let loose: thereupon it seems to us that God no longer possesses any means of saving us, and we are tempted to provide for our own affairs as if nothing more were to be expected from Him. On the contrary, His providence, as He unfolds it, ought to be regarded by us as an impregnable fortress. Let us labor, then, to learn the full import of the expression, that our bodies are in the hands of Him who created them. For this reason He has sometimes delivered His people in a miraculous manner, and beyond all human expectation, as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, from the fiery furnace, Daniel from the den of lions; Peter from Herod's prison, where he was locked, chained, and guarded so closely. By these examples He meant to testify that He holds our enemies in check, altho it may not seem so, and has power to withdraw us from the midst of death when He pleases. Not that He always does it; but in reserving authority to Himself to dispose of us for life and for death, He would have us to feel fully assured that He has us under His charge; so that whatever tyrants attempt, and with whatever fury they may rush against us, it belongs to Him alone to order our life.

If He permits tyrants to slay us, it is not because our life is not dear to Him, and held in a hundred times greater honor than it deserves. Such being the case, having declared by the mouth of David (Psalm cxvi., 13), that the death of the saints is precious in His sight, He says also by the mouth of Isaiah (xxvi., 21), that the earth will discover the blood which seems to be concealed. Let the enemies of the gospel, then, be as prodigal as they will of the blood of martyrs, they shall have to render a fearful account of it even to its last drop. In the present day, they indulge in proud derision while consigning believers to the flames; and after having bathed in their blood, they are intoxicated by it to such a degree as to count all the murders which they commit mere festive sport. But if we have patience to wait, God will show in the end that it is not in vain He has taxed our life at so high a value. Meanwhile, let it not offend us that it seems to confirm the gospel, which in worth surpasses heaven and earth.

To be better assured that God does not leave us as it were forsaken in the hands of tyrants, let us remember the declarations of Jesus Christ, when He says (Acts ix., 4) that He Himself is persecuted in His members. God had indeed said before, (Zech. ii., 8), "He who touches you touches the apple of mine eye." But here it is said much more expressly, that if we suffer for the gospel, it is as much as if the Son of God were suffering in person. Let us know, therefore, that Jesus Christ must forget Himself before He can cease to think of us when we are in prison, or in danger of death for His cause; and let us know that God will take to heart all the outrages which tyrants commit upon us, just as if they were committed on His own Son.

Let us now come to the second point which God declares to us in His promise for our consolation. It is, that He will so sustain us by the energy of His Spirit that our enemies, do what they may, even with Satan at their head, will gain no advantage over us. And we see how He displays His gifts in such an emergency; for the invincible constancy which appears in the martyrs abundantly and beautifully demonstrates that God works in them mightily. In persecution there are two things grievous to the flesh, the vituperation and insult of men, and the tortures which the body suffers. Now, God promises to hold out His hand to us so effectually, that we shall overcome both by patience. What He thus tells us He confirms by fact. Let us take this buckler, then, to ward off all fears by which we are assailed, and let us not confine the working of the Holy Spirit within such narrow limits as to suppose that He will not easily defeat all the cruelties of men.

Of this we have had, among other examples, one which is particularly memorable. A young man who once lived with us here, having been apprehended in the town of Tournay, was condemned to have his head cut off if he recanted, and to be burned alive if he continued steadfast to his purpose. When asked what he meant to do, he replied simply, "He who will give me grace to die patiently for His name, will surely give me grace to bear the fire." We ought to take this expression not as that of a mortal man, but as that of the Holy Spirit, to assure us that God is not less powerful to strengthen us, and render us victorious over tortures, than to make us submit willingly to a milder death. Moreover, we oftentimes see what firmness he gives to unhappy malefactors who suffer for their crimes. I speak not of the hardened, but of those who derive consolation from the grace of Jesus Christ, and by His means, with a peaceful heart, undergo the most grievous punishment which can be inflicted. One beautiful instance is seen in the thief who was converted at the death of our Lord. Will God, who thus powerfully assists poor criminals when enduring the punishment of their misdeeds, be so wanting to His own people, while fighting for His cause, as not to give them invincible courage?

The third point for consideration in the promises which God gives His martyrs is, the fruit which they ought to hope for from their sufferings, and in the end, if need be, from their death. Now, this fruit is, that after having glorified His Name—after having edified the Church by their constancy—they, will be gathered together with the Lord Jesus into His immortal glory. But as we have above spoken of this at some length, it is enough here to recall it to remembrance. Let believers, then, learn to lift up their heads towards the crown of glory and immortality to which God invites them, thus they may not feel reluctant to quit the present life for such a recompense; and, to feel well assured of this inestimable blessing, let them have always before their eyes the conformity which they thus have to our Lord Jesus Christ; beholding death in the midst of life, just as He, by the reproach of the cross, attained to the glorious resurrection, wherein consists all our felicity, joy, and triumph.

END OF VOL. I.

**÷**02-00

THE WORLD'S GREAT SERMONS, VOLUME II (of 10)

HOOKER TO SOUTH

COMPILED BY GRENVILLE KLEISER  
Formerly of Yale Divinity School Faculty; Author of "How to Speak in  
Public," Etc.

With Assistance from Many of the Foremost Living Preachers and Other  
Theologians

INTRODUCTION BY LEWIS O. BRASTOW, D.D.  
Professor Emeritus of Practical Theology in Yale University

IN TEN VOLUMES

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**÷**02-01 HOOKER

THE ACTIVITY OF FAITH; OR, ABRAHAM'S IMITATORS

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Thomas Hooker, graduate and fellow of Cambridge, England, and practically founder of Connecticut, was born in 1586. He was dedicated to the ministry, and began his activities in 1620 by taking a small parish in Surrey. He did not, however, attract much notice for his powerful advocacy of reformed doctrine, until 1629, when he was cited to appear before Laud, the Bishop of London, whose threats induced him to leave England for Holland, whence he sailed with John Cotton, in 1633, for New England, and settled in Newtown, now Cambridge, Mass.

Chiefly in consequence of disagreements between his own and Cotton's congregation he, with a large following, migrated in 1636 to the Connecticut Valley, where the little band made their center at Hartford. Hooker was the inspirer if not the author of the Fundamental Laws and was of wide political as well as religious influence in organizing "The United Colonies of New England" in 1643—the first effort after federal government made on this continent. He was an active preacher and prolific writer up to his death in 1647.

HOOKER

1586-1647

THE ACTIVITY OF FAITH; OR, ABRAHAM'S IMITATORS

*And the father of circumcision to them who are not of circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcized*.—Rom 4:12.

I proceed now to show who those are, that may, and do indeed, receive benefit as Abraham did. The text saith, "They that walk in the steps of that faith of Abraham:" that man that not only enjoyeth the privileges of the Church, but yieldeth the obedience of faith, according to the Word of God revealed, and walketh in obedience, *that* man alone shall be blest with faithful Abraham.

Two points may be here raised, but I shall hardly handle them both; therefore I will pass over the first only with a touch, and that lieth closely couched in the text.

That faith causeth fruitfulness in the hearts and lives of those in whom it is.

Mark what I say: a faithful man is a fruitful man; faith enableth a man to be doing. Ask the question, by what power was it whereby Abraham was enabled to yield obedience to the Lord? The text answereth you, "They that walk in the footsteps" not of Abraham, but "in the footsteps of the faith of Abraham." A man would have thought the text should have run thus: They that walk in the footsteps of Abraham. That is true, too, but the apostle had another end; therefore he saith, "They that walk in the footsteps of the faith of Abraham," implying that it was the grace of faith that God bestowed on Abraham, that quickened and enabled him to perform every duty that God required of him, and called him to the performance of. So that I say, the question being, whence came it that Abraham was so fruitful a Christian, what enabled him to do and to suffer what he did? surely it was faith that was the cause that produced such effects, that helped him to perform such actions. The point then you see is evident, faith it is that causeth fruit.

Hence it is, that of almost all the actions that a Christian hath to do, faith is still said to be the worker. If a man pray as he should, it is "the prayer of faith." If a man obey as he should, it is the obedience of faith. If a man war in the Church militant, it is "the fight of faith." If a man live as a Christian and holy man, he "liveth by faith." Nay, shall I say yet more, if he died as he ought, "he dieth by faith." "These all died in faith." What is that? The power of faith that directed and ordered them in the cause of their death, furnished them with grounds and principles of assurance of the love of God, made them carry themselves patiently in death. I can say no more, but with the apostle, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." Why doth not the apostle say, Examine whether faith be in you, but "whether ye be in the faith"? His meaning is, that as a man is said to be in drink, or to be in love, or to be in passion, that is, under the command of drink, or love, or passion; so the whole man must be under the command of faith (as you shall see more afterward). If he prays, faith must indite his prayer; if he obey, faith must work; if he live, it is faith that must quicken him; and if he die, it is faith that must order him in death. And wheresoever faith is, it will do wonders in the soul of that man where it is; it can not be idle; it will have footsteps, it sets the whole man on work; it moveth feet, and hands, and eyes, and all parts of the body. Mark how the apostle disputeth: "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken, we also believe, and therefore speak." The faith of the apostle, which he had in his heart, set his tongue agoing. If a man have faith within, it will break forth at his mouth. This shall suffice for the proof of the point; I thought to have prest it further, but if I should, I see the time would prevent me.

The use, therefore, in a word, is this: if this be so, then it falleth foul, and is a heavy bill of indictment against many that live in the bosom of the Church. Go thy ways home, and read but this text, and consider seriously but this one thing in it: That whosoever is the son of Abraham, hath faith, and whosoever hath faith is a walker, is a marker; by the footsteps of faith you may see where faith hath been. Will not this, then, I say, fall marvelous heavy upon many souls that live in the bosom of the Church, who are confident, and put it out of all question, that they are true believers, and make no doubt but what they have faith? But look to it, wheresoever faith is, it is fruitful. If thou art fruitless, say what thou wilt, thou hast no faith at all. Alas, these idle drones, these idle Christians, the Church is too full of them; Men are continually hearing, and yet remain fruitless and unprofitable; whereas if there were more faith in the world, we should have more work done in the world; faith would set feet, and hands, and eyes, and all on work. Men go under the name of professors, but alas! they are but pictures; they stir not a whit; mark, where you found them in the beginning of the year, there you shall find them in the end of the year, as profane, as worldly, as loose in their conversations, as formal in duty as ever. And is this faith? Oh! faith would work other matters, and provoke a soul to other passages than these.

But you will say, may not a man have faith, and not that fruit you speak of? May not a man have a good heart to Godward, altho he can not find that ability in matter of fruitfulness?

My brethren, be not deceived; such an opinion is a mere delusion of Satan; wherever faith is it bringeth Christ into the soul; mark that, "Whosoever believeth, Christ dwelleth in his heart by faith. And if Christ be in you," saith the apostle, "the body is dead, because of sin, but the spirit is life, because of righteousness." If Christ be in you, that is, whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus, Christ dwells in such a man by faith; now if Christ be in the soul, the body can not be dead; but a man is alive, and quick, and active to holy duties, ready, and willing, and cheerful in the performance of whatsoever God requireth. Christ is not a dear Savior, nor the Spirit a dead Spirit: the second Adam is made a quickening spirit. And wherever the Spirit is, it works effects suitable to itself. The Spirit is a spirit of purity, a spirit of zeal, and where it is it maketh pure and zealous. When a man will say he hath faith, and in the mean time can be content to be idle and unfruitful in the work of the Lord, can be content to be a dead Christian, let him know that his case is marvelously fearful: for if faith were in him indeed it would appear; ye can not keep your good hearts to yourselves; wherever fire is it will burn, and wherever faith is it can not be kept secret. The heart will be enlarged, the soul quickened, and there will be a change in the whole life and conversation, if ever faith takes place in a man. I will say no more of this, but proceed to the second point arising out of the affirmative part.

You will say, what fruit is it then? Or how shall a man know what is the true fruit of faith, indeed, whereby he may discern his own estate? I answer, the text will tell you: "He that walketh in the footsteps of that faith of Abraham." By footsteps are meant the works the actions, the holy endeavors of Abraham; and where those footsteps are there is the faith of Abraham. So that the point of instruction hence is thus much (which indeed is the main drift of the apostle).

That, Every faithful man may, yea doth, imitate the actions of faithful Abraham.

Mark what I say; I say again, this is to be the son of Abraham, not because we are begotten of him by natural generation, for so the Jews are the sons of Abraham; but Abraham is our father because he is the pattern, for the proceeding of our faith. "Thy father was an Amorite," saith the Scripture: that is, thou followest the steps of the Amorites in thy conversation. So is Abraham called the "father of the faithful," because he is the copy of their course, whom they must follow in those services that God calleth for. So the point is clear, every faithful man may, yea doth, and must imitate the actions of faithful Abraham. It is Christ's own plea, and He presseth it as an undeniable truth upon the hearts of the Scribes and Pharisees, that bragged very highly of their privileges and prerogatives, and said, "Abraham is our father." "No (saith Christ), if ye were Abraham's children ye would do the works of Abraham." To be like Abraham in constitution, to be one of his blood, is not that which makes a man a son of Abraham, but to be like him in holiness of affection, to have a heart framed and a life disposed answerably to his. The apostle in like manner presseth this point when he would provoke the Hebrews, to whom he wrote, to follow the examples of the saints: "Whose faith (says he) follow, considering the end of their conversation." So the apostle Peter presseth the example of Sarah upon all good women: "Whose daughter ye are (saith he) as long: as ye do well."

For the opening of the point, and that ye may more clearly understand it, a question here would be resolved, what were "the footsteps of the faith of Abraham"? which way went he? This is a question, I say, worthy the scanning, and therefore (leaving the further confirmation of the point, as already evident enough) I will come to it that you may know what to settle your hearts upon.

I answer, therefore, there are six footsteps of the faith of Abraham, which are the main things wherein every faithful man must do as Abraham did, in the work of faith—I mean in his ordinary course; for if there be any thing extraordinary no man is bound to imitate him therein; but in the works of faith, I say, which belongeth to all men, every man must imitate Abraham in these six steps, and then he is in the next door to happiness, the very next neighbor, as I say, to heaven.

The first advance which Abraham made in the ways of grace and happiness, you shall observe to be a yielding to the call of God. Mark what God said to Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and Abraham departed," saith the text, "as the Lord had spoken unto him." Even when he was an idolater, he is content to lay aside all and let the command of God bear the sway; neither friends, nor kindred, nor gods can keep him back, but he presently stoopeth to the call of God. So it is, my brethren, with every faithful man. This is his first step: he is content to be under the rule and power of God's command. Let the Lord call for him, require any service of him, his soul presently yieldeth, and is content to be framed and fashioned to God's call, and returneth an obedient answer thereto; he is content to come out of his sins, and out of himself, and to receive the impressions of the Spirit. This is that which God requireth, not only of Abraham, but of all believers: "Whosoever will be my disciple," saith Christ, "must forsake father, and mother, and children, and houses, and lands"; yea, and he must "deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." This is the first step in Christianity, to lay down our own honors, to trample upon our own respects, to submit our necks to the block, as it were, and whatever God commands, to be content that His good pleasure should take place with us.

Then Abraham, as doth every faithful soul, set forward, in this wise: He showed that whenever faith cometh powerfully into the heart, the soul is not content barely to yield to the command of God, but it breatheth after His mercy, longeth for His grace, prizeth Christ and salvation above all things in the world, is satisfied and contented with nothing but with the Lord Christ, and altho it partake of many things below, and enjoy abundance of outward comforts, yet it is not quieted till it rest and pitch itself upon the Lord, and find and feel that evidence and assurance of His love, which He hath promised unto and will bestow on those who love Him. As for all things here below, he hath but a slight, and mean, and base esteem of them. This you shall see apparent in Abraham. "Fear not, Abraham (saith God), I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." What could a man desire more? One would think that the Lord makes a, promise here large enough to Abraham, "I will be thy buckler, and exceeding great reward." Is not Abraham contented with this? No; mark how he pleadeth with God: "Lord God (saith he), what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?" His eye is upon the promise that God had made to him of a son, of whom the Savior of the world should come. "O Lord, what wilt thou give me?" as if he had said, What wilt Thou do for me? alas! nothing will do my soul good unless I have a son, and in him a Savior. What will become of me so long as I go childless, and so Saviorless, as I may so speak? You see how Abraham's mouth was out of taste with all other things, how he could relish nothing, enjoy nothing in comparison of the promise, tho he had otherwise what he would, or could desire. Thus must it be with every faithful man. That soul never had, nor never shall have Christ, that doth not prize Him above all things in the world.

The next step of Abraham's faith was this, he casteth himself and flingeth his soul, as I may say, upon the all-sufficient power and mercy of God for the attainment of what he desireth; he rolleth and tumbleth himself, as it were, upon the all-sufficiency of God. This you shall find in Rom. iv. 18, where the apostle, speaks of Abraham, who "against hope, believed in hope"; that is, when there was no hope in the world, yet he believed in God, even above hope, and so made it possible. It was an object of his hope, that it might be in regard of God, howsoever there was no possibility in regard of man. So the text saith, "he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb, but was strong in faith." He cast himself wholly upon the precious promise and mercy of God.

But he took another step in true justifying faith. He proved to us the believer is informed touching the excellency of the Lord Jesus, and that fulness that is to be had in Him, tho he can not find the sweetness of His mercy, tho he can not or dare not apprehend and apply it to himself, tho he find nothing in himself, yet he is still resolved to rest upon the Lord, and to stay himself on the God of his salvation, and to wait for His mercy till he find Him gracious to his poor soul. Excellent and famous is the example of the woman of Canaan. When Christ, as it were, beat her off, and took up arms against her, was not pleased to reveal Himself graciously to her for the present, "I am not sent (saith He) but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs"; mark how she replied, "Truth, Lord, I confess all that; yet notwithstanding, the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Oh, the excellency, and strength, and work of her faith! She comes to Christ for mercy, He repelleth her, reproacheth her, tells her she is a dog; she confesseth her baseness, is not discouraged for all that, but still resteth upon the goodness and mercy of Christ, and is mightily resolved to have mercy whatsoever befalleth her. Truth, Lord, I confess I am as bad as Thou canst term me, yet I confess, too, that there is no comfort but from Thee, and tho I am a dog, yet I would have crumbs. Still she laboreth to catch after mercy, and to lean and to bear herself upon the favor of Christ for the bestowing thereof upon her. So it must be with every faithful Christian in this particular; he must roll himself upon the power, and faithfulness, and truth of God, and wait for His mercy (I will join them both together for brevity's sake, tho the latter be a fourth step and degree of faith); I say he must not only depend upon God, but he must wait upon the Holy One of Israel.

But a further step of Abraham's faith appeared in this: he counted nothing too dear for the Lord; he was content to break through all impediments, to pass through all difficulties, whatsoever God would have, He had of him. This is the next step that Abraham went; and this you shall find when God put him upon trial. The text saith there "that God did tempt Abraham," did try what He would do for Him, and He bade him, "Go, take thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and slay him"; and straight Abraham went and laid his son upon an altar, and took a knife, to cut the throat of his son—so that Abraham did not spare his son Isaac, he did not spare for any cost, he did not dodge with God in this case; if God would have anything, He should have it, whatsoever it were, tho it were his own life, for no question Isaac was dearer to him than his own life. And this was not his case alone, but the faithful people of God have ever walked the same course. The apostle Paul was of the same spirit; "I know not (saith he) the things that shall befall me, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me: but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." O blest spirit! here is the work of faith. Alas! when we come to part with anything for the cause of God, how hardly comes it from us! "But I (saith he) pass not, no, nor is my life dear unto me." Here, I say, is the work of faith, indeed, when a man is content to do anything for God, and to say if imprisonment, loss of estate, liberty, life, come, I pass not, it moveth me nothing, so I may finish my course with comfort. Hence it was that the saints of God in those primitive times "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods." Methinks I see the saints there reaching after Christ with the arms of faith, and how, when anything lay in their way, they were content to lose all, to part with all, to have Christ. Therefore saith Saint Paul, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Mark, rather than he would leave his Savior, he would leave his life, and tho men would have hindered him, yet was resolved to have Christ, howsoever, tho he lost his life for Him. Oh, let me have my Savior, and take my life!

The last step of all is this: when the soul is thus resolved not to dodge with God, but to part with anything for Him, then in the last place there followeth a readiness of heart to address man's self to the performance of whatsoever duty God requireth at his hands; I say this is the last step, when, without consulting with flesh and blood, without hammering upon it, as it were, without awkwardness of heart, there followeth a readiness to obey God; the soul is at hand. When Abraham was called, "Behold (saith he) here I am." And so Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," and so Ananias. "Behold, I am here, Lord." The faithful soul is not to seek, as an evil servant that is gone a roving after his companions, that is out of the way when his master would use him, but is like a trusty servant that waiteth upon his master, and is ever at hand to do His pleasure. So you shall see it was with Abraham, when the Lord commanded him to go out of his country, "he obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went"; he went cheerfully and readily, tho he knew not whither; as who would say, if the Lord calls, I will not question, if He command I will perform, whatever it be. So it must be with every faithful soul—we must blind the eye of carnal reason, resolve to obey, tho heaven and earth seem to meet together in a contradiction, care not what man or what devil saith in this case, but what God will have done, do it; this is the courage and obedience of faith. See how Saint Paul, in the place before named, flung his ancient friends from him, when they came to cross him in the work of his ministry. They all came about him, and because they thought they should see his face no more, they besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "What, mean ye to weep, and to break my heart?" as who should say, It is a grief and a vexation to my soul, that ye would burden me, that I can not go with readiness to perform the service that God requireth at my hands. The like Christian courage was in Luther when his friends dissuaded him to go to Worms: "If all the tiles in 'Worms' were so many devils (said he) yet would I go thither in the name of my Lord Jesus." This is the last step.

Now gather up a little what I have delivered. He that is resolved to stoop to the call of God; to prize the promises, and breathe after them; to rest upon the Lord, and to wait His time for bestowing mercy upon him; to break through all impediments and difficulties, and to count nothing too dear for God; to be content to perform ready and cheerful obedience; he that walketh thus, and treadeth in these steps, peace be upon him; heaven is hard by; he is as sure of salvation as the angels are; it is as certain as the Lord liveth that he shall be saved with faithful Abraham, for he walketh in the steps of Abraham, and therefore he is sure to be where he is. The case, you see, is clear, and the point evident, that every faithful man may, and must, imitate faithful Abraham.

It may be here imagined, that we draw men up to too high a pitch; and certainly, if this be the sense of the words, and the meaning of the Holy Ghost in this place, what will become of many that live in the bosom of the Church? Will you therefore see the point confirmed by reason? The ground of this doctrine stands thus: every faithful man hath the same faith, for nature and for work, that Abraham had; therefore, look what nature his faith was of, and what power it had; of the same nature and power every true believer's faith is. Briefly thus: the promises of God are the ground upon which all true faith resteth; the Spirit of God it is that worketh this faith in all believers; the power of the Spirit is that that putteth forth itself in the hearts and lives of all the faithful; gather these together: if all true believers have the same promises for the ground of their faith; have one and the same spirit to work it; have' one and the same power to draw out the abilities of faith, then certainly they can not but have the very self-same actions, having the very self-same ground of their actions.

Every particular believer (as the apostle Peter saith) "hath obtained the like precious faith." Mark, that there is a great deal of copper faith in the world—much counterfeit believing; but the saints do all partake of "the like precious faith." As when a man hath but a sixpence in silver, or a crown in gold, those small pieces, for the nature, are as good as the greatest of the same metal; so it is with the faith of God's elect. And look as it is in grafting; if there be many scions of the same kind grafted into one stock, they all partake alike of the virtue of the stock; just so it is here. The Lord Jesus Christ is the stock, as it were, into which all the faithful are grafted by the spirit of God and faith; therefore, whatsoever fruit one beareth, another beareth also: howsoever, there may be degrees of works, yet they are of the same nature. As a little apple is the same in taste with a great one of the same tree, even so every faithful man hath the same holiness of heart and life, because he hath the same principle of holiness. The fruit indeed that one Christian bringeth may be but poor and small in comparison with others, yet it is the same in kind; the course of his life is not with so much power and fulness of grace, it may be, as another's, yet there is the same true grace, and the same practise, in the kind of it, for truth, however in degree it differ.

Let us now come to see what benefit we may make to ourselves of this point, thus proved and confirmed; and, certainly, the use of this doctrine is of great consequence. In the first place, it is a just ground of examination. For if it be true (as can not be denied, the reasons being so strong, and arguments so plain) that every son of Abraham followeth the steps of Abraham, then here you may clearly perceive who it is that hath saving faith indeed, who they be that are true saints and the sons of Abraham. By the light of this truth, by the rule of this doctrine, if you would square your courses, and look into your conversations, you can not but discern whether you have faith or no. That man whose faith showeth itself and putteth itself forth in its several conditions, agreeably to, the faith of Abraham, that man that followeth the footsteps of the faith of Abraham, let him be esteemed a faithful man, let him be reckoned for a true believer.

You that are gentlemen and tradesmen, I appeal to your souls whether the Lord and His cause is not the loser this way? Doth not prayer pay for it? Doth not the Word pay for it? Are not the ordinances always losers when anything of your own cometh in competition? Is it not evident, then, that you are not under the command of the Word? How do you tremble at the wrath and threatenings of a mortal man? and yet, when you hear the Lord thunder judgments out of His Word, who is humbled? When He calls for fasting, and weeping, and mourning, who regards it? Abraham, my brethren, did not thus: these were none of his steps; no, no: he went a hundred miles off this course. The Lord no sooner said to him, "Forsake thy country and thy kindred, and thy father's house," but he forsook all, neither friend nor father prevailed to detain him from obedience, but he stooped willingly to God's command.

There are a sort that come short of being the sons of Abraham, and they are the close-hearted hypocrites. These are a generation that are of a more refined kind than the last, but howsoever they carry the matter very covertly, yea, and are exceeding cunning; yet the truth will make them known. Many a hypocrite may come thus far, to be content to part with anything, and outwardly to suffer for the cause of God, to part with divers pleasures and lusts, and to perform many holy services. But here is the difference between Abraham and these men: Abraham forsook his goods and all, but your close-hearted hypocrites have always some god or other that they do homage to—their ease, or their wealth, or some secret lust, something or other they have set up as an idol within them—and so long as they may have and enjoy that, they will part with anything else. But thou must know that, if thou be one of Abraham's children, thou must come away from thy gods—the god of pride, of self-love, of vainglory—and leave worshiping of these, and be content to be alone by God and His truth. This shall suffice for the first use; I can not proceed further in the pressing thereof, because I would shut up all with the time.

The second use is a word of instruction, and it shall be but a word or two; that if all the saints of God must walk in the same way of life and salvation that Abraham did, then there is no byway to bring a man to happiness. Look, what way Abraham went, you must go; there are no more ways: the same course that he took must be a copy for you to follow, a rule, as it were, for you to square your whole conversation by. There is no way but one to come to life and happiness. I speak it the rather to dash that idle device of many carnal men, that think the Lord hath a new invention to bring them to life, and that they need not go the ordinary way, but God hath made a shorter cut for them. Great men and gentlemen think God will spare them. What, must they be humbled, and fast, and pray! That is for poor men, and mean men. Their places and estates will not suffer it; therefore surely God hath given a dispensation to them. And the poor men, they think it is for gentlemen that have more leisure and time: alas! they live by their labor, and they must take pains for what they have, and therefore they can not do what is required. But be not deceived; if there be any way beside that which Abraham went, then will I deny myself. But the case is clear, the Lord saith it, the Word saith it; the same way, the same footsteps that Abraham took, we must take, if ever we will come where Abraham is.

You must not balk in this kind, whoever you are; God respecteth no man's person. If you would arrive at the same haven, you must sail through the same sea. You must walk the same way of grace, if you would come to the same kingdom of glory. It is a conceit that harboreth in the hearts of many men, nay, of most men in general, especially your great wise men and your great rich men, that have better places and estates in the world than ordinary. What, think they, may not a man be saved without all this ado? What needs all this? Is there not another way besides this? Surely, my brethren, you must teach our Savior Christ and the apostle Paul another way. I am sure they never knew another; and he that dreameth of another way must be content to go beside. There is no such matter as the devil would persuade you; it is but his delusion to keep you under infidelity, and so shut you up to destruction under false and vain conceits. The truth is, here is the way, and the only way, and you must walk here if ever you come to life and happiness. Therefore, be not deceived, suffer not your eyes to be blinded; but know, what Abraham did, you must do the same, if not in action, yet in affection. If God say, forsake all, thou must do it, at least in affection. Thou must still wait upon His power and providence; yield obedience to Him in all things; be content to submit thyself to His will. This is the way you must walk in, if you ever come to heaven.

The last use shall be a use of comfort to all the saints and people of God, whose consciences can witness that they have labored to walk in the uprightness of their heart as Abraham did. I have two or three words to speak to these.

Be persuaded out of the Word of God, that your course is good, and go on with comfort, and the God of heaven be with you; and be sure of it, that you that walk with Abraham shall be at rest with Abraham; and it shall never repent you of all the pains that you have taken. Haply it may seem painful and tedious to you; yet, what Abigail said to David, let me say to you: "Oh," saith she, "let not my lord do this: when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel, this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offense of heart, that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself." My brethren, let me say to you, you will find trouble and inconveniences and hard measure at the hands of the wicked in this world. Many Nabals and Cains will set themselves against you; but go on, and bear it patiently. Know it is a troublesome way, but a true way; it is grievous but yet good; and the end will be happy. It will never repent you, when the Lord hath performed all the good that He hath spoken concerning you.

Oh! to see a man drawing his breath low and short, after he hath spent many hours and days in prayer to the Lord, grappling with his corruptions, and striving to pull down his base lusts, after he hath waited upon the Lord in a constant course of obedience. Take but such a man, and ask him, now his conscience is opened, whether the ways of holiness and sincerity be not irksome to him, whether he be not grieved with himself for undergoing so much needless trouble (as the world thinks it); and his soul will then clear this matter. It is true he hath a tedious course of it, but now his death will be blest. He hath striven for a crown, and now beholds a crown. Now he is beyond the waves. All the contempts, and imprisonments, and outrages of wicked men are now too short to reach him. He is so far from repenting, that he rejoiceth and triumpheth in reflecting back upon all the pains, and care, and labor of love, whereby he hath loved the Lord Jesus, in submitting his heart unto Him.

Take me another man, that hath lived here in pomp and jollity, hath had many livings, great preferments, much honor, abundance of pleasure, yet hath been ever careless of God and of His Word, profane in his course, loose in his conversation, and ask him upon his deathbed, how it standeth with him. Oh! woe the time, that ever he spent it as he hath done. Now the soul begins to hate the man, and the very sight of him that hath been, the instrument with it in the committing of sin. Now nothing but gall and wormwood remaineth. Now the sweetness of the adulterer's lust is gone, and nothing but the sting of conscience remaineth. Now the covetous man must part with his goods, and the gall of asps must stick behind. Now the soul sinks within, and the heart is overwhelmed with sorrow. Take but these two men, I say, and judge by their ends, whether it will ever repent you that you have done well, that you have walked in the steps of the faith of Abraham.

My brethren, howsoever you have had many miseries, yet the Lord hath many mercies for you. God dealeth with His servants, as a father doth with his son, after he hath sent him on a journey to do some business; and the weather falleth foul, and the way proveth dangerous, and many a storm, and great difficulties are to be gone through. Oh, how the heart of that father pitieth his son! How doth he resolve to requite him, if he ever live to come home again! What preparation doth he make to entertain, and welcome him; and how doth he study to do good unto him! My brethren, so it is here; I beseech you, think of it, you that are the saints and people of God. You must find in your way many troubles and griefs (and we ought to find them), but be not discouraged. The more misery, the greater mercy. God the Father seeth His servants: and if they suffer and endure for a good conscience, as His eye seeth them, so His soul pitieth them. His heart bleeds within Him for them; that is, He hath a tender compassion of them, and He saith within Himself, Well, I will requite them if ever they come into My kingdom; all their patience, and care, and conscience in walking My ways, I will requite; and they shall receive a double reward from Me, even a crown of eternal glory. Think of these things that are not seen; they are eternal. The things that are seen are temporal, and they will deceive us. Let our hearts be carried after the other, and rest in them forever!

**÷**02-02 JEREMY TAYLOR

CHRIST'S ADVENT TO JUDGMENT

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Jeremy Taylor, born in Cambridge, England, in 1613, was the son of a barber. By his talents he obtained an entrance into Caius College, where his exceptional progress obtained for him admission to the ministry in his twenty-first year, two years before the canonical age. He was appointed in succession fellow of All Souls, Oxford, through the influence of Laud, chaplain to the King, and rector of Uppingham. During the Commonwealth he was expelled from his living and opened a school in Wales, employing his seclusion in writing his memorable work "The Liberty of Prophesying."

At the Restoration, Charles II raised him to the bishopric of Down and Connor (1660), in which post he remained until his death in 1667. His "*Ductor Dubitantium*," dedicated to Charles II, is a work of subtilty and ingenuity; his "Holy Living" and "Holy Dying" (1652), are unique monuments of learning and devotion. His sermons form, however, his most brilliant and most voluminous productions, and fully establish his claims to the first place among the learned, witty, fanciful, ornate and devotional prose writers of his time.

JEREMY TAYLOR

1613-1667

CHRIST'S ADVENT TO JUDGMENT

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*.— 2 Cor.5 10.

If we consider the person of the Judge, we first perceive that He is interested in the injury of the crimes He is to sentence: "They shall look on Him whom they have pierced." It was for thy sins that the Judge did suffer such unspeakable pains as were enough to reconcile all the world to God; the sum and spirit of which pains could not be better understood than by the consequence of His own words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" meaning, that He felt such horrible, pure, unmingled sorrows, that, altho His human nature was personally united to the Godhead, yet at that instant he felt no comfortable emanations by sensible perception from the Divinity, but He was so drenched in sorrow that the Godhead seemed to have forsaken Him. Beyond this, nothing can be added: but then, that thou hast for thy own particular made all this sin in vain and ineffective, that Christ thy Lord and Judge should be tormented for nothing, that thou wouldst not accept felicity and pardon when he purchased them at so dear a price, must needs be an infinite condemnation to such persons. How shalt thou look upon Him that fainted and died for love of thee, and thou didst scorn His miraculous mercies? How shall we dare to behold that holy face that brought salvation to us, and we turned away and fell in love with death, and kissed deformity and sins? And yet in the beholding that face consists much of the glories of eternity. All the pains and passions, the sorrows and the groans, the humility and poverty, the labors and watchings, the prayers and the sermons, the miracles and the prophecies, the whip and the nails, the death and the burial, the shame and the smart, the cross and the grave of Jesus, shall be laid upon thy score, if thou hast refused the mercies and design of all their holy ends and purposes. And if we remember what a calamity that was which broke the Jewish nation in pieces, when Christ came to judge them for their murdering Him who was their King and the Prince of Life, and consider that this was but a dark image of the terrors of the day of judgment, we may then apprehend that there is some strange unspeakable evil that attends them that are guilty of this death, and of so much evil to their Lord. Now it is certain if thou wilt not be saved by His death, you are guilty of His death; if thou wilt not suffer Him to have thee, thou art guilty of destroying Him; and then let it be considered what is to be expected from that Judge before whom you stand as His murderer and betrayer. But this is but half of this consideration.

Christ may be crucified again, and upon a new account, put to an open shame. For after that Christ has done all this by the direct actions of His priestly office, of sacrificing himself for us, He hath also done very many things for us which are also the fruits of His first love and prosecutions of our redemption. I will not instance the strange arts of mercy that our Lord uses to bring us to live holy lives; but I consider, that things are so ordered, and so great a value set upon our souls since they are the images of God, and redeemed by the blood of the Holy Lamb, that the salvation of our souls is reckoned as a part of Christ's reward, a part of the glorification of His humanity. Every sinner that repents causes joy to Christ, and the joy is so great that it runs over and wets the fair brows and beauteous looks of cherubim and seraphim, and all the angels have a part of that banquet; then it is that our blest Lord feels the fruits of His holy death; the acceptation of His holy sacrifice, the graciousness of His person, the return of His prayers. For all that Christ did or suffered, and all that He now does as a priest in heaven, is to glorify His Father by bringing souls to God. For this it was that He was born and died, that He descended from heaven to earth, from life to death, from the cross to the grave; this was the purpose of His resurrection and ascension, of the end and design of all the miracles and graces of God manifested to all the world by Him; and now what man is so vile, such a malicious fool, that will refuse to bring joy to his Lord by doing himself the greatest good in the world? They who refuse to do this, are said to crucify the Lord of Life again, and put him to an open shame—that is, they, as much as in them lies, bring Christ from His glorious joys to the labors of His life and the shame of His death; they advance His enemies, and refuse to advance the kingdom of their Lord; they put themselves in that state in which they were when Christ came to die for them; and now that He is in a state that He may rejoice over them (for He hath done all His share towards it), every wicked man takes his head from the blessing, and rather chooses that the devils should rejoice in his destruction, than that his Lord should triumph in his felicity. And now upon the supposition of these premises, we may imagine that it will be an infinite amazement to meet that Lord to be our Judge whose person we have murdered, whose honor we have disparaged, whose purposes we have destroyed, whose joys we have lessened, whose passion we have made ineffectual, and whose love we have trampled under our profane and impious feet.

But there is yet a third part of this consideration. As it will be inquired at the day of judgment concerning the dishonors to the person of Christ, so also concerning the profession and institution of Christ, and concerning His poor members; for by these also we make sad reflections upon our Lord. Every man that lives wickedly disgraces the religion and institution of Jesus, he discourages strangers from entering into it, he weakens the hands of them that are in already, and makes that the adversaries speak reproachfully of the name of Christ; but altho it is certain our Lord and Judge will deeply resent all these things, yet there is one thing which He takes more tenderly, and that is, the uncharitableness of men towards His poor. It shall then be upbraided to them by the Judge, that Himself was hungry and they refused to give meat to Him that gave them His body and heart-blood to feed them and quench their thirst; that they denied a robe to cover His nakedness, and yet He would have clothed their souls with the robe of His righteousness, lest their souls should be found naked on the day of the Lord's visitation; and all this unkindness is nothing but that evil men were uncharitable to their brethren, they would not feed the hungry, nor give drink to the thirsty nor clothe the naked, nor relieve their brothers' needs, nor forgive their follies, nor cover their shame, nor turn their eyes from delighting in their affronts and evil accidents; this is it which our Lord will take so tenderly, that His brethren for whom He died, who sucked the paps of His mother, that fed on His body and are nourished with His blood, whom He hath lodged in His heart and entertains in His bosom, the partners of His spirit and co-heirs of His inheritance, that these should be denied relief and suffered to go away ashamed, and unpitied; this our blest Lord will take so ill, that all those who are guilty of this unkindness, have no reason to expect the favor of the Court.

To this if we add the almightiness of the Judge, His infinite wisdom and knowledge of all causes, and all persons, and all circumstances, that He is infinitely just, inflexibly angry, and impartial in His sentence, there can be nothing added either to the greatness or the requisites of a terrible and an almighty Judge. For who can resist Him who is almighty? Who can evade His scrutiny that knows all things? Who can hope for pity of Him that is inflexible? Who can think to be exempted when the Judge is righteous and impartial? But in all these annexes of the Great Judge, that which I shall now remark, is that indeed which hath terror in it, and that is, the severity of our Lord. For then is the day of vengeance and recompenses, and no mercy at all shall be showed, but to them that are the sons of mercy; for the other, their portion is such as can be expected from these premises.

If we remember the instances of God's severity in this life, in the days of mercy and repentance, in those days when judgment waits upon mercy, and receives laws by the rules and measures of pardon, and that for all the rare streams of loving; kindness issuing out of paradise and refreshing all our fields with a moisture more fruitful than the floods of Nilus, still there are mingled some storms and violences, some fearful instances of the divine justice, we may more readily expect it will be worse, infinitely worse, at that day, when judgment shall ride in triumph, and mercy shall be the accuser of the wicked. But so we read, and are commanded to remember, because they are written for our example, that God destroyed at once five cities of the plain, and all the country, and Sodom and her sisters are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Fearful it was when God destroyed at once twenty-three thousand for fornication, and an exterminating angel in one night killed one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians, and the first-born of all the families of Egypt, and for the sin of David in numbering the people, three score and ten thousand of the people died, and God sent ten tribes into captivity and eternal oblivion and indistinction from a common people for their idolatry. Did not God strike Korah and his company with fire from heaven? and the earth opened and swallowed up the congregation of Abiram? And is not evil come upon all the world for one sin of Adam? Did not the anger of God break the nation of the Jews all in pieces with judgments so great, that no nation ever suffered the like, because none ever sinned so? And at once it was done, that God in anger destroyed all the world, and eight persons only escaped the angry baptism of water, and yet this world is the time of mercy; God hath opened here His magazines, and sent His Holy Son as the great channel and fountain of it, too: here He delights in mercy, and in judgment loves to remember it, and it triumphs over all His works, and God contrives instruments and accidents, chances and designs, occasions and opportunities for mercy. If, therefore, now the anger of God makes such terrible eruptions upon the wicked people that delight in sin, how great may we suppose that anger to be, how severe that judgment, how terrible that vengeance, how intolerable those inflictions which God reserves for the full effusion of indignation on the great day of vengeance!

We may also guess at it by this: if God upon all single instances, and in the midst of our sins, before they are come to the full, and sometimes in the beginning of an evil habit, be so fierce in His anger, what can we imagine it to be in that day when the wicked are to drink the dregs of that horrid potion, and count over all the particulars of their whole treasure of wrath? "This is the day of wrath, and God shall reveal, or bring forth, His righteous judgments." The expression is taken from Deut. xxxii., 34: "Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures? I will restore it in the day of vengeance, for the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants." For so did the Lybian lion that was brought up under discipline, and taught to endure blows, and eat the meat of order and regular provision, and to suffer gentle usages and the familiarities of societies; but once He brake out into His own wildness, and killed two Roman boys; but those that forage in the Lybian mountains tread down and devour all that they meet or master; and when they have fasted two days, lay up an anger great as is their appetite, and bring certain death to all that can be overcome. God is pleased to compare himself to a lion; and though in this life He hath confined Himself with promises and gracious emanations of an infinite goodness, and limits himself by conditions and covenants, and suffers Himself to be overcome by prayers, and Himself hath invented ways of atonement and expiation; yet when He is provoked by our unhandsome and unworthy actions, He makes sudden breaches, and tears some of us in pieces, and of others He breaks their bones or affrights their hopes and secular gaieties, and fills their house with mourning and cypress, and groans and death. But when this Lion of the tribe of Judah shall appear upon His own mountain, the mountain of the Lord, in His natural dress of majesty, and that justice shall have her chain and golden fetters taken off, then justice shall strike, and mercy shall hold her hands; she shall strike sore strokes, and pity shall not break the blow; and God shall account with us by minutes, and for words, and for thoughts, and then He shall be severe to mark what is done amiss; and that justice may reign entirely, God shall open the wicked man's treasure, and tell the sums, and weigh grains and scruples. Said Philo upon the place of Deuteronomy before quoted: As there are treasures of good things, and God has crowns and scepters in store for His saints and servants, and coronets for martyrs, and rosaries for virgins, and vials full of prayers, and bottles full of tears, and a register of sighs and penitential groans, so God hath a treasure of wrath and fury, of scourges and scorpions, and then shall be produced the shame of lust, and the malice of envy, and the groans of the opprest, and the persecutions of the saints, and the cares of covetousness, and the troubles of ambition, and the insolencies of traitors, and the violence of rebels, and the rage of anger, and the uneasiness of impatience, and the restlessness of unlawful desires; and by this time the monsters and diseases will be numerous and intolerable, when God's heavy hand shall press the *sanies* and the intolerableness, the obliquity and the unreasonableness, the amazement and the disorder, the smart and the sorrow, the guilt and the punishment, out from all our sins, and pour them into one chalice, and mingle them with an infinite wrath, and make the wicked drink of all the vengeance, and force it down their unwilling throats with the violence of devils and accurst spirits.

We may guess at the severity of the Judge by the lesser strokes of that judgment which He is pleased to send upon sinners in this world, to make them afraid of the horrible pains of doomsday—I mean the torments of an unquiet conscience, the amazement and confusions of some sins and some persons. For I have sometimes seen persons surprised in a base action, and taken in the circumstances of crafty theft and secret injustices, before their excuse was ready. They have changed their color, their speech hath faltered, their tongue stammered, their eyes did wander and fix nowhere, till shame made them sink into their hollow eye-pits to retreat from the images and circumstances of discovery; their wits are lost, their reason useless, the whole order of their soul is decomposed, and they neither see, nor feel, nor think, as they used to do, but they are broken into disorder by a stroke of damnation and a lesser stripe of hell; but then if you come to observe a guilty and a base murderer, a condemned traitor, and see him harassed first by an evil conscience, and then pulled in pieces by the hangman's hooks, or broken upon sorrows and the wheel, we may then guess (as well as we can in this life) what the pains of that day shall be to accurst souls. But those we shall consider afterward in their proper scene; now only we are to estimate the severity of our Judge by the intolerableness of an evil conscience; if guilt will make a man despair—and despair will make a man mad, confounded, and dissolved in all the regions of his senses and more noble faculties, that he shall neither feel, nor hear, nor see anything but specters and illusions, devils and frightful dreams, and hear noises, and shriek fearfully, and look pale and distracted, like a hopeless man from the horrors and confusions of a lost battle, upon which all his hopes did stand—then the wicked must at the day of judgment expect strange things and fearful, and such which now no language can express, and then no patience can endure. Then only it can truly be said that he is inflexible and inexorable. No prayers then can move Him, no groans can cause Him to pity thee; therefore pity thyself in time, that when the Judge comes thou mayest be one of the sons of everlasting mercy, to whom pity belongs as part of thine inheritance, for all else shall without any remorse (except His own) be condemned by the horrible sentence.

That all may think themselves concerned in this consideration, let us remember that even the righteous and most innocent shall pass through a severe trial. Many of the ancients explicated this severity by the fire of conflagration, which say they shall purify those souls at the day of judgment, which in this life have built upon the foundation (hay and stubble) works of folly and false opinions, states of imperfection. So St. Augustine's doctrine was: "The great fire at doomsday shall throw some into the portion of the left hand, and others shall be purified and represented on the right." And the same is affirmed by Origen and Lactantius; and St. Hilary thus expostulates: "Since we are to give account for every idle word, shall we long for the day of judgment, wherein we must, every one of us, pass that unwearied fire in which those grievous punishments for expiating the soul from sins must be endured; for to such as have been baptized with the Holy Ghost it remaineth that they be consummated with the fire of judgment." And St. Ambrose adds: "That if any be as Peter or as John, they are baptized with this fire, and he that is purged here had need to be purged there again. Let him also purify us, that every one of us being burned with that flaming sword, not burned up or consumed, we may enter into Paradise, and give thanks unto the Lord who hath brought us into a place of refreshment." This opinion of theirs is, in the main of it, very uncertain; relying upon the sense of some obscure place of Scripture is only apt to represent the great severity of the Judge at that day, and it hath in it this only certainty, that even the most innocent person hath great need of mercy, and he that hath the greatest cause of confidence, altho he runs to no rocks to hide him, yet he runs to the protection of the cross, and hides himself under the shadow of the divine mercies: and he that shall receive the absolution of the blest sentence shall also suffer the terrors of the day, and the fearful circumstances of Christ's coming. The effect of this consideration is this: That if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and the sinner appear? And if St. Paul, whose conscience accused him not, yet durst not be too confident, because he was not hereby justified, but might be found faulty by the severer judgment of his Lord, how shall we appear, with all our crimes and evil habits round about us? If there be need of much mercy to the servants and friends of the Judge, then His enemies shall not be able to stand upright in judgment.

Let us next consider the circumstances of our appearing and his sentence; and first I consider that men at the day of judgment that belong not to the portion of life, shall have three sorts of accusers: 1. Christ Himself, who is their Judges 2. Their own conscience, whom they have injured and blotted with characters of death and foul dishonor; 3. The devil, their enemy, whom they served.

Christ shall be their accuser, not only upon the stock of those direct injuries (which I before reckoned) of crucifying the Lord of Life, once and again, etc., but upon the titles of contempt and unworthiness, of unkindness and ingratitude; and the accusation will be nothing else but a plain representation of those artifices and assistances, those bonds and invitations, those constrainings and importunities, which our dear Lord used to us to make it almost impossible to lie in sin, and necessary to be saved. For it will, it must needs be, a fearful exprobration of our unworthiness, when the Judge Himself shall bear witness against us that the wisdom of God Himself was strangely employed in bringing us safely to felicity. I shall draw a short scheme which, altho it must needs be infinitely short, of what God hath done for us, yet it will be enough to shame us. God did not only give His Son for an example, and the Son gave Himself for a price for us, but both gave the Holy Spirit to assist us in mighty graces, for the verifications of faith, and the entertainments of hope, and the increase and perseverance of charity. God gave to us a new nature, He put another principle into us, a third part of a perfective constitution; we have the spirit put into us, to be a part of us, as properly to produce actions of a holy life, as the soul of man in the body does produce the natural. God hath exalted human nature, and made it in the person of Jesus Christ, to sit above the highest seat of angels, and the angels are made ministering spirits, ever since their Lord became our brother. Christ hath by a miraculous sacrament given us His body to eat and His blood to drink; He made ways that we may become all one with Him. He hath given us an easy religion, and hath established our future felicity upon natural and pleasant conditions, and we are to be happy hereafter if we suffer God to make us happy here; and things are so ordered that a man must take more pains to perish than to be happy. God hath found out rare ways to make our prayers acceptable, our weak petitions, the desires of our imperfect souls, to prevail mightily with God, and to lay a holy violence and an undeniable necessity upon Himself; and God will deny us nothing but when we ask of Him to do us ill offices, to give us poisons and dangers, and evil nourishment, and temptations; and He that hath given such mighty power to the prayers of His servants, yet will not be moved by those potent and mighty prayers to do any good man an evil turn, or to grant him one mischief—in that only God can deny us. But in all things else God hath made all the excellent things in heaven and earth to join toward the holy and fortunate effects; for He that appointed an angel to present the prayers of saints, and Christ makes intercession for us, and the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us with groans unutterable, and all the holy men in the world pray for all and for every one, and God hath instructed us with scriptures, and precedents, and collateral and direct assistances to pray, and He encouraged us with divers excellent promises, and parables, and examples, and teaches us what to pray, and how, and gives one promise to public prayer, and another to private prayer, and to both the blessing of being heard.

Add to this account that God did heap blessings upon us without order, infinitely, perpetually, and in all instances, when we needed and when we needed not. He heard us when we prayed, giving us all, and giving us more, than we desired. He desired that we should ask, and yet He hath also prevented our desires. He watched for us, and at His own charge sent a whole order of men whose employment is to minister to our souls; and if all this had not been enough, He had given us more also. He promised heaven to our obedience, a province for a dish of water, a kingdom for a prayer, satisfaction for desiring it, grace for receiving, and more grace for accepting and using the first. He invited us with gracious words and perfect entertainments; He threatened horrible things to us if we would not be happy; He hath made strange necessities for us, making our very repentance to be a conjugation of holy actions, and holy times, and a long succession; He hath taken away all excuses from us; He hath called us from temptation; He bears our charges; He is always beforehand with us in every act of favor, and perpetually slow in striking, and His arrows are unfeathered; and He is so long, first, in drawing His sword, and another long while in whetting it, and yet longer in lifting His hand to strike, that before the blow comes the man hath repented long, unless he be a fool and impudent; and then God is so glad of an excuse to lay His anger aside, that certainly, if after all this, we refuse life and glory, there is no more to be said; this plain story will condemn us; but the story is very much longer; and, as our conscience will represent all our sins to us, so the Judge will represent all His Father's kindnesses, as Nathan did to David, when he was to make the justice of the divine sentence appear against him. Then it shall be remembered that the joys of every day's piety would have been a greater pleasure every night than the remembrance of every night's sin could have been in the morning; that every night the trouble and labor of the day's virtue would have been as much passed and turned to as the pleasure of that day's sin, but that they would be infinitely distinguished by the effects. The offering ourselves to God every morning, and the thanksgiving to God every night, hope and fear, shame and desire, the honor of leaving a fair name behind us, and the shame of dying like a fool,—everything indeed in the world is made to be an argument and an inducement to us to invite us to come to God and be saved; and therefore when this, and infinitely more shall by the Judge be exhibited in sad remembrances, there needs no other sentence; we shall condemn ourselves with a hasty shame and a fearful confusion, to see how good God hath been to us, and how base we have been to ourselves. Thus Moses is said to accuse the Jews; and thus also He that does accuse, is said to condemn, as Verres was by Cicero, and Claudia by Domitius her accuser, and the world of impenitent persons by the men of Nineveh, and all by Christ, their Judge. I represent the horror of this circumstance to consist in this, besides the reasonableness of the judgment, and the certainty of the condemnation, it can not but be an argument of an intolerable despair to perishing souls, when He that was our advocate all our life, shall, in the day of that appearing, be our Accuser and our Judge, a party against us, an injured person in the day of His power and of His wrath, doing execution upon all His own foolish and malicious enemies.

Our conscience shall be our accuser. But this signifies but these two things: First, That we shall be condemned for the evils that we have done and shall then remember, God by His power wiping away the dust from the tables of our memory, and taking off the consideration and the voluntary neglect and rude shufflings of our cases of conscience. For then we shall see things as they are, the evil circumstances and the crooked intentions, the adherent unhandsomeness and the direct crimes; for all things are laid up safely, and tho we draw a curtain of cobweb over them, and a few fig-leaves before our shame, yet God shall draw away the curtain, and forgetfulness shall be no more, because, with a taper in the hand of God, all the corners of our nastiness shall be discovered. And, secondly, it signifies this also, that not only the justice of God shall be confest by us in our own shame and condemnation, but the evil of the sentence shall be received into us, to melt our bowels and to break our heart in pieces within us, because we are the authors of our own death, and our own inhuman hands have torn our souls in pieces. Thus far the horrors are great, and when evil men consider it, it is certain they must be afraid to die. Even they that have lived well, have some sad considerations, and the tremblings of humility, and suspicion of themselves. I remember St. Cyprian tells of a good man who in his agony of death saw a fantasm of a noble and angelical shape, who, frowning and angry, said to him: "Ye can not endure sickness, ye are troubled at the evils of the world, and yet you are loath to die and to be quit of them; what shall I do to you?" Altho this is apt to represent every man's condition more or less, yet, concerning persons of wicked lives, it hath in it too many sad degrees of truth; they are impatient of sorrow, and justly fearful of death, because they know not how to comfort themselves in the evil accidents of their lives; and their conscience is too polluted to take death for sanctuary, and to hope to have amends made to their condition by the sentence of the day of judgment. Evil and sad is their condition who can not be contented here nor blest hereafter, whose life is their misery and their conscience is their enemy, whose grave is their prison and death their undoing, and the sentence of doomsday the beginning of an intolerable condition.

The third sort of accusers are the devils, and they will do it with malicious and evil purposes. The prince of the devils hath Diabolus for one of his chiefest appellatives. The accuser of the brethren he is by his profest malice and employment; and therefore God, who delights that His mercy should triumph and His goodness prevail over all the malice of men and devils, hath appointed one whose office is to reprove the accuser and to resist the enemy, and to be a defender of their cause who belong to God. The Holy Spirit is a defender; the evil spirit is the accuser; and they that in this life belong to one or the other, shall in the same proportion be treated at the day of judgment. The devil shall accuse the brethren, that is, the saints and servants of God, and shall tell concerning their follies and infirmities, the sins of their youth and weakness of their age, the imperfect grace and the long schedule of omissions of duty, their scruples and their fears, their diffidences and pusillanimity, and all those things which themselves by strict examination find themselves guilty of and have confest all their shame and the matter of their sorrows, their evil intentions and their little plots, their carnal confidences and too fond adherences of the things of this world, their indulgence and easiness of government, their wilder joys and freer meals, their loss of time and their too forward and apt compliances, their trifling arrests and little peevishnesses, the mixtures of the world with the thing of the Spirit, and all the incidences of humanity he will bring forth and aggravate them by circumstances of ingratitude, and the breach of promise, and the evacuating all their holy purposes, and breaking their resolutions, and rifling their vows, and all these things, being drawn into an entire representment, and the bills clogged by numbers, will make the best man in the world seem foul and unhandsome, and stained with the characters of death and evil dishonor. But for these there is appointed a defender. The Holy Spirit that maketh intercession for us shall then also interpose, and against all these things shall oppose the passion of our blest Lord, and upon all their defects shall cast the robe of righteousness; and the sins of their youth shall not prevail so much as the repentance of their age, and their omissions be excused by probable intervening causes, and their little escapes shall appear single and in disunion, because they were always kept asunder by penitential prayers and sighings, and their seldom returns of sin by their daily watchfulness, and their often infirmities by the sincerity of their souls, and their scruples by their zeal, and their passions by their love, and all by the mercies of God and the sacrifice which their Judge offered and the Holy Spirit made effective by daily graces and assistances. These, therefore, infallibly go to the portion of the right hand, because the Lord our God shall answer for them. But as for the wicked, it is not so with them; for altho the plain story of their life be to them a sad condemnation, yet what will be answered when it shall be told concerning them, that they despised God's mercies, and feared not His angry judgments; that they regarded not His Word, and loved not His excellences; that they were not persuaded by the promises nor affrighted by His threatenings; that they neither would accept His government nor His blessings; that all the sad stories that ever happened in both the worlds (in all which Himself did escape till the day of His death, and was not concerned in them save only that He was called upon by every one of them, which He ever heard or saw or was told of, to repentance), that all these were sent to Him in vain? But can not the accuser truly say to the Judge concerning such persons, "They were Thine by creation, but mine by their own choice; Thou didst redeem them indeed, but they sold themselves to me for a trifle, or for an unsatisfying interest; Thou diedst for them, but they obeyed my commandments; I gave them nothing, I promised them nothing but the filthy pleasures of a night, or the joys of madness, or the delights of a disease; I never hanged upon the cross three long hours for them, nor endured the labors of a poor life thirty-three years together for their interest; only when they were Thine by the merit of Thy death, they quickly became mine by the demerit of their ingratitude; and when Thou hadst clothed their soul with Thy robe, and adorned them by Thy graces, we stript them naked as their shame, and only put on a robe of darkness, and they thought themselves secure and went dancing to their grave like a drunkard to a fight, or a fly unto a candle; and therefore they that did partake with us in our faults must divide with us in our portion and fearful interest." This is a sad story because it ends in death, and there is nothing to abate or lessen the calamity. It concerns us therefore to consider in time that he that tempts us will accuse us, and what he calls pleasant now he shall then say was nothing, and all the gains that now invite earthly souls and mean persons to vanity, was nothing but the seeds of folly, and the harvest in pain and sorrow and shame eternal. But then, since this horror proceeds upon the account of so many accusers, God hath put it in our power by a timely accusation of ourselves in the tribunal of the court Christian, to prevent all the arts of aggravation which at doomsday shall load foolish and undiscerning souls. He that accuses himself of his crimes here, means to forsake them, and looks upon them on all sides, and spies out his deformity, and is taught to hate them, he is instructed and prayed for, he prevents the anger of God and defeats the devil's malice, and, by making shame the instrument of repentance, he takes away the sting, and makes that to be his medicine which otherwise would be his death: and, concerning this exercise, I shall only add what the patriarch of Alexandria told an old religious person in his hermitage. Having asked him what he found in that desert, he was answered, "Only this, to judge and condemn myself perpetually; that is the employment of my solitude." The patriarch answered, "There is no other way." By accusing ourselves we shall make the devil's malice useless, and our own consciences clear, and be reconciled to the Judge by the severities of an early repentance, and then we need to fear no accusers.

**÷**02-03 BAXTER

MAKING LIGHT OF CHRIST AND SALVATION

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Richard Baxter, was born in 1615, at Rowton, near Shrewsbury, in England. After surmounting great difficulties in securing an education for the ministry he was ordained in 1638, in the Church of England, his first important charge being that of Kidderminster, where he established his reputation as a powerful evangelical and controversial preacher. Altho opposed to Cromwell's extreme acts, he became a chaplain in the army of the Rebellion. His influence was all on the side of peace, however, and at the Restoration he was appointed chaplain to Charles II.

Baxter left the Church of England on the promulgation of the Act of Uniformity, and in 1662 retired to Acton in Middlesex, where he wrote most of his works. The Acts of Indulgence enabled him to return to London, where he remained until Judge Jeffreys imprisoned and fined him on a charge of sedition. He was the most prolific writer and controversialist of his day among nonconformists. Baxter left only two works which seem likely to be of ever fresh interest, "The Saint's Rest" and "Calls to the Unconverted." He died in London in 1691.

BAXTER

1615-1691

MAKING LIGHT OF CHRIST AND SALVATION

*But they made light of it*.— Matt. 22 5.

Beloved hearers; the office that God hath called us to is, by declaring the glory of His grace, to help under Christ to the saving of men's souls. I hope you think not that I come hither to-day on another errand. The Lord knows I had not set a foot out-of-doors but in hope to succeed in this work for your souls. I have considered, and often considered, what is the matter that so many thousands should perish when God hath done so much for their salvation; and I find this that is mentioned in my text is the cause. It is one of the wonders of the world, that when God hath so loved the world as to send His Son, and Christ hath made a satisfaction by His death sufficient for them all, and offereth the benefits of it so freely to them, even without money or price, that yet the most of the world should perish; yea, the most of those that are thus called by His Word! Why, here is the reason—when Christ hath done all this, men make light of it. God hath showed that He is not unwilling; and Christ hath showed that He is not unwilling that men should be restored to God's favor and be saved; but men are actually unwilling themselves. God takes not pleasure in the death of sinners, but rather that they return and live. But men take such pleasure in sin that they will die before they will return. The Lord Jesus was content to be their physician, and hath provided them a sufficient plaster of His own blood: but if men make light of it, and will not apply it, what wonder if they perish after all? This Scripture giveth us the reason of their perdition. This, sad experience tells us, the most of the world is guilty of. It is a most lamentable thing to see how most men do spend their care, their time, their pains, for known vanities, while God and glory are cast aside; that He who is all should seem to them as nothing, and that which is nothing should seem to them as good as all; that God should set mankind in such a race where heaven or hell is their certain end, and that they should sit down, and loiter, or run after the childish toys of the world, and so much forget the prize that they should run for. Were it but possible for one of us to see the whole of this business as the all-seeing God doth; to see at one view both heaven and hell, which men are so near; and see what most men in the world are minding, and what they are doing every day, it would be the saddest sight that could be imagined. Oh, how should we marvel at their madness, and lament their self-delusion! O poor distracted world! what is it you run after? and what is it that you neglect? If God had never told them what they were sent into the world to do, or whither they were going, or what was before them in another world, then they had been excusable; but He hath told them over and over, till they were weary of it. Had He left it doubtful, there had been some excuse; but it is His sealed word, and they profess to believe it, and would take it ill of us if we should question whether they do believe it or not.

Beloved, I come not to accuse any of you particularly of this crime; but seeing it is the commonest cause of men's destruction, I suppose you will judge it the fittest matter for our inquiry, and deserving our greatest care for the cure. To which end I shall, (1) endeavor the conviction of the guilty; (2) shall give them such considerations as may tend to humble and reform them; (3) I shall conclude with such direction as may help them that are willing to escape the destroying power of this sin.

And for the first, consider: It is the case of most sinners to think themselves freest from those sins that they are most enslaved to; and one reason why we can not reform them is because we can not convince them of their guilt. It is the nature of sin so far to blind and befool the sinner, that he knoweth not what he doth, but thinketh he is free from it when it reigneth in him, or when he is committing it: it bringeth men to be so much unacquainted with themselves that they know not what they think, or what they mean and intend, nor what they love or hate, much less what they are habituated and disposed to. They are alive to sin, and dead to all the reason, consideration, and resolution that should recover them, as if it were only by their sinning that we must know that they are alive. May I hope that you that hear me to-day are but willing to know the truth of your case, and then I shall be encouraged to proceed to an inquiry. God will judge impartially; why should not we do so? Let me, therefore, by these following questions, try whether none of you are slighters of Christ and your own salvation. And follow me, I beseech you, by putting them close to your own hearts, and faithfully answering them.

Things that men highly value will be remembered; they will be matter of their freest and sweetest thoughts. This is a known case.

Do not those then make light of Christ and salvation that think of them so seldom and coldly in comparison of other things? Follow thy own heart, man, and observe what it daily runneth after; and then judge whether it make not light of Christ.

We can not persuade men to one hour's sober consideration what they should do for an interest in Christ, or in thankfulness for His love, and yet they will not believe that they make light of Him.

Things that we highly value will be matter of our discourse; the judgment and heart will command the tongue. Freely and delightfully will our speech run after them. This also is a known case.

Do not those men make light of Christ and salvation that shun the mention of His name, unless it be in a vain or sinful use? Those that love not the company where Christ and salvation is much talked of, but think it troublesome, precise discourse: that had rather hear some merry jests, or idle tales, or talk of their riches or business in the world; when you may follow them from morning to night, and scarce have a savory word of Christ; but perhaps some slight and weary mention of Him sometimes; judge whether these make not light of Christ and salvation. How seriously do they talk of the world and speak of vanity! but how heartlessly do they make mention of Christ and salvation!

The things that we highly value we would secure the possession of, and therefore would take any convenient course to have all doubts and fears about them well resolved. Do not those men then make light of Christ and salvation that have lived twenty or thirty years in uncertainty whether they have any part in these or not, and yet never seek out for the right resolution of their doubts? Are all that hear me this day certain they shall be saved? Oh, that they were! Oh, had you not made light of salvation, you could not so easily bear such doubting of it; you could not rest till you had made it sure, or done your best to make it sure. Have you nobody to inquire of, that might help you in such a work? Why, you have ministers that are purposely appointed to that office. Have you gone to them, and told them the doubtfulness of your case, and asked their help in the judging of your condition? Alas! ministers may sit in their studies from one year to another, before ten persons among a thousand will come to them on such an errand! Do not these make light of Christ and salvation? When the gospel pierceth the heart indeed, they cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" Trembling and astonished, Paul cries out, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And so did the convinced Jews to Peter. But when hear we such questions?

The things that we value do deeply affect us, and some motions will be in the heart according to our estimation of them. O sirs, if men made not light of these things, what working would there be in the hearts of all our hearers! What strange affections would it raise in them to hear of the matters of the world to come! How would their hearts melt before the power of the gospel! What sorrow would be wrought in the discovery of their sins! What astonishment at the consideration of their misery! What unspeakable joy at the glad tidings of salvation by the blood of Christ! What resolution would be raised in them upon the discovery of their duty! Oh, what hearers should we have, if it were not for this sin! Whereas now we are liker to weary them, or preach them asleep with matters of this unspeakable moment. We talk to them of Christ and salvation till we make their heads ache: little would one think by their careless carriage that they heard and regarded what we said, or tho we spoke at all to them.

Our estimation of things will be seen in the diligence of our endeavors. That which we highliest value, we shall think no pains too great to obtain. Do not those men then make light of Christ and salvation that think all too much that they do for them; that murmur at His service, and think it too grievous for them to endure? that ask His service as Judas of the ointment. What need this waste? Can not men be saved without so much ado? This is more ado than needs. For the world they will labor all the day, and all their lives; but for Christ and salvation they are afraid of doing too much. Let us preach to them as long as we will, we can not bring them to relish or resolve upon a life of holiness. Follow them to their houses, and you shall not hear them read a chapter, nor call upon God with their families once a day; nor will they allow Him that one day in seven which He hath separated to His service. But pleasure, or worldly business, or idleness, must have a part And many of them are so far hardened as to reproach them that will not be as mad as themselves. And is not Christ worth the seeking? Is not everlasting salvation worth more than all this? Doth not that soul make light of all these that thinks his ease more worth than they? Let but common sense judge.

That which we most highly value, we think we can not buy too dear. Christ and salvation are freely given, and yet the most of men go without them because they can not enjoy the world and them together. They are called but to part with that which would hinder them Christ, and they will not do it. They are called but to give God His own, and to resign all to His will, and let go the profits and pleasures of this world, when they must let go either Christ or them, and they will not. They think this too dear a bargain, and say they can not spare these things: they must hold their credit with men; they must look to their estates: how shall they live else? They must have their pleasure, whatsoever becomes of Christ and salvation: as if they could live without Christ better than without these; as if they were afraid of being losers by Christ, or could make a saving match by losing their souls to gain the world. Christ hath told us over and over that if we will not forsake all for Him we can not be His disciples. Far are these men from forsaking all, and yet will needs think that they are His disciples indeed.

That which men highly esteem, they would help their friends to as well as themselves. Do not those men make light of Christ and salvation that can take so much care to leave their children portions in the world, and do so little to help them to heaven? that provide outward necessaries so carefully for their families, but do so little to the saving of their souls? Their neglected children and friends will witness that either Christ, or their children's souls, or both, were made light of.

That which men highly esteem, they will so diligently seek after that you may see it in the success, if it be a matter within their reach. You may see how many make light of Christ, by the little knowledge they have of Him, and the little communion with Him, and the communication from Him; and the little, yea, none, of His special grace in them. Alas! how many ministers can speak it to the sorrow of their hearts, that many of their people know almost nothing of Christ, tho they hear of Him daily! Nor know they what they must do to be saved: if we ask them an account of these things, they answer as if they understood not what we say to them, and tell us they are no scholars, and therefore think they are excusable for their ignorance. Oh, if these men had not made light of Christ and their salvation, but had bestowed but half as much pains to know and enjoy Him as they have done to understand the matters of their trades and callings in the world, they would not have been so ignorant as they are: they make light of these things, and therefore will not be at the pains to study or learn them. When men that can learn the hardest trade in a few years have not learned a catechism, nor how to understand their creed, under twenty or thirty years' preaching, nor can abide to be questioned about such things, doth not this show that they have slighted them in their hearts? How will these despisers of Christ and salvation be able one day to look Him in the face, and to give an account of these neglects?

Thus much I have spoken in order to your conviction. Do not some of your consciences by this time smite you, and say, I am the man that have made light of my salvation? If they do not, it is because you make light of it still, for all that is said to you. But because, if it be the will of the Lord, I would fain have this damning distemper cured, and am loath to leave you in such a desperate condition, if I knew how to remedy it, I will give you some considerations, which may move you, if you be men of reason and understanding, to look better about you; and I beseech you to weigh them, and make use of them as we go, and lay open your hearts to the work of grace, and sadly bethink you what a case you are in, if you prove such as make light of Christ.

Consider, 1. Thou makest light of Him that made not light of thee who deserve it. Thou wast worthy of nothing but contempt. As a man, what art thou but a worm to God? As a sinner, thou art far viler than a toad: yet Christ was so far from making light of thee and thy happiness, that He came down into the flesh, and lived a life of suffering, and offered Himself a sacrifice to the justice which thou hadst provoked, that thy miserable soul might have a remedy. It is no less than miracles of love and mercy that He hath showed to us; and yet shall we slight them after all?

Angels admire them, whom they less concern, and shall redeemed sinners make light of them? What barbarous, yea, devilish—yea, worse than devilish—ingratitude is this! The devils never had a savior offered to them; but thou hast, and dost thou yet make light of Him?

2. Consider, the work of man's salvation by Jesus Christ is the masterpiece of all the works of God, wherein He would have His love and mercy to be magnified. As the creation declareth. His goodness and power, so doth redemption His goodness and mercy; He hath contrived the very frame of His worship so that it shall much consist in the magnifying of this work; and, after all this, will you make light of it? "His name is wonderful." "He did the work that none could do." "Greater love could none show than His." How great was the evil and misery that He delivered us from! the good procured from us! All are wonders, from His birth to His ascension; from our new birth to our glorification, all are wonders of matchless mercy—and yet do you make light of them?

3. You make light of matters of greatest excellency and moment in the world: you know not what it is that you slight: had you well known, you would not have done it. As Christ said to the woman of Samaria, "Hadst thou known who it is that speaketh to thee, thou wouldst have asked of Him the waters of life"; had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. So, had you known what Christ is, you would not have made light of Him; had you been one day in heaven, and but seen what they possess, and seen also what miserable souls must endure that are shut out, you would never sure have made so light of Christ.

O sirs, it is no trifles or jesting matters that the gospel speaks of. I must needs profess to you that when I have the most serious thoughts of these things myself, I am ready to marvel that such amazing matters do not overwhelm the souls of men; that the greatness of the subject doth not so overmatch our understandings and affections as even to drive men besides themselves, but that God hath always somewhat allayed it by the distance; much more that men should be so blockish as to make light of them. O Lord, that men did but know what everlasting glory and everlasting torments are: would they then hear us as they do? would they read and think of these things as they do? I profess I have been ready to wonder, when I have heard such weighty things delivered, how people can forbear crying out in the congregation; much more how they can rest till they have gone to their ministers, and learned what they should do to be saved, that this great business might be put out of doubt. Oh, that heaven and hell should work no more on men! Oh, that everlastingness work no more! Oh, how can you forbear when you are alone to think with yourselves what it is to be everlastingly in joy or in torment! I wonder that such thoughts do not break your sleep, and that they come not in your mind when you are about your labor! I wonder how you can almost do anything else! how you can have any quietness in your minds! How you can eat, or drink, or rest, till you have got some ground of everlasting consolations! Is that a man or a corpse that is not affected with matters of this moment? that can be readier to sleep than to tremble when he heareth how he must stand at the bar of God? Is that a man or a clod of clay that can rise or lie down without being deeply affected with his everlasting estate? that can follow his worldly business and make nothing of the great business of salvation or damnation; and that when they know it is hard at hand? Truly, sirs, when I think of the weight of the matter, I wonder at the very best of God's saints upon the earth that they are no better, and do no more in so weighty a case. I wonder at those whom the world accounteth more holy than needs, and scorns for making too much ado, that they can put off Christ and their souls with so little; that they pour not out their souls in every supplication; that they are not more taken up with God; that their thoughts be more serious in preparation for their account. I wonder that they be not a hundred times more strict in their lives, and more laborious and unwearied in striving for the crown, than they are. And for myself, as I am ashamed of my dull and careless heart, and of my slow and unprofitable course of life, so the Lord knows I am ashamed of every sermon that I preach: when I think what I have been speaking of, and who sent me, and that men's salvation or damnation is so much concerned in it, I am ready to tremble lest God should judge me as a slighter of His truth and the souls of men, and lest in the best sermon I should be guilty of their blood. Methinks we should not speak a word to men in matters of such consequence without tears, or the greatest earnestness that possibly we can: were not we too much guilty of the sin which we reprove, it would be so. Whether we are alone, or in company, methinks our end, and such an end, should still be in our mind, and before our eyes; and we should sooner forget anything, and set light by anything, or by all things, than by this.

Consider, 4. Who is it that sends this weighty message to you? Is it not God Himself? Shall the God of heaven speak and men make light of it? You would not slight the voice of an angel or a prince.

5. Whose salvation is it that you make light of? Is it not your own? Are you no more near or dear to yourselves than to make light of your own happiness or misery? Why, sirs, do you not care whether you be saved or damned? Is self-love lost? are you turned your own enemies? As he that slighteth his meat doth slight his life, so if you slight Christ, whatsoever you may think, you will find it was your own salvation that you slighted. Hear what He saith, "All they that hate me love death."

6. Your sin is greater, in that you profess to believe the gospel which you make so light of. For a profest infidel to do it that believes not that ever Christ died, or rose again, or doth not believe that there is a heaven or hell, this were no such marvel—but for you, that make it your creed, and your very religion, and call yourselves Christians, and have been baptized into this faith, and seemed to stand to it, this is the wonder, and hath no excuse. What! believe that you shall live in endless joy or torment, and yet make no more of it to escape torment, and obtain that joy! What! believe that God will shortly judge you, and yet make no preparation for it! Either say plainly, I am no Christian, I do not believe these wonderful things, I will believe nothing but what I see, or else let your hearts be affected with your belief, and live as you say you do believe. What do you think when you repeat the creed, and mention Christ's judgment and everlasting life?

7. What are these things you set so much by as to prefer them before Christ and the saving of your soul? Have you found a better friend, a greater and a surer happiness than this? Good Lord! what dung is it that men make so much of, while they set so light by everlasting glory? What toys are they that are daily taken up with, while matters of life and death are neglected? Why, sirs, if you had every one a kingdom in your hopes, what were it in comparison of the everlasting kingdom? I can not but look upon all the glory and dignity of this world, lands and lordships, crowns and kingdoms, even as on some brain-sick, beggarly fellow, that borroweth fine clothes, and plays the part of a king or a lord for an hour on a stage, and then comes down, and the sport is ended, and they are beggars again. Were it not for God's interest in the authority of magistrates, or for the service they might do Him, I should judge no better of them. For, as to their own glory, it is but a smoke: what matter is it whether you live poor or rich, unless it were a greater matter to die rich than it is? You know well enough that death levels all. What matter is it at judgment, whether you be to answer for the life of a rich man or a poor man? Is Dives, then, any better than Lazarus? Oh, that men knew what poor, deceiving shadow they grasp at while they let go the everlasting substance! The strongest, and richest, and most voluptuous sinners do but lay in fuel for their sorrows, while they think they are gathering together a treasure. Alas! they are asleep, and dream that they are happy; but when they awake, what a change will they find! Their crown is made of thorns; their pleasure hath such a sting as will stick in the heart through all eternity, except unfeigned repentance do prevent it. Oh, how sadly will these wretches be convinced ere long, what a foolish bargain they made in selling Christ and their salvation for these trifles! Let your farms and merchandise, then, save you, if they can, and do that for you that Christ would have done. Cry then to Baal, to save thee! Oh, what thoughts have drunkards and adulterers, etc., of Christ, that will not part with the basest lust for Him? "For a piece of bread," saith Solomon, "such men do transgress."

8. To set so light by Christ and salvation is a certain mark that thou hast no part in them, and if thou so continue, that Christ will set as light by thee: "Those that honor him he will honor, and those that despise him shall be lightly esteemed." Thou wilt feel one day that thou canst not live without Him; thou wilt confess then thy need of Him; and then thou mayest go look for a savior where thou wilt; for He will be no Savior for thee hereafter, that wouldst not value Him, and submit to Him here. Then who will prove the loser by thy contempt? Oh, what a thing will it be for a poor miserable soul to cry to Christ for help in the day of extremity, and to hear so sad an answer as this! Thou didst set lightly by Me and My law in the day of thy prosperity, and I will now set as light by thee in the day of thy adversity. Read Prov. i., 24, to the end. Thou that, as Esau, didst sell thy birthright for a mess of pottage, shalt then find no place for repentance, tho thou seek it with tears. Do you think that Christ shed His blood to save them that continue to make light of it? and to save them, that value a cup of drink or a lust before His salvation? I tell you, sirs, tho you set so light by Christ and salvation, God doth not so: He will not give them on such terms as these: He valueth the blood of His Son, and the everlasting glory, and He will make you value them if ever you have them. Nay, this will be thy condemnation, and leaveth no remedy. All the world can not save him that sets lightly by Christ. None of them shall taste of His supper. Nor can you blame Him to deny you what you made light of yourselves. Can you find fault if you miss of the salvation which you slighted?

9. The time is near when Christ and salvation will not be made light of as now they are. When God hath shaken those careless souls out of their bodies, and you must answer for all your sins in your own name, oh, then, what would you not give for a Savior! When a thousand bills shall be brought in against you, and none to relieve you, then you will consider, Oh! Christ would now have stood between me and the wrath of God; had I not despised Him, He would have answered all. When you see the world hath left you, and your companions in sin have deceived themselves and you, and all your merry days are gone, then what would you not give for that Christ and salvation that now you account not worth your labor! Do you think that when you see the judgment seat, and you are doomed to everlasting perdition for your wickedness, that you should then make as light of Christ as now? Why will you not judge now as you know you shall judge then? Will He then be worth ten thousand worlds? And is He not now worth your highest estimation and dearest affection?

10. God will not only deny thee that salvation thou madest light of, but He will take from thee all that which thou didst value before it: he that most highly esteems Christ shall have Him, and the creatures, so far as they are good here, and Him without the creature hereafter, because the creature is not useful; and he that sets more by the creature than by Christ, shall have some of the creature without Christ here, and neither Christ nor it hereafter.

So much of these considerations, which may show the true face of this heinous sin.

What think you now, friends, of this business? Do you not see by this time what a case that soul is in that maketh light of Christ and salvation? What need then is there that you should take heed lest this should prove your own case! The Lord knows it is too common a case. Whoever is found guilty at the last of this sin, it were better for that man he had never been born. It were better for him he had been a Turk or Indian, that never had heard the name of a Savior, and that never had salvation offered to him: for such men "have no cloak for their sin." Besides all the rest of their sins, they have this killing sin to answer for, which will undo them. And this will aggravate their misery, that Christ whom they set light by must be their Judge, and for this sin will He judge them. Oh, that such would now consider how they will answer that question that Christ put to their predecessors: "How will ye escape the damnation of hell" or, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Can you escape without a Christ? or will a despised Christ save you then? If he be accurst that sets light by father or mother, what then is he that sets light by Christ? It was the heinous sin of the Jews, that among them were found such as set light by father and mother. But among us, men slight the Father of Spirits! In the name of God, brethren, I beseech you to consider how you will then bear this anger which you now make light of! You that can not make light of a little sickness or want, or of natural death, no, not of a toothache, but groan as if you were undone; how will you then make light of the fury of the Lord, which will burn against the contemners of His grace! Doth it not behoove you beforehand to think of these things?

Dearly beloved in the Lord, I have now done that work which I came upon; what effect it hath, or will have, upon your hearts, I know not, nor is it any further in my power to accomplish that which my soul desireth for you. Were it the Lord's will that I might have my wish herein, the words that you have this day heard should so stick by you that the secure should be awakened by them, and none of you should perish by the slighting of your salvation. I can not follow you to your several habitations to apply this word to your particular necessities; but oh, that I could make every man's conscience a preacher to himself that it might do it, which is ever with you! That the next time you go prayerless to bed, or about your business, conscience might cry out, Dost thou set no more by Christ and thy salvation? That the next time you are tempted to think hardly of a holy and diligent life (I will not say to deride it as more ado than needs), conscience might cry out to thee, Dost thou set so light by Christ and thy salvation? That the next time you are ready to rush upon unknown sin, and to please your fleshly desires against the command of God, conscience might cry out, Is Christ and salvation no more worth than to cast them away, or venture them for thy lust? That when you are following the world with your most eager desires, forgetting the world to come, and the change that is a little before you, conscience might cry out to you, Is Christ and salvation no more worth than so? That when you are next spending the Lord's day in idleness or vain sports, conscience might tell you what you are doing. In a word, that in all your neglects of duty, your sticking at the supposed labor or cost of a godly life, yea, in all your cold and lazy prayers and performances, conscience might tell you how unsuitable such endeavors are to the reward; and that Christ and salvation should not be so slighted. I will say no more but this at this time, it is a thousand pities that when God hath provided a Savior for the world, and when Christ hath suffered so much for their sins, and made so full a satisfaction to justice, and purchased so glorious a kingdom for His saints, and all this is offered so freely to sinners, to lost, unworthy sinners, even for nothing, that yet so many millions should everlastingly perish because they make light of their Savior and salvation, and prefer the vain world and their lusts before them. I have delivered my message, the Lord open your hearts to receive it. I have persuaded you with the word of truth and soberness; the Lord persuade you more effectually, or else all this is lost. Amen.

**÷**02-04 BOSSUET

THE FUNERAL SERMON ON THE DEATH OF THE GRANDE CONDÉ

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Jacque Benigne Bossuet was born at Dijon, in Burgundy, in 1627. In an illustrious group of French Catholic preachers he occupied a foremost place. In beginning his sermons he was reserved and dignified, but as he moved forward and his passionate utterance captured his hearers, "he watched their rising emotion, the rooted glances of a thousand eyes filled him with a sort of divine frenzy, his notes became a burden and a hindrance, and with impetuous ardor he abandoned himself to the inspiration of the moment."

To ripe scholarship Bossuet added a voice that was deep and sonorous, an imposing personality, and an animated and graceful style of gesture. Lamartine says he had "a voice which, like that of the thunder in the clouds, or the organ in the cathedral, had never been anything but the medium of power and divine persuasion to the soul; a voice which only spoke to kneeling auditors; a voice which spoke in the name of God, an authority of language unequaled upon earth, and against which the lowest murmur was impious and the smallest opposition blasphemy." He died in 1704.

BOSSUET 1627-1704

THE FUNERAL SERMON ON THE DEATH OF THE GRANDE CONDÉ

In beginning this address, in which I purpose to celebrate the immortal glory of Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, I feel myself overweighted both by the grandeur of the subject and, to be frank, by the fruitlessness of the effort. What part of the inhabited world has not heard of the victories of the Prince de Condé and the wonders of his life? They are recounted everywhere; the Frenchman who boasts of them in the presence of the foreigner tells him nothing which the latter does not know; and in no matter how exalted a strain I might sound his praises, I should still feel that in your hearts you were convinced that I deserved the reproach of falling far short of doing him justice. An orator, feeble as he is, can not do anything for the perpetuation of the glory of extraordinary souls. Le Sage was right when he said that "their deeds alone can praise them"; no other praise is of any effect where great names are concerned; and it needs but the simple story of his deeds faithfully recorded to sustain the glory of the Prince de Condé.

But, while awaiting the appearance of the history which is to tell the story of his life to coming ages, it is necessary to satisfy as best we may the public recognition of his merit and bow to the order of the greatest of all sovereigns. What does not the kingdom owe to a prince who has honored the house of France, the French name, his century, and, so to speak, all mankind? Louis the Great himself shares these sentiments; after having mourned this great man, and by his tears, shed in the presence of his entire court, rather than by words, uttered the most glorious eulogy he could receive, he assembled together in this celebrated temple all that is most august in his realm, in order that the last rites to the memory of this prince might there be celebrated; and he wishes that my feeble voice should animate all this funeral equipage. Let us try, then, to forget our grief. Here an object greater and worthier of this pulpit presents itself to my mind: it is God, who makes warriors and conquerors. "It is Thou," said David unto Him, "who hast trained my hand to battle, and my fingers to hold the sword." If He inspires courage, no less is He the bestower of other great qualities, both of heart and of mind. His mighty hand is the source of everything; it is He who sends from heaven generous sentiments, wise counsels and every worthy thought. But He wishes us to know how to distinguish between the gifts He abandons to His enemies and those He reserves for His servants. What distinguishes His friends from all others is piety. Until this gift of heaven has been received, all others not only are as naught, but even bring ruin on those who are endowed with them; without this inestimable gift of piety what would the Prince de Condé have been, even with his great heart and great genius? No, my brethren, if piety had not, as it were, consecrated his other virtues, these princes would have found no consolation for their grief, nor this pontiff any confidence in his prayers, nor would I myself utter with conviction the praises which I owe so great a man.

Let us, by this example, then set human glory at naught; let us destroy the idol of the ambitious, that it might fall to pieces before this altar. Let us to-day join together (for with a subject so noble we may do it) all the finest qualities of a superior nature; and, for the glory of truth, let us demonstrate, in a prince admired of the universe, that what makes heroes, that what carries to the highest pitch worldly glory, worth, magnanimity, natural goodness—all attributes of the heart; vivacity, penetration, grandeur and sublimity of genius—attributes of the mind; would be but an illusion were piety not a part of them—in a word, that piety is the essence of the man. It is this, gentlemen, which you will see in the forever memorable life of the most high and mighty Prince Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, first prince of the blood.

God has revealed to us that He alone creates conquerors, and that He makes them serve His designs. What other created a Cyrus if it is not God, who named him two hundred years before his birth in the Prophecies of Isaiah? "Thou art as yet unborn," He said unto him, "but I see thee, and I named thee by thy name; thou shalt be called Cyrus. I will walk before thee in battle, at thy approach I will put kings to flight; I will break down doors of brass. It is I that stretch out the heavens, that support the earth, that name that which is not as that which is," that is to say, it is I that create everything and I that see, from eternity, all that I create. What other could fashion an Alexander, if it is not this same God who caused the unquenchable ardor of Daniel, His prophet, to see from so great a distance and by means of foreshadowings so vivid. "Do you see him," he says, "this conqueror; with what rapidity he rises from the west by bounds, as it were, and touches not the earth?"

In the boldness of his leaps, and the lightness of his tread like unto some powerful and frisking beast, he advances by quick and impetuous bounds, and nor mountain nor precipice arrests his progress. Already has the King of Persia fallen into his hands. "At his sight he was exasperated; *efferatus est in eum*," says the prophet; "he strikes him down, he tramples him under foot; none can save him from his blows nor cheat him of his prey." But to hear these words of Daniel, whom would you suppose you perceived, gentlemen, under that figure of speech—Alexander or the Prince de Condé? God gave him that dauntless valor that France might enjoy safety during the minority of a king but four years old. Let him grow up, this king, cherished of Heaven, and all will yield to his exploits; rising above his own followers, as well as his enemies, he will know how sometimes to make use of, and at others to dispense with, his most illustrious captains, and alone, under the hand of God, who will be his constant aid, he will be seen to be the stanch rampart of his dominions. But God chose the Duc d'Enghien to defend him in his infancy. So, toward the first days of his reign, at the age of twenty-two years, the duke conceived a plan in the armor of which the seasoned veterans could find no vulnerable point; but victory justified his course at Rocroi. The opposing force, it is true, is stronger; it is composed of those old Walloon, Italian and Spanish regiments that, up to that time, could not be broken; but at what valuation should be placed the courage inspired in our troops by the pressing necessities of the state, by past successes, and by a young prince of the blood in whose eyes could be read victory? Don Francisco de Mellos awaits the onset with a firm foot; and, without being able to retreat, the two generals and the two armies seemed to have wished to imprison themselves in the woods and the marshes in order to decide the issue of combat like two champions in the lists.

Then what a sight is presented to the eye! the young prince appears another man; touched by an object so worthy, his great soul displays all its sublimity; his courage waxes with the dangers it has to encounter, and his penetration becomes keener as his ardor increases. That night, which had to be spent in the presence of the enemy, like the vigilant commander that he was, he was the last to retire. But never were his slumbers more peaceful. On the eve of so momentous a day, when the first battle is to be fought, his mind is entirely tranquil, so thoroughly is he in his element; and it is well known that on the morrow, at the hour he had indicated, it was necessary to awaken this second Alexander from a deep slumber. Do you see him as he rushes on to victory or death? No sooner had he inspired the ranks with the ardor with which his soul was animated than he was seen almost at the same time to press the right wing of the enemy, support our own shaken by the shock of the charge, rally the disheartened and almost vanquished French forces, put to flight the victorious Spaniards, carrying dismay everywhere, and terrifying by his lightning glances those who escape his blows. There still remained that dreaded infantry of the Spanish army, whose great battalions in close line of battle like so many towers, but towers which knew how to repair their breaches, were unshaken by the onset, and, tho the rest of the army was put to rout, maintained a steady fire. Thrice the young conqueror attempted to break the ranks of these intrepid warriors, thrice was he repulsed by the valorous Comte de Fontaines, who was borne to the scene of combat in his invalid's chair, by reason of his bodily infirmities, thus demonstrating that the warrior's soul has the ascendant over the body it animates.

But at last was he forced to yield. In vain does Beck, with a body of fresh cavalry, hasten his march through the woods in order to attack our exhausted soldiers; the prince has forestalled him; the defeated battalions are asking quarter. But victory for the Duc d'Enghien was destined to be more terrible than the combat. While with an air of confidence he advances to receive the surrender of these brave fellows, they, on their part, still on their guard, are in dread of being surprized by a fresh attack. The frightful havoc wrought by the discharge of their musketry infuriates our troops. Carnage is now rampant; the bloodshed intoxicates the soldiers to a high degree. But the prince, who could not bear to see these lions slaughtered like so many lambs, calmed their overwrought feeling and enhanced the pleasure of victory by that of pardoning the vanquished. What, then, was the astonishment of these veteran troops and their brave officers when they perceived that their only salvation was to give themselves up to their conqueror! With what wonder did they regard the young prince, whose victory had rendered still more impressive his customary proud bearing, to which, however, his clemency had imparted a new grace. How willingly would he have saved the life of the brave Comte de Fontaines, but unhappily he lay stretched upon the field of battle among the thousands of dead bodies, those whose loss is still kept by Spain. Spain knew not that the prince who caused her the loss of so many of her old regiments on the day of Rocroi was to finish the rest on the plains of Lens.

Thus the first victory was the guarantee of many others. The prince bent his knee and on the field of battle rendered to the Lord of Hosts the glory He had sent him. There was celebrated the deliverance of Rocroi, and thanksgivings were uttered that the threats of a once dreaded enemy had resulted in his own shameful defeat; that the regency was strengthened, France calmed, and a reign which was to be so illustrious begun by an augury so auspicious. The army led in thanksgiving; all France followed; the first venture of the Duc d'Enghien was lauded to the skies. Praise sufficient to render others forever illustrious; but for him it was but the first stage in his career!

As a result of this first campaign, and after the capture of Thionville—a prize worthy of the victory gained at Rocroi—he was regarded as an adversary equally to be feared in sieges and in battles. But there is one trait in the character of the victorious young prince no less admirable than that which was brought out by victory. The court, which at his arrival was prepared to welcome him with the plaudits he deserved, was surprized at the manner in which he received them. The queen-regent assured him that the king was well pleased with his services. This from the lips of his sovereign was a fitting recompense for his labors. If others dared to praise him, however, he treated their eulogies as insults, and, impatient of flattery, he was in dread even of its semblance. Such was the delicacy, or rather the solidity of character, of this prince. Moreover his maxim was (listen, for it is a maxim which makes great men), that, in the performance of great deeds, one's sole thought should be to perform them well, and leave glory to follow in the train of virtue. It is this which he has endeavored to instil into others, and by this principle has he himself ever been guided. Thus false glory had no temptation for him. It was with truth and greatness alone that he was concerned.

Thus it came about that his glory was wrapt up in the service of his kind and in the happiness and well-being of the state; They were the objects nearest his heart; these were his first and most cherished desires. The court had but little charm for him, or occupation suited to his talents, tho he was there regarded as its greatest hero. It was deemed needful to exhibit everywhere in Germany, as in Flanders, the intrepid defender whom God had given us. Remark well what is about to transpire: There is being formed against the prince an enterprise of a more formidable nature than, that at Rocroi; and, in order to put his talents to the test, warfare is about to drain all its resources, and call to its aid every known invention. What is it that is presented to my vision? I see not merely men to meet in combat but inaccessible mountains: on one side are ravines and precipices; on the other impenetrable forests in the heart of which are marshes, and in proximity to streams are impregnable intrenchments; everywhere are lofty fortresses and forests of felled trees lying across roads which are frightful; and there arises Merci, with his worthy Bavarians inflated by the large measure of success which has fallen to their arms and by the capture of Fribourg; Merci, whom none has ever seen retreat from the combat; Merci, whom the Prince de Condé and the vigilant Turenne have never surprized in a movement that was not in accord with the rales of warfare, and to whom they have conceded this great mark of admiration—that never has he lost a single favorable opportunity, nor failed to anticipate their designs as tho he had taken part in their councils.

Here, then, in the course of eight days, and by four separate attacks, is seen how much can be supported and undertaken in war. Our troops seem as much dispirited by the frightful condition of the field of battle as by the resistance of the enemy, and for a time the prince sees himself, so to speak, abandoned. But like a second Maccabee, "his right arm abandons him not, and his courage, inflamed by so many perils, came to his aid." No sooner had he been seen on foot the first to scale those inaccessible heights, than his ardor drew the whole army after him. Merci sees himself lost beyond redemption; his best regiments are defeated; nightfall is the salvation of the remainder of his army. But a severe rainstorm serves to add to our difficulties and discouragements, so that we have at the same time to contend with not only the highest courage and the perfection of art, but the forces of nature as well. In spite of the advantage that an enemy, as able as he is bold, takes of these conditions, and the fact that he intrenches himself anew in his impregnable mountains, hard prest on every side, he is forced not only to allow his cannon and baggage to fall a prey to the Duc d'Enghien, but also the country bordering the Rhine. See how everything is shaken to its foundation: Philipsburg is in dire distress in ten days, in spite of the winter now close at hand; Philipsburg, which so long held the Rhine captive under our laws, and whose loss the greatest of kings so gloriously retrieved. Worms, Spire, Mayence, Landau, twenty other places I might name, open their portals: Merci is unable to defend them, and no longer faces his conqueror. It is not enough; he must fall at his feet, a worthy victim of his valor. Nordlingen will witness his overthrow; it will there be admitted that it is no more possible to withstand the French in Germany than in Flanders. And all these benefits we will owe to this self-same prince. God, the protector of France and of a king whom He has destined to perform His great works, thus ordains …

It was not merely for a son nor for his family that he had such tender sentiments: I have seen him (and do not think that I here speak in terms of exaggeration), I have seen him deeply moved by the perils of his friends. Simple and natural as he was, I have seen his features betray his emotions at the story of their misfortunes, and he was ever ready to confer with them on the most insignificant details as well as on affairs of the utmost importance. In the adjustment of quarrels, he was ever ready to soothe turbulent spirits with a patience and good nature that one would little have expected from a disposition so excitable, nor from a character so lofty. What a contrast to heroes devoid of human sympathy! Well might the latter command respect and charm the admiration, as do all extraordinary things, but they will not win the heart. When God fashioned the heart of man and endowed him with human affection, He first of all inspired him with the quality of kindness, like unto the essence of the divine nature itself, as a token of the beneficent hand that fashioned us. Kindness, therefore, ought to be the mainspring and guide of our heart, and ought at the same time to be the chief attraction that should, as it were, be a part of our very being, with which to win the hearts of others. Greatness, which is but the result of good fortune, so far from diminishing the quality of kindness, is but given one that he might the more freely spread broadcast its beneficent effects like a public fountain, which is but erected that its waters might be scattered to the sunlight.

This is the value of a good heart; and the great who are devoid of the quality of kindness, justly punished for their disdainful insensibility to the misfortunes of their fellows, are forever deprived of the greatest blessing of human life—that is to say, of the pleasures of society. Never did man enjoy these pleasures more keenly than the prince of whom I am speaking; never was man less inspired with the misgiving that familiarity breeds contempt. Is this the man who carried cities by storm and won great battles? Verily, he seems to have forgotten the high rank he so well knew how to sustain. Do you not recognize in him the hero, who, ever equable and consistent, never having to stand on tiptoe to seem taller than he is, nor to stoop to be courteous and obliging, found himself by nature all that a man ought to be toward his fellow, like a majestic and bountiful stream, which peacefully bears into the cities the abundance it has spread in the fields that it has watered, which gives to all and never rises above its normal height, nor becomes swollen except when violent opposition is offered to the gentle slope by which it continues on its tranquil course. Such, indeed, has also been the gentleness and such the might of the Prince de Condé. Have you a secret of importance? Confide it boldly to the safe-keeping of this noble heart; he will reward your confidence by making your affair his own. To this prince nothing is more inviolable than the sacred rights of friendship. When a favor is asked of him he acts as tho he himself were under obligation; and never has a joy keener and truer been witnessed than he felt at being able to give pleasure to another.

It was a grand spectacle to see during the same period, and in the same campaigns, these two men, who in the common opinion of all Europe could be favorably compared to the greatest captains of past ages, sometimes at the head of different bodies of troops; sometimes united more indeed by the concord of their thoughts than by the orders which the subaltern received from his superior; sometimes at the head of opposing forces, and each redoubling his customary activity and vigilance, as tho God, who, according to the Scriptures, often in His wisdom makes a sport of the universe, had desired to show mortals the wonders in all their forms that He could work with men. Behold the encampments, the splendid marches, the audacity, the precautions, the perils, the resources of these brave men! Has there ever been beheld in two men virtues such as these in characters so different, not to say diametrically opposite? The one appears to be guided by deep reflection, the other by sudden illumination; the latter as a consequence, tho more impetuous, yet never acting with undue precipitation; the former, colder of manner, tho never slow, is bolder of action than of speech, and even while having the outward appearance of embarrassment, inwardly determined and resolved. The one, from the moment he appears in the army, conveys an exalted idea of his worth and makes one expect of him something out of the ordinary; nevertheless, he advanced in regular order, and performed, as it were, by degrees, the prodigious deeds which marked the course of his career. The other, like a man inspired from the date of his first battle, showed himself the equal of the most consummate masters of the art of warfare. The one by his prompt and continued efforts commanded the admiration of the human race and silenced the voice of envy; the other shone so resplendently from the very beginning that none dared attack him. The one, in a word, by the depth of his genius and the incredible resources of his courage, rose superior to the greatest perils and even knew how to profit by every kind of fickleness of fortune; the other, by reason of the advantages derived from high birth, by his great conceptions derived from Heaven, and by a kind of admirable instinct, the secret of which is not given to ordinary men, seemed born to mold fortune to conform to his designs and bring destiny to his feet. And that the great tho diverse characters of these two men might be clearly discerned, it should be borne in mind that the one, his career cut short by an unexpected blow, died for his country like another Judas Maccabeus, mourned by the army as for a father, while the court and all the people, lamented his fate. His piety as well as his courage were universally lauded, and his memory will never fade from the minds of men. The other, raised to the very summit of glory by force of arms like another David, dies like him in his bed, sounding the praises of God and leaving his dying behests to his family, while all hearts were imprest as much by the splendor of his life as by the gentleness of his death.

**÷**02-05 BUNYAN

THE HEAVENLY FOOTMAN

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Bunyan was born in the village of Elstow, near Bedford, England, in 1628. Because of his fearless preaching he was imprisoned in Bedford jail from 1660 to 1672, and again for six months in 1675, during which latter time it is said his wonderful "Pilgrim's Progress" was written. While his sermons in their tedious prolixity share the fault of his time, they are characterized by vividness, epigrammatic wit, and dramatic fervor. The purity and simplicity of his style have been highly praised, and his unflinching faith has been the inspiration of many a hesitating soul. Among his best known works are "The Holy War," "Grace Abounding in the Chief of Sinners," and "Sighs from Hell." He died in London in 1688.

BUNYAN

1628-1688

THE HEAVENLY FOOTMAN

*So run that ye may obtain*.—1Co 9:24.

Heaven and happiness is that which every one desireth, insomuch that wicked Balaam could say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Yet, for all this, there are but very few that do obtain that ever-to-be-desired glory, insomuch that many eminent professors drop short of a welcome from God into this pleasant place. The apostle, therefore, because he did desire the salvation of the souls of the Corinthians, to whom he writes this epistle, layeth them down in these words such counsel, which if taken, would be for their help and advantage.

First, Not to be wicked, and sit still, and wish for heaven; but to run for it.

Secondly, Not to content themselves with, every kind of running, but, saith he, "So run that ye may obtain." As if he should say, some, because they would not lose their souls, begin to run betimes, they run apace, they run with patience, they run the right way. Do you so run. Some run from both father and mother, friends and companions, and thus, they may have the crown. Do you so run. Some run through temptations, afflictions, good report, evil report, that they may win the pearl. Do you so run. "So run that ye may obtain."

These words were taken from men's funning for a wager; a very apt similitude to set before the eyes of the saints of the Lord. "Know you that they which run in a race run all, but one obtaineth the prize? So run that ye may obtain." That is, do not only run, but be sure you win as well as run. "So run that ye may obtain."

I shall not need to make any great ado in opening the words at this time, but shall rather lay down one doctrine that I do find in them; and in prosecuting that, I shall show you, in some measure, the scope of the words.

The doctrine is this: They that will have heaven, must run for it; I say, they that will have heaven, they must run for it. I beseech you to heed it well. "Know ye not, that they which run in a race run all, but one obtaineth the prize? So run ye." The prize is heaven, and if you will have it, you must run for it. You have another scripture for this in the xii. of the Hebrews, the 1James , 2 d, and 3d verses: "Wherefore seeing also," saith the apostle, "that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." And let us run, saith he. Again, saith Paul, "I so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I," etc.

But before I go any farther:

1. Fleeing. Observe, that this running is not an ordinary, or any sort of running, but it is to be understood of the swiftest sort of running; and therefore, in the vi. of the Hebrews, it is called a fleeing: "That we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us." Mark, who have fled. It is taken from that xx. of Joshua, concerning the man that was to flee to the city of refuge, when the avenger of blood was hard at his heels, to take vengeance on him for the offense he had committed; therefore it is a running or fleeing for one's life: a running with all might and main, as we use to say. So run.

2. Pressing. Secondly, this running in another place is called a pressing. "I press toward the mark"; which signifieth, that they that will have heaven, they must not stick at any difficulties they meet with; but press, crowd, and thrust through all that may stand between heaven and their souls. So run.

3. Continuing. Thirdly, this running is called in another place, a continuing in the way of life. "If you continue in the faith grounded, and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel of Christ." Not to run a little now and then, by fits and starts, or half-way, or almost thither, but to run for my life, to run through all difficulties, and to continue therein to the end of the race, which must be to the end of my life. "So run that ye may obtain." And the reasons are:

(1.) Because all or every one that runneth doth not obtain the prize; there may be many that do run, yea, and run far too, who yet miss of the crown that standeth at the end of the race. You know all that run in a race do not obtain the victory; they all run, but one wins. And so it is here; it is not every one that runneth, nor every one that seeketh, nor every one that striveth for the mastery that hath it. "Tho a man do strive for the mastery," saith Paul, "yet he is not crowned, unless he strive lawfully"; that is, unless he so run, and so strive, as to have God's approbation. What, do you think that every heavy-heeled professor will have heaven? What, every lazy one? every wanton and foolish professor, that will be stopt by anything, kept back by anything, that scarce runneth so fast heavenward as a snail creepeth on the ground? Nay, there are some professors that do not go on so fast in the way of God as a snail doth go on the wall; and yet these think that heaven and happiness is for them. But stay, there are many more that run than there be that obtain; therefore he that will have heaven must run for it.

(2.) Because you know, that tho a man do run, yet if he do not overcome, or win, as well as run, what will they be the better for their running? They will get nothing. You know the man that runneth, he doth do it to win the prize; but if he doth not obtain it, he doth lose his labor, spend his pains and time, and that to no purpose; I say, he getteth nothing. And ah! how many such runners will there be found in the day of judgment? Even multitudes, multitudes that have run, yea, run so far as to come to heaven-gates, and not able to get any farther, but there stand knocking when it is too late, crying, Lord! Lord! when they have nothing but rebukes for their pains. Depart from Me, you come not here, you come too late, you run too lazily; the door is shut. "When once the master of the house is risen up," saith Christ, "and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, I will say, I know you not, depart," etc. Oh, sad will the state of those be that run and miss; therefore, if you will have heaven, you must run for it; and "so run that ye may obtain."

(3.) Because the way is long (I speak metaphorically), and there is many a dirty step, many a high hill, much work to do, a wicked heart, world, and devil to overcome; I say, there are many steps to be taken by those that intend to be saved, by running or walking in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham. Out of Egypt thou must go through the Red Sea; thou must run a long and tedious journey, through the vast howling wilderness, before thou come to the land of promise.

(4.) They that will go to heaven they must run for it; because, as the way is long, so the time in which they are to get to the end of it is very uncertain; the time present is the only time; thou hast no more time allotted thee than thou now enjoyest: "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Do not say, I have time enough to get to heaven seven years hence; for I tell thee, the bell may toll for thee before seven days more be ended; and when death comes, away thou must go, whether thou art provided or not; and therefore look to it; make no delays; it is not good dallying with things of so great concernment as the salvation or damnation of thy soul. You know he that hath a great way to go in a little time, and less by half than he thinks of, he had need to run for it.

(5.) They that will have heaven, they must run for it; because the devil, the law, sin, death, and hell follow them. There is never a poor soul that is going to heaven, but the devil, the law, sin, death, and hell, make after the soul. "The devil, your adversary, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour." And I will assure you, the devil is nimble, he can run apace, he is light of foot, he hath overtaken many, he hath turned up their heels, and hath given them an everlasting fall. Also the law, that can shoot a great way, have a care thou keep out of the reach of those great guns, the Ten Commandments. Hell also hath a wide mouth; it can stretch itself farther that you are aware of. And as the angel said to Lot, "Take heed, look not behind thee, neither tarry thou in all the plain" (that is, anywhere between this and heaven), "lest thou be consumed"; so I say to thee, Take heed, tarry not, lest either the devil, hell or the fearful curses of the law of God do overtake thee, and throw thee down in the midst of thy sins, so as never to rise and recover again. If this were all considered, then thou, as well as I, wouldst say, They that will have heaven must run for it.

(6.) They that go to heaven must run for it; because perchance the gates of heaven may be shut shortly. Sometimes sinners have not heaven-gates open to them so long as they suppose; and if they be once shut against a man, they are so heavy that all the men in the world, nor all the angels in heaven, are not able to open them. "I shut, and no man can open," saith Christ. And how if thou shouldst come but one quarter of an hour too late? I tell thee, it will cost thee an eternity to bewail thy misery in. Francis Spira can tell thee what it is to stay till the gate of mercy be quite shut; or to run so lazily that they be shut before you get within them. What, to be shut out! what, out of heaven! Sinner, rather than lose it, run for it; yea, "and so run that thou mayst obtain."

(7.) Lastly, because if thou lose, thou losest all, thou losest soul, God, Christ, heaven, ease, peace, etc. Besides, thou layest thyself open to all the shame, contempt, and reproach, that either God, Christ, saints, the world, sin, the devil, and all can lay upon thee. As Christ saith of the foolish builder, so I will say of thee, if thou be such a one who runs and misses; I say, even all that go by will begin to mock at thee, saying, This man began to run well, but was not able to finish. But more of this anon.

Quest. But how should a poor soul do to run? For this very thing is that which afflicteth me sore (as you say), to think that I may run, and yet fall short. Methinks to fall short at last, oh, it fears me greatly. Pray tell me, therefore, how I should run.

Ans. That thou mayst indeed be satisfied in this particular, consider these following things.

The first direction: If thou wouldst so run as to obtain the kingdom of heaven, then be sure that thou get into the way that leadeth thither: For it is a vain thing to think that ever thou shalt have the prize, tho thou runnest never so fast, unless thou art in the way that leads to it. Set the case, that there should be a man in London that was to run to York for a wager; now, tho he run never so swiftly, yet if he run full south, he might run himself quickly out of breath, and be never nearer the prize, but rather the farther off? Just so is it here; it is not simply the runner, nor yet the hasty runner, that winneth the crown, unless he be in the way that leadeth thereto. I have observed, that little time which I have been a professor, that there is a great running to and fro, some this way, and some that way, yet it is to be feared most of them are out of the way, and then, tho they run as swift as the eagle can fly, they are benefited nothing at all.

Here is one runs a-quaking, another a-ranting; one again runs after the baptism, and another after the Independency: here is one for Freewill, and another for Presbytery; and yet possibly most of all these sects run quite the wrong way, and yet every one is for his life, his soul, either for heaven or hell.

If thou now say, Which is the way? I tell thee it is Christ, the Son of Mary, the Son of God. Jesus saith, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me." So then thy business is (if thou wouldst have salvation), to see if Christ be thine, with all His benefits; whether He hath covered thee with His righteousness, whether He hath showed thee that thy sins are washed away with His heart-blood, whether thou art planted into Him, and whether you have faith in Him, so as to make a life out of Him, and to conform thee to Him; that is, such faith as to conclude that thou art righteous, because Christ is thy righteousness, and so constrained to walk with Him as the joy of thy heart, because he saveth thy soul. And for the Lord's sake take heed, and do not deceive thyself, and think thou art in the way upon too slight grounds; for if thou miss of the way, thou wilt miss of the prize, and if thou miss of that I am sure thou wilt lose thy soul, even that soul which is worth more than the whole world.

Mistrust thy own strength, and throw it away; down on thy knees in prayer to the Lord for the spirit of truth; search His word for direction; flee seducers' company; keep company with the soundest Christians, that have most experience of Christ; and be sure thou have a care of Quakers, Ranters, Free-willers: also do not have too much company with some Anabaptists, tho I go under that name myself. I will tell thee this is such a serious matter, and I fear thou wilt so little regard it, that the thought of the worth of the thing, and of thy too light regarding of it, doth even make my heart ache whilst I am writing to thee. The Lord teach thee the way by His Spirit, and then I am sure thou wilt know it. So run.

The second direction: As thou shouldst get into the way, so thou shouldst also be much in studying and musing on the way. You know men that would be expert in anything, they are usually much in studying of that thing, and so likewise is it with those that quickly grow expert in any way. This therefore thou shouldst do; let thy study be much exercised about Christ, which is the way, what He is, what He hath done, and why He is what He is, and why He hath done what is done; as why "He took upon Him the form of a servant" (Phil, ii.); why He was "made in the likeness of man"; why He cried; why He died; why He "bare the sin of the world"; why He was made sin, and why He was made righteousness; why He is in heaven in the nature of man, and what He doth there. Be much in musing and considering of these things; be thinking also enough of those places which thou must not come near, but leave some on this hand, and some on that hand; as it is with those that travel into other countries; they must leave such a gate on this hand, and such a bush on that hand, and go by such a place, where standeth such a thing. Thus therefore you must do: "Avoid such things, which are expressly forbidden in the Word of God." Withdraw thy foot far from her, "and come not nigh the door of her house, for her steps take hold of hell, going down to the chambers of death." And so of everything that is not in the way, have a care of it, that thou go not by it; come not near it, have nothing to do with it. So run.

The third direction: Not only thus, but in the next place, thou must strip thyself of those things that may hang upon thee, to the hindering of thee in the way to the kingdom of heaven, as covetousness, pride, lust, or whatever else thy heart may be inclining unto, which may hinder thee in this heavenly race. Men that run for a wager, if they intend to win as well as run, they do not use to encumber themselves, or carry those things about them that may be a hindrance to them in their running. "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things"; that is, he layeth aside everything that would be anywise a disadvantage to him; as saith the apostle, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." It is but a vain thing to talk of going to heaven, if thou let thy heart be encumbered with those things that would hinder. Would you not say that such a man would be in danger of losing, tho he run, if he fill his pockets with stones, hang heavy garments on his shoulders, and get lumpish shoes on his feet? So it is here; thou talkest of going to heaven, and yet fillest thy pockets with stones—*i.e.*, fillest thy heart with this world, lettest that hang on thy shoulders, with its profits and pleasures. Alas! alas! thou art widely mistaken: if thou intendest to win, thou must strip, thou must lay aside every weight, thou must be temperate in all things. Thou must so run.

The fourth direction: Beware of by-paths; take heed thou dost not turn into those lanes which lead out of the way. There are crooked paths, paths in which men go astray, paths that lead to death and damnation, but take heed of all those. Some of them are dangerous because of practise, some because of opinion, but mind them not; mind the path before thee, look right before thee, turn neither to the right hand nor to the left, but let thine eyes look right on, even right before thee; "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." Turn not to the right hand nor to the left. "Remove thy foot far from evil." This counsel being not so seriously taken as given, is the reason of that starting from opinion to opinion, reeling this way and that way, out of this lane into that lane, and so missing the way to the kingdom. Tho the way to heaven be but one, yet there are many crooked lanes and by-paths that shoot down upon it, as I may say. And again, notwithstanding the kingdom of heaven be the biggest city, yet usually those by-paths are most beaten, most travelers go those ways; and therefore the way to heaven is hard to be found, and as hard to be kept in, by reason of these. Yet, nevertheless, it is in this case as it was with the harlot of Jericho; she had one scarlet thread tied in her window, by which her house was known: so it is here, the scarlet streams of Christ's blood run throughout the way to the kingdom of heaven; therefore mind that, see if thou do not find the besprinkling of the blood of Christ in the way, and if thou do, be of good cheer, thou art in the right way; but have a care thou beguile not thyself with a fancy; for then thou mayst light into any lane or way; but that thou mayst not be mistaken, consider, tho it seem never so pleasant, yet if thou do not find that in the very middle of the road there is written with the heart-blood of Christ, that he came into the world to save sinners, and that we are justified, tho we are ungodly, shun that way; for this it is which the apostle meaneth when, he saith, "We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the vail—that is to say, His flesh." How easy a matter it is in this our day, for the devil to be too cunning for poor souls, by calling his by-paths the way to the kingdom. If such an opinion or fancy be but cried up by one or more, this inscription being set upon it by the devil, "This is the way of God," how speedily, greedily, and by heaps, do poor simple souls throw away themselves upon it; especially if it be daubed over with a few external acts of morality, if so good. But it is because men do not know painted by-paths from the plain way to the kingdom of heaven. They have not yet learned the true Christ, and what His righteousness is, neither have they a sense of their own insufficiency; but are bold, proud, presumptuous, self-conceited. And therefore,

The fifth direction: Do not thou be too much in looking too high in thy journey heavenward. You know men that run a race do not use to stare and gaze this way and that, neither do they use to cast up their eyes too high, lest haply, through their too much gazing with their eyes after other things, they in the mean time stumble and catch a fall. The very same case is this: if thou gaze and stare after every opinion and way that comes into the world, also if thou be prying overmuch into God's secret decrees, or let thy heart too much entertain questions about some nice foolish curiosities, thou mayst stumble and fall, as many hundreds in England have done, both in ranting and quakery, to their own eternal overthrow, without the marvelous operation of God's grace be suddenly stretched forth to bring them back again. Take heed, therefore; follow not that proud, lofty spirit, that, devil-like, can not be content with his own station. David was of an excellent spirit, where he saith, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother: My soul is even as a weaned child." Do thou so run.

The sixth direction: Take heed that you have not an ear open to every one that calleth after you as you are in your journey. Men that run, you know, if any do call after them, saying, I would speak with you, or go not too fast and you shall have my company with you, if they run for some great matter, they use to say, Alas! I can not stay, I am in haste, pray talk not to me now; neither can I stay for you, I am running for a wager: if I win I am made; if I lose I am undone, and therefore hinder me not. Thus wise are men when they run for corruptible things, and thus shouldst thou do, and thou hast more cause to do so than they, forasmuch as they run for things that last not, but thou for an incorruptible glory. I give thee notice of this betimes, knowing that thou shalt have enough call after thee, even the devil, sin, this world, vain company, pleasures, profits, esteem among men, ease, pomp, pride, together with an innumerable company of such companions; one crying, Stay for me; the other saying, Do not leave me behind; a third saying, And take me along with you. What, will you go, saith the devil, without your sins, pleasures, and profits? Are you so hasty? Can you not stay and take these along with you? Will you leave your friends and companions behind you? Can you not do as your neighbors do, carry the world, sin, lust, pleasure, profit, esteem among men, along with you? Have a care thou do not let thine ear open to the tempting, enticing, alluring, and soul-entangling flatteries of such sink-souls as these are. "My son," saith Solomon, "if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."

You know what it cost the young man whom Solomon speaks of in the vii. of the Proverbs, that was enticed by a harlot: "With much fair speech she won him, and caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him, till he went after her as an ox to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks"; even so far, "till the dart struck through his liver," and he knew not "that it was for his life." "Hearken unto me now therefore," saith he, "O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth, let not thine heart incline to her ways, go not astray in her paths, for she hast cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain (that is, kept out of heaven); by her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." Soul, take this counsel, and say, Satan, sin, lust, pleasure, profit, pride, friends, companions, and everything else, let me alone, stand off, come not nigh me, for I am running for heaven, for my soul, for God, for Christ, from hell and everlasting damnation; if I win, I win all; and if I lose, I lose all; let me alone, for I will not hear. So run.

The seventh direction: In the next place be not daunted tho thou meetest with never so many discouragements in thy journey thither. That man that is resolved for heaven, if Satan can not win him by flatteries, he will endeavor to weaken him by discouragements; saying, Thou art a sinner, thou hath broken God's law, thou art not elected, thou cometh too late, the day of grace is passed, God doth not care for thee, thy heart is naught, thou art lazy, with a hundred other discouraging suggestions. And thus it was with David where he saith, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the loving-kindness of the Lord in the land of the living." As if he should say, the devil did so rage, and my heart was so base, that had I judged according to my own sense and feeling, I had been absolutely distracted; but I trusted to Christ in the promise, and looked that God would be as good as his promise, in having mercy upon me, an unworthy sinner; and this is that which encouraged me, and kept me from fainting. And thus must thou do when Satan or the law, or thy own conscience, do go about to dishearten thee, either by the greatness of thy sins, the wickedness of thy heart, the tediousness of the way, the loss of outward enjoyments, the hatred that thou wilt procure from the world or the like; then thou must encourage thyself with the freeness of the promises, the tender-heartedness of Christ, the merits of His blood, the freeness of His invitations to come in, the greatness of the sin of others that have been pardoned, and that the same God, through the same Christ, holdeth forth the same grace as free as ever. If these be not thy meditations, thou wilt draw very heavily in the way of heaven, if thou do not give up all for lost, and so knock off from following any farther; therefore, I say, take heart in thy journey, and say to them that seek thy destruction, "Rejoice not against me, O my enemy, for when I fall I shall arise, when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me." So run.

The eighth direction: Take heed of being offended at the cross that thou must go by before thou come to heaven. You must understand (as I have already touched) that there is no man that goeth to heaven but he must go by the cross. The cross is the standing way-mark by which all they that go to glory must pass.

"We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." If thou art in thy way to the kingdom, my life for thine thou wilt come at the cross shortly (the Lord grant thou dost not shrink at it, so as to turn thee back again).

"If any man will come after me," saith Christ, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." The cross it stands, and hath stood, from the beginning, as a way-mark to the kingdom of heaven. You know, if one ask you the way to such and such a place, you, for the better direction, do not only say, This is the way, but then also say, You must go by such a gate, by such a stile, such a bush, tree, bridge, or such like. Why, so it is here; art thou inquiring the way to heaven? Why, I tell thee, Christ is the way; into Him thou must get, into His righteousness, to be justified; and if thou art in Him, thou wilt presently see the cross, thou must go close by it, thou must touch it, nay, thou must take it up, or else thou wilt quickly go out of the way that leads to heaven, and turn up some of those crooked lanes that lead down to the chambers of death.

It is the cross which keepeth those that are kept from heaven. I am persuaded, were it not for the cross, where we have one professor we should have twenty; but this cross, that is it which spoileth all.

The ninth direction: Beg of God that He would do these two things for thee: First, enlighten thine understanding: And, secondly, inflame thy will. If these two be but effectually done, there is no fear but thou wilt go safe to heaven.

One of the great reasons why men and women do so little regard the other world is because they see so little of it: And the reason why they see so little of it is because they have their understanding darkened: And therefore, saith Paul, "Do not you believers walk as do other Gentiles, even in the vanity of their minds, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance (or foolishness) that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Walk not as those, run not with them: alas! poor souls, they have their understandings darkened, their hearts blinded, and that is the reason they have such undervaluing thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the salvation of their souls. For when men do come to see the things of another world, what a God, what a Christ, what a heaven, and what an eternal glory there is to be enjoyed; also when they see that it is possible for them to have a share in it, I tell you it will make them run through thick and thin to enjoy it. Moses, having a sight of this, because his understanding was enlightened, "He feared not the wrath of the king, but chose rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He refused to be called the son of the king's daughter"; accounting it wonderful riches to be accounted worthy of so much as to suffer for Christ with the poor despised saints; and that was because he saw Him who was invisible, and had respect unto the recompense of reward. And this is that which the apostle usually prayeth for in his epistles for the saints, namely, "That they might know what is the hope of God's calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; and that they might be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." …

The tenth direction: Cry to God that He would inflame thy will also with the things of the other world. For when a man's will is fully set to do such or such a thing, then it must be a very hard matter that shall hinder that man from bringing about his end. When Paul's will was set resolvedly to go up to Jerusalem (tho it was signified to him before what he should there suffer), he was not daunted at all; nay, saith he, "I am ready (or willing) not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." His will was inflamed with love to Christ; and therefore all the persuasions that could be used wrought nothing at all.

Your self-willed people, nobody knows what to do with them: we use to say, he will have his own will, do all what you can. Indeed, to have such a will for heaven, is an admirable advantage to a man that undertaketh a race thither; a man that is resolved, and hath his will fixt, saith he, I will do my best to advantage myself; I will do my worst to hinder my enemies; I will not give out as long as I can stand; I will have it or I will lose my life; "tho he slay me, yet will I trust in him. I will not let thee go except thou bless me." I will, I will, I will, oh this blest inflamed will for heaven! What is it like? If a man be willing, then any argument shall be a matter of encouragement; but if unwilling, then any argument shall give discouragement; this is seen both in saints and sinners; in them that are the children of God, and also those that are the children of the devil. As,

1. The saints of old, they being willing and resolved for heaven, what could stop them? Could fire and fagot, sword or halter, stinking dungeons, whips, bears, bulls, lions, cruel rackings, stoning, starving, nakedness, etc., "and in all these things they were more than conquerors, through him that loved them"; who had also made them "willing in the day of his power."

2. See again, on the other side, the children of the devil, because they are not willing, how many shifts and starting-holes they will have. I have a married wife, I have a farm, I shall offend my landlord, I shall offend my master, I shall lose my trading, I shall lose my pride, my pleasures, I shall be mocked and scoffed, therefore I dare not come. I, saith another, will stay till I am older, till my children are out, till I am got a little aforehand in the world, till I have done this and that and the other business; but, alas! the thing is, they are not willing; for, were they but soundly willing, these, and a thousand such as these, would hold them no faster than the cords held Samson, when he broke them like burnt flax. I tell you the will is all: that is one of the chief things which turns the wheel either backward or forward; and God knoweth that full well, and so likewise doth the devil; and therefore they both endeavor very much to strengthen the will of their servants; God, He is for making of His a willing people to serve Him; and the devil, he doth what he can to possess the will and affection of those that are his with love to sin; and therefore when Christ comes closer to the matter, indeed, saith He, "You will not come to me. How often would I have gathered you as a hen doth her chickens, but you would not." The devil had possest their wills, and so long he was sure enough of them. Oh, therefore cry hard to God to inflame thy will for heaven and Christ: thy will, I say, if that be rightly set for heaven, thou wilt not be beat off with discouragements; and this was the reason that when Jacob wrestled with the angel, tho he lost a limb, as it were, and the hollow of his thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him, yet saith he, "I will not," mark, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Get thy will tipped with the heavenly grace, and resolution against all discouragements, and then thou goest full speed for heaven; but if thou falter in thy will, and be not found there, thou wilt run hobbling and halting all the way thou runnest, and also to be sure thou wilt fall short at last. The Lord give thee a will and courage.

Thus I have done with directing thee how to run to the kingdom; be sure thou keep in memory what I have said unto thee, lest thou lose thy way. But because I would have thee think of them, take all in short in this little bit of paper.

1. Get into the way. 2. Then study on it. 3. Then, strip, and lay aside everything that would hinder. 4.. Beware of by-paths. 5. Do not gaze and stare too much about thee, but be sure to ponder the path of thy feet. 6. Do not stop for any that call after thee, whether it be the world, the flesh, or the devil: for all these will hinder thy journey, if possible. 7. Be not daunted with any discouragements thou meetest with as thou goest. 8. Take heed of stumbling at the cross. 9. Cry hard to God for an enlightened heart, and a willing mind, and God give thee a prosperous journey.

Provocation: Now that you may be provoked to run with the foremost, take notice of this. When Lot and his wife were running from curst Sodom to the mountains, to save their lives, it is said, that his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt; and yet you see that neither her example, nor the judgment of God that fell upon her for the same, would cause Lot to look behind him. I have sometimes wondered at Lot in this particular; his wife looked behind her, and died immediately, but let what would become of her, Lot would not so much as once look behind him to see her. We do not read that he did so much as once look where she was, or what was become of her; his heart was indeed upon his journey, and well it might: there was the mountain before him, and the fire and brimstone behind him; his life lay at stake, and he had lost it if he had looked behind. Do thou so run and in thy race remember Lot's wife, and remember her doom; and remember for what that doom did overtake her; and remember that God made her an example for all lazy runners, to the end of the world; and take heed thou fall not after the same example. But,

If this will not provoke thee, consider thus, 1. Thy soul is thine own soul, that is either to be saved or lost; thou shalt not lose my soul by thy laziness. It is thine own soul, thine own ease, thine own peace, thine own advantage or disadvantage. If it were my own that thou art desired to be good unto, methinks reason should move thee somewhat to pity it. But, alas! it is thine own, thine own soul. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" God's people wish well to the souls of others, and wilt not thou wish well to thine own? And if this will not provoke thee, then think.

Again, 2. If thou lose thy soul, it is thou also that must bear the blame. It made Cain stark mad to consider that he had not looked to his brother Abel's soul. How much more will it perplex thee to think that thou hadst not a care of thine own? And if this will not provoke thee to bestir thyself, think again.

3. That, if thou wilt not run, the people of God are resolved to deal with thee even as Lot dealt with his wife—that is, leave thee behind them. It may be thou hast a father, mother, brother, etc., going post-haste to heaven, wouldst thou be willing to be left behind them? Surely no.

Again, 4. Will it not be a dishonor to thee to see the very boys and girls in the country to have more with them than thyself? It may be the servants of some men, as the housekeeper, plowman, scullion, etc., are more looking after heaven than their masters. I am apt to think, sometimes, that more servants than masters, that more tenants than landlords, will inherit the kingdom of heaven. But is not this a shame for them that are such? I am persuaded you scorn that your servants should say that they are wiser than you in the things of this world; and yet I am bold to say that many of them are wiser than you in the things of the world to come, which are of greater concernment.

Expostulation. Well, then, sinner, what sayest thou? Where is thy heart? Wilt thou run? Art thou resolved to strip? Or art thou not? Think quickly, man; have no dallying in this matter. Confer not with flesh and blood; look up to heaven, and see how thou likest it; also to hell, and accordingly devote thyself. If thou dost not know the way, inquire at the Word of God; if thou wantest company, cry for God's Spirit; if thou wantest encouragement, entertain the promises. But be sure thou begin betimes; get into the way, run apace, and hold out to the end; and the Lord give thee a prosperous journey. Farewell.

**÷**02-06 TILLOTSON

THE REASONABLENESS OF A RESURRECTION

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Tillotson, archbishop of Canterbury, renowned as a preacher, was born at Sowerby, in Yorkshire, in 1630, the son of an ardent Independent. After graduating from Clare College, Cambridge, he began to preach in 1661, in connection with the Presbyterian wing of the Church of England. He, however, submitted to the Act of Uniformity the following year, and in 1663 was inducted into the rectory of Veddington, Suffolk. He was also appointed preacher to Lincoln's Inn, was made prebendary of Canterbury in 1670 and dean in 1672. William III regarded him with high favor, and he succeeded the nonjuring Sancroft in the arch-see of Canterbury. His sermons are characterized by stateliness, copiousness and lucidity, and were long looked upon as models of correct pulpit style. He died in 1694.

TILLOTSON

1630-1694

THE REASONABLENESS OF A RESURRECTION

*Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?*—Act 26:8.

The resurrection of the dead is one of the great articles of the Christian faith; and yet so it hath happened that this great article of our religion hath been made one of the chief objections against it. There is nothing that Christianity hath been more upbraided for withal, both by the heathens of old and by the infidels of later times, than the impossibility of this article; so that it is a matter of great consideration and consequence to vindicate our religion in this particular. But if the thing be evidently impossible, then it is highly unreasonable to propose it to the belief of mankind.

I know that some, more devout than wise, and who, it is to be hoped, mean better than they understand, make nothing of impossibilities in matters of faith, and would fain persuade us that the more impossible anything is, for that very reason it is the fitter to be believed; and that it is an argument of a poor and low faith to believe only things that are possible; but a generous and heroical faith will swallow contradictions with as much ease as reason assents to the plainest and most evident propositions. Tertullian, in the heat of his zeal and eloquence, upon this point of the death and resurrection of Christ, lets fall a very odd passage, and which must have many grains of allowance to make it tolerable: "*prosus credible est* (saith he), *quia ineptum est; certum est, quia impossible*—it is therefore very credible, because it is foolish, and certain, because it is impossible"; "and this (says he) is *necessarium dedecus fidei*," that is, "it is necessary the Christian faith should be thus disgraced by the belief of impossibilities and contradictions." I suppose he means that this article of the resurrection was not in itself the less credible because the heathen philosophers caviled at it as a thing impossible and contradictious, and endeavored to disgrace the Christian religion upon that account. For if he meant otherwise, that the thing was therefore credible because it was really and in itself foolish and impossible; this had been to recommend the Christian religion from the absurdity of the things to be believed; which would be a strange recommendation of any religion to the sober and reasonable part of mankind.

I know not what some men may find in themselves; but I must freely acknowledge that I could never yet attain to that bold and hardy degree of faith as to believe anything for this reason, because it was impossible: for this would be to believe a thing to be because I am sure it can not be. So that I am very far from being of his mind, that wanted not only more difficulties, but even impossibilities in the Christian religion, to exercise his faith upon.

Leaving to the Church of Rome that foolhardiness of faith, to believe things to be true which at the same time their reason plainly tells them are impossible, I shall at this time endeavor to assert and vindicate this article of the resurrection from the pretended impossibility of it. And I hope, by God's assistance, to make the possibility of the thing so plain as to leave no considerable scruple about it in any free and unprejudiced mind. And this I shall do from these words of St. Paul, which are part of the defense which he made for himself before Festus and Agrippa, the substance whereof is this, that he had lived a blameless and inoffensive life among the Jews, in whose religion he had been bred up; that he was of the strictest sect of that religion, a Pharisee, which, in opposition to the Sadducees, maintained the resurrection of the dead and a future state of rewards and punishments in another life; and that for the hope of this he was called in question, and accused by the Jews. "And now I stand here, and am judged, for the hope of the promise made unto the fathers; unto which promise our twelve scribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come; for which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews." That is, he was accused for preaching that Jesus was risen from the dead, which is a particular instance of the general doctrine of the resurrection which was entertained by the greatest part of the Jews, and which to the natural reason of mankind (however the heathen in opposition to the Christian religion were prejudiced against it), hath nothing in it that is incredible. And for this he appeals to his judges, Festus and Agrippa: "why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?"

Which words being a question without an answer, imply in them these two propositions:

First, That it was thought by some a thing incredible that the dead should be raised. This is supposed in the question, as the foundation of it: for he who asks why a thing is so, supposeth it to be so.

Secondly, That this apprehension, that it is a thing incredible that God should raise the dead, is very unreasonable. For the question being left unanswered, implies its own answer, and is to be resolved into this affirmative, that there is no reason why they or any man else should think it a thing incredible that God should raise the dead.

I shall speak to these two propositions as briefly as I can; and then show what influence this doctrine of the resurrection ought to have upon our lives.

First, that it was thought by some a thing incredible that God should raise the dead. This St. Paul has reason to suppose, having from his own experience found men so averse from the entertaining of this doctrine. When he preached to the philosophers at Athens, and declared to them the resurrection of one Jesus from the dead, they were amazed at this new doctrine, and knew not what he meant by it. They said, "he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection." He had discoursed to them of the resurrection of one Jesus from the dead; but this business of the resurrection of one Jesus from the dead was a thing so remote from their apprehensions that they had no manner of conception of it; but understood him quite in another sense, as if he had declared to them two new deities, Jesus and Anastasis; as if he had brought a new god and a new goddess among them, Jesus and the Resurrection. And when he discoursed to them again more fully of this matter, it is said that, "when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, they mocked." And at the twenty-fourth verse of this twenty-sixth chapter, when he spake of the resurrection, Festus told him he would hear him no further, and that he looked upon him as a man beside himself, whom much learning had made mad. Festus looked upon this business of the resurrection as the wild speculation of a crazy head. And indeed the heathens generally, even those who believed the immortality of the soul, and another state after this life, looked upon the resurrection of the body as a thing impossible. Pliny, I remember, reckons it among those things which are impossible, and which God himself can not do; "*revocare defunctos*, to call back the dead to life"; and in the primitive times the heathen philosophers very much derided the Christians, upon account of this strange doctrine of the resurrection, looking always upon this article of their faith as a ridiculous and impossible assertion.

So easy it is for prejudice to blind the minds of men, and to represent everything to them which hath a great appearance of difficulty in it as impossible. But I shall endeavor to show that if the matter be thoroughly examined, there is no ground for any such apprehension.

I proceed therefore to the second proposition, namely, that this apprehension, that it is an incredible thing that God should raise the dead, is very unreasonable: "why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" That is, there is no sufficient reason why any man should look upon the resurrection of the dead as a thing impossible to the power of God; the only reason why they thought it incredible being because they judged it impossible; so that nothing can be vainer than for men to pretend to believe the resurrection; and yet at the same time to grant it to be a thing in reason impossible, because no man can believe that which he thinks to be incredible; and the impossibility of a thing is the best reason any man can have to think a thing incredible. So that the meaning of St. Paul's question is, "why should it be thought a thing impossible that God should raise the dead?"

To come then to the business: I shall endeavor to show that there is no sufficient reason why men should look upon the resurrection of the dead as a thing impossible to God. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible (that is, impossible) with you, that God should raise the dead?" which question implies in it these three things:

1. That it is above the power of nature to raise the dead.

2. But it is not above the power of God to raise the dead.

3. That God should be able to do this is by no means incredible to natural reason.

First. This question implies that it is above the power of nature to raise the dead; and therefore the apostle puts the question very cautiously, "why should it be thought incredible that God should raise the dead?" by which he seems to grant that it is impossible to any natural power to raise the dead; which is granted on all hands.

Secondly. But this question does plainly imply that it is not above the power of God to do this. Tho the raising of the dead to life be a thing above the power of nature, yet why should it be thought incredible that God, who is the author of nature, should be able to do this? and indeed the apostle's putting the question in this manner takes away the main ground of the objection against the resurrection from the impossibility of the thing. For the main reason why it was looked upon as impossible was, because it was contrary to the course of nature that there should be any return from a perfect privation to a habit, and that a body perfectly dead should be restored to life again: but for all this no man that believes in a God who made the world, and this natural frame of things, but must think it very reasonable to believe that He can do things far above the power of anything that He hath made.

Thirdly. This question implies that it is not a thing incredible to natural reason that God should be able to raise the dead. I do not say that by natural light we can discover that God will raise the dead; for that, depending merely upon the will of God, can no otherwise be certainly known than by divine revelation: but that God can do this is not at all incredible to natural reason. And this is sufficiently implied in the question which St. Paul asks, in which he appeals to Festus and Agrippa, neither of them Christians, "why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" And why should he appeal to them concerning the credibility of this matter if it be a thing incredible to natural reason?

That it is not, I shall first endeavor to prove, and then to answer the chief objections against the possibility of it.

And I prove it thus: it is not incredible to natural reason that God made the world, and all the creatures in it; that mankind is His offspring; and that He gives us life and breath, and all things. This was acknowledged and firmly believed by many of the heathens. And indeed, whoever believes that the being of God may be known by natural light, must grant that it may be known by the natural light of reason that God made the world; because one of the chief arguments of the being of God is taken from those visible effects of wisdom, and power, and goodness, which we see in the frame of the world. Now He that can do the greater can undoubtedly do the less; He that made all things of nothing, can much more raise a body out of dust; He who at first gave life to so many inanimate beings, can easily restore that which is dead to life again. It is an excellent saying of one of the Jewish rabbis: He who made that which was not, to be, can certainly make that which was once, to be again. This hath the force of a demonstration; for no man that believes that God hath done the one, can make any doubt but that He can, if He please, do the other.

This seems to be so very clear, that they must be strong objections indeed, that can render it incredible.

There are but two that I know of, that are of any consideration, and I shall not be afraid to represent them to you with their utmost advantage; and they are these:

First, against the resurrection in general: it is pretended impossible, after the bodies of men are resolved into dust, to re-collect all the dispersed parts and bring them together, to be united into one body.

The second is leveled against a resurrection in some particular instances, and pretends it to be impossible in some cases only—viz., when that which was the matter of one man's body does afterward become the matter of another man's body; in which case, say they, it is impossible that both these should, at the resurrection, each have his own body.

The difficulty of both these objections is perfectly avoided by those who hold that it is not necessary that our bodies at the resurrection should consist of the very same parts of matter that they did before. There being no such great difference between one parcel of dust and another; neither in respect of the power of God, which can easily command this parcel of dust as that to become a living body and being united to a living soul to rise up and walk; so that the miracle of the resurrection will be all one in the main, whether our bodies be made of the very same matter they were before, or not; nor will there be any difference as to us; for whatever matter our bodies be made of, when they are once reunited to our souls, they will be then as much our own as if they had been made of the very same matter of which they consisted before. Besides that, the change which the resurrection will make in our bodies will be so great that we could not know them to be the same, tho they were so.

Now upon this supposition, which seems philosophical enough, the force of both these objections is wholly declined. But there is no need to fly to this refuge; and therefore I will take this article of the resurrection in the strictest sense for the raising of a body to life, consisting of the same individual matter that it did before; and in this sense, I think, it has generally been received by Christians, not without ground, from Scripture. I will only mention one text, which seems very strongly to imply it: "and the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and the grave delivered up the dead which, were in them; and they were judged every man according to his works." Now why should the sea and the grave be said to deliver up their dead, if there were not a resurrection of the same body; for any dust formed into a living body and united to the soul, would serve the turn? We will therefore take it for granted that the very same body will be raised, and I doubt not, even in this sense, to vindicate the possibility of the resurrection from both these objections.

First, against the resurrection in general of the same body; it is pretended impossible, after the bodies of men are moldered into dust, and by infinite accidents have been scattered up and down the world, and have undergone a thousand changes, to re-collect and rally together the very same parts of which they consisted before. This the heathens used to object to the primitive Christians; for which reason they also used to burn the bodies of the martyrs, and to scatter their ashes in the air, to be blown about by the wind, in derision of their hopes of a resurrection.

I know not how strong malice might make this objection to appear; but surely in reason it is very weak; for it wholly depends upon a gross mistake of the nature of God and his providence, as if it did not extend to the smallest things; as if God did not know all things that He hath made, and had them not always in His view, and perfectly under His command; and as if it were a trouble and burden to infinite knowledge and power to understand and order the least things; whereas infinite knowledge and power can know and manage all things with as much ease as we can understand and order any one thing; so that this objection is grounded upon a low and false apprehension of the Divine nature, and is only fit for Epicurus and his herd, who fancied to themselves a sort of slothful and unthinking deities, whose happiness consisted in their laziness, and a privilege to do nothing.

I proceed therefore to the second objection, which is more close and pressing; and this is leveled against the resurrection in some particular instances. I will mention but two, by which all the rest may be measured and answered.

One is, of those who are drowned in the sea, and their bodies eaten up by fishes, and turned into their nourishment: and those fishes perhaps eaten afterward by men, and converted into the substance of their bodies.

The other is of the cannibals; some of whom, as credible relations tell us, have lived wholly or chiefly on the flesh of men; and consequently the whole, or the greater part of the substance of their bodies is made of the bodies of other men. In these and the like cases, wherein one man's body is supposed to be turned into the substance of another man's body, how should both these at the resurrection each recover his own body? So that this objection is like that of the Sadducees to our Savior, concerning a woman that had seven husbands: they ask, "whose wife of the seven shall she be at the resurrection?" So here, when several have had the same body, whose shall it be at the resurrection? and how shall they be supplied that have it not?

This is the objection; and in order to the answering of it, I shall premise these two things:

1. That the body of man is not a constant and permanent thing, always continuing in the same state, and consisting of the same matter; but a successive thing, which is continually spending and continually renewing itself, every day losing something of the matter which it had before, and gaining new; so that most men have new bodies oftener than they have new clothes; only with this difference, that we change our clothes commonly at once, but our bodies by degrees.

And this is undeniably certain from experience. For so much as our bodies grow, so much new matter is added to them, over and beside the repairing of what is continually spent; and after a man come to his full growth, so much of his food as every day turns into nourishment, so much of his yesterday's body is usually wasted, and carried off by insensible perspiration—that is, breathed out at the pores of his body; which, according to the static experiment of Sanctorius, a learned physician, who, for several years together, weighed himself exactly every day, is (as I remember) according to the proportion of five to eight of all that a man eats and drinks. Now, according to this proportion, every man must change his body several times in a year.

It is true indeed the more solid parts of the body, as the bones, do not change so often as the fluid and fleshy; but that they also do change is certain, because they grow, and whatever grows is nourished and spends, because otherwise it would not need to be repaired.

2. The body which a man hath at any time of his life is as much his own body as that which he hath at his death; so that if the very matter of his body which a man had at any time of his life be raised, it is as much his own and the same body as that which he had at his death, and commonly much more perfect; because they who die of lingering sickness or old age are usually mere skeletons when they die; so that there is no reason to suppose that the very matter of which our bodies consists at the time of our death shall be that which shall be raised, that being commonly the worst and most imperfect body of all the rest.

These two things being premised, the answer to this objection can not be difficult. For as to the more solid and firm parts of the body, as the skull and bones, it is not, I think, pretended that the cannibals eat them; and if they did, so much of the matter even of these solid parts wastes away in a few years, as being collected together would supply them many times over. And as for the fleshy and fluid parts, these are so very often changed and renewed that we can allow the cannibals to eat them all up, and to turn them all into nourishment, and yet no man need contend for want of a body of his own at the resurrection—viz., any of those bodies which he had ten or twenty years before; which are every whit as good and as much his own as that which was eaten.

Having thus shown that the resurrection is not a thing incredible to natural reason, I should now proceed to show the certainty of it from divine revelation. For as reason tells us it is not impossible, so the word of God hath assured us that it is certain. The texts of Scripture are so many and clear to this purpose, and so well known to all Christians, that I will produce none. I shall only tell you that as it is expressly revealed in the gospel, so our blest Savior, for the confirmation of our faith and the comfort and encouragement of our hope, hath given us the experiment of it in his own resurrection, which is "the earnest and first-fruits of ours." So St. Paul tells us that "Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept" And that Christ did really rise from the dead, we have as good evidence as for any ancient matter of fact which we do most firmly believe; and more and greater evidence than this the thing is not capable of; and because it is not, no reasonable man ought to require it.

Now what remains but to conclude this discourse with those practical inferences which our apostle makes from this doctrine of the resurrection; and I shall mention these two:

The first for our support and comfort under the infirmities and miseries of this mortal life.

The second for the encouragement of obedience and a good life.

1. For our comfort and support under the infirmities and miseries of this mortal state. The consideration of the glorious change of our bodies at the resurrection of the just can not but be a great comfort to us, under all bodily pain and sufferings.

One of the greatest burdens of human nature is the frailty and infirmity of our bodies, the necessities they are frequently prest withal, the manifold diseases they are liable to, and the dangers and terrors of death, to which they are continually subject and enslaved. But the time is coming, if we be careful to prepare ourselves for it, when we shall be clothed with other kind of bodies, free from all the miseries and inconveniences which flesh and blood is subject to. For "these vile bodies shall be changed, and fashioned like to the glorious body of the Son of God." When our bodies shall be raised to a new life, they shall become incorruptible; "for this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality; and then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory." When this last enemy is conquered, there shall be no "fleshly lusts" nor brutish passions "to fight against the soul; no law in our members to war against the laws of our minds"; no disease to torment us; no danger of death to amaze and terrify us. Then all the passions and appetites of our outward man shall be subject to the reason of our minds, and our bodies shall partake of the immortality of our souls. It is but a very little while that our spirits shall be crusht and clogged with these heavy and sluggish bodies; at the resurrection they shall be refined from all dregs of corruption, and become spiritual, and incorruptible, and glorious, and every way suited to the activity and perfection of a glorified soul and the "spirits of just men made perfect."

2. For the encouragement of obedience and a good life. Let the belief of this great article of our faith have the same influence upon us which St. Paul tells it had upon him. "I have hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; and herein do I exercise myself always to have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man." The firm belief of a resurrection to another life should make every one of us very careful how we demean ourselves in this life, and afraid to do anything or to neglect anything that may defeat our hopes of a blest immortality, and expose us to the extreme and endless misery of body and soul in another life.

Particularly, it should be an argument to us, "to glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits"; and to use the members of the one and the faculties of the other as "instruments of righteousness unto holiness." We should reverence ourselves, and take heed not only how we defile our souls by sinful passions, but how we dishonor our bodies by sensual and brutish lusts; since God hath designed so great an honor and happiness for both at the resurrection.

So often as we think of a blest resurrection to eternal life, and the happy consequences of it, the thought of so glorious a reward should make us diligent and unwearied in the service of so good a Master and so great a Prince, who can and will prefer us to infinitely greater honors than any that are to be had in this world. This inference the apostle makes from the doctrine of the resurrection. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Nay, we may begin this blest state while we are upon earth, by "setting our hearts and affections upon the things that are above, and having our conversation in heaven, from whence also we look for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself."

"Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us always that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

**÷**02-07 HOWE

THE REDEEMER'S TEARS OVER LOST SOULS

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Howe, a leading writer and divine under the Commonwealth, was born in 1630, at Loughborough, in Leicestershire, England. He was educated at Cambridge and Oxford, and ordained by Charles Herle, rector of Winwick, whom he styled, "a primitive bishop." He became chaplain to Cromwell and his son Richard. Among his contributions to Puritan theology are "The Good Man the Living Temple of God," and "Vanity of Men as Mortal," He was a man of intellect and imagination. His sermons, tho often long and cumbersome, are marked by warmth of fancy and a sublimity of spirit superior to his style. Howe was a leading spirit in the effort made for the union of the Congregational and Presbyterian bodies. He died in 1705.

HOWE

1630-1705

THE REDEEMER'S TEARS OVER LOST SOULS

*And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes*.—Luk 6:41-42.

Such as live tinder the gospel have a day, or a present opportunity, for the obtaining the knowledge of those things immediately belonging to their peace, and of whatsoever is besides necessary thereunto. I say nothing what opportunities they have who never lived under the gospel, who yet no doubt might generally know more than they do, and know better what they do know. It suffices who enjoy the gospel to understand our own advantages thereby. Nor, as to those who do enjoy it, is every one's day of equal clearness. How few, in comparison, have ever seen such a day as Jerusalem at this time did I made by the immediate beams of the Sun of Righteousness! our Lord Himself vouchsafing to be their Instructor, so speaking as never man did, and with such authority as far outdid their other teachers, and astonished the hearers. In what transports did He use to leave those that heard Him, wheresoever He came, wondering at the gracious words that came out of His mouth! And with what mighty and beneficial works was He went to recommend His doctrine, shining in the glorious power and savoring of the abundant mercy of Heaven, so that every apprehensive mind might see the Deity was incarnate. God was come down to entreat with men, and allure them into the knowledge and love of Himself. The Word was made flesh. What unprejudiced mind might not perceive it to be so? He was there manifested and vailed at once; both expressions are made concerning the same matter. The divine beams were somewhat obscured, but did yet ray through that vail; so that His glory was beheld of the only-begotten Son of His Father, full of grace and truth.

This Sun shone with a mild and benign, but with a powerful, vivifying light. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. Such a light created unto the Jews this their day. Happy Jews, if they had understood their own happiness! And the days that followed to them (for a while) and the Gentile world were not inferior, in some respects brighter and more glorious (the more copious gift of the Holy Ghost being reserved unto the crowning and enthroning of the victorious Redeemer), when the everlasting gospel flew like lightning to the uttermost ends of the earth, and the word which began to be spoken by the Lord Himself was confirmed by them that heard Him, God also Himself bearing them witness with signs, and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost. No such day hath been seen this many an age. Yet whithersoever this same gospel, for substance, comes, it also makes a day of the same kind, and affords always true tho diminished light, whereby, however, the things of our peace might be understood and known. The written gospel varies not, and if it be but simply and plainly proposed tho to some it be proposed with more advantage, to some with less, still we have the same things immediately relating to our peace extant before our eyes …

This day hath its bounds and limits, so that when it is over and lost with such, the things of their peace are forever hid from their eyes. And that this day is not infinite and endless, we see in the present instance. Jerusalem had her day; but that day had its period, we see it comes to this at last, that now the things of her peace are hid from her eyes. We generally see the same thing, in that sinners are so earnestly prest to make use of the present time. To-day if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. They are admonished to seek the Lord while He may be found, to call upon Him when He is nigh. It seems some time He will not be found, and will be far off. They are told this is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation … As it is certain death ends the day of grace with every unconverted person, soit is very possible that it may end with divers before they die; by their total loss of all external means, or by the departure of the blest Spirit of God from them; so as to return and visit them no more.

How the day of grace may end with a person, is to be understood by considering what it is that makes up and constitutes such a day. There must become measure and proportion of time to make up this (or any) day, which is as the substratum and ground fore-laid. Then there must be light superadded, otherwise it differs not from night, which may have the same measure of mere time. The gospel revelation some way or other, must be had, as being the light of such a day. And again there must be some degree of liveliness, and vital influence, the more usual concomitant of light; the night doth more dispose men to drowsiness. The same sun that enlightens the world disseminates also an invigorating influence. If the Spirit of the living God do no way animate the gospel revelation, and breathe in it, we have no day of grace. It is not only a day of light, but a day of power, wherein souls can be wrought upon, and a people made willing to become the Lord's. As the Redeemer revealed in the gospel, is the light of the world, so He is life to it too, tho neither are planted or do take root everywhere. In Him was life and that life was the light of men. That light that rays from Him is vital light in itself, and in its tendency and design, tho it be disliked and not entertained by the most. Whereas therefore these things must concur to make up such a day; if either a man's time, his life on earth, expire, or if light quite fail him, or if all gracious influence be withheld, so as to be communicated no more, his day is done, the season of grace is over with him. Now it is plain that many a one may lose the gospel before his life end; and possible that all gracious influence may be restrained, while as yet the external dispensation of the gospel remains. A sinner may have hardened his heart to that degree that God will attempt him no more, in any kind, with any design of kindness to him, not in that more inward, immediate way at all—*i.e.*, by the motions of His Spirit, which peculiarly can impart nothing but friendly inclination, as whereby men are personally applied unto, so that can not be meant; nor by the voice of the gospel, which may either be continued for the sake of others, or they contained under it, but for their heavier doom at length. Which, tho it may seem severe, is not to be thought strange, much less unrighteous.

It is not to be thought strange to them that read the Bible, which so often speaks this sense; as when it warns and threatens men with so much terror. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses's law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; 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, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? And when It tells us, after many overtures made to men in vain, of His having given them up. "But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me; so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels;" and pronounces, "Let him that is unjust be unjust still, and let him which is filthy be filthy still," and says, "In thy filthiness is lewdness, because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged; thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee." Which passages seem to imply a total desertion of them, and retraction of all gracious influence. And when it speaks of letting them be under the gospel, and the ordinary means of salvation, for the most direful purpose: as that, "This child (Jesus) was set for the fall, as well as for the rising, of many in Israel"; as that, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling, and a rock of offense"; and, "The stone which the builders refused, is made a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which, stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed"; with that of our Savior Himself, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see, might be made blind." And most agreeable to those former places is that of the prophet, "But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken." And we may add, that our God hath put us out of doubt that there is such a sin as that which is eminently called the sin against the Holy Ghost; that a man in such circumstances, and to such a degree, sin against that Spirit, that He will never move or breathe upon him more, but leave him to a hopeless ruin; tho I shall not in this discourse determine or discuss the nature of it. But I doubt not it is somewhat else than final impenitency and infidelity; and that every one that dies, not having sincerely repented and believed, is not guilty of it, tho every one that is guilty of it dies impenitent and unbelieving, but was guilty of it before; so it is not the mere want of time that makes him guilty. Whereupon, therefore, that such may outlive their day of grace, is out of the question …

Wherefore, no man can certainly know, or ought to conclude, concerning himself or others, as long as they live, that the season of grace is quite over with them. As we can conceive no rule God hath set to Himself to proceed by, in ordinary cases of this nature; so nor is there any He hath set unto us to judge by, in this case. It were to no purpose, and could be of no use to men to know so much; therefore it were unreasonable to expect God should have settled and declared any rule, by which they might come to the knowledge of it. As the case is then, viz.: there being no such rule, no such thing can be concluded; for who can tell what an arbitrary, sovereign, free agent will do, if he declare not his own purpose himself? How should it be known, when the Spirit of God hath been often working upon the soul of man, that this or that shall be the last act, and that he will never put forth another? And why should God make it known? To the person himself whose case it is, 'tis manifest it could be of no benefit. Nor is it to be thought the Holy God will ever so alter the course of His own proceedings but that it shall be finally seen to all the world that every man's destruction was entirely, and to the last, of himself. If God had made it evident to a man that he were finally rejected, he were obliged to believe it. But shall it ever be said, God hath made anything a man's duty which were inconsistent with his felicity. The having sinned himself into such a condition wherein he is forsaken of God is indeed inconsistent with it. And so the case is to stand—*i.e.*, that his perdition be in immediate connection with his sin, not with his duty; as it would be in immediate, necessary connection with his duty, if he were bound to believe himself finally forsaken and a lost creature. For that belief makes him hopeless, and a very devil, justifies his unbelief in the gospel, toward himself, by removing and shutting up, toward himself, the object of such a faith, and consequently brings the matter to this state that he perishes, not because he doth not believe God reconcilable to man, but because, with particular application to himself, he ought not so to believe. And it were most unfit, and of very pernicious consequence, that such a thing should be generally known concerning others….

But tho none ought to conclude that their day or season of grace is quite expired, yet they ought to deeply apprehend the danger, lest it should expire before their necessary work be done and their peace made. For tho it can be of no use for them to know the former, and therefore they have no means appointed them by which to know it, 'tis of great use to apprehend the latter; and they have sufficient ground for the apprehension. All the cautions and warnings wherewith the Holy Spirit abounds, of the kind with those already mentioned, have that manifest design. And nothing can be more important, or opposite to this purpose, than that solemn charge of the great apostle: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"; considered together with the subjoined ground of it; "For it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his own good pleasure." How correspondent is the one with the other; work for He works: there were no working at all to any purpose, or with any hope, if He did not work. And work with fear and trembling, for He works of His own good pleasure, q.d., "'Twere the greatest folly imaginable to trifle with One that works at so perfect liberty, under no obligation, that may desist when He will; to impose upon so absolutely sovereign and arbitrary an Agent, that owes you nothing; and from whose former gracious operations not complied with you can draw no argument, unto any following ones, that because He doth, therefore He will. As there is no certain connection between present time and future, but all time is made up of undepending, not strictly coherent, moments, so as no man can be sure, because one now exists, another shall; there is also no more certain connection between the arbitrary acts of a free agent within such time; so that I can not be sure, because He now darts in light upon me, is now convincing me, now awakening me, therefore He will still do so, again and again." Upon this ground then, what exhortation could be more proper than this? "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." What could be more awfully monitory and enforcing of it than that He works only of mere good will and pleasured How should I tremble to think, if I should be negligent, or undutiful, He may give out the next moment, may let the work fall, and me perish? And there is more especial cause for such an apprehension upon the concurrence of such things as these:

1. If the workings of God's Spirit upon the soul of a man have been more than ordinarily strong and urgent, and do not now cease: if there have been more powerful convictions, deeper humiliations, more awakened fears, more formed purposes of a new life, more fervent desires that are now vanished, and the sinner returns to his dead and dull temper.

2. If there be no disposition to reflect and consider the difference, no sense of his loss, but he apprehends such workings of spirit in him unnecessary troubles to him, and thinks it well he is delivered and eased of them.

3. If in the time when he was under such workings of the Spirit he had made known his case to his minister, or any godly friend, whose company he now shuns, as not willing to be put in mind, or hear any more of such matters.

4. If, hereupon he hath more indulged sensual inclination, taken more liberty, gone against the check of his own conscience, broken former good resolutions, involved himself in the guilt of any grosser sins.

5. If conscience, so baffled, be now silent, lets him alone, grows more sluggish and weaker, which it must as his lusts grow stronger.

6. If the same lively, powerful ministry which before affected him much, now moves him not.

7. If especially he is grown into a dislike of such preaching—if serious godliness, and what tends to it, are become distasteful to him—if discourses of God, and of Christ, of death and judgment, and of a holy life, are reckoned superflous and needless, are unsavory and disrelished—if he have learned to put disgraceful names upon things of this import, and the persons that most value them live accordingly—if he hath taken the seat of the scorner, and makes it his business to deride what he had once a reverence for, or took some complacency in.

8. If, upon all this, God withdraw such a ministry, so that he is now warned, admonished, exhorted and striven with, as formerly, no more. Oh, the fearful danger of that man's case! Hath he no cause to fear lest the things of his peace should be forever hid from his eyes? Surely he hath much cause of fear, but mot of despair. Fear in this case would be his great duty, and might yet prove the means of saving him—despair would be his very heinous and destroying sin. If yet he would be stirred up to consider his case, whence he is fallen, and whither he is falling, and set himself to serious seekings of God, cast down himself before Him, abase himself, cry for mercy as for his life, there is yet hope in his case. God may make here an instance what He can obtain of Himself to do for a perishing wretch. But if with any that have lived under the gospel, their day is quite expired, and the things of their peace now forever hid from their eyes, this is in itself a most deplorable case, and much lamented by our Lord Jesus Himself. That the case is in itself most deplorable, who sees not? A soul lost! a creature capable of God! upon its way to Him! near to the kingdom of God! shipwrecked in the port! Oh, sinner, from how high a hope art thou fallen! into what depths of misery and we! And that it was lamented by our Lord is in the text. He beheld the city (very generally, we have reason to apprehend, inhabited by such wretched creatures) and wept over it. This was a very affectionate lamentation. We lament often, very heartily, many a sad case for which we do not shed tears. But tears, such tears, falling from such eyes! the issues of the purest and best-governed passion that ever was, showed the true greatness of the cause. Here could be no exorbitancy or unjust excess, nothing more than was proportional to the occasion. There needs no other proof that this is a sad case than that our Lord lamented it with tears, which that He did we are plainly told, so that, touching that, there is no place for doubt. All that is liable to question is, whether we are to conceive in Him any like resentments of such cases, in His present glorified state? Indeed, we can not think heaven a place or state of sadness or lamentation, and must take heed of conceiving anything there, especially on the throne of glory, unsuitable to the most perfect nature, and the most glorious state. We are not to imagine tears there, which, in that happy region are wiped away from inferior eyes—no grief, sorrow, or sighing, which are all fled away, and shall be no more, as there can be no other turbid passion of any kind. But when expressions that import anger or grief are used, even concerning God Himself, we must sever in our conception everything of imperfection, and ascribe everything of real perfection. We are not to think such expressions signify nothing, that they have no meaning, or that nothing at all is to be attributed to Him under them. Nor are we again to think they signify the same thing with what we find in ourselves, and are wont to express by those names. In the divine nature there may be real, and yet most serene, complacency and displacency—viz., that, unaccompanied by the least commotion, that impart nothing of imperfection, but perfection rather, as it is a perfection to apprehend things suitably to what in themselves they are. The holy Scriptures frequently speak of God as angry, and grieved for the sins of men, and their miseries which ensue therefrom. And a real aversion and dislike is signified thereby, and by many other expressions, which in us would signify vehement agitations of affection, that we are sure can have no place in Him. We ought, therefore, in our own thoughts to ascribe to Him that calm aversion of will, in reference to the sins and miseries of men in general; and in our own apprehensions to remove to the utmost distance from Him all such agitations of passion or affection, even tho some expressions that occur carry a great appearance thereof, should they be understood according to human measures, as they are human forms of speech. As, to instance in what is said by the glorious God Himself, and very near in sense to what we have in the text, what can be more pathetic than that lamenting wish, "Oh, that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!" But we must take heed lest, under the pretense that we can not ascribe everything to God that such expressions seem to import, we therefore ascribe nothing. We ascribe nothing, if we do not ascribe a real unwillingness that men should sin on, and perish, and consequently a real willingness that they should turn to Him, and live, which so many plain texts assert. And therefore it is unavoidably imposed upon us to believe that God is truly unwilling of some things which He doth not think fit to interpose His omnipotency to hinder, and is truly willing of some things which He doth not put forth His omnipotency to effect.

We can not, therefore, doubt but that,

1. He distinctly comprehends the truth of any such case. He beholds, from the throne of His glory above, all the treaties which are held and managed with sinners in His name, and what their deportments are therein. His eyes are as a flame of fire, wherewith He searcheth hearts and trieth reins. He hath seen therefore, sinner, all along every time an offer of grace hath been made to thee, and been rejected; when thou hast slighted counsels and warnings that have been given thee, exhortations and treaties that have been prest upon thee for many years together, and how thou hast hardened thy heart against reproofs and threatenings, against promises and allurements, and beholds the tendency of all this, what is like to come to it, and that, if thou persist, it will be bitterness in the end.

2. That He hath a real dislike of the sinfulness of thy course. It is not indifferent to Him whether thou obeyest or disobeyest the gospel, whether thou turn and repent or no; that He is truly displeased at thy trifling, sloth, negligence, impenitency, hardness of heart, stubborn obstinacy, and contempt of His grace, and takes real offense at them.

3. He hath real kind propensions toward thee, and is ready to receive thy returning soul, and effectually to mediate with the offended majesty of Heaven for thee, as long as there is any hope in thy case.

4. When He sees there is no hope, He pities thee, while thou seest it not, and dost not pity thyself. Pity and mercy above are not names only; 'tis a great reality that is signified by them, and that hath place here in far higher excellency and perfection than it can with us poor mortals here below. Ours is but borrowed and participated from that first fountain and original above. Thou dost not perish unlamented even with the purest heavenly pity, tho thou hast made thy case incapable of remedy; as the well tempered judge bewails the sad end of the malefactor, whom justice obliges him not to spare or save.

And that thou mayst not throw away thy soul and so great a hope, through mere sloth and loathness to be at some pains for thy life, let the text, which hath been thy directory about the things that belong to thy peace, be also thy motive, as it gives thee to behold the Son of God weeping over such as would not know those things. Shall not the Redeemer's tears move thee? O hard heart! Consider what these tears import to this purpose.

1. They signify the real depth and greatness of the misery into which thou are falling. They drop from an intellectual and most comprehensive eye, that sees far and pierces deep into things, hath a wide and large prospect; takes the comfort of that forlorn state into which unreconcilable sinners are hastening, in all the horror of it. The Son of God did not weep vain and causeless tears, or for a light matter; nor did He for Himself either spend His own or desire the profusion of others' tears. "Weep not for me, O daughters of Jerusalem," etc. He knows the value of souls, the weight of guilt, and how low it will press and sink them; the severity of God's justice and the power of His anger, and what the fearful effects of them will be when they finally fall. If thou understandest not these things thyself, believe Him that did; at least believe His tears.

2. They signify the sincerity of His love and pity, the truth and tenderness of His compassion. Canst thou think His deceitful tears? His, who never knew guile? Was this like the rest of His course? And remember that He who shed tears did, from the same fountain of love and mercy, shed blood too! Was that also done to deceive? Thou makest thyself a very considerable thing indeed, if thou thinkest the Son of God counted it worth His while to weep, and bleed, and die, to deceive thee into a false esteem of Him and His love. But if it be the greatest madness imaginable to entertain any such thought but that His tears were sincere and unartificial, the natural, genuine expression of undissembled benignity and pity, thou art then to consider what love and compassion thou art now sinning against; what bowels thou spurnest; and that if thou perishest, 'tis under such guilt as the devils themselves are not liable to, who never had a Redeemer bleeding for them, nor, that we ever find, weeping over them.

3. They show the remedilessness of thy case if thou persist in impenitency and unbelief till the things of thy peace be quite hid from thine eyes. These tears will then be the last issues of (even defeated) love, of love that is frustrated of its kind design. Thou mayst perceive in these tears the steady, unalterable laws of heaven, the inflexibleness of the divine justice, that holds thee in adamantine bonds, and hath sealed thee up, if thou prove incurably obstinate and impenitent, unto perdition; so that even the Redeemer Himself, He that is mighty to save, can not at length save thee, but only weep over thee, drop tears into thy flame, which assuage it not; but (tho they have another design, even to express true compassion) do yet unavoidably heighten and increase the fervor of it, and will do so to all eternity. He even tells thee, sinner, "Thou hast despised My blood; thou shalt yet have My tears." That would have saved thee, these do only lament thee lost. But the tears wept over others, as lost and past hope, why should they not yet melt thee, while as yet there is hope in thy case? If thou be effectually melted in thy very soul, and looking to Him whom thou hast pierced, dost truly mourn over Him, thou mayst assure thyself the prospect His weeping eye had of lost souls did not include thee. His weeping over thee would argue thy case forlorn and hopeless; thy mourning over Him will make it safe and happy. That it may be so, consider, further, that,

4. They signify how very intent He is to save souls, and how gladly He would save thine, if yet thou wilt accept of mercy while it may be had. For if He weep over them that will not be saved, from the same love that is the spring of these tears, would saving mercies proceed to those that are become willing to receive them. And that love that wept over them that were lost, how will it glory in them that are saved! There His love is disappointed and vexed, crossed in its gracious intendment; but here, having compassed it, how will He joy over thee with singing, and rest in His love! And thou also, instead of being revolved in a like ruin with the unreconciled sinners of old Jerusalem, shalt be enrolled among the glorious citizens of the new, and triumph together with them in glory.

**÷**02-08 BOURDALOUE

THE PASSION OF CHRIST

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Louis Bourdaloue was born at Bourges, in 1632. At the age of sixteen he entered the order of the Jesuits and was thoroughly educated in the scholarship, philosophy and theology of the day. He devoted himself entirely to the work of preaching, and was ten times called upon to address Louis XIV and his court from the pulpit as Bossuet's successor. This was an unprecedented record and yet Bourdaloue could adapt his style to any audience, and "mechanics left their shops, merchants their business, and lawyers their court house" to hear him. His high personal character, his simplicity of life, his clear, direct, and logical utterance as an accomplished orator united to make him not only "the preacher of kings but the king of preachers." Retiring from the pulpit late in life he ministered to the sick and to prisoners. He died in Paris, 1704.

BOURDALOUE

1632-1704

THE PASSION OF CHRIST

*And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for your selves, and for your children*."—Luk 22:27-28.

The passion of Jesus Christ, however sorrowful and ignominious it may appear to us, must nevertheless have been to Jesus Christ Himself an object of delight, since this God-man, by a wonderful secret of His wisdom and love, has willed that the mystery of it shall be continued and solemnly renewed in His Church until the final consummation of the world. For what is the Eucharist but a perpetual repetition of the Savior's passion, and what has the Savior supposed in instituting it, but that whatever passed at Calvary is not only represented but consummated on our altars? That is to say, that He is still performing the functions of the victim anew, and is every moment virtually sacrificed, as tho it were not sufficient that He should have suffered once; at least that His love, as powerful as it is free, has given to His adorable sufferings that character of perpetuity which they have in the Sacrament, and which renders them so salutary to us. Behold, Christians, what the love of God has devised; but behold, also, what has happened through the malice of men! At the same time that Jesus Christ, in the sacrament of His body, repeats His holy passion in a manner altogether mysterious, men, the false imitators, or rather base corrupters of the works of God, have found means to renew this same passion, not only in a profane, but in a criminal, sacrilegious, and horrible manner!

Do not imagine that I speak figuratively. Would to God, Christians, that what I am going to say to you were only a figure, and that you were justified in vindicating yourselves to-day against the horrible expressions which I am obliged to employ! I speak in the literal sense, and you ought to be more affected with this discourse, if what I advance appears to you to be overcharged; for it is by your excesses that it is so, and not by my words. Yes, my dear hearers, the sinners of the age, by the disorders of their lives, renew the bloody and tragic passion of the Son of God in the world; I will venture to say that the sinners of the age cause to the Son of God, even in the state of glory, as many new passions as they have committed outrages against Him by their actions! Apply yourselves to form an idea of them; and in this picture, which will surprize you, recognize what you are, that you may weep bitterly over yourselves! What do we see in the passion of Jesus Christ? A divine Savior betrayed and abandoned by cowardly disciples, persecuted by pontiffs and hypocritical priests, ridiculed and mocked in the palace of Herod by impious courtiers, placed upon a level with Barabbas, and to whom Barabbas is preferred by a blind and inconstant people, exposed to the insults of libertinism, and treated as a mock king by a troop of soldiers equally barbarous and insolent; in fine, crucified by merciless executioners! Behold, in a few words, what is most humiliating and most cruel in the death of the Savior of the world! Then tell me if this is not precisely what we now see, of what we are every day called to be witnesses. Let us resume; and follow me.

Betrayed and abandoned by cowardly disciples; such, O divine Savior, has been Thy destiny. But it was not enough that the apostles, the first men whom Thou didst choose for Thine own, in violation of the most holy engagement, should have forsaken Thee in the last scene of Thy life; that one of them should have sold Thee, another renounced Thee, and all disgraced themselves by a flight which was, perhaps, the most sensible of all the wounds that Thou didst feel in dying. This wound must be again opened by a thousand acts of infidelity yet more scandalous. Even in the Christian ages we must see men bearing the character of Thy disciples, and not having the resolution to sustain it; Christians, prevaricators, and deserters from their faith; Christians ashamed of declaring themselves for Thee, not daring to appear what they are, renouncing at least in the exterior what they have profest, flying when they ought to fight; in a word, Christians in form, ready to follow Thee even to the Supper when in prosperity, and while it required no sacrifice, but resolved to abandon Thee in the moment of temptation. It is on your account, and my own, my dear hearers, that I speak, and behold what ought to be the subject of our sorrow.

A Savior mortally persecuted by pontiffs and hypocritical priests! Let us not enter, Christians, into the discussion of this article, at which your piety would, perhaps, be offended, and which would weaken or prejudice the respect which you owe to the ministers of the Lord. It belongs to us, my brethren, to meditate to-day on this fact in the spirit of holy compunction; to us consecrated to the ministry of the altars, to us priests of Jesus Christ, whom God has chosen in His Church to be the dispensers of His sacraments. It does not become me to remonstrate in this place. God forbid that I should undertake to judge those who sustain the sacred office! This is not the duty of humility to which my condition calls me. Above all, speaking as I do, before many ministers, the irreprehensible life of whom contributes so much to the edification of the people, I am not yet so infatuated as to make myself the judge, much less the censor of their conduct.

But tho it should induce you only to acknowledge the favors with which God prevents you, as a contrast, from the frightful blindness into which He permits others to fall, remember that the priests and the princes of the priests, are those whom the evangelist describes as the authors of the conspiracy formed against the Savior of the world, and of the wickedness committed against Him. Remember that this scandal is notoriously public, and renewed still every day in Christianity. Remember, but with fear and horror, that the greatest persecutors of Jesus Christ are not lay libertines, but wicked priests; and that among the wicked priests, those whose corruption and iniquity are covered with the veil of hypocrisy are His most dangerous and most cruel enemies. A hatred, disguised under the name of zeal, and covered with the specious pretext of observance of the law, was the first movement of the persecution which the Pharisees and the priests raised against the Son of God. Let us fear lest the same passion should blind us! Wretched passion, exclaims St. Bernard, which spreads the venom of its malignity even over the most lovely of the children of men, and which could not see a God upon earth without hating Him! A hatred not only of the prosperity and happiness, but what is yet more strange, of the merit and perfection of others! A cowardly and shameful passion, which, not content with having caused the death of Jesus Christ, continues to persecute Him by rending His mystical body, which is the Church; dividing His members, which are believers; and stifling in their hearts that charity which is the spirit of Christianity! Behold, my brethren, the subtle temptation against which we have to defend ourselves, and under which it is but too common for us to fall!

A Redeemer reviled and mocked in the palace of Herod by the impious creatures of his court! This was, without doubt, one of the most sensible insults which Jesus Christ received. But do not suppose, Christians, that this act of impiety ended there. It has passed from the court of Herod, from that prince destitute of religion, into those even of Christian princes. And is not the Savior still a subject of ridicule to the libertine spirits which compose them? They worship Him externally, but internally how do they regard His maxims? What idea have they of His humility, of His poverty, of His sufferings? Is not virtue either unknown or despised? It is not a rash zeal which induces me to speak in this manner; it is what you too often witness, Christians; it is what you perhaps feel in yourselves; and a little reflection upon the manners of the court will convince you that there is nothing that I say which is not confirmed by a thousand examples, and that you yourselves are sometimes unhappy accomplices in these crimes.

Herod had often earnestly wished to see Jesus Christ. The reputation which so many miracles had given Him, excited the curiosity of this prince, and he did not doubt but that a man who commanded all nature might strike some wonderful blow to escape from the persecution of His enemies. But the Son of God, who had not been sparing of His prodigies for the salvation of others, spared them for Himself, and would not say a single word about His own safety. He considered Herod and his people as profane persons, with whom he thought it improper to hold any intercourse, and he preferred rather to pass for a fool than to satisfy the false wisdom of the world. As His kingdom was not of this world, as He said to Pilate, it was not at the court that He designed to establish Himself. He knew too well that His doctrine could not be relished in a place where the rules of worldly wisdom only were followed, and where all the miracles which He had performed had not been sufficient to gain men full of love for themselves and intoxicated with their greatness. In this corrupted region they breathe only the air of vanity; they esteem only that which is splendid; they speak only of preferment: and on whatever side we cast our eyes, we see nothing but what either flatters or inflames the ambitious desires of the heart of man.

What probability then was there that Jesus Christ, the most humble of all men, should obtain a hearing where only pageantry and pride prevail! If He had been surrounded with honors and riches, He would have found partisans near Herod and in every other place. But as He preached a renunciation of the world both to His disciples and to Himself, let us not be astonished that they treated Him with so much disdain. Such is the prediction of the holy man Job, and which after Him must be accomplished in the person of all the righteous; "the upright man is laughed to scorn." In fact, my dear hearers, you know that, whatever virtue and merit we may possess, they are not enough to procure us esteem at court. Enter it, and appear only like Jesus Christ, clothed with the robe of innocence; only walk with Jesus Christ in the way of simplicity; only speak as Jesus Christ to render testimony to the truth, and you will find that you meet with no better treatment there than Jesus Christ. To be well received there, you must have pomp and splendor. To keep your station there, you must have artifice and intrigue. To be favorably heard there, you must have complaisance and flattery. Then all this is opposed to Jesus Christ; and the court being what it is—that is to say, the kingdom of the prince of this world—it is not surprizing that the kingdom of Jesus Christ can not be established there. But wo to you, princes of the earth! Wo to you, men of the world, who despise this incarnate wisdom, for you shall be despised in your turn, and the contempt which shall fall upon you shall be much more terrible than the contempt which you manifest can be prejudicial.

A Savior placed upon a level with Barabbas, and to whom Barabbas is preferred by a blind and fickle rabble! How often have we been guilty of the same outrage against Jesus Christ as the blind and fickle Jews! How often, after having received Him in triumph in the sacrament of the communion, seduced by cupidity, have we not preferred either a pleasure or interest after which we sought, in violation of His law, to this God of glory! How often divided between conscience which governed us, and passion which corrupted us, have we not renewed this abominable judgment, this unworthy preference of the creature even above our God! Christians, observe this application; it is that of St. Chrysostom, and if you properly understand it, you must be affected by it. Conscience, which, in spite of ourselves, presides in us as judge, said inwardly to us, "What art thou going to do? Behold thy pleasure on the one hand, and thy God on the other: for which of the two dost thou declare thyself? for thou canst not save both; thou must either lose thy pleasure or thy God; and it is for thee to decide." And the passion, which by a monstrous infidelity had acquired the influence over our hearts, made us conclude—I will keep my pleasure. "But what then will become of thy God," replied conscience secretly, "and what must I do, I, who can not prevent myself from maintaining His interests against thee?" I care not what will become of my God, answered passion insolently; I will satisfy myself, and the resolution is taken. "But dost thou know," proceeded conscience by its remorse, "that in indulging thyself in this pleasure it will at last submit thy Savior to death and crucifixion for thee?" It is of no consequence if He be crucified, provided I can have my enjoyments. "But what evil has He done, and what reason hast thou to abandon Him in this manner?" My pleasure is my reason; and since Christ is the enemy of my pleasure, and my pleasure crucifies Him, I say it again, let Him be crucified.

Behold, my dear hearers, what passes every day in the consciences of men, and what passes in you and in me, every time that we fall into sin, which causes death to Jesus Christ, as well as to our souls! Behold what makes the enormity and wickedness of this sin! I know that we do not always speak, that we do not always explain ourselves in such express terms and in so perceptible a manner; but after all, without explaining ourselves so distinctly and so sensibly, there is a language of the heart which says all this. For, from the moment that I know that this pleasure is criminal and forbidden of God, I know that it is impossible for me to desire it, impossible to seek it, without losing God; and consequently I prefer this pleasure to God in the desire that I form of it, and in the pursuit that I make after it. This, then, is sufficient to justify the thought of St. Chrysostom and the doctrine of the theologians upon the nature of deadly sin …

That there are men, and Christian men, to whom, by a secret judgment of God, the passion of Jesus Christ, salutary as it is, may become useless, is a truth too essential in our religion to be unknown, and too sorrowful not to be the subject of our grief. When the Savior from the height of His cross, ready to give up His spirit, raised this cry toward heaven, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" there was no one who did not suppose but that the violence of His torments forced from Him this complaint, and perhaps we ourselves yet believe it. But the great Bishop Arnauld de Chartres, penetrating deeper into the thoughts and affections of this dying Savior, says, with much more reason, that the complaint of Christ Jesus to His Father proceeded from the sentiment with which He was affected, in representing to Himself the little fruit which His death would produce; in considering the small number of the elect who would profit by it; in foreseeing with horror the infinite number of the reprobate, for whom it would be useless: as if He had wished to proclaim that His merits were not fully enough nor worthily enough remunerated; and that after having done so much work He had a right to promise to Himself a different success in behalf of men. The words of this author are admirable: Jesus Christ complains, says this learned prelate, but of what does He complain? That the wickedness of sinners makes Him lose what ought to be the reward of the conflicts which He has maintained; that millions of the human race for whom He suffers will, nevertheless, be excluded from the benefit of redemption. And because He regards Himself in them as their head, and themselves, in spite of their worthlessness, as the members of His mystical body; seeing them abandoned by God, He complains of being abandoned Himself: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He complains of what made St. Paul groan when, transported with an apostolic zeal, he said to the Galatians: "What, my brethren, is Jesus Christ then dead in vain? Is the mystery of the cross then nothing to you? Will not this blood which He has so abundantly shed have the virtue to sanctify you?"

But here, Christians, I feel myself affected with a thought which, contrary as it appears to that of the apostle, only serves to strengthen and confirm it. For it appears that St. Paul is grieved because Jesus Christ has suffered in vain; but I, I should almost console myself if He had only suffered in vain, and if His passion was only rendered useless to us. That which fills me with consternation is, that at the same time that we render it useless to ourselves, by an inevitable necessity it must become pernicious; for this passion, says St. Gregory of Nazianzen, "partakes of the nature of those remedies which, kill if they do not heal, and of which the effect is either to give life or to convert itself into poison; lose nothing of this, I beseech you." Remember, then, Christians, what happened during the judgment and at the moment of the condemnation of the Son of God.

When Pilate washed his hands before the Jews and declared to them that there was nothing worthy of death in this righteous man, but that the crime from which he freed himself rested upon them, and that they would have to answer for it, they all cried with one voice that they consented to it, and that they readily agreed that the blood of this just man should fall upon them and upon their children. You know what this cry has cost them. You know the curses which one such imprecation has drawn upon them, the anger of heaven which began from that time to burst upon this nation, the ruin of Jerusalem which followed soon after—the carnage of their citizens, the profanation of their temple, the destruction of their republic, the visible character of their reprobation which their unhappy posterity bear to this day, that universal banishment, that exile of sixteen hundred years, that slavery through all the earth—and all in consequence of the authentic prediction which Jesus Christ made to them of it when going to Calvary, and with circumstances which incontestably prove that a punishment as exemplary as this can not be imputed but to decide which they had committed in the person of the Savior; since it is evident, says St. Augustine, that the Jews were never further from idolatry nor more religious observers of their law than they were then, and that, excepting the crime of the death of Jesus Christ, God, very far from punishing them, would, it seems, rather have loaded them with His blessings. You know all this, I say; and all this is a convincing proof that the blood of this God-man is virtually fallen upon these sacrilegious men, and that God, in condemning them by their own mouth, altho in spite of Himself, employs that to destroy them which was designed for their salvation.

But, Christians, to speak with the Holy Spirit, this has happened to the Jews only as a figure; it is only the shadow of the fearful curses of which the abuse of the merits and passion of the Son of God must be to us the source and the measure. I will explain myself. What do we, my dear hearers, when borne away by the immoderate desires of our hearts to a sin against which our consciences protest? And what do we, when, possest of the spirit of the world, we resist a grace which solicits us, which presses us to obey God? Without thinking upon it, and without wishing it, we secretly pronounce the same sentence of death which the Jews pronounced against themselves before Pilate, when they said to him, "His blood be upon us." For this grace which we despise is the price of the blood of Jesus Christ, and the sin that we commit is an actual profanation of this very blood. It is, then, as if we were to say to God: "Lord, I clearly see what engagement I make, and I know what risk I run, but rather than not satisfy my own desires, I consent that the blood of Thy Son shall fall upon me. This will be to bear the chastisement of it, but I will indulge my passion; Thou hast a right to draw forth from it a just indignation, but nevertheless I will complete my undertaking."

Thus we condemn ourselves. And here, Christians, is one of the essential foundations of this terrible mystery of the eternity of the punishment with which faith threatens us, and against which our reason revolts. We suppose that we can not have any knowledge of it in this life, and we are not aware, says St. Chrysostom, that we find it completely in the blood of the Savior, or rather in our profanation of it every day. For this blood, my brethren, adds this holy doctor, is enough to make eternity not less frightful, but less incredible. And behold the reason: This blood is of an infinite dignity; it can therefore be avenged only by an infinite punishment. This blood, if we destroy ourselves, will cry eternally against us at the tribunal of God. It will eternally excite the wrath of God against us. This blood, falling upon lost souls, will fix a stain upon them, which shall never be effaced. Their torments must consequently never end.

A reprobate in hell will always appear in the eyes of God stained with that blood which he has so basely treated. God will then always abhor him; and, as the aversion of God from His creature is that which makes hell, it must be inferred that hell will be eternal. And in this, O my God, Thou art sovereignly just, sovereignly holy, and worthy of our praise and adoration. It is in this way that the beloved disciple declared it even to God Himself in the Apocalypse. Men, said he, have shed the blood of Thy servants and of Thy prophets; therefore they deserve to drink it, and to drink it from the cup of Thine indignation. "For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink." An expression which the Scripture employs to describe the extreme infliction of divine vengeance. Ah! if the blood of the prophets has drawn down the scourge of God upon men, what may we not expect from the blood of Jesus Christ? If the blood of martyrs is heard crying out in heaven against the persecutors of the faith, how much more will the blood of the Redeemer be heard!

Then once more, Christians, behold the deplorable necessity to which we are reduced. This blood which flows from Calvary either demands grace for us, or justice against us. When we apply ourselves to it by a lively faith and a sincere repentance, it demands grace; but when by our disorders and impieties we check its salutary virtue, it demands justice, and it infallibly obtains it. It is in this blood, says St. Bernard, that all righteous souls are purified; but by a prodigy exactly opposite, it is also in this same blood that all the sinners of the land defile themselves, and render themselves, if I may use the expression, more hideous in the sight of God.

Ah! my God, shall I eternally appear in thine eyes polluted with that blood which washes away the crimes of others? If I had simply to bear my own sins, I might promise myself a punishment less rigorous, considering my sins as my misfortune, my weakness, my ignorance. Then, perhaps, Thou wouldst be less offended on account of them. But when these sins with which I shall be covered shall present themselves before me as so many sacrileges with respect to the blood of Thy Son; when the abuse of this blood shall be mixed and confounded with all the disorders of my life; when there shall not be one of them against which this blood shall not cry louder than the blood of Abel against Cain; then, O God of my soul I what will become of me in thy presence? No, Lord, cries the same St. Bernard affectionately, suffer not the blood of my Savior to fall upon me in this manner. Let it fall upon me to sanctify, but let it not fall upon me to destroy. Let it fall upon me in a right use of the favors which are the divine overflowings of it, and not through the blindness of mind and hardness of heart which are the most terrible punishments of it. Let it fall upon me by the participation of the sacred Eucharist, which is the precious source of it, and not by the maledictions attached to the despisers of Thy sacraments. In fine, let it fall upon me by influencing my conduct and inducing the practise of good works, and let it not fall upon me for my wanderings, my infidelities, my obstinacy, and my impenitence. This, my brethren, is what we ought to ask to-day from Jesus Christ crucified. It is with these views that we ought to go to the foot of the cross and catch the blood as it flows. He was the Savior of the Jews as well as ours, but this Savior, St. Augustine says, the Jews have converted into their judge. Avert from us such an evil. May He Who died to save us be our Savior. May He be our Savior during all the days of our lives. And may His merits, shed upon us abundantly, lose none of their efficacy in our hands, but be preserved entire by the fruits we produce from them. May He be our Savior in death. And at the last moment may the cross be our support, and thus may He consummate the work of our salvation which He has begun. May He be our Savior in a blest eternity, where we shall be as much the sharer in His glory as we have been in His sufferings.

**÷**02-09 FÉNELON

THE SAINTS CONVERSE WITH GOD

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambray, and private tutor to the heir-apparent of France, was born of a noble family in Perigord, 1651. In 1675 he received holy orders, and soon afterward made the acquaintance of Bossuet, whom he henceforth looked up to as his master. It was the publication of his "De l'Éducation des Filles" that brought him his first fame, and had some influence in securing his appointment in 1689 to be preceptor of the Duke of Burgundy. In performing this office he thought it necessary to compose his own text-books, such as would teach the vanity of worldly greatness and the loftiness of virtue. He was promoted to the archbishopric of Cambray in 1695, and subsequently became entangled in the religious aberrations of Madame Guyon. Fénelon came into controversy with Bossuet, whose severity against his friend was rebuked by the Pope, who, nevertheless, condemned some of the Archbishop of Cambray's views. Fénelon submitted, and withdrew to his diocesan see, where he died in 1715. His deep spirituality and eloquence are exemplified in the following sermon.

FÉNELON

1651-1715

THE SAINTS CONVERSE WITH GOD

*Pray without ceasing*.—1Th 5:17

Of all the duties enjoined by Christianity none is more essential, and yet more neglected, than prayer. Most people consider this exercise a wearisome ceremony, which they are justified in abridging as much as possible. Even those whose profession or fears lead them to pray, do it with such languor and wanderings of mind that their prayers, far from drawing down blessings, only increase their condemnation. I wish to demonstrate, in this discourse, first, the general necessity of prayer; secondly, its peculiar duty; thirdly, the manner in which we ought to pray.

First. God alone can instruct us in our duty. The teachings of men, however wise and well disposed they may be, are still ineffectual, if God do not shed on the soul that light which opens the mind to truth. The imperfections of our fellow creatures cast a shade over the truths that we learn from them. Such is our weakness that we do not receive, with sufficient docility, the instructions of those who are as imperfect as ourselves. A thousand suspicions, jealousies, fears, and prejudices prevent us from profiting, as we might, by what we hear from men; and tho they announce the most serious truths, yet what they do weakens the effect of what they say. In a word, it is God alone who can perfectly teach us.

St. Bernard said, in writing to a pious friend—If you are seeking less to satisfy a vain curiosity than to get true wisdom, you will sooner find it in deserts than in books. The silence of the rocks and the pathless forests will teach you better than the eloquence of the most gifted men. "All," says St. Augustine, "that we possess of truth and wisdom is a borrowed good flowing from that fountain for which we ought to thirst in the fearful desert of this world, that, being refreshed and invigorated by these dews from heaven, we may not faint upon the road that conducts us to a better country. Every attempt to satisfy the cravings of our hearts at other sources only increases the void. You will be always poor if you do not possess the only true riches." All light that does not proceed from God is false; it only dazzles us; it sheds no illumination upon the difficult paths in which we must walk, along the precipices that are about us.

Our experience and our reflections can not, on all occasions, give us just and certain rules of conduct. The advice of our wisest, and most sincere friends is not always sufficient; many things escape their observation, and many that do not are too painful to be spoken. They suppress much from delicacy, or sometimes from a fear of transgressing the bounds that our friendship and confidence in them will allow. The animadversions of our enemies, however severe or vigilant they may be, fail to enlighten us with regard to ourselves. Their malignity furnishes our self-love with a pretext for the indulgence of the greatest faults. The blindness of our self-love is so great that we find reasons for being satisfied with ourselves, while all the world condemn us. What must we learn from all this darkness? That it is God alone who can dissipate it; that it is He alone whom we can never doubt; that He alone is true, and knoweth all things; that if we go to Him in sincerity, He will teach us what men dare not tell us, what books can not—all that is essential for us to know.

Be assured that the greatest obstacle to true wisdom is the self-confidence inspired by that which is false. The first step toward this precious knowledge is earnestly to desire it, to feel the want of it, and to be convinced that they who seek it must address themselves to the Father of lights, who freely gives to him who asks in faith. But if it be true that God alone can enlighten us, it is not the less true that He will do this simply in answer to our prayers. Are we not happy, indeed, in being able to obtain so great a blessing by only asking for it? No part of the effort that we make to acquire the transient enjoyments of this life is necessary to obtain these heavenly blessings. What will we not do, what are we not willing to suffer, to possess dangerous and contemptible things, and often without any success? It is not thus with heavenly things. God is always ready to grant them to those who make the request in sincerity and truth. The Christian life is a long and continual tendency of our hearts toward that eternal goodness which we desire on earth. All our happiness consists in thirsting for it. Now this thirst is prayer. Ever desire to approach your Creator and you will never cease to pray.

Do not think that it is necessary to pronounce many words. To pray is to say, Let Thy will be done. It is to form a good purpose; to raise your heart to God; to lament your weakness; to sigh at the recollection of your frequent disobedience. This prayer demands neither method, nor science, nor reasoning; it is not essential to quit one's employment; it is a simple movement of the heart toward its Creator, and a desire that whatever you are doing you may do it to His glory. The best of all prayers is to act with a pure intention, and with a continual reference to the will of God. It depends much upon ourselves whether our prayers be efficacious. It is not by a miracle, but by a movement of the heart that we are benefited; by a submissive spirit. Let us believe, let us trust, let us hope, and God never will reject our prayer. Yet how many Christians do we see strangers to the privilege, aliens from God, who seldom think of Him, who never open their hearts to Him; who seek elsewhere the counsels of a false wisdom, and vain and dangerous consolations, who can not resolve to seek, in humble, fervent prayer to God, a remedy for their griefs and a true knowledge of their defects, the necessary power to conquer their vicious and perverse inclinations, and the consolations and assistance they require, that they may not be discouraged in a virtuous life.

But some will say, "I have no interest in prayer; it wearies me; my imagination is excited by sensible and more agreeable objects, and wanders in spite of me."

If neither your reverence for the great truths of religion, nor the majesty of the ever-present Deity, nor the interest of your eternal salvation, have power to arrest your mind and engage it in prayer, at least mourn with me for your infidelity; be ashamed of your weakness, and wish that your thoughts were more under your control; and desire to become less frivolous and inconstant. Make an effort to subject your mind to this discipline. You will gradually acquire habit and facility. What is now tedious will become delightful; and you will then feel, with a peace that the world can not give nor take away, that God is good. Make a courageous effort to overcome yourself. There can be no occasion that more demands it.

Secondly. The peculiar obligation of prayer. Were I to give all the proofs that the subject affords, I should describe every condition of life, that I might point out its dangers, and the necessity of recourse to God in prayer. But I will simply state that under all circumstances we have need of prayer. There is no situation in which it is possible to be placed where we have not many virtues to acquire and many faults to correct. We find in our temperament, or in our habits, or in the peculiar character of our minds, qualities that do not suit our occupations, and that oppose our duties. One person is connected by marriage to another whose temper is so unequal that life becomes a perpetual warfare. Some, who are exposed to the contagious atmosphere of the world, find themselves so susceptible to the vanity which they inhale that all their pure desires vanish. Others have solemnly promised to renounce their resentments, to conquer their aversions, to suffer with patience certain crosses, and to repress their eagerness for wealth; but nature prevails, and they are vindictive, violent, impatient, and avaricious.

Whence comes it that these resolutions are so frail? That all these people wish to improve, desire to perform their duty toward God and man better, and yet fail? It is because our own strength and wisdom, alone, are not enough. We undertake to do everything without God; therefore we do not succeed. It is at the foot of the altar that we must seek for counsel which will aid us. It is with God that we must lay our plans of virtue and usefulness; it is He alone that can render them successful. Without Him, all our designs, however good they may appear, are only temerity and delusion. Let us then pray that we may learn what we are and what we ought to be. By this means we shall not only learn the number and the evil effects of our peculiar faults, but we shall also learn to what virtues we are called, and the way to practise them. The rays of that pure and heavenly light that visit the humble soul will beam on us and we shall feel and understand that everything is possible to those who put their whole trust in God. Thus, not only to those who live in retirement, but to those who are exposed to the agitations of the world and the excitements of business, it is peculiarly necessary, by contemplation and fervent prayer, to restore their souls to that serenity which the dissipations of life and commerce with men have disturbed. To those who are engaged in business, contemplation and prayer are much more difficult than to those who live in retirement; but it is far more necessary for them to have frequent recourse to God in fervent prayer. In the most holy occupation a certain degree of precaution is necessary.

Do not devote all your time to action, but reserve a certain portion of it for meditation upon eternity. We see Jesus Christ inviting His disciples to go apart, in a desert place, and rest awhile, after their return from the cities, where they had been to announce His religion. How much more necessary is it for us to approach the source of all virtue, that we may revive our declining faith and charity, when we return from the busy scenes of life, where men speak and act as if they had never known that there is a God! We should look upon prayer as the remedy for our weakness, the rectifier of our own faults. He who was without sin prayed constantly; how much more ought we, who are sinners, to be faithful in prayer!

Even the exercise of charity is often a snare to us. It calls us to certain occupations that dissipate the mind, and that may degenerate into mere amusement. It is for this reason that St. Chrysostom says that nothing is so important as to keep an exact proportion between the interior source of virtue and the external practise of it; else, like the foolish virgins, we shall find that the oil in our lamp is exhausted when the bridegroom comes.

The necessity we feel that God should bless our labors is another powerful motive to prayer. It often happens that all human help is vain. It is God alone that can aid us, and it does not require much faith to believe that it is less our exertions, our foresight, and our industry than the blessing of the Almighty that can give success to our wishes.

Thirdly. Of the manner in which we ought to pray. 1. We must pray with attention. God listens to the voice of the heart, not to that of the lips. Our whole heart must be engaged in prayer. It must fasten upon what it prays for; and every human object must disappear from our minds. To whom should we speak with attention if not to God? Can He demand less of us than that we should think of what we say to Him? Dare we hope that He will listen to us, and think of us, when we forget ourselves in the midst of our prayers? This attention to prayer, which it is so just to exact from Christians, may be practised with less difficulty than we imagine. It is true that the most faithful souls suffer from occasional involuntary distractions. They can not always control their imaginations, and, in the silence of their spirits, enter into the presence of God. But these unbidden wanderings of the mind ought not to trouble us; and they may conduce to our perfection even more than the most sublime and affecting prayers if we earnestly strive to overcome them, and submit with humility to this experience of our infirmity. But to dwell willingly on frivolous and worldly things during prayer, to make no effort to check the vain thoughts that intrude upon this sacred employment and come between us and the Father of our spirits—is not this choosing to live the sport of our senses, and separated from God?

2. We must also ask with faith; a faith so firm that it never falters. He who prays without confidence can not hope that his prayer will be granted. Will not God love the heart that trusts in Him? Will He reject those who bring all their treasures to Him, and repose everything upon His goodness? When we pray to God, says St. Cyprian, with entire assurance, it is Himself who has given us the spirit of our prayer. Then it is the Father listening to the words of His child; it is He who dwells in our hearts, teaching us to pray. But must we confess that this filial confidence is wanting in all our prayers? Is not prayer our resource only when all others have failed us? If we look into hearts, shall we not find that we ask of God as if we had never before received benefits from Him? Shall we not discover there a secret infidelity that renders us unworthy of His goodness? Let us tremble, lest, when Jesus Christ shall judge us, He pronounce the same reproach that He did to Peter, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

3. We must join humility with trust. Great God, said Daniel, when we prostrate ourselves at Thy feet, we do not place our hopes for the success of our prayers upon our righteousness, but upon Thy mercy. Without this disposition in our hearts, all others, however pious they may be, can not please God. St. Augustine observes that the failure of Peter should not be attributed to insincerity in his zeal for Jesus Christ. He loved his Master in good faith; in good faith he would rather have died than have forsaken Him; but his fault lay in trusting to his own strength, to do what his own heart dictated.

It is not enough to possess a right spirit, an exact knowledge of duty, a sincere desire to perform it We must continually renew this desire, and enkindle this flame within us, at the fountain of pure and eternal light.

It is the humble and contrite heart that God will not despise. Remark the difference which the evangelist has pointed out between the prayer of the proud and presumptuous Pharisee and the humble and penitent publican. The one relates his virtues, the other deplores his sins. The good works of the one shall be set aside, while the penitence of the other shall be accepted. It will be thus with many Christians. Sinners, vile in their own eyes, will be objects of the mercy of God; while some, who have made professions of piety, will be condemned on account of the pride and arrogance that have contaminated their good works. It will be so because these have said in their hearts, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." They imagine themselves privileged; they pretend that they alone have penetrated the mysteries of the kingdom of God; they have a language and science of their own; they believe that their zeal can accomplish everything. Their regular lives favor their vanity; but in truth they are incapable of self-sacrifice, and they go to their devotions with their hearts full of pride and presumption. Unhappy are those who pray in this manner! Unhappy are those whose prayers do not render them more humble, more submissive, more watchful over their faults, and more willing to live in obscurity!

4. We must pray with love. It is love says St. Augustine, that asks, that seeks, that knocks, that finds, and that is faithful to what it finds. We cease to pray to God as soon as we cease to love Him, as soon as we cease to thirst for His perfections. The coldness of our love is the silence of our hearts toward God. Without this we may pronounce prayers, but we do not pray; for what shall lead us to meditate upon the laws of God if it be not the love of Him who has made these laws? Let our hearts be full of love, then, and they will pray. Happy are they who think seriously of the truths of religion; but far more happy are they who feel and love them! We must ardently desire that God will grant us spiritual blessings; and the ardor of our wishes must render us fit to receive the blessings. For if we pray only from custom, from fear, in the time of tribulation—- if we honor God only with our lips, while our hearts are far from Him—if we do not feel a strong desire for the success of our prayers—if we feel a chilling indifference in approaching Him who is a consuming fire—if we have no zeal for His glory—if we do not feel hatred for sin, and a thirst for perfection, we can not hope for a blessing upon such heartless prayers.

5. We must pray with perseverance. The perfect heart is never weary of seeking God. Ought we to complain if God sometimes leaves us to obscurity, and doubt, and temptation? Trials purify humble souls, and they serve to expiate the faults of the unfaithful. They confound those who, even in their prayers, have flattered their cowardice and pride. If an innocent soul, devoted to God, suffer from any secret disturbance, it should be humble, adore the designs of God, and redouble its prayers and its fervor. How often do we hear those who every day have to reproach themselves with unfaithfulness toward God complain that He refuses to answer their prayers! Ought they not to acknowledge that it is their sins which have formed a thick cloud between Heaven and them, and that God has justly hidden Himself from them? How often has He recalled us from our wanderings! How often, ungrateful as we are, have we been deaf to His voice and insensible to His goodness! He would make us feel that we are blind and miserable when we forsake Him. He would teach us, by privation, the value of the blessings that we have slighted. And shall we not bear our punishment with patience? Who can boast of having done all that he ought to have done; of having repaired all his past errors; of having purified his heart, so that he may claim as a right that God should listen to his prayer? Most truly, all our pride, great as it is, would not be sufficient to inspire such presumption! If then, the Almightly do not grant our petitions, let us adore His justice, let us be silent, let us humble ourselves, and let us pray without ceasing. This humble perseverance will obtain from Him what we should never obtain by our own merit. It will make us pass happily from darkness to light; for know, says St. Augustine that God is near to us even when He appears far from us.

6. We should pray with a pure intention. We should not mingle in our prayers what is false with what is real; what is perishable with what is eternal; low and temporal interests with that which concerns our salvation. Do not seek to render God the protector of your self-love and ambition, but the promoter of your good desires. You ask for the gratification of your passions, or to be delivered from the cross, of which He knows you have need. Carry not to the foot of the altar irregular desires and indiscreet prayers. Sigh not for vain and fleeting pleasures. Open your heart to your Father in heaven, that His Spirit may enable you to ask for the true riches. How can He grant you, says St. Augustine, what you do not yourself desire to receive? You pray every day that His will may be done, and that His kingdom may come. How can you utter this prayer with sincerity when you prefer your own will to His, and make His law yield to the vain pretexts with which your self-love seeks to elude it? Can you make this prayer—you who disturb His reign in your heart by so many impure and vain desires? You, in fine, who fear the coming of His reign, and do not desire that God should grant what you seem to pray for? No! If He, at this moment, were to offer to give you a new heart, and render you humble, and willing to bear the cross, your pride would revolt, and you would not accept the offer; or you would make a reservation in favor of your ruling passion, and try to accommodate your piety to your humor and fancies!

**÷**02-10 SOUTH

THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Robert South, who was born in the borough of Hackney, London, England, in 1638, attracted wide attention by his vigorous mind and his clear, argumentative style in preaching. Some of his sermons are notable specimens of pulpit eloquence. A keen analytical mind, great depth of feeling, and wide range of fancy combined to make him a powerful and impressive speaker. By some critics his style has been considered unsurpassed in force and beauty. What he lacked in tenderness was made up in masculine strength. He was a born satirist. Henry Rogers said of him: "Of all the English preachers, South seems to furnish, in point of style, the truest specimens of pulpit eloquence. His robust intellect, his shrewd common sense, his vehement feelings, and a fancy always more distinguished by force than by elegance, admirably qualified him for a powerful public speaker." South became prebendary of Westminster in 1663, canon at Oxford in 1670, and rector of Islip in 1678. An edition of his writings was published in 1823. He died in 1716.

SOUTH

1638-1716

THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him*.—Gen 1:27.

How hard it is for natural reason to discover a creation before revealed, or, being revealed, to believe it, the strange opinions of the old philosophers, and the infidelity of modern atheists, is too sad a demonstration. To run the world back to its first original and infancy, and, as it were, to view nature in its cradle, and trace the outgoings of the Ancient of Days in the first instance and specimen of His creative power, is a research too great for any mortal inquiry; and we might continue our scrutiny to the end of the world, before natural reason would be able to find out when it began.

Epicurus's discourse concerning the original of the world is so fabulous and ridiculously merry that we may well judge the design of his philosophy to have been pleasure, and not instruction. Aristotle held that it streamed by connatural result and emanation from God, the infinite and eternal Mind, as the light issues from the sun; so that there was no instant of duration assignable of God's eternal existence in which the world did not also coexist. Others held a fortuitous concourse of atoms—but all seem jointly to explode a creation, still beating upon this ground, that the producing something out of nothing is impossible and incomprehensible; incomprehensible, indeed, I grant, but not therefore impossible. There is not the least transaction of sense and motion in the whole man, but philosophers are at a loss to comprehend, I am sure they are to explain it. Wherefore it is not always rational to measure the truth of an assertion by the standard of our apprehension.

But, to bring things even to the bare preception of reason, I appeal to any one who shall impartially reflect upon the ideas and conceptions of his own mind, whether he doth not find it as easy and suitable to his natural notions to conceive that an infinite Almighty power might produce a thing out of nothing, and make that to exist *de novo*, which did not exist before, as to conceive the world to have had no beginning, but to have existed from eternity, which, were it so proper for this place and exercise, I could easily demonstrate to be attended with no small train of absurdities. But then, besides that the acknowledging of a creation is safe, and the denial of it dangerous and irreligious, and yet not more, perhaps much less, demonstrable than the affirmative; so, over and above, it gives me this advantage, that, let it seem never so strange, uncouth, and incomprehensible, the nonplus of my reason will yield a fairer opportunity to my faith.

The work that I shall undertake from these words shall be to show what this image of God in man is, and wherein it doth consist. Which I shall do these two ways: 1. Negatively, by showing wherein it does not consist. 2. Positively, by showing wherein it does.

For the first of these we are to remove the erroneous opinion of the Socinians. They deny that the image of God consisted in any habitual perfections that adorned the soul of Adam, but, as to his understanding, bring him in void of all notion, a rude, unwritten blank; making him to be created as much an infant as others are born; sent into the world only to read and to spell out a God in the works of creation, to learn by degrees, till at length his understanding grew up to the stature of his body; also without any inherent habits of virtue in his will; thus divesting him of all, and stripping him of his bare essence; so that all the perfection they allowed his understanding was aptness and docility, and all that they attributed to his will was a possibility to be virtuous.

But wherein, then, according to their opinion, did this image of God consist? Why, in that power and dominion that God gave Adam over the creatures; in that he was vouched His immediate deputy upon earth, the viceroy of the creation, and lord-lieutenant of the world. But that this power and dominion is not adequately and formally the image of God, but only a part of it, is clear from hence, because then he that had most of this would have most of God's image; and consequently Nimrod had more of it than Noah, Saul than Samuel, the persecutors than the martyrs, and Caesar than Christ Himself, which, to assert, is a, blasphemous paradox. And if the image of God is only grandeur, power, and sovereignty, certainly we have been hitherto much mistaken in our duty, and hereafter are by all means to beware of making ourselves unlike God by too much self-denial and humility. I am not ignorant that some may distinguish between a lawful authority and actual power, and affirm that God's image consists only in the former, which wicked princes, such, as Saul and Nimrod, have not, tho they possess the latter. But to this I answer,

1. That the Scripture neither makes nor owns such a distinction, nor anywhere asserts that when princes begin to be wicked they cease of right to be governors. Add to this, that when God renewed this charter of man's sovereignty over the creatures to Noah and his family we find no exception at all, but that Shem stood as fully invested with this right as any of his brethren.

2. But, secondly, this savors of something ranker than Socinianism, even the tenants of the fifth monarchy, and of sovereignty founded only upon saintship, and therefore fitter to be answered by the judge than the divine, and to receive its confutation at the bar of justice than from the pulpit.

Having now made our way through this false opinion, we are in the next place to lay down positively what this image of God in man is. It is, in short, that universal rectitude of all the faculties of the soul, by which they stand apt and disposed to their respective offices and operations, which will be more fully set forth by taking a distinct survey of it in the several faculties belonging to the soul.

1. In the understanding. 2. In the will. 3. In the passions or affections.

I. And, first, for its noblest faculty, the understanding: it was then sublime, clear, and aspiring—and, as it were, the soul's upper region, lofty and serene, free from vapors and disturbances of the inferior affections. It was the leading, controlling faculty; all the passions wore the colors of reason; it was not consul, but dictator. Discourse was then almost as quick as intuition; it was nimble in proposing, firm in concluding; it could sooner determine than now it can dispute. Like the sun, it had both light and agility; it knew no rest but in motion, no quiet but in activity. It did not so properly apprehend, as irradiate the object; not so much find, as make things intelligible. It did not arbitrate upon the several reports of sense, and all the varieties of imagination, like a drowsy judge, not only hearing, but also directing their verdict. In sum, it was vegete, quick, and lively, open as the day, untainted as the morning, full of the innocence and sprightliness of youth, it gave the soul a bright and a full view into all things, and was not only a window, but itself the prospect. Briefly, there is as much difference between the clear representations of the understanding then and the obscure discoveries that it makes now as there is between the prospect of a casement and of a keyhole.

Now, as there are two great functions of the soul, contemplation and practise, according to that general division of objects, some of which only entertain our speculation, others also employ our actions, so the understanding, with relation to these, not because of any distinction in the faculty itself, is accordingly divided into speculative and practical; in both of which the image of God was then apparent.

1. For the understanding speculative. There are some general maxims and notions in the mind of man which are the rules of discourse and the basis of all philosophy: as, that the same thing can not at the same time be and not be; that the whole is bigger than a part; that two dimensions, severally equal to a third, must also be equal to one another. Aristotle, indeed, affirms the mind to be at first a mere *tabula rasa*, and that these notions are not ingenit, and imprinted by the finger of nature, but by the later and more languid impressions of sense, being only the reports of observation, and the result of so many repeated experiments.

(1.) That these notions are universal, and what is universal must needs proceed from some universal, constant principle, the same in all particulars, which here can be nothing else but human nature.

(2.) These can not be infused by observation, because they are the rules by which men take their first apprehensions and observations of things, and therefore, in order of nature, must needs precede them; as the being of the rule must be before its application to the thing directed by it. From whence it follows that these were notions not descending from us, but born with us, not our offspring, but our brethren; and, as I may so say, such as we were taught without the help of a teacher.

Now it was Adam's happiness in the state of innocence to have these clear and unsullied. He came into the world a philosopher, which sufficiently appeared by his writing the nature of things upon their names; he could view essences in themselves, and read forms without the comment of their respective properties; he could see consequents yet dormant in their principles, and effects yet unborn and in the womb of their causes; his understanding could almost pierce into future contingents; his conjectures improving even to prophecy, or the certainties of prediction; till his fall, it was ignorant of nothing but sin, or at least it rested in the notion, without the smart of the experiment. Could any difficulty have been proposed, the resolution would have been as early as the proposal; it could not have had time to settle into doubt. Like a better Archimedes, the issue of all his inquiries was a *eureka*, a *eureka*, the offspring of his brain without the sweat of his brow. Study was not then a duty, night-watchings were needless, the light of reason wanted not the assistance of a candle. This is the doom of fallen man, to labor in the fire, to seek truth *in profundo*, to exhaust his time and impair his health, and perhaps to spin out his days and himself into one pitiful, controverted conclusion. There was then no poring, no struggling with memory, no straining for invention; his faculties were quick and expedite, they answered without knocking, they were ready upon the first summons.

2. The image of God was no less resplendent in that which we call man's practical understanding; namely, that storehouse of the soul in which are treasured up the rules of action, and the seeds of morality; where, we must observe, that many who deny all connate notions in the speculative intellect, do yet admit them in this. Now of this sort are these maxims, "That God is to be worshiped, that parents are to be honored, that a man's word is to be kept," and the like; which, being of universal influence, as to the regulation of the behavior and converse of mankind, are the ground of all virtue and civility, and the foundation of religion.

It was the privilege of Adam innocent, to have these notions also firm and untainted, to carry his monitor in his bosom, his law in his heart, and to have such a conscience as might be its own casuist; and certainly those actions must needs be regular where there is an identity between the rule and the faculty. His own mind taught him a due dependence upon God, and chalked out to him the just proportions and measures of behavior to his fellow creatures. He had no catechism but the creation, needed no study but reflection, read no book but the volume of the world, and that too, not for the rules to work by, but for the objects to work upon. Reason was his tutor, and first principles his *magna moralia*. The decalogue of Moses was but a transcript, not an original. All the laws of nations, and wise decrees of states, the statutes of Solon, and the twelve tables, were but a paraphrase upon this standing rectitude of nature, this fruitful principle of justice, that was ready to run out and enlarge itself into suitable demonstrations upon all emergent objects and occasions.

And this much for the image of God, as it shone in man's understanding.

II. Let us in the next place take a view of it as it was stamped upon the will. It is much disputed by divines concerning the power of man's will to good and evil in the state of innocence: and upon very nice and dangerous precipices stand their determinations on either side. Some hold that God invested him with a power to stand so that in the strength of that power received, he might, without the auxiliaries of any further influence, have determined his will to a full choice of good. Others hold that notwithstanding this power, yet it was impossible for him to exert it in any good action without a superadded assistance of grace actually determining that power to the certain production of such an act; so that whereas some distinguish between sufficient and effectual grace, they order the matter so as to acknowledge some sufficient but what is indeed effected, and actually productive of good action. I shall not presume to interpose dogmatically in a controversy which I look never to see decided. But concerning the latter of these opinions, I shall only give these two remarks:

1. That it seems contrary to the common and natural conceptions of all mankind, who acknowledge themselves able and sufficient to do many things which actually they never do.

2. That to assert that God looked upon Adam's fall as a sin, and punished it as such when, without any antecedent sin of his, he withdrew that actual grace from him upon the withdrawing of which it was impossible for him not to fall, seems a thing that highly reproaches the essential equity and goodness of the divine nature.

Wherefore, doubtless the will of man in the state of innocence had an entire freedom, a perfect equipendency and indifference to either part of the contradiction, to stand, or not to stand; to accept, or not to accept the temptation. I will grant the will of man now to be as much a slave as any one who will have it, and be only free to sin; that is, instead of a liberty, to have only a licentiousness; yet certainly this is not nature, but chance. We were not born crooked; we learned these windings and turnings of the serpent: and therefore it can not but be a blasphemous piece of ingratitude to ascribe them to God, and to make the plague of our nature the condition of our creation.

The will was then ductile and pliant to all the motions of right reason; it met the dictates of a clarified understanding half way. And the active informations of the intellect, filling the passive reception of the will, like form closing with matter, grew actuate into a third and distinct perfection of practise; the understanding and will never disagreed; for the proposals of the one never thwarted the inclinations of the other. Yet neither did the will servilely attend upon the understanding, but as a favorite does upon his prince, where the service is privilege and preferment; or as Solomon's servants waited upon him: it admired its wisdom, and heard its prudent dictates and counsels—both the direction and the reward of its obedience. It is indeed the nature of this faculty to follow a superior guide—to be drawn by the intellect; but then it was drawn as a triumphant chariot, which at the same time both follows and triumphs: while it obeyed this, it commanded the other faculties. It was subordinate, not enslaved to the understanding: not as a servant to a master, but as a queen to her king, who both acknowledges a subjection and yet retains a majesty.

III. Pass we now downward from man's intellect and will to the passions, which have their residence and situation chiefly in the sensitive appetite. For we must know that inasmuch as man is a compound, and mixture of flesh as well as spirit, the soul, during its abode in the body, does all things by the mediation of these passions and inferior affections. And here the opinion of the Stoics was famous and singular, who looked upon all these as sinful defects and irregularities, as so many deviations from right reason, making passion to be only another word for perturbation. Sorrow in their esteem was a sin scarce to be expiated by another; to pity, was a fault; to rejoice, an extravagance; and the apostle's advice, "to be angry and sin not," was a contradiction in their philosophy. But in this they were constantly outvoted by other sects of philosophers, neither for fame nor number less than themselves: so that all arguments brought against them from divinity would come in by way of overplus to their confutation. To us let this be sufficient, that our Savior Christ, who took upon Him all our natural infirmities, but none of our sinful, has been seen to weep, to be sorrowful, to pity, and to be angry: which shows that there might be gall in a dove, passion without sin, fire without smoke, and motion without disturbance. For it is not bare agitation, but the sediment at the bottom, that troubles and defiles the water; and when we see it windy and dusty, the wind does not (as we used to say) make, but only raise a dust.

Now, tho the schools reduce all the passions to these two heads, the concupiscible and the irascible appetite, yet I shall not tie myself to an exact prosecution of them under this division; but at this time, leaving both their terms and their method to themselves, consider only the principal and noted passions, from whence we may take an estimate of the rest.

And first for the grand leading affection of all, which is love. This is the great instrument and engine of nature, the bond and cement of society, the spring and spirit of the universe. Love is such an affection as can not so properly be said to be in the soul as the soul to be in that. It is the whole man wrapt up into one desire; all the powers, vigor, and faculties of the soul abridged into one inclination. And it is of that active, restless nature that it must of necessity exert itself; and, like the fire to which it is so often compared, it is not a free agent, to choose whether it will heat or no, but it streams forth by natural results and unavoidable emanations. So that it will fasten upon any inferior, unsuitable object, rather than none at all. The soul may sooner leave off to subsist than to love; and, like the vine, it withers and dies if it has nothing to embrace. Now this affection, in the state of innocence, was happily pitched upon its right object; it flamed up in direct fervors of devotion to God, and in collateral emissions of charity to its neighbor. It was not then only another and more cleanly name for lust. It had none of those impure heats that both represent and deserve hell. It was a vestal and a virgin fire, and differed as much from that which usually passes by this name nowadays as the vital heat from the burning of a fever.

Then for the contrary passion of hatred. This we know is the passion of defiance, and there is a kind of aversation and hostility included in its very essence and being. But then (if there could have been hatred in the world when there was scarce anything odious) it would have acted within the compass of its proper object; like aloes, bitter indeed, but wholesome. There would have been no rancor, no hatred of our brother: an innocent nature could hate nothing that was innocent. In a word, so great is the commutation that the soul then hated only that which now only it loves, that is, sin.

And if we may bring anger under this head, as being, according to some, a transient hatred, or at least very like it, this also, as unruly as now it is, yet then it vented itself by the measures of reason. There was no such thing as the transports of malice or the violences of revenge, no rendering evil for evil, when evil was truly a nonentity and nowhere to be found. Anger, then, was like the sword of justice, keen, but innocent and righteous: it did not act like fury, then call itself zeal. It always espoused God's honor, and never kindled upon anything but in order to a sacrifice. It sparkled like the coal upon the altar with the fervors of piety, the heats of devotion, the sallies and vibrations of a harmless activity.

In the next place, for the lightsome passion of joy. It was not that which now often usurps this name; that trivial, vanishing, superficial thing, that only gilds the apprehension and plays upon the surface of the soul. It was not the mere crackling of thorns or sudden blaze of the spirits, the exultation of a tickled fancy or a pleased appetite. Joy was then a masculine and a severe thing; the recreation of the judgment, the jubilee of reason. It was the result of a real good, suitably applied. It commenced upon the solidity of truth and the substance of fruition. It did not run out in voice or indecent eruptions, but filled the soul, as God does the universe, silently and without noise. It was refreshing, but composed, like the pleasantness of youth tempered with the gravity of age; or the mirth of a festival managed with the silence of contemplation.

And, on the other side, for sorrow: Had any loss or disaster made but room for grief, it would have moved according to the severe allowances of prudence, and the proportions of the provocation. It would not have sallied out into complaint of loudness, nor spread itself upon the face, and writ sad stories upon the forehead. No wringing of hands, knocking the breast, or wishing oneself unborn; all which are but the ceremonies of sorrow, the pomp and ostentation of an effeminate grief, which speak not so much the greatness of the misery as the smallness of the mind! Tears may spoil the eyes, but not wash away the affliction. Sighs may exhaust the man, but not eject the burden. Sorrow, then, would have been as silent as thought, as severe as philosophy. It would have been rested in inward senses, tacit dislikes; and the whole scene of it been transacted in sad and silent reflections….

And, lastly, for the affection of fear: It was then the instrument of caution, not of anxiety; a guard, and not a torment to the breast that had it. It is now indeed an unhappiness, the disease of the soul: it flies from a shadow, and makes more dangers than it avoids; it weakens the judgment and betrays the succors of reason: so hard is it to tremble and not to err, and to hit the mark with a shaking hand. Then it fixt upon Him who is only to be feared, God; and yet with a filial fear, which at the same time both fears and loves. It was awe without amazement, dread without distraction. There was then a beauty even in this very paleness. It was the color of devotion, giving a luster to reverence and a gloss to humility.

Thus did the passions then act without any of their present jars, combats, or repugnances; all moving with the beauty of uniformity and the stillness of composure; like a well-governed army, not for fighting, but for rank and order. I confess the Scripture does not expressly attribute these several endowments to Adam in his first estate. But all that I have said, and much more, may be drawn out of that short aphorism, "God made man upright." And since the opposite weaknesses infest the nature of man fallen, if we will be true to the rules of contraries we must conclude that these perfections were the lot of man innocent….

Having thus surveyed the image of God in the soul of man, we are not to omit now those characters of majesty that God imprinted upon the body. He drew some traces of His image upon this also, as much as a spiritual substance could be pictured upon a corporeal. As for the sect of the Anthropomorphites, who from hence ascribe to God the figure of a man, eyes, hands, feet, and the like, they are too ridiculous to deserve a confutation. They would seem to draw this impiety from the letter of the Scripture sometimes speaking of God in this manner. Absurdity! as if the mercy of Scripture expressions ought to warrant the blasphemy of our opinions; and not rather to show us that God condescends to us only to draw us to Himself; and clothes Himself in our likeness only to win us to His own. The practise of the papists is much of the same nature, in their absurd and impious picturing of God Almighty; but the wonder in them is the less since the image of a deity may be a proper object for that which is but the image of a religion. But to the purpose: Adam was then no less glorious in his externals; he had a beautiful body, as well as an immortal soul. The whole compound was like a well-built temple, stately without, and sacred within. The elements were at perfect union and agreement in His body; and their contrary qualities served not for the dissolution of the compound, but the variety of the composure. Galen, who had no more divinity than what his physic taught him, barely upon the consideration of this so exact frame of the body, challenges any one, upon a hundred years' study, to find out how any the least fiber, or most minute particle, might be more commodiously placed, either for the advantage of use or comeliness. His stature erect, and tending upward to his center; his countenance majestic and comely, with the luster of a native beauty that scorned the poor assistance of art or the attempts of imitation; His body of so much quickness and agility that it did not only contain but also represent the soul; for we might well suppose that where God did deposit so rich a jewel He would suitably adorn the case. It was a fit workhouse for sprightly, vivid faculties to exercise and exert themselves in; a fit tabernacle for an immortal soul, not only to dwell in, but to contemplate upon; where it might see the world without travel, it being a lesser scheme of the creation, nature contracted a little cosmography or map of the universe. Neither was the body then subject to distempers, to die by piecemeal, and languish under coughs, catarrhs, or consumptions. Adam knew no disease so long as temperance from the forbidden fruit secured him. Nature was his physician, and innocence and abstinence would have kept him healthful to immortality.

The two great perfections that both adorn and exercise man's understanding, are philosophy and religion: for the first of these, take it even among the professors of it where it most flourished, and we shall find the very first notions of common-sense debauched by them. For there have been such as have asserted, "that there is no such thing in the world as motion: that contradictions may be true." There has not been wanting one that has denied snow to be white. Such a stupidity or wantonness had seized upon the most raised wits that it might be doubted whether the philosophers or the owls of Athens were the quicker sighted. But then for religion; what prodigious, monstrous, misshapen births has the reason of fallen man produced! It is now almost six thousand years that far the greater part of the world has had no other religion but idolatry: and idolatry certainly is the first-born of folly, the great and leading paradox, nay, the very abridgment and sum total of all absurdities. For is it not strange that a rational man should worship an ox, nay, the image of an ox? That he should fawn upon his dog? Bow himself before a cat? Adore leeks and garlic, and shed penitential tears at the smell of a deified onion? Yet so did the Egyptians, once the famed masters of all arts and learning. And to go a little further, we have yet a stronger instance in Isaiah, "A man hews him down a tree in the wood, and a part of it he burns, with the residue thereof he maketh a god." With one part he furnishes his chimney, with the other his chapel. A strange thing that the fire must first consume this part and then burn incense to that. As if there was more divinity in one end of the stick than in the other; or, as if he could be graved and painted omnipotent, or the nails and the hammer could give it an apotheosis! Briefly, so great is the change, so deplorable the degradation of our nature, that whereas we bore the image of God, we now retain only the image of man.

In the last place, we learn hence the excellency of Christian religion, in that it is the great and only means that God has sanctified and designed to repair the breaches of humanity, to set fallen man upon his legs again, to clarify his reason, to rectify his will, and to compose and regulate his affections. The whole business of our redemption is, in short, only to rub over the defaced copy of the creation, to reprint God's image upon the soul, and, as it were, to set forth nature in a second and fairer edition; the recovery of which lost image, as it is God's pleasure to command, and our duty to endeavor, so it is in His power only to effect; to whom be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and forever more. Amen.

END OF VOL. II.

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VOLUME III

MASSILLON TO MASON

1908

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**÷**03-01 MASSILLON

THE SMALL NUMBER OF THE ELECT

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Jean Baptiste Massillon was born in 1663, at Hyères, in Provence, France. He first attracted notice as a pulpit orator by his funeral sermons as the Archbishop of Vienne, which led to his preferment from his class of theology at Meaux to the presidency of the Seminary of Magloire at Paris. His conferences at Paris showed remarkable spiritual insight and knowledge of the human heart. He was a favorite preacher of Louis XIV and Louis XV, and after being appointed bishop of Clermont in 1719 he was also nominated to the French Academy. In 1723 he took final leave of the capital and retired to his see, where he lived beloved by all until his death in 1742.

MASSILLON

1662-1742

THE SMALL NUMBER OF THE ELECT

*And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian*.—Luke 4 27.

Every day, my brethren, you continue to ask of us, whether the road to heaven is really so difficult, and the number of the saved really so small as we represent? To a question so often proposed, and still oftener resolved, our Savior answers you here, that there were many widows in Israel afflicted with famine; but the widow of Sarepta was alone found worthy the succor of the prophet Elias; that the number of lepers was great in Israel in the time of the prophet Eliseus; and that Naaman was only cured by the man of God.

Were I here, my brethren, for the purpose of alarming, rather than instructing you, I had only to recapitulate what in the holy writings we find dreadful with regard to this great truth; and, running over the history of the just, from age to age, show you that, in all times, the number of the saved has been very small. The family of Noah alone saved from the general flood; Abraham chosen from among men to be the sole depositary of the covenant with God; Joshua and Caleb the only two of six hundred thousand Hebrews who saw the Land of Promise; Job the only upright man in the land of Uz; Lot, in Sodom. To representations so alarming, would have succeeded the sayings of the prophets. In Isaiah you would see the elect as rare as the grapes which are found after the vintage, and have escaped the search of the gatherer; as rare as the blades which remain by chance in the field, and have escaped the scythe of the mower. The evangelist would still have added new traits to the terrors of these images. I might have spoken to you of two roads—of which one is narrow, rugged, and the path of a very small number; the other broad, open, and strewed with flowers, and almost the general path of men: that everywhere, in the holy writings, the multitude is always spoken of as forming the party of the reprobate; while the saved, compared with the rest of mankind, form only a small flock, scarcely perceptible to the sight. I would have left you in fears with regard to your salvation; always cruel to those who have not renounced faith and every hope of being among the saved. But what would it serve to limit the fruits of this instruction to the single point of setting forth how few persons will be saved? Alas! I would make the danger known, without instructing you how to avoid it; I would allow you, with the prophet, the sword of the wrath of God suspended over your heads, without assisting you to escape the threatened blow; I would alarm but not instruct the sinner.

My intention is, to-day, to search for the cause of this small number, in our morals and manner of life. As every one flatters himself he will not be excluded, it is of importance to examine if his confidence be well founded. I wish not, in marking to you the causes which render salvation so rare, to make you generally conclude that few will be saved, but to bring you to ask yourselves if, living as you live, you can hope to be saved. Who am I? What am I doing for heaven? And what can be my hopes in eternity? I propose no other order in a matter of such importance. What are the causes which render salvation so rare? I mean to point out three principal causes, which is the only arrangement of this discourse. Art, and far-sought reasonings, would be ill-timed. Oh, attend, therefore, be ye whom ye may. No subject can be more worthy your attention, since it goes to inform you what may be the hopes of your eternal destiny.

Few are saved, because in that number we can only comprehend two descriptions of persons: either those who have been so happy as to preserve their innocence pure and undefiled, or those who, after having lost, have regained it by penitence. This is the first cause. There are only these two ways of salvation: heaven is only open to the innocent or to the penitent. Now, of which party are you? Are you innocent? Are you penitent?

Nothing unclean shall enter the kingdom of God. We must consequently carry there either an innocence unsullied, or an innocence regained. Now to die innocent is a grace to which few souls can aspire; and to live penitent is a mercy which the relaxed state of our morals renders equally rare. Who, indeed, will pretend to salvation by the chain of innocence? Where are the pure souls in whom sin has never dwelt, and who have preserved to the end the sacred treasure of grace confided to them by baptism, and which our Savior will redemand at the awful day of punishment?

In those happy days when the whole Church was still but an assembly of saints, it was very uncommon to find an instance of a believer who, after having received the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and acknowledged Jesus Christ in the sacrament which regenerates us, fell back to his former irregularities of life. Ananias and Sapphira were the only prevaricators in the Church of Jerusalem; that of Corinth had only one incestuous sinner. Church penitence was then a remedy almost unknown; and scarcely was there found among these true Israelites one single leper whom they were obliged to drive from the holy altar, and separate from communion with his brethren. But since that time the number of the upright diminishes in proportion, as that of believers increases. It would appear that the world, pretending now to have become almost generally Christian, has; brought with it into the Church its corruptions and its maxims.

Alas! we all go astray, almost from the breast of our mothers! The first use which we make of our heart is a crime; our first desires. are passions; and our reason only expands and increases on the wrecks of our innocence. The earth, says a prophet, is infected by the corruption of those who inhabit it: all have violated the laws, changed the ordinances, and broken the alliance which should have endured forever: all commit sin, and scarcely is there one to be found who does the work of the Lord. Injustice, calumny, lying, treachery, adultery, and the blackest crimes have deluged the earth. The brother lays snares for his brother; the father is divided from his children; the husband from his wife: there is no tie which a vile interest does not sever. Good faith and probity are no longer virtues except among the simple people. Animosities are endless; reconciliations are feints, and never is a former enemy regarded as a brother: they tear, they devour each other. Assemblies are no longer but for the purpose of public and general censure. The purest virtue is no longer a protection from the malignity of tongues. Gaming is become either a trade, a fraud, or a fury. Repasts—those innocent ties of society—degenerate into excesses of which we dare not speak. Our age witnesses horrors with which our forefathers were unacquainted.

Behold, then, already one path of salvation shut to the generality of men. All have erred. Be ye whom ye may, listen to me now, the time has been when sin reigned over you. Age may perhaps have calmed your passions, but what was your youth? Long and habitual infirmities may perhaps have disgusted you with the world; but what use did you formerly make of the vigor of health? A sudden inspiration of grace may have turned your heart, but do you not most fervently entreat that every moment prior to that inspiration may be effaced from the remembrance of the Lord?

But with what am I taking up time? We are all sinners, O my God! and Thou knowest our hearts! What we know of our errors is, perhaps, in Thy sight, the most pardonable; and we all allow that by innocence we have no claim to salvation. There remains, therefore, only one resource, which is penitence. After our shipwreck, say the saints, it is the timely plank which alone can conduct us into port; there is no other means of salvation for us. Be ye whom ye may, prince or subject, high or low, penitence alone can save you. Now permit me to ask where are the penitent? You will find more, says a holy father, who have never fallen, than who, after their fall, have raised themselves by true repentance. This is a terrible saying; but do not let us carry things too far: the truth is sufficiently dreadful without adding new terrors to it by vain declamation.

Let us alone examine as to whether the majority of us have a right, through penitence, to salvation. What is a penitent? According to Tertullian, a penitent is a believer who feels every moment his former unhappiness in forsaking and losing his God; one who has his guilt incessantly before his eyes; who finds everywhere the traces and remembrance of it.

A penitent is a man instrusted by God with judgment against himself; one who refuses himself the most innocent pleasures because he had formerly indulged in those the most criminal; one who puts up with the most necessary gratification with pain; one who regards his body as an enemy whom it is necessary to conquer—as an unclean vessel which must be purified—as an unfaithful debtor of whom it is proper to exact to the last farthing. A penitent regards himself as a criminal condemned to death, because he is no longer worthy of life. In the loss of riches or health he sees only a withdrawal of favors that he had formerly abused: in the humiliations which happen to him, only the pains of his guilt: in the agonies with which he is racked, only the commencement of those punishments he has justly merited. Such is a penitent.

But I again ask you—Where, among us, are penitents of this description? Now look around you. I do not tell you to judge your brethren, but to examine what are the manners and morals of those who surround you. Nor do I speak of those open and avowed sinners who have thrown off even the appearance of virtue. I speak only of those who, like yourselves, live as most live, and whose actions present nothing to the public view particularly shameful or depraved. They are sinners and they admit it: you are not innocent, and you confess it. Now are they penitent? or are you? Age, vocation, more serious employments, may perhaps have checked the sallies of youth. Even the bitterness which the Almighty has made attendant on our passions, the deceits, the treacheries of the world, an injured fortune, with ruined constitution, may have cooled the ardor, and confined the irregular desires of your hearts. Crimes may have disgusted you even with sin itself—for passions gradually extinguish themselves. Time, and the natural inconstancy of the heart will bring these about; yet, nevertheless, tho detached from sin by incapability, you are no nearer your God. According to the world you are become more prudent, more regular, to a greater extent what it calls men of probity, more exact in fulfilling your public or private duties. But you are not penitent. You have ceased your disorders but you have not expiated them. You are not converted: this great stroke, this grand operation on the heart, which regenerates man, has not yet been felt by you. Nevertheless, this situation, so truly dangerous, does not alarm you. Sins which have never been washed away by sincere repentance, and consequently never obliterated from the book of life, appear in your eyes as no longer existing; and you will tranquilly leave this world in a state of impenitence, so much the more dangerous as you will die without being sensible of your danger.

What I say here is not merely a rash expression, or an emotion of zeal; nothing is more real, or more exactly true: it is the situation of almost all men, even the wisest and most esteemed of the world. The morality of the younger stages of life is always lax, if not licentious. Age, disgust, and establishment for life, fix the heart and withdraw it from debauchery: but where are those who are converted? Where are those who expiate their crimes by tears of sorrow and true repentance? Where are those who, having begun as sinners, end as penitents? Show me, in your manner of living, the smallest trace of penitence! Are your graspings at wealth and power, your anxieties to attain the favor of the great—and by these means an increase of employments and influence—are these proofs of it? Would you wish to reckon even your crimes as virtues?—that the sufferings of your ambition, pride, and avarice, should discharge you from an obligation which they themselves have imposed? You are penitent to the world, but are you so to Jesus Christ? The infirmities with which God afflicts you, the enemies He raised up against you, the disgraces and losses with which He tries you—do you receive them all as you ought, with humble submission to His will? Or, rather, far from finding in them occasions of penitence, do you not turn them into the objects of new crimes? It is the duty of an innocent soul to receive with submission the chastisements of the Almighty; to discharge with courage the painful duties of the station allotted to him, and to be faithful to the laws of the gospel. But do sinners owe nothing beyond this? And yet they pretend to salvation! Upon what claim? To say that you are innocent before God, your own consciences will witness against you. To endeavor to persuade yourselves that you are penitent, you dare not; and you would condemn yourselves by your own mouths. Upon what then dost thou depend, O man! who thus livest so tranquil?

These, my brethren, as I have already told you, are not merely advices and pious arts; they are the most essential of our obligations. But, alas! who fulfils them? Who even knows them? Ah! my brethren, did you know how far the title you bear, of Christian, engages you; could you comprehend the sanctity of your state, the hatred of the world, of yourself, and of everything which is not of God that it enjoys, that gospel life, that constant watching, that guard over the passions, in a word, that conformity with Jesus Christ crucified, which it exacts of you—could you comprehend it, could you remember that you ought to love God with all your heart, and all your strength, so that a single desire that has not connection with Him defiles you—you would appear a monster in your own sight. How! you would exclaim. Duties so holy, and morals so profane! A vigilance so continual, and a life so careless and dissipated! A love of God so pure, so complete, so universal, and a heart the continual prey of a thousand impulses, either foreign or criminal! If thus it is, who, O my God! will be entitled to salvation? Few indeed, I fear, my dear hearers! At least it will not be you (unless a change takes place) nor those who resemble you; it will not be the multitude!

Who shall be saved? Those who work out their salvation with fear and trembling; who live in the world without indulging in its vices. Who shall be saved? That Christian woman who, shut up in the circle of her domestic duties, rears up her children in faith and in piety; divides her heart only between her Savior and her husband; is adorned with delicacy and modesty; sits not down in the assemblies of vanity; makes not a law of the ridiculous customs of the world, but regulates those customs by the law of God; and makes virtue appear more amiable by her rank and her example. Who shall be saved? That believer who, in the relaxation of modern times, imitates the manners of the first Christian—whose hands are clean and his heart pure—who is watchful—who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity, but who, in the midst of the dangers of the great world, continually applies himself to purify it; just—who swears not deceitfully against his neighbor, nor is indebted to fraudulent ways for the aggrandizement of his fortune; generous—who with benefits repays the enemy who sought his ruin; sincere—who sacrifices not the truth to a vile interest, and knows not the part of rendering himself agreeable by betraying his conscience; charitable—who makes his house and interest the refuge of his fellow creatures, and himself the consolation of the afflicted; regards his wealth as the property of the poor; humble in affliction—a Christian under injuries, and penitent even in prosperity. Who will merit salvation? You, my dear hearer, if you will follow these examples; for such are the souls to be saved. Now these assuredly do not form the greatest number. While you continue, therefore, to live like the multitude, it is a striking proof that you disregard your salvation.

These, my brethren, are truths which should make us tremble! nor are they those vague ones which are told to all men, and which none apply to themselves. Perhaps there is not in this assembly an individual who may not say of himself, "I live like the great number; like those of my rank, age, and situation; I am lost, should I die in this path." Now, can anything be more capable of alarming a soul, in whom some remains of care for his salvation shall exist? It is the multitude, nevertheless, who tremble not. There is only a small number of the just who work out severally their salvation with fear and trembling. All the rest are tranquil. After having lived with the multitude, they flatter themselves they shall be particularized at death. Every one augurs favorably for himself, and vainly imagines that he shall be an exception.

On this account it is, my brethren, that I confine myself to you who are now here assembled. I include not the rest of men; but consider you as alone existing on the earth. The idea which fills and terrifies me is this—I figure to myself the present as your last hour, and the end of the world! the heavens opening above your heads—the Savior, in all His glory, about to appear in the midst of His temple—you only assembled here as trembling criminals, to wait His coming, and hear the sentence, either of life eternal, or everlasting death! for it is vain to flatter yourselves that you shall die more innocent than you are at this hour. All those desires of change with which you are amused, will continue to amuse you till death arrives. The experience of all ages proves it. The only difference you have to expect will most likely be only a larger balance against you than what you would have to answer for now; and from what would be your destiny, were you to be judged in this moment, you may almost decide upon what it will be at death. Now, I ask you—and, connecting my own lot with yours, I ask it with dread—were Jesus Christ to appear in this temple, in the midst of this assembly, to judge us, to make the awful separation between the sheep and the goats, do you believe that the most of us would be placed at His right hand? Do you believe that the number would at least be equal? Do you believe that there would even be found ten upright and faithful servants of the Lord, when formerly five cities could not furnish that number? I ask you! You know not! I know it not! Thou alone, O my God, knowest who belong to Thee.

But if we know not who belong to Him, at least we know that sinners do not. Now, who are the just and faithful assembled here at present? Titles and dignities avail nothing; you are stript of all these in the presence of your Savior! Who are they? Many sinners who wish not to be converted; many more who wish, but always put it off; many others who are only converted in appearance, and again fall back to their former course; in a word, a great number, who flatter themselves they have no occasion for conversion. This is the party of the reprobate! Ah! my brethren, cut off from this assembly these four classes of sinners, for they will be cut off at the great day! And now stand forth ye righteous:—where are ye? O God, where are Thine elect! What remains as Thy portion!

My brethren, our ruin is almost certain! Yet we think not of it! If in this terrible separation, which will one day take place; there should be but one sinner in the assembly on the side of the reprobate, and a voice from heaven should assure us of it, without particularizing him, who of us would not tremble, lest he be the unfortunate and devoted wretch? Who of us would not immediately apply to his conscience, to examine if its crimes merited not this punishment? Who of us, seized with dread, would not demand of our Savior, as did the apostles, crying out, "Lord, is it I?" And should a small respite be allowed to our prayers, who of us would not use every effort, by tears, supplication, and sincere repentance, to avert the misfortune?

Are we in our senses, my dear hearers? Perhaps among all who listen to me now, ten righteous ones would not be found. It may be fewer still. What do I perceive, O my God! I dare not, with a fixt eye, regard the depths of Thy judgments and justice! Not more than one, perhaps, would be found among us all! And this danger affects you not, my dear hearer! You persuade yourself that in this great number who shall perish, you will be the happy individual! You, you have less reason, perhaps, than any other to believe it! You, upon whom alone the sentence of death should fall, were only one of all who hear me to suffer! Great God! how little are the terrors of Thy law known to the world? In all ages the just have shuddered with dread in reflecting on the severity and extent of Thy judgments, touching the destinies of men! Alas! what are they laying up in store for the sons of men!

But what are we to conclude from these awful truths? That all must despair of salvation? God forbid! The impious alone, to quiet his own feelings in his debaucheries, endeavors to persuade himself that all men shall perish as well as he. This idea ought not to be the fruit of the present discourse. It is intended to undeceive you with regard to the general error, that any one may do whatever is done by others. To convince you that, in order to merit salvation, you must distinguish yourself from the rest; that in the midst of the world you are to live for God's glory, and not follow after the multitude.

When the Jews were led in captivity from Judea to Babylon, a little before they quitted their own country, the prophet Jeremiah, whom the Lord had forbidden to leave Jerusalem, spoke thus to them: "Children of Israel, when you shall arrive at Babylon, you will behold the inhabitants of that country, who carry upon their shoulders gods of silver and gold. All the people will prostrate themselves and adore them. But you, far from allowing yourselves, by these examples, to be led to impiety, say to yourselves in secret, It is Thou, O Lord! whom we ought to adore."

Let me now finish by addressing to you the same words.

At your departure from this temple, you go to enter into another Babylon. You go to see the idols of gold and silver, before which all men prostrate themselves. You go to regain the vain objects of human passions, wealth, glory, and pleasure, which are the gods of this world and which almost all men adore. You will see those abuses which all the world permits, those errors which custom authorizes, and those debaucheries, which an infamous fashion has almost constituted as laws. Then, my dear hearer, if you wish to be of the small number of true Israelites, say, in the secrecy of your heart, "It is Thou alone, O my God! whom we ought to adore. I wish not to have connection with a people which know Thee not; I will have no other law than Thy holy law; the gods which this foolish multitude adore are not gods; they are the work of the hands of men; they will perish with them; Thou alone, O my God! art immortal; and Thou alone deservest to be adored. The customs of Babylon have no connection with the holy laws of Jerusalem. I will continue to worship Thee, with that small number of the children of Abraham which still, in the midst of an infidel nation, composes Thy people; with them I will turn all my desires toward the holy Zion. The singularity of my manners will be regarded as a weakness; but blest weakness, O my God! which will give me strength to resist the torrent of customs, and the seduction of example. Thou wilt be my God in the midst of Babylon, as Thou wilt one day be in Jerusalem above!"

Ah! the time of the captivity will at last expire. Thou wilt call to Thy remembrance Abraham and David. Thou wilt deliver Thy people. Thou wilt transport us to the holy city. Then wilt Thou alone reign over Israel, and over the nations which at present know Thee not. All being destroyed, all the empires of the earth, all the monuments of human pride annihilated, and Thou alone remaining eternal, we then shall know that Thou art the Lord of hosts, and the only God to be adored.

Behold the fruit which you ought to reap from this discourse! Live apart. Think, without ceasing, that the great number work their own destruction. Regard as nothing all customs of the earth, unless authorized by the law of God, and remember that holy men in all ages have been looked upon as a peculiar people.

It is thus that, after distinguishing yourselves from the sinful on earth, you will be gloriously distinguished from them in eternity!

**÷**03-02 SAURIN

PAUL BEFORE FELIX AND DRUSILLA

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Jacques Saurin, the famous French Protestant preacher of the seventeenth century, was born at Nismes in 1677. He studied at Geneva and was appointed to the Walloon Church in London in 1701. The scene of his great life work was, however, the Hague, where he settled in 1705. He has been compared with Bossuet, tho he never attained the graceful style and subtilty which characterize the "Eagle of Meaux." The story is told of the famous scholar Le Clerc that he long refused to hear Saurin preach, on the ground that he gave too much attention to mere art. One day he consented to hear him on the condition that he should be permitted to sit behind the pulpit where he could not see his oratorical action. At the close of the sermon he found himself in front of the pulpit, with tears in his eyes. Saurin died in 1730.

SAURIN

1677—1730

PAUL BEFORE FELIX AND DRUSILLA

*And before certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith of Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee*.—Act 24:24-25.

My brethren, tho the kingdoms of the righteous be not of this world, they present, however, amidst their meanness, marks of dignity and power. They resemble Jesus Christ. He humbled Himself so far as to take the form of a servant, but frequently exercised the rights of a sovereign. From the abyss of humiliation to which He condescended, emanations of the Godhead were seen to proceed. Lord of nature, He commanded the winds and seas. He bade the storm and tempest subside. He restored health to the sick, and life to the dead. He imposed silence on the rabbis; He embarrassed Pilate on the throne; and disposed of Paradise at the moment He Himself was pierced with the nails, and fixt on the cross. Behold the portrait of believers! "They are dead. Their life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii., 3.) "If they had hope only in this life, they were of all men most miserable." (I Cor. xv., 19.) Nevertheless, they show I know not what superiority of birth. Their glory is not so concealed but we sometimes perceive its luster! just as the children of a king, when unknown and in a distant province, betray in their conversation and carriage indications of illustrious descent.

We might illustrate this truth by numerous instances. Let us attend to that in our text. There we shall discover that association of humility and grandeur, of reproach and glory, which constitutes the condition of the faithful while on earth. Behold St. Paul, a Christian, an apostle, a saint. See him hurried from tribunal to tribunal, from province to province; sometimes before the Romans, sometimes before the Jews, sometimes before the high-priest of the synagog, and sometimes before the procurator of Caesar. See him conducted from Jerusalem to Caesarea, and summoned to appear before Felix. In all these traits, do you not recognize the Christian walking in the narrow way, the way of tribulation, marked by his Master's feet? But consider him nearer still. Examine his discourse, look at his countenance; there you will see a fortitude, a courage, and a dignity which constrain you to acknowledge that there was something really grand in the person of St. Paul. He preached Jesus Christ at the very moment he was persecuted for having preached Him. He preached even when in chains. He did more; he attacked his judge on the throne. He reasoned, he enforced, he thundered. He seemed already to exercise the function of judging the world, which God has reserved for His saints. He made Felix tremble. Felix felt himself borne away by a superior force. Unable to hear St. Paul any longer without appalling fears, he sent him away. "After certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ," etc.

We find here three considerations which claim our attention: An enlightened preacher, who discovers a very peculiar discernment in the selection of his subject; a conscience appalled and confounded on the recollection of its crimes and of that awful judgment where they must be weighed, a sinner alarmed, but not converted; a sinner who desires to be saved, but delays his conversion: a case, alas! of but too common occurrence.

You perceive already, my brethren, the subject of this discourse: first, that St. Paul reasoned before Felix and Drusilla of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; second, that Felix trembled; third, that he sent the apostle away; three considerations which shall divide this discourse. May it produce on your hearts, on the hearts of Christians, the same effects St. Paul produced on the soul of this heathen; but may it have a happier influence on your lives. Amen.

Paul preached before Felix and Drusilla "on righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." This is the first subject of discussion. Before, however, we proceed further with our remarks, we must first sketch the character of this Felix and this Drusilla, which will serve as a basis to the first proposition.

After the scepter was departed from Judah, and the Jewish nation subjugated by Pompey, the Roman emperors governed the country by procurators. Claudius filled the imperial throne while St. Paul was at Caesarea. This emperor had received a servile education from his grandmother Lucia, and from his mother Antonia; and having been brought up in obsequious meanness, evinced, on his elevation to the empire, marks of the inadequate care which had been bestowed on his infancy. He had neither courage nor dignity of mind. He who was raised to sway the Roman scepter, and consequently to govern the civilized world, abandoned his judgment to his freedmen, and gave them a complete ascendency over his mind. Felix was one of those freedmen. "He exercised in Judea the imperial functions with a mercenary soul." Voluptuousness and avarice were the predominant vices of his heart. We have a proof of his avarice immediately after our text, where it is said he sent for Paul,—not to hear him concerning the truth of the gospel which this apostle had preached with so much power; not to inquire whether this religion, against which the Jews raised the standard, was contrary to the interest of the State; but because he hoped to have received money for his liberation. Here is the effect of avarice.

Josephus recited an instance of his voluptuousness. It is his marriage with Drusilla. She was a Jewess, as is remarked in our text. King Azizus, her former husband, was a heathen; and in order to gain her affections, he had conformed to the most rigorous ceremonies of Judaism. Felix saw her, and became enamored of her beauty. He conceived for her a violent passion; and in defiance of the sacred ties which had united her to her husband, he resolved to become master of her person. His addresses were received. Drusilla violated her former engagements, and chose rather to contract with Felix an illegitimate marriage than to adhere to the chaste ties which united her to Azizus. Felix the Roman, Felix the procurator of Judea and the favorite of Caesar appeared to her a noble acquisition. It is indeed a truth, we may here observe, that grandeur and fortune are charms which mortals find the greatest difficulty to resist, and against which the purest virtue has need to be armed with all its constancy. Recollect these two characters of Felix and Drusilla. St. Paul, before those two personages, treated concerning "The faith in Christ"; that is, concerning the Christian religion, of which Jesus Christ is the sum and substance, the author and the end: and from the numerous doctrines of Christianity, he selected "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come."

Here is, my brethren, an admirable text; but a text selected with discretion. Fully to comprehend it, recollect the character we have given of Felix. He was covetous, luxurious, and governor of Judea. St. Paul selected three subjects, correspondent to the characteristics. Addressing an avaricious man, he treated of righteousness. Addressing the governor of Judea, one of those persons who think themselves independent and responsible to none but themselves for their conduct, he treated of "judgment to come."

But who can here supply the brevity of the historian, and report the whole of what the apostle said to Felix on these important points? It seems to me that I hear him enforcing those important truths he has left us in his works, and placing in the fullest luster those divine maxims interspersed in our Scriptures. "He reasoned of righteousness." There he maintained the right of the widow and the orphan. There he demonstrated that kings and magistrates are established to maintain the rights of the people, and not to indulge their own caprice; that the design of the supreme authority is to make the whole happy by the vigilance of one, and not to gratify one at the expense of all; that it is meanness of mind to oppress the wretched, who have no defense but cries and tears; and that nothing is so unworthy of an enlightened man as that ferocity with which some are inspired by dignity, and which obstructs their respect for human nature, when undisguised by worldly pomp; that nothing is so noble as goodness and grandeur, associated in the same character; that this is the highest felicity; that in some sort it transforms the soul into the image of God; who, from the high abodes of majesty in which He dwells, surrounded with angels and cherubim, deigns to look down on this mean world which we inhabit, and "Leaves not Himself without witness, doing good to all."

"He reasoned of temperance." There he would paint the licentious effects of voluptuousness. There he would demonstrate how opposite is this propensity to the spirit of the gospel; which everywhere enjoins retirement, mortification, and self-denial. He would show how it degrades the finest characters who have suffered it to predominate. Intemperance renders the mind incapable of reflection. It debases the courage. It debilitates the mind. It softens the soul. He would demonstrate the meanness of a man called to preside over a great people, who exposes his foibles to public view; not having resolution to conceal, much less to vanquish them. With Drusilla, he would make human motives supply the defects of divine; with Felix, he would make divine motives supply the defects of human. He would make this shameless woman feel that nothing on earth is more odious than a woman destitute of honor, that modesty is an attribute of the sex; that an attachment, uncemented by virtue, can not long subsist; that those who receive illicit favors are the first, according to the fine remark of a sacred historian, to detest the indulgence: "The hatred wherewith 'Ammon, the son of David,' hated his sister, after the gratification of his brutal passion, was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her" (II Sam. xiii., 15). He would make Felix perceive that, however the depravity of the age might seem to tolerate a criminal intercourse with persons of the other sex, with God, who has called us all to equal purity, the crime was not less heinous.

"He reasoned," in short, "of judgment to come." And here he would magnify his ministry. When our discourses are regarded as connected only with the present period, their force, I grant, is of no avail. We speak for a Master who has left us clothed with infirmities, which discover no illustrious marks of Him by whom we are sent. We have only our voice, only our exhortations, only our entreaties. Nature is not averted at our pleasure. The visitations of Heaven do not descend at our command to punish your indolence and revolts: that power was very limited, even to the apostle. The idea of a future state, the solemnities of a general judgment, supply our weakness, and St. Paul enforced this motive; he proved its reality, he delineated its luster, he displayed its pomp. He resounded in the ears of Felix the noise, the voices, the trumpets. He showed him the small and the great, the rich man and Lazarus, Felix the favorite of Caesar, and Paul the captive of Felix, awakened by that awful voice: "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment."

But not to be precipitate in commending the apostle's preaching. Its encomiums will best appear by attending to its effects on the mind of Felix. St. Jerome wished, concerning a preacher of his time, that the tears of his audience might compose the eulogy of his sermons. We shall find in the tears of Felix occasion to applaud the eloquence of our apostle. We shall find that his discourses were thunder and lightning in the congregation, as the Greeks used to say concerning one of their orators. While St. Paul preached, Felix felt I know not what agitations in his mind. The recollection of his past life; the sight of his present sins; Drusilla, the object of his passion and subject of his crime; the courage of St. Paul—all terrified him. His heart burned while that disciple of Jesus Christ expounded the Scriptures. The word of God was quick and powerful. The apostle, armed with the two-edged sword, divided the soul, the joints, and the marrow, carried conviction to the heart. Felix trembled, adds our historian, Felix trembled! The fears of Felix are our second reflection.

What a surprizing scene, my brethren, is here presented to your view. The governor trembled, and the captive spoke without dismay. The captive made the governor tremble. The governor shuddered in the presence of the captive. It would not be surprizing, brethren, if we should make an impression on your hearts (and we shall do so, indeed, if our ministry is not, as usual, a sound of empty words); it would not be surprizing if we should make some impression on the hearts of our hearers. This sanctuary, these solemnities, these groans, this silence, these arguments, these efforts,—all aid our ministry, and unite to convince and persuade you. But here is an orator destitute of these extraneous aids: behold him without any ornament but the truth he preached. What do I say? that he was destitute of extraneous aids? See him in a situation quite the reverse,—a captive, loaded with irons, standing before his judge. Yet he made Felix tremble. Felix trembled! Whence proceeded this fear, and this confusion? Nothing is more worthy of your inquiry. Here we must stop for a moment: follow us while we trace this fear to its source. We shall consider the character of Felix under different views; as a heathen, imperfectly acquainted with a future judgment, and the life to come; as a prince, or governor, accustomed to see every one humble at his feet; as an avaricious magistrate, loaded with extortions and crimes; in short, as a voluptuous man, who has never restricted the gratification of his senses. These are so many reasons of Felix's fears.

First, we shall consider Felix as a heathen, imperfectly acquainted with a future judgment and the life to come: I say, imperfectly acquainted, and not as wholly ignorant, the heathens having the "work of the law written in their hearts" (Rom. ii., 15). The force of habit had corrupted nature, but had not effaced its laws. They acknowledged a judgment to come, but their notions were confused concerning its nature.

Such were the principles of Felix, or rather such were the imperfections of his principles, when he heard this discourse of St. Paul. You may infer his fears from his character. Figure to yourselves a man hearing for the first time the maxims of equity and righteousness inculcated in the gospel. Figure to yourselves a man who heard corrected the immorality of pagan theology; what was doubtful, illustrated; and what was right, enforced. See a man who knew of no other God but the incestuous Jupiter, the lascivious Venus, taught that he must appear before Him, in whose presence the seraphim veil their faces, and the heavens are not clean. Behold a man, whose notions were confused concerning the state of souls after death, apprized that God shall judge the world in righteousness. See a man who saw described the smoke, the fire, the chains of darkness, the outer darkness, the lake of fire and brimstone; and who saw them delineated by one animated by the Spirit of God. What consternation must have been excited by these terrific truths!

This we are incapable adequately of comprehending. We must surmount the insensibility acquired by custom. It is but too true that our hearts—instead of being imprest by these truths, in proportion to their discussion—become more obdurate. We hear them without alarm, having so frequently heard them before. But if, like Felix, we had been brought up in the darkness of paganism, and if another Paul had come and opened our eyes, and unveiled those sacred terrors, how exceedingly should we have feared! This was the case with Felix. He perceived the bandage which conceals the sight of futurity drop in a moment. He heard St. Paul, that herald of grace and ambassador to the Gentiles, he heard him reason on temperance and a judgment to come. His soul was amazed; his heart trembled; his knees smote one against another.

Amazing effects, my brethren, of conscience! Evident argument of the vanity of those gods whom idolatry adorns after it has given them form! Jupiter and Mercury, it is true, had their altars in the temples of the heathens; but the God of heaven and earth has His tribunal in the heart: and, while idolatry presents its incense to sacrilegious and incestuous deities, the God of heaven and earth reveals His terrors to the conscience, and there loudly condemns both incest and sacrilege.

Secondly, consider Felix as a prince; and you will find in this second office a second cause of his fear. When we perceive the great men of the earth devoid of every principle of religion, and even ridiculing those very truths which are the objects of our faith, we feel that faith to waver. They excite a certain suspicion in the mind that our sentiments are only prejudices, which have become rooted in man, brought up in the obscurity of humble life. Here is the apology of religion. The Caligulas, the Neros, those potentates of the universe, have trembled in their turn as well as the meanest of their subjects. This independence of mind, so conspicuous among libertines, is consequently an art,—not of disengaging themselves from prejudices, but of shutting their eyes against the light, and of extinguishing the purest sentiments of the heart. Felix, educated in a court fraught with the maxims of the great instantly ridicules the apostle's preaching. St. Paul, undismayed, attacks him, and finds a conscience concealed in his bosom: the very dignity of Felix is constrained to aid our apostle by adding weight to his ministry. He demolishes the edifice of Felix's pride. He shows that if a great nation was dependent on his pleasure, he himself was dependent on a Sovereign in whose presence the kings of the earth are as nothing. He proves that dignities are so very far from exempting men from the judgment of God that, for this very reason, their account becomes the more weighty, riches being a trust which Heaven has committed to the great: and "where much is given, much is required." He makes him feel this awful truth, that princes are responsible, not only for their own souls, but also for those of their subjects; their good or bad example influencing, for the most part, the people committed to their care.

See then Felix in one moment deprived of his tribunal. The judge became a party. He saw himself rich and in need of nothing; and yet he was "blind, and naked, and poor." He heard a voice from the God of the whole earth, saying unto him, "Thou profane and wicked prince, remove the diadem and take off the crown. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more" (Ezekiel xxi., 25-27). "Tho thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and tho thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord" (Oba 1:4). Neither the dignity of governor, nor the favor of Caesar, nor all the glory of empire shall deliver thee out of My hand.

Thirdly, I restrict myself, my brethren, as much as possible in order to execute without exceeding my limits the plan I have conceived; and proceed to consider Felix as an avaricious man: to find in this disposition a further cause of his fear. Felix was avaricious, and St. Paul instantly transported him into a world in which avarice shall receive its appropriate and most severe punishment. For you know that the grand test by which we shall be judged is charity. "I was hungry, and ye gave me meat"; and of all the constructions of charity covetousness is the most obstinate and insurmountable.

This unhappy propensity renders us insensible of our neighbor's necessities. It magnifies the estimate of our wants; it diminishes the wants of others. It persuades us that we have need of all, that others have need of nothing. Felix began to perceive the iniquity of this passion, and to feel that he was guilty of double idolatry: idolatry, in morality, idolatry in religion; idolatry in having offered incense to gods, who were not the makers of heaven and earth; idolatry in having offered incense to Mammon. For the Scriptures teach, and experience confirms, that "covetousness is idolatry." The covetous man is not a worshiper of the true God. Gold and silver are the divinities he adores. His heart is with his treasure. Here then is the portrait of Felix: a portrait drawn by St. Paul in the presence of Felix, and which reminded this prince of innumerable prohibitions, innumerable frauds, innumerable extortions; of the widow and the orphan he opprest. Here is the cause of Felix's fears. According to an expression of St. James, the "rust of his gold and silver began to witness against him, and to eat his flesh as with fire" (James v., 3).

Fourthly, consider Felix as a voluptuous man. Here is the final cause of his fear. Without repeating all we have said on the depravity of this passion, let one remark suffice, that, if the torments of hell are terrible at all, they must especially be so to the voluptuous. The voluptuous man never restricts his sensual gratification; his soul dies on the slightest approach of pain. What a terrific impression must not the thought of judgment make on such a character. Shall I, accustomed to indulgence and pleasure, become a prey to the worm that dieth not and fuel to the fire which is not quenched? Shall I, who avoid pain with so much caution, be condemned to eternal torments? Shall I have neither delicious meats nor voluptuous delights? This body, my idol, which I habituate to so much delicacy, shall it be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, whose smoke ascendeth up forever and ever?" And this effeminate habit I have of refining on pleasure, will it render me only the more sensible of my destruction and anguish?

Such are the traits of Felix's character; such are the causes of Felix's fear. Happy, if his fear had produced that "godly sorrow, and that repentance unto salvation not to be repented of." Happy if the fear of hell had induced him to avoid its torments. But, ah no! he feared, and yet persisted in the causes of his fear. He trembled, yet said to St. Paul, "Go thy way for this time." This is our last reflection.

How preposterous, my brethren, is the sinner! What absurdities does he cherish in his heart! For, in short, had the doctrines St. Paul preached to Felix been the productions of his brain:—had the thought of a future judgment been a chimera, whence proceeded the fears of Felix? Why was he so weak as to admit this panic of terror? If, on the contrary, Paul had truth and argument on his side, why did Felix send him away? Such are the contradictions of the sinner. He wishes; he revolts; he denies; he grants; he trembles; and says, "Go thy way for this time." Speak to him concerning the truths of religion, open hell to his view, and you will see him affected, devout, and appalled: follow him in life, and you will find that these truths have no influence whatever on his conduct.

But are we not mistaken concerning Felix? Did not the speech of St. Paul make a deeper impression upon him than we seem to allow? He sent the apostle away, it is true, but it was "for this time" only. And who can censure this delay? The infirmities of human nature require relaxation and repose. Felix could afterward recall him. "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will send for thee."

It pains me, I confess, my brethren, in entering on this head of my discourse, that I should exhibit to you in the person of Felix the portrait of whom? Of wicked men? Alas! of nearly the whole of this assembly; most of whom seem to us living in negligence and vice, running with the children of this world "to the same excess of riot." One would suppose that they had already made their choice, having embraced one or the other of these notions: either that religion is a fantom, or that, all things considered, it is better to endure the torments of hell than to be restricted to the practise of virtue. Oh no! that is not their notion. Ask the worse among them. Ask whether they have renounced their salvation. You will not find an individual who will say that he has renounced it. Ask them again whether they think it attainable by following this way of life. They will answer, No. Ask them afterward how they reconcile things so opposite as their life and their hopes. They will answer that they are resolved to reform, and by and by they will enter on the work. They will say, as Felix said to St. Paul, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Nothing is less wise than this delay. At a future period I will reform. But who has assured me that at a future period I shall have opportunities of conversion? Who has assured me that God will continue to call me, and that another Paul shall thunder in my ears?

I will reform at a future period. But who has told me that God at a future period will accompany His word with the powerful aids of grace? While Paul may plant and Apollos may water, is it not God who gives the increase? How then can I flatter myself that the Holy Spirit will continue to knock at the door of my heart after I shall have so frequently obstructed His admission?

I will reform in future. But who has told me that I shall ever desire to be converted? Do not habits become confirmed in proportion as they are indulged? And is not an inveterate evil very difficult to cure? If I can not bear the excision of a slight gangrene, how shall I sustain the operation when the wound is deep?

I will reform in future! But who has told me that I shall live to a future period? Does not death advance every moment with gigantic strides? Does he not assail the prince in his palace and the peasant in his cottage? Does he not send before him monitors and messengers: acute pains, which wholly absorb the soul; deliriums, which render reason of no avail; deadly stupors, which benumb the brightest and most piercing geniuses? And what is still more awful, does He not daily come without either warning or messenger? Does He not snatch away this man without allowing him time to be acquainted with the essentials of religion; and that man, without the restitution of riches ill acquired; and the other, before he is reconciled to his enemy?

Instead of saying "Go thy way for this time" we should say, Stay for this time. Stay, while the Holy Spirit is knocking at the door of my heart; stay, while my conscience is alarmed; stay, while I yet live; "while it is called to-day." The arguments confounded my conscience: no matter. "Thy hand is heavy upon me": no matter still. Cut, strike, consume; provided it procure my salvation.

But, however criminal this delay may be, we seem desirous to excuse it. "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." It was Felix's business then which induced him to put off the apostle. Unhappy business! Awful occupation! It seems an enviable situation, my brethren, to be placed at the head of a province; to speak in the language of majesty; to decide on the fortunes of a numerous people; and in all cases to be the ultimate judge. But those situations, so happy and so dazzling in appearance, are in the main dangerous to the conscience. Those innumerable concerns, this noise and bustle, entirely dissipate the soul. While so much engaged on earth, we can not be mindful of heaven. When we have no leisure we say to St. Paul, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

Happy he who, amid the tumult of the most active life, has hours consecrated to reflection, to the examination of his conscience, and to insure the "one thing needful." Or, rather, happy he who, in the repose of the middle classes of society,—places between indigence and affluence, far from the courts of the great, having neither poverty nor riches according to Agur's wish,—can in retirement and quietness see life sweetly glide away, and make salvation, if not the sole, yet his principal, concern.

Felix not only preferred his business to his salvation, but he mentions it with evasive disdain. "When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." "When I have a convenient season!" Might we not thence infer that the truths discust by St. Paul were not of serious importance? Might we not infer that the soul of Felix was created for the government of Judea; and that the grand doctrines of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come ought to serve at most but to pass away the time, or merely to engross one's leisure—"when I have a convenient season?" …

Yes, Christians, this is the only moment on which we can reckon. It is, perhaps, the only acceptable time. It is, perhaps, the last day of our visitation. Let us improve a period so precious. Let us no longer say by and by—at another time; but let us say to-day—this moment—even now. Let the pastor say: I have been insipid in my sermons, and remiss in my conduct; having been more solicitous, during the exercise of my ministry, to advance my family than to build up the Lord's house, I will preach hereafter with fervor and zeal. I will be vigilant, sober, rigorous, and disinterested. Let the miser say: I have riches ill acquired. I will purge my house of illicit wealth. I will overturn the altar of Mammon and erect another to the supreme Jehovah. Let the prodigal say: I will extinguish the unhappy fires by which I am consumed and kindle in my bosom the flame of divine love. Ah, unhappy passions, which war against my soul; sordid attachments; irregular propensities; emotions of concupiscence; law in the members,—I will know you no more. I will make with you an eternal divorce, I will from this moment open my heart to the eternal Wisdom, who condescends to ask it.

If we are in this happy disposition, if we thus become regenerate, we shall enjoy from this moment foretastes of the glory which God has prepared. From this moment the truths of religion, so far from casting discouragement and terror on the soul, shall heighten its consolation and joy; from this moment heaven shall open to this audience, paradise shall descend into your hearts, and the Holy Spirit shall come and dwell there. He will bring that peace, and those joys, which pass all understanding.

**÷**03-03 EDWARDS

SPIRITUAL LIGHT

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Jonathan Edwards, the New England divine and metaphysician, was born at East Windsor, Connecticut, in 1703. He was graduated early from Yale College, where he had given much attention to philosophy, became tutor of his college, and at nineteen began to preach. His voice and manner did not lend themselves readily to pulpit oratory, but his clear, logical, and intense presentation of the truth produced a profound and permanent effect upon his hearers. He wrote what were considered the most important philosophical treatises of his time. His place among the thinkers of the world is high and indisputable. He had many gifts of intellect and imagination, and a uniform gravity that left no doubt as to his deeply earnest nature. He was one of the greatest preachers of his age. His most widely quoted sermon, "Sinners in the Eyes of an Angry God," while powerful and impressive, does not do him justice. It is believed the sermon presented here discloses to greater advantage the tender and saintly side of his character. He died in 1758.

EDWARDS

1703-1758

SPIRITUAL LIGHT

*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*—Matthew 16 17.

Christ says these words to Peter upon occasion of his professing his faith in Him as the Son of God. Our Lord was inquiring of His disciples, who men said He was; not that He needed to be informed, but only to introduce and give occasion to what follows. They answer, that some said He was John the Baptist, and some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. When they had thus given an account of who others said He was, Christ asks them, who they said He was? Simon Peter, whom we find always zealous and forward, was the first to answer: he readily replied to the question, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.

Upon this occasion Christ says as He does to him, and of him in the text: in which we may observe,

1. That Peter is pronounced blest on this account. "Blessed art Thou."—"Thou art a happy man, that thou art not ignorant of this, that I am Christ, the Son of the living God. Thou art distinguishingly happy. Others are blinded, and have dark and deluded apprehensions, as you have now given an account, some thinking that I am Elias, and some that I am Jeremias, and some one thing and some another; but none of them thinking right, all of them misled. Happy art thou, that art so distinguished as to know the truth in this matter."

2. The evidence of this his happiness declared; viz., that God, and He only, had revealed it to him. This is an evidence of his being blest.

First. As it shows how peculiarly favored he was of God above others: "How highly favored art thou, that others that are wise and great men, the scribes, Pharisees, and rulers, and the nation in general, are left in darkness, to follow their own misguided apprehensions; and that thou shouldst be singled out, as it were, by name, that my heavenly Father should thus set His love on thee, Simon Barjona. This argues thee blest, that thou shouldst thus be the object of God's distinguishing love."

Secondly. It evidences his blessedness also, as it intimates that this knowledge is above any that flesh and blood can reveal. "This is such knowledge as my Father which is in heaven only can give: it is too high and excellent to be communicated by such means as other knowledge is. Thou art blest, that thou knowest that which God alone can teach thee."

The original of this knowledge is here declared, both negatively and positively. Positively, as God is here declared the author of it. Negatively, as it is declared, that flesh and blood had not revealed it. God is the author of all knowledge and understanding whatsoever. He is the author of the knowledge that is obtained by human learning: He is the author of all moral prudence, and of the knowledge and skill that men have in their secular business. Thus it is said of all in Israel that were wise-hearted, and skilful in embroidering, that God had filled them with the spirit of wisdom. (Exod. xxviii., 3.)

God is the author of such knowledge; but yet not so but that flesh and blood reveals it. Mortal men are capable of imparting that knowledge of human arts and sciences, and skill in temporal affairs. God is the author of such knowledge by those means: flesh and blood is made use of by God as the mediate or second cause of it; he conveys it by the power and influence of natural means. But this spiritual knowledge, spoken of in the text, is that God is the author of, and none else: he reveals it, and flesh and blood reveals it not. He imparts this knowledge immediately, not making use of any intermediate natural causes, as he does in other knowledge. What has passed in the preceding discourse naturally occasioned Christ to observe this; because the disciples had been telling how others did not know Him, but were generally mistaken about Him, and divided and confounded in their opinions of Him: but Peter had declared his assured faith, that He was the Son of God. Now it was natural to observe, how it was not flesh and blood that had revealed it to him, but God: for if this knowledge were dependent on natural causes or means, how came it to pass that they, a company of poor fishermen, illiterate men, and persons of low education, attained to the knowledge of the truth; while the scribes and Pharisees, men of vastly higher advantages and greater knowledge and sagacity in other matters, remained in ignorance? This could be owing only to the gracious distinguishing influence and revelation of the Spirit of God. Hence, what I would make the subject of my present discourse from these words, is this doctrine. That there is such a thing as a spiritual and divine light, immediately imparted to the soul by God, of a different nature from any that is obtained by natural means.

1. Those convictions that natural men may have of their sin and misery is not this spiritual and divine light. Men in a natural condition may have convictions of the guilt that lies upon them, and of the anger of God, and their danger of divine vengeance. Such convictions are from light or sensibleness of truth. That some sinners have a greater conviction of their guilt and misery than others, is because some have more light, or more of an apprehension of truth than others. And this light and conviction may be from the Spirit of God; the Spirit convinces men of sin: but yet nature is much more concerned in it than in the communication of that spiritual and divine light that is spoken of in the doctrine; it is from the Spirit of God only as assisting natural principles, and not as infusing any new principles. Common grace differs from special, in that it influences only by assisting of nature; and not by imparting grace, or bestowing anything above nature. The light that is obtained is wholly natural, or of no superior kind to what mere nature attains to, tho more of that kind be obtained than would be obtained if men were left wholly to themselves: or, in other words, common grace only assists the faculties of the soul to do that more fully which they do by nature, as natural conscience or reason will by mere nature, make a man sensible of guilt, and will accuse and condemn him when he has done amiss. Conscience is a principle natural to men; and the work that it doth naturally, or of itself, is to give an apprehension of right and wrong, and to suggest to the mind the relation that there is between right and wrong and a retribution. The Spirit of God, in those convictions which unregenerate men sometimes have, assist conscience to do this work in a further degree than it would do if they were left to themselves: He helps it against those things that tend to stupify it, and obstruct its exercise. But in the renewing and sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, those things are wrought in the soul that are above nature, and of which there is nothing of the like kind in the soul by nature; and they are caused to exist in the soul habitually, and according to such a stated constitution or law that lays such a foundation of exercises in a continued course, as is called a principal of nature. Not only are remaining principles assisted to do their work more freely and fully, but those principles are restored that were utterly destroyed by the fall; and the mind thenceforward habitually exerts those acts that the dominion of sin has made it as wholly destitute of, as a dead body is of vital acts.

The Spirit of God acts in a very different manner in the one case, from what He doth in the other. He may indeed act upon the mind of a natural man, but He acts in the mind of a saint as an indwelling vital principle. He acts upon the mind of an unregenerate person as an extrinsic, occasional agent; for in acting upon them, He doth not unite Himself to them; for notwithstanding all His influences that they may be the subjects of, they are still sensual, having not the Spirit (Jud 1:19). But He unites Himself with the mind of a saint, takes him for his temple, actuates and influences him as a new supernatural principle of life and action. There is this difference, that the Spirit of God, in acting in the soul of a godly man, exerts and communicates Himself there in his own proper nature. Holiness is the proper nature of the spirit of God. The Holy Spirit operates in the minds of the godly, by uniting Himself to them, and living in them, and exerting His own nature in the exercise of their faculties. The Spirit of God may act upon a creature, and yet not in acting communicate Himself. The Spirit of God may act upon inanimate creatures; as, the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters, in the beginning of the creation; so the Spirit of God may act upon the minds of men many ways, and communicate Himself no more than when He acts upon an inanimate creature. For instance, He may excite thoughts in them, may assist their natural reason and understanding, or may assist other natural principles, and this without any union with the soul, but may act, as it were, as upon an external object. But as He acts in His holy influences and spiritual operations, He acts in a way of peculiar communication of Himself; so that the subject is thence denominated spiritual.

This spiritual and divine light does not consist in any impression made upon the imagination. It is no impression upon the mind, as tho one saw anything with the bodily eyes: it is no imagination or idea of an outward light or glory or any beauty of form or countenance, or a visible luster or brightness of any object. The imagination may be strongly imprest with such things; but this is not spiritual light. Indeed, when the mind has a lively discovery of spiritual things, and is greatly affected by the power of divine light, it may, and probably very commonly doth, much affect the imagination; so that impressions of an outward beauty or brightness may accompany those spiritual discoveries. But spiritual light is not that impression upon the imagination, but an exceeding different thing from it. Natural men may have lively impressions on their imaginations; and we can not determine but the devil, who transforms himself into an angel of light, may cause imaginations of an outward beauty, or visible glory, and of sounds and speeches, and other such things; but these are things of a vastly inferior nature to spiritual light.

This spiritual light is not the suggesting of any new truths or propositions not contained in the Word of God. This suggesting of new truths or doctrines to the mind, independent of any antecedent revelation of those propositions, either in word or writing, is inspiration; such as the prophets and apostles had, and such as some enthusiasts pretend to. But this spiritual light that I am speaking of is quite a different thing from inspiration; it reveals no new doctrine, it suggests no new proposition to the mind, it teaches no new thing of God, or Christ, or another world, not taught in the Bible, but only gives a due apprehension of those things that are taught in the Word of God.

It is not every affecting view that men have of the things of religion that is this spiritual and divine light. Men by mere principles of nature are capable of being affected with things that have a special relation to religion as well as other things. A person by mere nature, for instance, may be liable to be affected with the story of Jesus Christ, and the sufferings He underwent, as well as by any other tragical story; he may be the more affected with it from the interest he conceives mankind to have in it; yea, he may be affected with it without believing it; as well as a man may be affected with what he reads in a romance, or sees acted in a stage play. He may be affected with a lively and eloquent description of many pleasant things that attend the state of the blest in heaven, as well as his imagination be entertained by a romantic description of the pleasantness of fairy-land, or the like. And that common-belief of the truth of the things of religion, that persons may have from education or otherwise, may help forward their affection. We read in Scripture of many that were greatly affected with things of a religious nature, who yet are there presented as wholly graceless, and many of them very ill men. A person therefore may have affecting views of religion, and yet be very destitute of spiritual light. Flesh and blood may be the author of this; one man may give another an affecting view of divine things but common assistance: but God alone can give a spiritual discovery of them.

But I proceed to show positively what this spiritual and divine light is.

And it may be thus described: a true sense of the divine excellency of the things revealed in the Word of God, and a conviction of the truth and reality of them thence arising.

This spiritual light primarily consists in the former of these—viz., a real sense and apprehension of the divine excellency of things revealed in the Word of God. A spiritual and saving conviction of the truth and reality of these things arises from such a sight of their divine excellency and glory; so that this conviction of their truth is an effect and natural consequence of this sight of their divine glory. There is therefore in this spiritual light,

1. A true sense of the divine and superlative excellency of the things of religion; a real sense of the excellency of God and Jesus Christ, and of the work of redemption, and the ways and works of God revealed in the gospel. There is a divine and superlative glory in these things; an excellency that is of a vastly higher kind, and more sublime nature than in other things; a glory greatly distinguishing them from all that is earthly and temporal. He that is spiritually enlightened truly apprehends and sees it, or has a sense of it. He does not merely rationally believe that God is glorious, but he has a sense of the gloriousness of God in his heart. There is not only a rational belief that is holy, and that holiness is a good thing, but there is a sense of the loveliness of God's holiness. There is not only a speculative judging that God is gracious, but a sense how amiable God is upon that account, or a sense of the beauty of this divine attribute.

There is a twofold understanding or knowledge of good that God has made the mind of man capable of. The first, that which is merely speculative and notional; as when a person only speculatively judges that anything is, which, by the agreement of mankind, is called good or excellent, viz., that which is most to general advantage, and between which and a reward there is a suitableness, and the like. And the other is, that which consists in the sense of the heart: as when there is a sense of the beauty, amiableness, or sweetness of a thing; so that the heart is sensible of pleasure and delight in the presence of the idea of it. In the former is exercised merely the speculative faculty, or the understanding, strictly so called, or as spoken of in distinction from the will or disposition of the soul. In the latter, the will, or inclination, or heart is mainly concerned.

Thus there is a difference between having an opinion that God is holy and gracious, and having a sense of the loveliness and beauty of that holiness and grace. There is a difference between having a rational judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness. A man may have the former that knows not how honey tastes; but a man can not have the latter unless he has an idea of the taste of honey in his mind. So there is a difference between believing that a person is beautiful and having a sense of his beauty. The former may be obtained by hearsay, but the latter only by seeing the countenance. There is a wide difference between mere speculative rational judging anything to be excellent, and having a sense of its sweetness and beauty. The former rests only in the head, speculation only is concerned in it; but the heart is concerned in the latter. When the heart is sensible of the beauty and amiableness of a thing, it necessarily feels pleasure in the apprehension. It is implied in a person's being heartily sensible of the loveliness of a thing, that the idea of it is sweet and pleasant to his soul; which is a far different thing from having a rational opinion that it is excellent.

2. There arises from this sense of divine excellency of things contained in the word of God a conviction of the truth and reality of them; and that either directly or indirectly.

First, indirectly, and that two ways.

(1) As the prejudices that are in the heart, against the truth of divine things, are hereby removed; so that the mind becomes susceptive of the due force of rational arguments for their truth. The mind of man is naturally full of prejudices against the truth of divine things: it is full of enmity against the doctrines of the gospel; which is a disadvantage to those arguments that prove their truth, and causes them to lose their force upon the mind. But when a person has discovered to him the divine excellency of Christian doctrines, this destroys the enmity, removes those prejudices, and sanctifies the reason, and causes it to lie open to the force of arguments for their truth.

Hence was the different effect that Christ's miracles had to convince the disciples from what they had to convince the scribes and Pharisees. Not that they had a stronger reason, or had their reason more improved; but their reason was sanctified, and those blinding prejudices, that the scribes and Pharisees were under, were removed by the sense they had of the excellency of Christ and His doctrine.

(2) It not only removes the hindrances of reason, but positively helps reason. It makes even the speculative notions the more lively. It engages the attention of the mind, with the more fixedness and intenseness to that kind of objects; which causes it to have a clearer view of them, and enables it more clearly to see their mutual relations, and occasions it to take more notice of them. The ideas themselves that otherwise are dim and obscure, are by this means imprest with the greater strength, and have a light cast upon them, so that the mind can better judge of them; as he that beholds the objects on the face of the earth, when the light of the sun is cast upon them, is under greater advantage to discern them in their true forms and mutual relations, than he that sees them in a dim starlight or twilight.

The mind having a sensibleness of the excellency of divine objects, dwells upon them with delight; and the powers of the soul are more awakened and enlivened to employ themselves in the contemplation of them, and exert themselves more fully and much more to the purpose. The beauty and sweetness of the objects draw on the faculties, and draw forth their exercises; so that reason itself is under far greater advantages for its proper and free exercises, and to attain its proper end, free of darkness and delusion.

Secondly. A true sense of the divine excellency of these things is so superlative as more directly and immediately to convince of the truth of them; and that because the excellency of these things is so superlative. There is a beauty in them that is so divine and godlike, that it greatly and evidently distinguishes them from things merely human, or that men are the inventors and authors of; a glory that is so high and great, that when clearly seen, it commands assent to their divinity and reality. When there is an actual and lively discovery of this beauty and excellency, it will not allow of any such thought as that it is a human work, or the fruit of men's invention. This evidence that they who are spiritually enlightened have of the truth of the things of religion, is a kind of intuitive and immediate evidence. They believe the doctrines of God's word to be divine, because they see divinity in them; *i.e.*, they see a divine, and transcendent, and most evidently distinguishing glory in them; such a glory as, if clearly seen, does not leave room to doubt of their being of God, and not of men.

Such a conviction of the truth of religion as this, arising, these ways, from a sense of the divine excellency of them, is that true spiritual conviction that there is in saving faith. And this original of it, is that by which it is most essentially distinguished from that common assent, which unregenerated men are capable of.

I proceed now to show how this light is immediately given by God, and not obtained by natural means.

1. It is not intended that the natural faculties are not made use of in it. The natural faculties are the subject of this light: and they are the subject in such a manner that they are not merely passive, but active in it; the acts and exercises of men's understanding are concerned and made use of in it. God, in letting in this light into the soul, deals with man according to his nature, or as a rational creature; and makes use of his human faculties. But yet this light is not the less immediately from God for that; tho the faculties are made use of, it is as the subject and not as the cause; and that acting of the faculties in it is not the cause, but is either implied in the thing itself (in the light that is imparted) or is the consequence of it; as the use that we make of our eyes in beholding various objects, when the sun arises, is not the cause of the light that discovers those objects to us.

2. It is not intended that outward means have no concern in this affair. As I have observed already, it is not in this affair, as it is in inspiration, where new truths are suggested: for here is by this light only given a due apprehension of the same truths that are revealed in the word of God; and therefore it is not given without the word. The gospel is made use of in this affair: this light is the light of the glorious gospel of Christ. (II Cor. iv., 4.) The gospel is as a glass, by which this light is conveyed to us (I Cor. xiii., 12). Now we see through a glass.

3. When it is said that this light is given immediately by God, and not obtained by natural means, hereby is intended that it is given by God without making use of any means that operate by their own power, or a natural force. God makes use of means; but it is not as mediate causes to produce this effect. There are not truly any second causes of it; but it is produced by God immediately. The Word of God is no proper cause of this effect: it does not operate by any natural force in it. The Word of God is only made use of to convey to the mind the subject matter of this saving instruction, and this indeed it doth convey to us by natural force or influence. It conveys to our minds these and those doctrines; it is the cause of the notion of them in our heads, but not of the sense of the divine excellency of them in our hearts. Indeed, a person can not have spiritual light without the Word. But that does not argue that the Word properly causes the light The mind can not see the excellency of any doctrine unless that doctrine be first in the mind; but the seeing of the excellency of the doctrine may be immediately from the Spirit of God; tho the conveying of the doctrine or proposition itself may be by the Word. So that the notions that are the subject-matter of this light are conveyed to the mind by the Word of God; but that due sense of the heart, wherein this light formally consists, is immediately by the Spirit of God. As for instance, that notion that there is a Christ, and that Christ is holy and gracious, is conveyed to the mind by the Word of God; but the sense of the excellency of Christ by reason of that holiness and grace, is nevertheless immediately the work of the Holy Spirit.

This is the most excellent and divine wisdom that any creature is capable of. It is more excellent than any human learning; it is far more excellent than all the knowledge of the greatest philosophers or statesmen. Yea, the least glimpse of the glory of God in the face of Christ doth more exalt and ennoble the soul than all the knowledge of those that have the greatest speculative understanding in divinity without grace. This knowledge has the most noble object that is or can be, viz., the divine glory or excellency of God and Christ. The knowledge of these objects is that wherein consists the most excellent knowledge of the angels, yea, of God himself.

This knowledge is that which is above all others sweet and joyful. Men have a great deal of pleasure in human knowledge, in studies of natural things; but this is nothing to that joy which arises from this divine light shining into the soul. This light gives a view of those that are immensely the most exquisitely beautiful, and capable of delighting the eye of the understanding. This spiritual light is the dawning of the light of glory in the heart. There is nothing so powerful as this to support persons in affliction, and to give the mind peace and brightness in this stormy and dark world.

This light is such as effectually influences the inclination, and changes the nature of the soul. It assimilates the human nature to the divine nature, and changes the soul into an image of the same glory that is beheld (II Cor. iii., 18), "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This knowledge will wean from the world, and raise the inclination to heavenly things. It will turn the heart to God as the fountain of good, and to choose him for the only portion. This light, and this only, will bring the soul to a saving close with Christ. It conforms the heart to the gospel, mortifies its enmity and opposition against the schemes of salvation therein revealed: it causes the heart to embrace the joyful tidings, and entirely to adhere to, and acquiesce in the revelation of Christ as our Savior: it causes the whole soul to accord and symphonize with it, admitting it with entire credit and respect; cleaving to it with full inclination and affection; and it effectually disposes the soul to give up itself entirely to Christ.

This light, and this only, has its fruit in a universal holiness of life. No merely notional or speculative understanding of the doctrines of religion will ever bring us to this. But this light, as it reaches the bottom of the heart, and changes the nature, so it will effectually dispose to a universal obedience. It shows God's worthiness to be obeyed and served. It draws forth the heart in a sincere love to God, which is the only principle of a true, gracious, and universal obedience; and it convinces of the reality of those glorious rewards that God has promised to them that obey him.

**÷**03-04 WESLEY

GOD'S LOVE TO FALLEN MAN

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Wesley was born at Epworth rectory in Lincolnshire, England, in 1703. He was educated at Charterhouse school and in 1720 entered Christ Church College, Oxford, where he graduated in 1724. He was noted for his classical taste as well as for his religious fervor, and on being ordained deacon by Bishop Potter, of Oxford, he became his father's curate in 1727. Being recalled to Oxford to fulfil his duties as fellow of Lincoln he became the head of the Oxford "Methodists," as they were called. He had the characteristics of a great general, being systematic in his work and a lover of discipline, and established Methodism in London by his sermons at the Foundery. His speaking style suggested power in repose. His voice was clear and resonant, his countenance kindly, and his tone extremely moderate. His sermons wore carefully written, altho not read in the pulpit. They moved others because he was himself moved. At an advanced age he preached several times a day, and traveled many miles on horseback. At seventy years of age he had published thirty octavo volumes. He composed hymns on horseback, and studied French and mathematics in spare hours, and was never a moment idle until his death, in 1791.

WESLEY

1703—1791

GOD'S LOVE TO FALLEN MAN

*Not as the transgression, so is the free gift*.—Rom 5:15.

How exceedingly common, and how bitter is the outcry against our first parent, for the mischief which he not only brought upon himself, but entailed upon his latest posterity! It was by his wilful rebellion against God "that sin entered into the world." "By one man's disobedience," as the apostle observes, the many, as many as were then in the loins of their forefathers, were made, or constituted sinners: not only deprived of the favor of God, but also of His image; of all virtue, righteousness, and true holiness, and sunk partly into the image of the devil, in pride, malice, and all other diabolical tempers; partly into the image of the brute, being fallen under the dominion of brutal passions and groveling appetites. Hence also death entered into the world, with all his forerunners and attendants; pain, sickness, and a whole train of uneasy as well as unholy passions and tempers.

"For all this we may thank Adam," has been echoed down from generation to generation. The self-same charge has been repeated in every age and every nation where the oracles of God are known, in which alone this grand and important event has been discovered to the children of men. Has not your heart, and probably your lips too, joined in the general charge? How few are there of those who believe the Scriptural relation of the Fall of Man, and have not entertained the same thought concerning our first parent? severely condemning him, that, through wilful disobedience to the sole command of his Creator,

Brought death into the world and all our wo.

Nay, it were well if the charge rested here: but it is certain it does not. It can not be denied that it frequently glances from Adam to his Creator. Have not thousands, even of those that are called Christians, taken the liberty to call His mercy, if not His justice also, into question, on this very account? Some indeed have done this a little more modestly, in an oblique and indirect manner: but others have thrown aside the mask, and asked, "Did not God foresee that Adam would abuse his liberty? And did He not know the baneful consequences which this must naturally have on all his posterity? And why then did He permit that disobedience? Was it not easy for the Almighty to have prevented it?" He certainly did foresee the whole. This can not be denied. "For known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." And it was undoubtedly in His Power to prevent it; for He hath all power both in heaven and earth. But it was known to Him at the same time, that it was best upon the whole not to prevent it. He knew that, "not as the transgression, so is the free gift"; that the evil resulting from the former was not as the good resulting from the latter, not worthy to be compared with it. He saw that to permit the fall of the first man was far best for mankind in general; that abundantly more good than evil would accrue to the posterity of Adam by his fall; that if "sin abounded" thereby over all the earth, yet grace "would much more abound"; yea, and that to every individual of the human race, unless it was his own choice.

It is exceedingly strange that hardly anything has been written, or at least published, on this subject: nay, that it has been so little weighed or understood by the generality of Christians: especially considering that it is not a matter of mere curiosity, but a truth of the deepest importance; it being impossible, on any other principle,

To assert a gracious Providence,  
And justify the ways of God with men:

and considering withal, how plain this important truth is, to all sensible and candid inquirers. May the Lover of men open the eyes of our understanding, to perceive clearly that by the fall of Adam mankind in general have gained a capacity,

First, of being more holy and happy on earth, and,

Secondly, of being more happy in heaven than otherwise they could have been.

And, first, mankind in general have gained by the fall of Adam a capacity of attaining more holiness and happiness on earth than it would have been possible for them to attain if Adam had not fallen. For if Adam had not fallen, Christ had not died. Nothing can be more clear than this: nothing more undeniable: the more thoroughly we consider the point, the more deeply shall we be convinced of it. Unless all the partakers of human nature had received that deadly wound in Adam it would not have been needful for the Son of God to take our nature upon Him. Do you not see that this was the very ground of His coming into the world? "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And thus death passed upon all" through him, "in whom all men sinned." (Rom. v., 12.) Was it not to remedy this very thing that "the Word was made flesh"? that "as in Adam all died, so in Christ all might be made alive"? Unless, then, many had been made sinners by the disobedience of one, by the obedience of one many would not have been made righteous (ver. 18); so there would have been no room for that amazing display of the Son of God's love to mankind. There would have been no occasion for His "being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." It would not then have been said, to the astonishment of all the hosts of heaven, "God so loved the world," yea, the ungodly world, which had no thought or desire of returning to Him, "that he gave his Son" out of His bosom, His only begotten Son, to the end that "whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Neither could we then have said, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself"; or that He "made him to be sin," that is, a sin-offering "for us, who know no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him." There would have been no such occasion for such "an advocate with the Father" as "Jesus Christ the Righteous"; neither for His appearing "at the right hand of God, to make intercession for us."

What is the necessary consequence of this? It is this: there could then have been no such thing as faith in God, thus loving the world, giving His only Son for us men, and for our salvation. There could have been no such thing as faith in the Son of God, as loving us and giving Himself for us. There could have been no faith in the Spirit of God, as renewing the image of God in our hearts, as raising us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. Indeed, the whole privilege of justification by faith could have no existence; there could have been no redemption in the blood of Christ: neither could Christ have been "made of God unto us," "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, or redemption."

And the same grand blank which was in our faith, must likewise have been in our love. We might have loved the Author of our being, the Father of angels and men, as our Creator and Preserver: we might have said, "O Lord our Governor, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!" But we could not have loved Him under the nearest and dearest relation, as delivering up His Son for us all. We might have loved the Son of God, as being the "brightness of his Father's glory," the express image of His person (altho this ground seems to belong rather to the inhabitants of heaven than earth). But we could not have loved Him as "bearing our sins in his own body on the tree," and "by that one oblation of himself once offered, making a full oblation, sacrifice, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." We would not have been "made conformable to his death," nor have known "the power of his resurrection." We could not have loved the Holy Ghost as revealing to us the Father and the Son, as opening the eyes of our understanding, bringing us out of darkness into His marvelous light, renewing the image of God in our soul, and sealing us unto the day of redemption. So that, in truth, what is now "in the sight of God, even the Father," not of fallible men "pure religion and undefiled," would then, have had no being: inasmuch as it wholly depends on those grand principles, "By grace ye are saved through faith"; and "Jesus Christ is of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

We see then what unspeakable advantage we derive from the fall of our first parent, with regard to faith: faith both in God the Father, who spared not His own Son, His only Son, but wounded Him for our transgressions and bruised Him for our iniquities; and in God the Son, who poured out His soul for us transgressors, and washed us in His own blood. We see what advantage we derive therefrom with regard to the love of God, both of God the Father and God the Son. The chief ground of this love, as long as we remain in the body, is plainly declared by the apostle, "We love him, because he first loved us." But the greatest instance of His love had never been given if Adam had not fallen.

And as our faith, both in God the Father and the Son, receives an unspeakable increase, if not its very being, from this grand event, as does also our love both of the Father and the Son: so does the love of our neighbor also, our benevolence to all mankind: which can not but increase in the same proportion with our faith and love of God. For who does not apprehend the force of that inference drawn by the loving apostle, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." If God so loved us—observe, the stress of the argument lies on this very point: so loved us! as to deliver up His only Son to die a curst death for our salvation. "Beloved, what manner of love is this," wherewith God hath loved us? So as to give His only Son! In glory equal with the Father: in majesty coeternal! What manner of love is this wherewith the only begotten Son of God hath loved us, as to empty Himself, as far as possible, of His eternal Godhead; as to divest Himself of that glory, which He had with the Father before the world began; as to take upon Him "the form of a servant, being found in fashion as a man"! And then to humble Himself still further, "being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"! If God so loved us, how ought we to love one another? But this motive to brotherly love had been totally wanting if Adam had not fallen. Consequently we could not then have loved one another in so high a degree as we may now. Nor could there have been that height and depth in the command of our blest Lord. "As I have loved you, so love one another."

Such gainers may we be by Adam's fall, with regard both to the love of God and of our neighbor. But there is another grand point, which, tho little adverted to, deserves our deepest consideration. By that one act of our first parent, not only "sin entered into the world," but pain also, and was alike entailed on his whole posterity. And herein appeared, not only the justice, but the unspeakable goodness of God. For how much good does He continually bring out of this evil! How much holiness and happiness out of pain!

How innumerable are the benefits which God conveys to the children of men through the channel of sufferings! so that it might well be said, "What are termed afflictions in the language of men, are in the language of God styled blessings." Indeed, had there been no suffering in the world, a considerable part of religion, yea, and in some respects, the most excellent part, could have no place therein: since the very existence of it depends on our suffering: so that had there been no pain it could have had no being. Upon this foundation, even our suffering, it is evident all our passive graces are built; yea, the noblest of all Christian graces, love enduring all things. Here is the ground for resignation to God, enabling us to say from the heart, and in every trying hour, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" And what a glorious spectacle is this? Did it not constrain even a heathen to cry out, "*Ecce spectaculum Deo dignum!* See a sight worthy of God: a good man struggling with adversity, and superior to it." Here is the ground for confidence in God, both with regard to what we feel, and with regard to what we should fear, were it not that our soul is calmly stayed on him. What room could there be for trust in God if there was no such thing as pain or danger? Who might not say then, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" It is by sufferings that our faith is tried, and, therefore, made more acceptable to God. It is in the day of trouble that we have occasion to say, "Tho he slay me, yet will I trust in him." And this is well pleasing to God, that we should own Him in the face of danger; in defiance of sorrow, sickness, pain, or death.

Again: Had there been neither natural nor moral evil in the world, what must have become of patience, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering? It is manifest they could have had no being: seeing all these have evil for their object. If, therefore, evil had never entered into the world, neither could these have had any place in it. For who could have returned good for evil, had there been no evil-doer in the universe? How had it been possible, on that supposition, to overcome evil with good? Will you say, "But all these graces might have been divinely infused into the hearts of men?" Undoubtedly they might: but if they had, there would have been no use or exercise for them. Whereas in the present state of things we can never long want occasion to exercise them. And the more they are exercised, the more all our graces are strengthened and increased. And in the same proportion as our resignation, our confidence in God, our patience and fortitude, our meekness, gentleness, and long-suffering, together with our faith and love of God and man increase, must our happiness increase, even in the present world.

Yet again: As God's permission of Adam's fall gave all his posterity a thousand opportunities of suffering, and thereby of exercising all those passive graces which increase both their holiness and happiness, so it gives them opportunities of doing good in numberless instances, of exercising themselves in various good works, which otherwise could have had no being. And what exertions of benevolence, of compassion, of godlike mercy, had then been totally prevented! Who could then have said to the lover of men,

Thy mind throughout my life be shown,  
While listening to the wretches' cry,  
The widow's or the orphan's groan;  
On mercy's wings I swiftly fly  
The poor and needy to relieve;  
Myself, my all, for them to give?

It is the just observation of a benevolent man,

—All worldly joys are less,  
Than that one joy of doing kindnesses.

Surely in keeping this commandment, if no other, there is great reward. "As we have time, let us do good unto all men;" good of every kind and in every degree. Accordingly the more good we do (other circumstances being equal), the happier we shall be. The more we deal our bread to the hungry, and cover the naked with garments; the more we relieve the stranger, and visit them that are sick or in prison; the more kind offices we do to those that groan under the various evils of human life; the more comfort we receive even in the present world; the greater the recompense we have in our own bosom.

To sum up what has been said under this head: As the more holy we are upon earth, the more happy we must be (seeing there is an inseparable connection between holiness and happiness); as the more good we do to others, the more of present reward rebounds into our own bosom: even as our sufferings for God lead us to rejoice in Him "with joy unspeakable and full of glory"; therefore, the fall of Adam, first, by giving us an opportunity of being far more holy; secondly, by giving us the occasions of doing innumerable good works, which otherwise could not have been done; and, thirdly, by putting it into our power to suffer for God, whereby "the spirit of glory and of God rests upon us": may be of such advantage to the children of men, even in the present life, as they will not thoroughly comprehend till they attain life everlasting.

It is then we shall be enabled fully to comprehend not only the advantages which accrue at the present time to the sons of men by the fall of their first parent, but the infinitely greater advantages which they may reap from it in eternity. In order to form some conception of this, we may remember the observation of the apostle, "As one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." The most glorious stars will undoubtedly be those who are the most holy; who bear most of that image of God wherein they were created. The next in glory to these will be those who have been most abundant in good works: and next to them, those that have suffered most, according to the will of God. But what advantages in every one of these respects will the children of God receive in heaven, by God's permitting the introduction of pain upon earth, in consequence of sin? By occasion of this they attained many holy tempers, which otherwise could have had no being: resignation to God, confidence in him in times of trouble and danger, patience, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, and the whole train of passive virtues. And on account of this superior holiness they will then enjoy superior happiness. Again: every one will then "receive his own reward, according to his own labor." Every individual will be "rewarded according to his work." But the Fall gave rise to innumerable good works, which could otherwise never have existed, such as ministering to the necessities of the saints, yea, relieving the distrest in every kind. And hereby innumerable stars will be added to their eternal crown. Yet again: there will be an abundant reward in heaven, for suffering as well as for doing, the will of God: "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Therefore that event, which occasioned the entrance of suffering into the world, has thereby occasioned to all the children of God, an increase of glory to all eternity. For altho the sufferings themselves will be at an end: altho

The pain of life shall then be o'er,  
The anguish and distracting care;  
The sighing grief shall weep no more;  
And sin shall never enter there:—

yet the joys occasioned thereby shall never end, but flow at God's right hand for evermore.

There is one advantage more that we reap from Adam's fall, which is not unworthy our attention. Unless in Adam all had died, being in the loins of their first parent, every descendant of Adam, every child of man, must have personally answered for himself to God: it seems to be a necessary consequence of this, that if he had once fallen, once violated any command of God, there would have been no possibility of his rising again; there was no help, but he must have perished without remedy. For that covenant knew not to show mercy: the word was, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Now who would not rather be on the footing he is now; under a covenant of mercy? Who would wish to hazard a whole eternity upon one stake? Is it not infinitely more desirable, to be in a state wherein, tho encompassed with infirmities, yet we do not run such a desperate risk, but if we fall, we may rise again? Wherein we may say,

My trespass is grown up to heaven!  
But, far above the skies,  
In Christ abundantly forgiven,  
I see Thy mercies rise!

In Christ! Let me entreat every serious person, once more to fix his attention here. All that has been said, all that can be said, on these subjects, centers in this point. The fall of Adam produced the death of Christ! Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! Yea,

Let earth and heaven agree,  
Angels and men be joined,  
To celebrate with me  
The Saviour of mankind;  
To adore the all-atoning Lamb,  
And bless the sound of Jesus' name!

If God had prevented the fall of man, the Word had never been made flesh: nor had we ever "seen his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." Those mysteries had never been displayed, "which the very angels desire to look into." Methinks this consideration swallows up all the rest, and should never be out of our thoughts. Unless "by one man, judgment had come upon all men to condemnation," neither angels nor men could ever have known "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

See then, upon the whole, how little reason we have to repine at the fall of our first parent, since herefrom we may derive such unspeakable advantages, both in time and eternity. See how small pretense there is for questioning the mercy of God in permitting that event to take place, since therein, mercy, by infinite degrees, rejoices over judgment! Where, then, is the man that presumes to blame God for not preventing Adam's sin? Should we not rather bless Him from the ground of the heart, for therein laying the grand scheme of man's redemption, and making way for that glorious manifestation of His wisdom, holiness, justice, and mercy? If indeed God had decreed before the foundation of the world that millions of men should dwell in everlasting burnings, because Adam sinned, hundreds or thousands of yours before they had a being, I know not who could thank him for this, unless the devil and his angels: seeing, on this supposition, all those millions of unhappy spirits would be plunged into hell by Adam's sin, without any possible advantage from it. But, blest be God, this is not the case. Such a decree never existed. On the contrary, every one born of a woman may be an unspeakable gainer thereby; and none ever was or can be a loser, but by his own choice.

We see here a full answer to that plausible account "of the origin of evil," published to the world some years since, and supposed to be unanswerable: that it "necessarily resulted from the nature of matter, which God was not able to alter." It is very kind in this sweet-tongued orator to make an excuse for God! But there is really no occasion for it: God hath answered for Himself. He made man in His own image, a spirit endued with understanding and liberty. Man abusing that liberty, produced evil, brought sin and pain into the world. This God permitted, in order to a fuller manifestation of His wisdom, justice, and mercy, by bestowing on all who would receive it an infinitely greater happiness than they could possibly have attained if Adam had not fallen.

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Altho a thousand particulars of His judgments, and of His ways are unsearchable to us, and past our finding out, yet we may discern the general scheme running through time into eternity. "According to the council of his own will," the plan He had laid before the foundation of the world, He created the parent of all mankind in His own image. And He permitted all men to be made sinners by the disobedience of this one man, that, by the obedience of One, all who receive the free gift may be infinitely holier and happier to all eternity!

**÷**03-05 WHITEFIELD

THE METHOD OF GRACE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

George Whitefield, evangelist and leader of Calvinistic Methodists, who has been called the Demosthenes of the pulpit, was born at Gloucester, England, in 1714. He was an impassioned pulpit orator of the popular type, and his power over immense congregations was largely due to his histrionic talent and his exquisitely modulated voice, which has been described as "an organ, a flute, a harp, all in one," and which at times became stentorian. He had a most expressive face, and altho he squinted, in grace and significance of gesture he knew perfectly how to "suit the action to the word." But he had not the style or scholarship of Wesley, and his printed sermons do not fully bear out his reputation. Whitefield died in 1770.

WHITEFIELD

1714—1770

THE METHOD OF GRACE

*They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace*.—Jer 6:14.

As God can send a nation or people no greater blessing than to give them faithful, sincere, and upright ministers, so the greatest curse that God can possibly send upon a people in this world is to give them over to blind, unregenerate, carnal, lukewarm, and unskilful guides. And yet, in all ages, we find that there have been many wolves in sheep's clothing, many that daubed with untempered mortar, that prophesied smoother things than God did allow. As it was formerly, so it is now; there are many that corrupt the word of God and deal deceitfully with it. It was so in a special manner in the prophet Jeremiah's time; and he, faithful to his Lord, faithful to that God who employed him, did not fail from time to time to open his mouth against them, and to bear a noble testimony to the honor of that God in whose name he from time to time spake. If you will read his prophecy, you will find that none spake more against such ministers than Jeremiah, and here especially in the chapter out of which the text is taken he speaks very severely against them. He charges them with several crimes; particularly he charges them with covetousness: "For," says he, in the thirteenth verse, "from the least of them even to the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely."

And then, in the words of the text, in a more special manner he exemplifies how they had dealt falsely, how they had behaved treacherously to poor souls: says he, "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace." The prophet, in the name of God, had been denouncing war against the people; he had been telling them that their house should be left desolate, and that the Lord would certainly visit the land with war. "Therefore," says he, in the eleventh verse, "I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in; I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together; for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days. And their houses shall be turned unto others, with their fields and wives together; for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord."

The prophet gives a thundering message, that they might be terrified and have some convictions and inclinations to repent; but it seems that the false prophets, the false priests, went about stifling people's convictions, and when they were hurt or a little terrified, they were for daubing over the wound, telling them that Jeremiah was but an enthusiastic preacher, that there could be no such thing as war among them, and saying to people, Peace, peace, be still, when the prophet told them there was no peace.

The words, then, refer primarily unto outward things, but I verily believe have also a further reference to the soul, and are to be referred to those false teachers who, when people were under conviction of sin, when people were beginning to look toward heaven, were for stifling their convictions and telling them they were good enough before. And, indeed, people generally love to have it so; our hearts are exceedingly deceitful and desperately wicked; none but the eternal God knows how treacherous they are.

How many of us cry, Peace, peace, to our souls, when there is no peace! How many are there who are now settled upon their lees, that now think they are Christians, that now flatter themselves that they have an interest in Jesus Christ; whereas if we come to examine their experiences we shall find that their peace is but a peace of the devil's making—it is not a peace of God's giving—it is not a peace that passeth human understanding.

It is a matter, therefore, of great importance, my dear hearers, to know whether we may speak peace to our hearts. We are all desirous of peace; peace is an unspeakable blessing; how can we live without peace? And, therefore, people from time to time must be taught how far they must go and what must be wrought in them before they can speak peace to their hearts. This is what I design at present, that I may deliver my soul, that I may be free from the blood of all those to whom I preach—that I may not fail to declare the whole counsel of God. I shall, from the words of the text, endeavor to show you what you must undergo and what must be wrought in you before you can speak peace to your hearts.

But before I come directly to this give me leave to premise a caution or two.

And the first is, that I take it for granted you believe religion to be an inward thing; you believe it to be a work of the heart, a work wrought in the soul by the power of the Spirit of God. If you do not believe this, you do not believe your Bibles. If you do not believe this, tho you have got your Bibles in your hand, you hate the Lord Jesus Christ in your heart; for religion is everywhere represented in Scripture as the work of God in the heart. "The kingdom of God is within us," says our Lord; and, "he is not a Christian who is one outwardly; but he is a Christian who is one inwardly." If any of you place religion in outward things, I shall not perhaps please you this morning; you will understand me no more when I speak of the work of God upon a poor sinner's heart than if I were talking in an unknown tongue.

I would further premise a caution, that I would by no means confine God to one way of acting. I would by no means say that all persons, before they come to have a settled peace in their hearts, are obliged to undergo the same degrees of conviction. No; God has various ways of bringing His children home; His sacred Spirit bloweth when, and where, and how it listeth. But, however, I will venture to affirm this: that before ever you can speak peace to your heart, whether by shorter or longer continuance of your convictions, whether in a more pungent or in a more; gentle way, you must undergo what I shall hereafter lay down in the following discourse.

First, then, before you can speak peace to your hearts, you must be made to see, made to feel, made to weep over, made to bewail, your actual transgressions against the law of God. According to the covenant of works, "the soul that sinneth it shall die"; curst is that man, be he what he may, be he who he may, that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.

We are not only to do some things, but we are to do all things, and we are to continue to do so, so that the least deviation from the moral law, according to the covenant of works, whether in thought, word, or deed, deserves eternal death at the hand of God. And if one evil thought, if one evil word, if one evil action deserves eternal damnation, how many hells, my friends, do every one of us deserve whose whole lives have been one continued rebellion against God! Before ever, therefore, you can speak peace to your hearts, you must be brought to see, brought to believe, what a dreadful thing it is to depart from the living God.

And now, my dear friends, examine your hearts, for I hope you came hither with a design to have your souls made better. Give me leave to ask you, in the presence of God, whether you know the time, and if you do not know exactly the time, do you know there was a time when God wrote bitter things against you, when the arrows of the Almighty were within you? Was ever the remembrance of your sins grievous to you? Was the burden of your sins intolerable to your thoughts? Did you ever see that God's wrath might justly fall upon you, on account of your actual transgressions against God? Were you ever in all your life sorry for your sins? Could you ever say, My sins are gone over my head as a burden too heavy for me to bear? Did you ever experience any such thing as this? Did ever any such thing as this pass between God and your soul? If not, for Jesus Christ's sake, do not call yourselves Christians; you may speak peace to your hearts, but there is no peace. May the Lord awaken you, may the Lord convert you, may the Lord give you peace, if it be His will, before you go home!

But, further, you may be convinced of your actual sins, so as to be made to tremble, and yet you may be strangers to Jesus Christ, you may have no true work of grace upon your hearts. Before ever, therefore, you can speak peace to your hearts, conviction must go deeper; you must not only be convinced of your actual transgressions against the law of God, but likewise of the foundation of all your transgressions. And what is that? I mean original sin, that original corruption each of us brings into the world with us, which renders us liable to God's wrath and damnation. There are many poor souls that think themselves fine reasoners, yet they pretend to say there is no such thing as original sin; they will charge God with injustice in imputing Adam's sin to us; altho we have got the mark of the beast and of the devil upon us, yet they tell us we are not born in sin. Let them look abroad and see the disorders in it, and think, if they can, if this is the paradise in which God did put man. No! everything in the world is out of order.

I have often thought, when I was abroad, that if there were no other arguments to prove original sin, the rising of wolves and tigers against man, nay, the barking of a dog against us, is a proof of original sin. Tigers and lions durst not rise against us unless it were as much as to say, "You have sinned against God, and we take up our master's quarrel." If we look inwardly, we shall see enough of lusts and man's temper contrary to the temper of God. There is pride, malice, and revenge in all our hearts; and this temper can not come from God; it comes from our first parent, Adam, who, after he fell from God, fell out of God into the devil.

However, therefore, some people may deny this, yet when conviction comes, all carnal reasonings are battered down immediately, and the poor soul begins to feel and see the fountain from which all the polluted streams do flow. When the sinner is first awakened, he begins to wonder, How came I to be so wicked? The Spirit of God then strikes in, and shows that he has no good thing in him by nature; then he sees that he is altogether gone out of the way, that he is altogether become abominable, and the poor creature is made to lie down at the foot of the throne of God and to acknowledge that God would be just to damn him, just to cut him off, tho he never had committed one actual sin in his life.

Did you ever feel and experience this, any of you—to justify God in your damnation—to own that you are by nature children of wrath, and that God may justly cut you off, tho you never actually had offended Him in all your life? If you were ever truly convicted, if your hearts were ever truly cut, if self were truly taken out of you, you would be made to see and feel this. And if you have never felt the weight of original sin, do not call yourselves Christians. I am verily persuaded original sin is the greatest burden of a true convert; this ever grieves the regenerate soul, the sanctified soul. The indwelling of sin in the heart is the burden of a converted person; it is the burden of a true Christian. He continually cries out: "Oh! who will deliver me from this body of death, this indwelling corruption in my heart?" This is that which disturbs a poor soul most. And, therefore, if you never felt this inward corruption, if you never saw that God might justly curse you for it, indeed, my dear friends, you may speak peace to your hearts, but I fear, nay, I know, there is no true peace.

Further, before you can speak peace to your hearts you must not only be troubled for the sins of your life, the sins of your nature, but likewise for the sins of your best duties and performances.

When a poor soul is somewhat awakened by the terrors of the Lord, then the poor creature, being born under the covenant of works, flies directly to a covenant of works again. And as Adam and Eve hid themselves among the trees of the garden and sewed fig-leaves together to cover their nakedness, so the poor sinner when awakened flies to his duties and to his performances, to hide himself from God, and goes to patch up a righteousness of his own. Says he, I will be mighty good now—I will reform—I will do all I can; and then certainly Jesus Christ will have mercy on me. But before you can speak peace to your heart you must be brought to see that God may damn you for the best prayer you ever put up; you must be brought to see that all your duties—all your righteousness—as the prophet elegantly expresses it—put them all together, are so far from recommending you to God, are so far from being any motive and inducement to God to have mercy on your poor soul, that He will see them to be filthy rags, a menstruous cloth—that God hates them, and can not away with them, if you bring them to Him in order to recommend you to His favor.

My dear friends, what is there in our performance to recommend us unto God? Our persons are in an unjustified state by nature; we deserve to be damned ten thousand times over; and what must our performance be? We can do no good thing by nature: "They that are in the flesh can not please God."

You may do things materially good, but you can not do a thing formally and rightly good; because nature can not act above itself. It is impossible that a man who is unconverted can act for the glory of God; he can not do anything in faith, and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

After we are renewed, yet we are renewed but in part, indwelling sin continues in us, there is a mixture of corruption in every one of our duties, so that after we are converted, were Jesus Christ only to accept us according to our works, our works would damn us, for we can not put up a prayer but it is far from that perfection which the moral law requireth. I do not know what you may think, but I can say that I can not pray but I sin—I can not preach to you or any others but I sin—I can do nothing without sin; and, as one expresseth it, my repentance wants to be repented of, and my tears to be washed in the precious blood of my dear Redeemer.

Our best duties are so many splendid sins. Before you can speak peace to your heart you must not only be sick of your original and actual sin, but you must be made sick of your righteousness, of all your duties and performances. There must be a deep conviction before you can be brought out of your self-righteousness; it is the last idol taken out of our heart. The pride of our heart will not let us submit to the righteousness of Jesus Christ. But if you never felt that you had no righteousness of your own, if you never felt the deficiency of your own righteousness, you can not come to Jesus Christ.

There are a great many now who may say, Well, we believe all this; but there is a great difference betwixt talking and feeling. Did you ever feel the want of a dear Redeemer? Did you ever feel the want of Jesus Christ, upon the account of the deficiency of your own righteousness? And can you now say from your heart Lord, thou mayest justly damn me for the best duties that ever I did perform? If you are not thus brought out of self, you may speak peace to yourselves, but yet there is no peace.

But then, before you can speak peace to your souls, there is one particular sin you must be greatly troubled for, and yet I fear there are few of you think what it is; it is the reigning, the damning sin of the Christian world, and yet the Christian world seldom or never think of it. And pray what is that?

It is what most of you think you are not guilty of—and that is, the sin of unbelief. Before you can speak peace to your heart, you must be troubled for the unbelief of your heart But can it be supposed that any of you are unbelievers here in this churchyard, that are born in Scotland, in a reformed country, that go to church every Sabbath? Can any of you that receive the sacrament once a year—oh, that it were administered oftener!—can it be supposed that you who had tokens for the sacrament, that you who keep up family prayer, that any of you do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?

I appeal to your own hearts, if you would not think me uncharitable, if I doubted whether any of you believed in Christ: and yet, I fear upon examination, we should find that most of you have not so much faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the devil himself. I am persuaded that the devil believes more of the Bible than most of us do. He believes the divinity of Jesus Christ; that is more than many who call themselves Christians do; nay, he believes and trembles, and that is more than thousands amongst us do.

My friends, we mistake a historical faith for a true faith, wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God. You fancy you believe because you believe there is such a book as we call the Bible—because you go to church; all this you may do and have no true faith in Christ. Merely to believe there was such a person as Christ, merely to believe there is a book called the Bible, will do you no good, more than to believe there was such a man as Caesar or Alexander the Great. The Bible is a sacred depository. What thanks have we to give to God for these lively oracles! But yet we may have these and not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

My dear friends, there must be a principle wrought in the heart by the Spirit of the living God. Did I ask you how long it is since you believed in Jesus Christ, I suppose most of you would tell me you believed in Jesus Christ as long as ever you remember—you never did misbelieve. Then, you could not give me a better proof that you never yet believed in Jesus Christ, unless you were sanctified early, as from the womb; for they that otherwise believe in Christ know there was a time when they did not believe in Jesus Christ.

You say you love God with all your heart, soul, and strength. If I were to ask you how long it is since you loved God, you would say, As long as you can remember; you never hated God, you know no time when there was enmity in your heart against God. Then, unless you were sanctified very early, you never loved God in your life.

My dear friends, I am more particular in this, because it is a most deceitful delusion, whereby so many people are carried away, that they believe already. Therefore it is remarked of Mr. Marshall, giving account of his experiences, that he had been working for life, and he had ranged all his sins under the ten commandments, and then, coming to a minister, asked him the reason why he could not get peace. The minister looked to his catalog. "Away," says he, "I do not find one word of the sin of unbelief in all your catalog." It is the peculiar work of the Spirit of God to convince us of our unbelief—that we have got no faith. Says Jesus Christ, "I will send the comforter; and when he is come, he will reprove the world" of the sin of unbelief; "of sin," says Christ, "because they believe not on me."

Now, my dear friends, did God ever show you that you had no faith? Were you ever made to bewail a hard heart of unbelief? Was it ever the language of your heart, Lord, give me faith; Lord, enable me to lay hold on Thee; Lord, enable me to call Thee my Lord and my God? Did Jesus Christ ever convince you in this manner? Did he ever convince you of your inability to close with Christ, and make you to cry out to God to give you faith? If not, do not speak peace to your heart. May the Lord awaken you and give you true, solid peace before you go hence and be no more!

Once more, then: before you can speak peace to your heart, you must not only be convinced of your actual and original sin, the sins of your own righteousness, the sin of unbelief, but you must be enabled to lay hold upon the perfect righteousness, the all-sufficient righteousness, of the Lord Jesus Christ; you must lay hold by faith on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and then you shall have peace. "Come," says Jesus, "unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

This speaks encouragement to all that are weary and heavy laden; but the promise of rest is made to them only upon their coming and believing, and taking Him to be their God and their all. Before we can ever have peace with God we must be justified by faith through our Lord Jesus Christ, we must be enabled to apply Christ to our hearts, we must have Christ brought home to our souls, so as His righteousness may be made our righteousness, so as His merits may be imputed to our souls. My dear friends, were you ever married to Jesus Christ? Did Jesus Christ ever give Himself to you? Did you ever close with Christ by a lively faith, so as to feel Christ in your hearts, so as to hear Him speaking peace to your souls? Did peace ever flow in upon your hearts like a river? Did you ever feel that peace that Christ spoke to His disciples? I pray God he may come and speak peace to you. These things you must experience.

I am now talking of the invisible realities of another world, of inward religion, of the work of God upon a poor sinner's heart. I am now talking of a matter of great importance, my dear hearers; you are all concerned in it, your souls are concerned in it, your eternal salvation is concerned in it. You may be all at peace, but perhaps the devil has lulled you asleep into a carnal lethargy and security, and will endeavor to keep you there till he gets you to hell, and there you will be awakened; but it will be dreadful to be awakened and find yourselves so fearfully mistaken when the great gulf is fixt, when you will be calling to all eternity for a drop of water to cool your tongue and shall not obtain it.

**÷**03-06 BLAIR

THE HOUR AND THE EVENT OF ALL TIME

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Hugh Blair, the preacher and divine, was born in Edinburgh, 1718. He entered the university of his native town and graduated in 1739. Two years later he was licensed to preach; he was ordained minister of Colossie, Fife, in 1742, but returned to Edinburgh and in 1762 was made regius professor of rhetoric and belles-lettres to the university. He became a member of the great literary club, the Poker, where he associated with Hume, A. Carlyle, Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith and others, and enjoyed a high reputation as a preacher and critic. The lectures he published on style are elegantly written, but weak in thought, and his sermons share the same fault. They are composed with great care, and sometimes a single discourse cost him a week's labor, but they are formal and destitute of feeling and sometimes even affected in style. Blair was notable for fastidiousness in dress and manners, and took very seriously the reputation he was given for refinement and common-sense as one of the moderate divines. He died in 1800.

BLAIR

1718—1800

THE HOUR AND THE EVENT OF ALL TIME

*Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father! the hour is come*.—Joh 17:1.

These were the words of our blest Lord on a memorable occasion. The feast of the Passover drew nigh, at which He knew that He was to suffer. The night was arrived wherein He was to be delivered into the hands of His enemies. He had spent the evening in conference with His disciples, like a dying father in the midst of his family, mingling consolations with His last instructions. When He had ended His discourse to them, "he lifted up his eyes to heaven," and with the words which I have now read, began that solemn prayer of intercession for the Church, which closed His ministry. Immediately after, He went forth with His disciples into the garden of Gethsemane and surrendered Himself to those who came to apprehend Him.

Such was the situation of our Lord at the time of His pronouncing these words. He saw His mission on the point of being accomplished. He had the prospect full before Him of all that He was about to suffer—"Father! the hour is come." What hour? An hour the most critical, the most pregnant with great events, since hours had begun to be numbered, since time had begun to run. It was the hour at which the Son of God was to terminate the labors of His important life by a death still more important and illustrious; the hour of atoning, by His sufferings, for the guilt of mankind; the hour of accomplishing prophecies, types, and symbols, which had been carried on through a series of ages; the hour of concluding the old and of introducing into the world the new dispensation of religion; the hour of His triumphing over the world, and death, and hell; the hour of His creating that spiritual kingdom which is to last forever. Such is the hour. Such are the events which you are to commemorate in the sacrament of our Lord's Supper.

I. This was the hour in which Christ was glorified by His sufferings. The whole of His life had discovered much real greatness under a mean appearance. Through the cloud of His humiliation, His native luster often broke forth; but never did it shine so bright as in this last, this trying hour. It was indeed the hour of distress and of blood. He knew it to be such; and when He uttered the words of the text, He had before His eyes the executioner and the cross, the scourge, the nails, and the spear. But by prospects of this nature His soul was not to be overcome. It is distress which ennobles every great character; and distress was to glorify the Son of God. He was now to teach all mankind by His example, how to suffer and to die. He was to stand forth before His enemies as the faithful witness of the truth, justifying by His behavior the character which He assumed, and sealing by His blood the doctrines which He taught.

What magnanimity in all His words and actions on this great occasion! The court of Herod, the judgment-hall of Pilate, the hill of Calvary, were so many theaters prepared for His displaying all the virtues of a constant and patient mind. When led forth to suffer, the first voice which we hear from Him is a generous lamentation over the fate of His unfortunate tho guilty country; and to the last moment of His life we behold Him in possession of the same gentle and benevolent spirit. No upbraiding, no complaining expression escaped from His lips during the long and painful approaches of a cruel death. He betrayed no symptom of a weak or a vulgar, of a discomposed or impatient mind. With the utmost attention of filial tenderness He committed His aged mother to the care of His beloved disciple. With all the dignity of a sovereign He conferred pardon on a fellow-sufferer. With a greatness of mind beyond example, He spent His last moments in apologies and prayers for those who were shedding His blood.

By wonders in heaven and wonders on earth, was this hour distinguished. All nature seemed to feel it; and the dead and the living bore witness of its importance. The veil of the temple was rent in twain. The earth shook. There was darkness over all the land. The graves were opened, and "many who slept arose, and went into the holy city." Nor were these the only prodigies of this awful hour. The most hardened hearts were subdued and changed. The judge who, in order to gratify the multitude, passed sentence against Him, publicly attested His innocence. The Roman centurion who presided at the execution, "glorified God," and acknowledged the Sufferer to be more than man. "After he saw the things which had passed, he said, Certainly this was a righteous person: truly this was the Son of God." The Jewish malefactor who was crucified with Him addrest Him as a king, and implored His favor. Even the crowd of insensible spectators, who had come forth as to a common spectacle, and who began with clamors and insults, "returned home smiting their breasts." Look back on the heroes, the philosophers, the legislators of old. View them, in their last moments. Recall every circumstance which distinguished their departure from the world. Where can you find such an assemblage of high virtues, and of great events, as concurred at the death of Christ? Where so many testimonials given to the dignity of the dying person by earth and by heaven?

II. This was the hour in which Christ atoned for the sins of mankind, and accomplished our eternal redemption. It was the hour when that great sacrifice was offered up, the efficacy of which reaches back to the first transgression of man, and extends forward to the end of time; the hour when, from the cross, as from a high altar, the blood was flowing which washed away the guilt of the nations.

This awful dispensation of the Almighty contains mysteries which are beyond the discovery of man. It is one of those things into which "the angels desire to look." What has been revealed to us is, that the death of Christ was the interposition of heaven for preventing the ruin of human kind. We know that under the government of God misery is the natural consequence of guilt. After rational creatures had, by their criminal conduct, introduced disorder into the divine kingdom, there was no ground to believe that by their penitence and prayers alone they could prevent the destruction which threatened them. The prevalence of propitiatory sacrifices throughout the earth proclaims it to be the general sense of mankind that mere repentance was not of sufficient avail to expiate sin or to stop its penal effects. By the constant allusions which are carried on in the New Testament to the sacrifices under the law, as pre-signifying a great atonement made by Christ, and by the strong expressions which are used in describing the effects of His death, the sacred writers show, as plainly as language allows, that there was an efficacy in His sufferings far beyond that of mere example and instruction. The nature and extent of that efficacy we are unable as yet fully to trace. Part we are capable of beholding; and the wisdom of what we behold we have reason to adore. We discern, in this plan of redemption, the evil of sin strongly exhibited and the justice of the divine government awfully exemplified, in Christ suffering for sinners. But let us not imagine that our present discoveries unfold the whole influence of the death of Christ. It is connected with causes into which we can not penetrate. It produces consequences too extensive for us to explore. "God's thoughts are not as our thoughts." In all things we "see only in part"; and here, if anywhere, we see also "as through a glass. darkly."

This, however, is fully manifest, that redemption is one of the most glorious works of the Almighty. If the hour of the creation of the world was great and illustrious, that hour when, from the dark and formless mass, this fair system of nature arose at the divine command, when "the morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," no less illustrious is the hour of the restoration of the world; the hour when, from condemnation and misery, it emerged into happiness and peace. With less external majesty it was attended; but it is, on that account, the more wonderful that, under an appearance so simple, such great events were covered.

III. In this hour the long series of prophecies, visions, types, and figures were accomplished. This was the center in which they all met: this the point toward which they had tended and verged, throughout the course of so many generations. You behold the law and the prophets standing, if we may speak so, at the foot of the cross, and doing homage. You behold Moses and Aaron bearing the Ark of the Covenant; David and Elijah presenting the oracle of testimony. You behold all the priests and sacrifices, all the rites and ordinances, all the types and symbols assembled together to receive their consummation. Without the death of Christ, the worship and ceremonies of the law would have remained a pompous, but unmeaning, institution. In the hour when He was crucified, "the book with the seven seals" was opened. Every rite assumed its significancy; every prediction met its event; every symbol displayed its correspondence.

The dark and seemingly ambiguous method of conveying important discoveries under figures and emblems was not peculiar to the sacred books. The spirit of God in presignifying the death of Christ, adopted that plan, according to which the whole knowledge of those early ages was propagated through the world. Under the veil of mysterious allusion, all wisdom was then concealed. From the sensible world images were everywhere borrowed to describe things unseen. More was understood to be meant than was openly exprest. By enigmatical rites the priests communicated his doctrines; by parables and allegories the philosopher instructed his disciples; even the legislator, by figurative sayings, commanded the reverence of the people. Agreeably to this prevailing mode of instruction, the whole dispensation of the Old Testament was so conducted as to be the shadow and figure of a spiritual system. Every remarkable event, every distinguished personage, under the law, is interpreted in the New Testament, as bearing reference to the hour of which we treat. If Isaac was laid upon the altar as an innocent victim; if David was driven from his throne by the wicked, and restored by the hand of God; if the brazen serpent was lifted up to heal the people; if the rock was smitten by Moses, to furnish drink in the wilderness; all were types of Christ and alluded to His death.

In predicting the same event the language of ancient prophecy was magnificent, but seemingly contradictory: for it foretold a Messiah, who was to be at once a sufferer and a conquerer. The Star was to come out of Jacob, and the Branch to spring from the stem of Jesse. The Angel of the Covenant, the desire of all nations, was to come suddenly to His temple; and to Him was to be "the gathering of the people." Yet, at the same time, He was to be "despised and rejected of men"; He was to be "taken from prison and from judgment," and to be "led as a lamb to the slaughter." Tho He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," yet "the Gentiles were to come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising." In the hour when Christ died, those prophetical riddles were solved: those seeming contradictions were reconciled. The obscurity of oracles, and the ambiguity of typos vanished. The "sun of righteousness" rose; and, together with the dawn of religion those shadows passed away.

IV. This was the hour of the abolition of the law, and the introduction of the gospel; the hour of terminating the old and of beginning the new dispensation of religious knowledge and worship throughout the earth. Viewed in this light, it forms the most august era which is to be found in the history of mankind. When Christ was suffering on the cross, we are informed by one of the evangelists that He said, "I thirst"; and that they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it to His mouth. "After he had tasted the vinegar, knowing that all things were now accomplished, and the Scriptures fulfilled, he said, It is finished"; that is, this offered draft of vinegar was the last circumstance predicted by an ancient prophet that remained to be fulfilled. The vision and the prophecy are now sealed: the Mosaic dispensation is closed. "And he bowed his head and gave up the ghost."

"It is finished." When He uttered these words He changed the state of the universe. At that moment the law ceased, and the gospel commenced. This was the ever memorable point of time which separated the old and the new worlds from each other. On one side of the point of separation you behold the law, with its priests, its sacrifices, and its rites, retiring from sight. On the other side you behold the gospel, with its simple and venerable institutions, coming forward into view. Significantly was the veil of the temple rent in this hour; for the glory then departed from between the cherubim. The legal high priest delivered up his urim and thummim, his breast-plate, his robes, and his incense: and Christ stood forth as the great high priest of all succeeding generations. By that one sacrifice which He now offered, He abolished sacrifices forever. Altars on which the fire had blazed for ages, were now to smoke no more. Victims were no more to bleed. "Not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with his own blood he now entered into the holy place, there to appear in the presence of God for us."

This was the hour of association and union to all the worshipers of God. When Christ said, "It is finished," He threw down the wall of partition which had so long divided the Gentile from the Jew. He gathered into one all the faithful out of every kindred and people. He proclaimed the hour to be come when the knowledge of the true God should be no longer confined to one nation, nor His worship to one temple; but over all the earth, the worshipers of the Father should serve Him "in spirit and in truth." From that hour they who dwelt in the "uttermost ends of the earth, strangers to the covenant of promise," began to be "brought nigh." In that hour the light of the gospel dawned from afar on the British Islands.

During a long course of ages, Providence seemed to be occupied in preparing the world for this revolution. The whole Jewish economy was intended to usher it in. The knowledge of God was preserved unextinguished in one corner of the world, that thence, in due time, might issue forth the light which was to overspread the earth. Successive revelations gradually enlarged the views of men beyond the narrow bounds of Judea, to a more extensive kingdom of God. Signs and miracles awakened their expectation and directed their eyes toward this great event. Whether God descended on the flaming mountain, or spoke by the prophet's voice; whether He scattered His chosen people into captivity, or reassembled them in their own land, He was still carrying on a progressive plan, which was accomplished at the death of Christ.

Not only in the territories of Israel, but over all the earth, the great dispensations of Providence respected the approach of this important hour. If empires rose or fell; if war divided, or peace united, the nations; if learning civilized their manners, or philosophy enlarged their views; all was, by the secret decree of Heaven, made to ripen the world for that "fulness of time," when Christ was to publish the whole counsel of God. The Persian, the Macedonian, the Roman conqueror, entered upon the stage each at his predicted period. The revolutions of power, and the succession of monarchies, were so arranged by Providence, as to facilitate the progress of the gospel through the habitable world, after the day had arrived, "when the stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands, should become a great mountain and fill the earth." This was the day which Abraham saw afar off, and was glad. This was the day which "many prophets, and kings, and righteous men desired to see, but could not"; the day for which "the earnest expectation of the creature," long opprest with ignorance, and bewildered in superstition, might be justly said to wait.

V. This was the hour of Christ's triumph over all the powers of darkness; the hour in which He overthrew dominions and thrones, "led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." The contest which the kingdom of darkness had long maintained against the kingdom of light was now brought to its crisis. The period was come when "the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent" For many ages the most gross superstition had filled the earth. "The glory of the incorruptible God" was everywhere, except in the land of Judea, "changed into images made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and beasts, and creeping-things." The world, which the Almighty created for Himself, seemed to have become a temple of idols. Even to vices and passions altars were raised; and what was entitled religion, was in effect a discipline of impurity. In the midst of this universal darkness, Satan had erected his throne, and the learned and the polished, as well as the savage nations, bowed down before him. But at the hour when Christ appeared on the cross, the signal of His defeat was given. His kingdom suddenly departed from Him; the reign of idolatry passed away: He was beheld to fall "like lightning from heaven." In that hour the foundation of every pagan temple shook. The statue of every false god tottered on its base. The priest fled from his falling shrine; and the heathen oracles became dumb forever.

As on the cross Christ triumphed over Satan, so He overcame His auxiliary, the world. Long had it assailed Him with its temptations and discouragements; in this hour of severe trial He surmounted them all. Formerly He had despised the pleasures of the world. He now baffled its terrors. Hence He is justly said to have "crucified the world." By His sufferings He ennobled distress; and He darkened the luster of the pomp and vanities of life. He discovered to His followers the path which leads, through affliction, to glory and to victory; and He imparted to them the same spirit which enabled Him to overcome. "My kingdom is not of this world. In this world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Death also, the last foe of man, was the victim of this hour. The formidable appearance of the specter remained; but his dart was taken away. For, in the hour when Christ expiated guilt, He disarmed death, by securing the resurrection of the just. When He said to His penitent fellow sufferer, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise," He announced to all His followers the certainty of heavenly bliss. He declared the cherubim to be dismissed and the flaming sword to be sheathed, which had been appointed at the fall, to keep from man "the way of the tree of life." Faint, before this period, had been the hope, indistinct the prospect, which even good men enjoyed of the heavenly kingdom. Life and immortality were now brought to light. From the hill of Calvary the first clear and certain view was given to the world of the everlasting mansions. Since that hour they have been the perpetual consolation of believers in Christ. Under trouble, they soothe their minds; amid temptation, they support their virtue; and in their dying moments enable them to say, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory"?

VI. This was the hour when our Lord erected that spiritual kingdom which is never to end. How vain are the counsels and designs of men! How shallow is the policy of the wicked! How short their triumphing! The enemies of Christ imagined that in this hour they had successfully accomplished their plan for His destruction. They believed that they had entirely scattered the small party of His followers, and had extinguished His name and His honor forever. In derision they addrest Him as a king. They clothed Him with purple robes; they crowned Him with a crown of thorns; they put a reed into His hand; and, with insulting mockery, bowed the knee before Him. Blind and impious men! How little did they know that the Almighty was at that moment setting Him as a king on the hill of Zion; giving Him "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession"! How little did they know that their badges of mock royalty were at that moment converted into the signals of absolute dominion, and the instruments of irresistible power! The reed which they put into His hands became "a rod of iron," with which He was to "break in pieces his enemies," a scepter with which He was to rule the universe in righteousness. The cross which they thought was to stigmatize Him with infamy, became the ensign of His renown. Instead of being the reproach of His followers, it was to be their boast and their glory. The cross was to shine on palaces and churches throughout the earth. It was to be assumed as the distinction of the most powerful monarchs, and to wave in the banner of victorious armies when the memory of Herod and Pilate should be accurst, when Jerusalem should be reduced to ashes, and the Jews be vagabonds over all the world.

These were the triumphs which commenced at this hour. Our Lord saw them already in their birth; He saw of the travail of His soul, and was satisfied. He beheld the Word of God going forth, conquering, and to conquer; subduing, to the obedience of His laws, the subduers of the world; carrying light into the regions of darkness, and mildness into the habitations of cruelty. He beheld the Gentiles waiting below the cross, to receive the gospel. He beheld Ethiopia and the Isles stretching out their hands to God; the desert beginning to rejoice and to blossom as the rose; and the knowledge of the Lord filling the earth, as the waters cover the sea. Well pleased, He said, "It is finished." As a conqueror He retired from the field, reviewing His triumphs: "He bowed his head and gave up the ghost." From that hour, Christ was no longer a mortal man, but "Head over all things to the Church," the glorious King of men and angels, of whose dominion there shall be no end. His triumphs shall perpetually increase. "His name shall endure forever; it shall last as long as the sun; men shall be blest in him, and all nations shall call him blest"

Such were the transactions, such the effects, of this ever-memorable hour. With all those great events was the mind of our Lord filled, when He lifted His eyes to heaven, and said, "Father! the hour is come."

From this view which we have taken of this subject, permit me to suggest what ground it affords to confide in the mercy of God for the pardon of sin; to trust to His faithfulness for the accomplishment of all His promises; and to approach to Him, with gratitude and devotion, in acts of worship.

In the first place, the death of Christ affords us ground to confide in the divine mercy for the pardon of sin. All the steps of that high dispensation of Providence, which we have considered, lead directly to this conclusion, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" This is the final result of the discoveries of the gospel. On this rests the great system of consolation which it hath reared up for men. We are not left to dubious and intricate reasonings concerning the conduct which God may be expected to hold toward His offending creatures: but we are led to the view of important and illustrious facts which strike the mind with evidence irresistible. For it is possible to believe that such great operations, as I have endeavored to describe, were carried on by the Almighty in vain? Did He excite in the hearts of His creatures such encouraging hopes, without any intention to fulfil them? After so long a preparation of goodness, could He mean to deny forgiveness to the penitent and the humble? When overcome by the sense of guilt, man looks up with an astonished eye to the justice of his Creator, let him recollect that hour of which the text speaks, and be comforted. The signals of divine mercy, erected in his view, are too conspicuous to be either distrusted or mistaken.

In the next place, the discoveries of this hour afford the highest reason to trust in the divine faithfulness for the accomplishment of every promise which remains yet unfulfilled. For this was the hour of the completion of God's ancient covenant.

It was the "performance of the mercy promised to the fathers." We behold the consummation of a great plan, which, throughout a course of ages, had been uniformly pursued; and which, against every human appearance, was, at the appointed moment, exactly fulfilled. No length of time alters His purpose. No obstacles can retard it. Toward the ends accomplished in this hour, the most repugnant instruments were made to operate. We discern God bending to His purpose the jarring passions, the opposite interests, and even the vices of men; uniting seeming contrarieties in His scheme; making "the wrath of man to praise him"; obliging the ambition of princes, the prejudices of Jews, the malice of Satan, all to concur, either in bringing forward this hour, or in completing its destined effects. With what entire confidence ought we to wait for the fulfilment of all His other promises in their due time, even when events are most embroiled and the prospect is most discouraging: "Altho thou sayst thou canst not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him." Be attentive only to perform thy duty; leave the event to God, and be assured that, under the direction of His Providence, "all things shall work together" for a happy issue.

Lastly, the consideration of this whole subject tends to excite gratitude and devotion, when we approach to God in acts of worship. The hour of which I have discust, presents Him to us in the amiable light of the deliverer of mankind, the restorer of our forfeited hopes. We behold the greatness of the Almighty, softened by the mild radiance of condescension and mercy. We behold Him diminishing the awful distance at which we stand from His presence, by appointing for us a mediator and intercessor, through whom the humble may, without dismay, approach to Him who made them. By such views of the divine nature, Christian faith lays the foundation for a worship which shall be at once rational and affectionate; a worship in which the light of the understanding shall concur with the devotion of the heart, and the most profound reverence be united with the most cordial love. Christian faith is not a system of speculative truths. It is not a lesson of moral instruction only. By a train of high discoveries which it reveals, by a succession of interesting objects which it places in our view, it is calculated to elevate the mind, to purify the affections, and by the assistance of devotion, to confirm and encourage virtue. Such, in particular, is the scope of that divine institution, the sacrament of our Lord's Supper. To this happy purpose let it conduce, by concentering in one striking point of light all that the gospel has displayed of what is most important to man. Touched with such contrition for past offenses, and filled with a grateful sense of divine goodness, let us come to the altar of God, and, with a humble faith in His infinite mercies, devote ourselves to His service forever.

**÷**03-07 DWIGHT

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Timothy Dwight was born at Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1752. He graduated from Yale in 1769, served as chaplain in the army during the Revolutionary War and was chosen president of his university in 1795. He died, after holding that office for twelve years, in 1817. Lyman Beecher, who attributed his conversion to him, says: "He was of noble form, with a noble head and body, and had one of the sweetest smiles that ever you saw. When I heard him preach on 'the harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved,' a whole avalanche rolled down on my mind. I went home weeping every step."

DWIGHT

1752—1817

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

*O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*.—Jer 10:23.

Few of this audience will probably deny the truth of a direct Scriptural declaration. With as little reason can it be denied that most of them apparently live in the very manner in which they would live if the doctrine were false: or that they rely, chiefly at least, on their own sagacity, contrivance and efforts for success in this life and that which is to come. As little can it be questioned that such self-confidence is a guide eminently dangerous and deceitful. Safe as we may feel under its direction, our safety is imaginary. The folly of others in trusting to themselves we discern irresistibly. The same folly they perceive, with equal evidence, in us. Our true wisdom lies in willingly feeling, and cheerfully acknowledging, our dependence on God; and in committing ourselves with humble reliance to His care and direction.

With these observations I will now proceed to illustrate the truth of the doctrine. The mode which I shall pursue will, probably, be thought singular. I hope it will be useful. Metaphysical arguments, which are customarily employed for the purpose of establishing this and several other doctrines of theology, are, if I mistake not, less satisfactory to the minds of men at large than the authors of them appear to believe. Facts, wherever they can be fairly adduced for this end, are attended with a superior power of conviction; and commonly leave little doubt behind them. On these, therefore, I shall at the present time rely for the accomplishment of my design. In the first place, the doctrine of the text is evident from the great fact that the birth and education of all men depend not on themselves.

The succeeding events of life are derived, in a great measure at least, from our birth. By this event, it is in a prime degree determined whether men shall be princes or peasants, opulent or poor, learned or ignorant, honorable or despised; whether they shall be civilized or savage, freemen or slaves, Christians or heathens, Mohammedans or Jews.

A child is born of Indian parents in the western wilderness. By his birth he is, of course, a savage. His friends, his mode of life, his habits, his knowledge, his opinions, his conduct, all grow out of this single event. His first thoughts, his first instructions, and all the first objects with which he is conversant, the persons whom he loves, the life to which he assumes are all savage. He is an Indian from the cradle; he is an Indian to the grave. To say that he could not be otherwise, we are not warranted; but that he is not is certain.

Another child is born of a Bedouin Arab. From this moment he begins to be an Arabian. His hand is against every man; and every man's hand is against him. Before he can walk, or speak, he is carried through pathless wastes in search of food; and roams in the arms of his mother, and on the back of a camel, from spring to spring, and from pasture to pasture. Even then he begins his conflict with hunger and thirst; is scorched by a vertical sun; shriveled by the burning sand beneath; and poisoned by the breath of the simoom. Hardened thus through his infancy and childhood, both in body and mind, he becomes, under the exhortations and example of his father, a robber from his youth; attacks every stranger whom he is able to overcome; and plunders every valuable thing on which he can lay his hand.

A third receives his birth in the palace of a British nobleman; and is welcomed to the world as the heir apparent of an ancient, honorable and splendid family. As soon as he opens his eyes on the light, he is surrounded by all the enjoyments which opulence can furnish, ingenuity contrive, or fondness bestow. He is dandled on the knee of indulgence; encircled by attendants, who watch and prevent alike his necessities and wishes; cradled on down; and charmed to sleep by the voice of tenderness and care. From the dangers and evils of life he is guarded with anxious solicitude. To its pleasures he is conducted by the ever-ready hand of maternal affection. His person is shaped and improved by a succession of masters; his mind is opened, invigorated and refined by the assiduous superintendence of learning and wisdom. While a child he is served by a host of menials and flattered by successive trains of visitors. When a youth he is regarded by a band of tenants with reverence and awe. His equals in age bow to his rank; and multitudes, of superior years acknowledge his distinction by continual testimonies of marked respect. When a man, he engages the regard of his sovereign; commands the esteem of the senate; and earns the love and applause of his country.

A fourth child, in the same kingdom, is begotten by a beggar, and born under a hedge. From his birth he is trained to suffering and hardihood. He is nursed, if he can be said to be nursed at all, on a coarse, scanty and precarious pittance; holds life only as a tenant at will; combats from the first dawnings of intellect with insolence, cold and nakedness; is originally taught to beg and to steal; is driven from the doors of men by the porter or the house dog; and is regarded as an alien from the family of Adam. Like his kindred worms, he creeps through life in the dust; dies under the hedge, where he is born; and is then, perhaps, cast into a ditch, and covered with earth by some stranger, who remembers that, altho a beggar, he still was a man.

A child enters the world in China; and unites, as a thing of course, with his sottish countrymen in the stupid worship of the idol Fo. Another prostrates himself before the Lama, in consequence of having received his being in Tibet, and of seeing the Lama worshiped by all around him.

A third, who begins his existence in Turkey, is carried early to the mosque; taught to lisp with profound reverence the name of Mohammed; habituated to repeat the prayers and sentences of the Koran as the means of eternal life; and induced, in a manner irresistible, to complete his title to Paradise by a pilgrimage to Mecca.

The Hindu infant grows into a religious veneration for the cow; and perhaps never doubts that, if he adds to this solemn devotion to Juggernaut, the Gooroos, and the Dewtahs, and performs carefully his ablutions in the Ganges, he shall wash away all his sins, and obtain, by the favor of Brahma, a seat among the blest.

In our own favored country, one child is born of parents devoted solely to this world. From his earliest moments of understanding, he hears and sees nothing commended but hunting, horse-racing, visiting, dancing, dressing, riding, parties, gaming, acquiring money with eagerness and skill, and spending it in gaiety, pleasure and luxury. These things, he is taught by conversation and example, constitute all the good of man. His taste is formed, his habits are riveted, and the whole character of his soul is turned to them before he is fairly sensible that there is any other good. The question whether virtue and piety are either duties or blessings he probably never asks. In the dawn of life he sees them neglected and despised by those whom he most reverences; and learns only to neglect and despise them also. Of Jehovah he thinks as little, and for the same reason as a Chinese or a Hindu. They pay their devotions to Fo and to Juggernaut: he his to money and pleasure. Thus he lives, and dies, a mere animal; a stranger to intelligence and morality, to his duty and his God.

Another child comes into existence in the mansion of knowledge and virtue. From his infancy, his mind is fashioned to wisdom and piety. In his infancy he is taught and allured to remember his Creator; and to unite, first in form and then in affection, in the household devotions of the morning and evening. God he knows almost as soon as he can know anything. The presence of that glorious being he is taught to realize almost from the cradle; and from the dawn of intelligence to understand the perfections and government of his Creator. His own accountableness, as soon as he can comprehend it, he begins to feel habitually, and always. The way of life through the Redeemer is early, and regularly explained to him by the voice of parental love; and enforced and endeared in the house of God. As soon as possible, he is enabled to read, and persuaded to "search the Scriptures." Of the approach, the danger and the mischiefs of temptations, he is tenderly warned. At the commencement of sin, he is kindly checked in his dangerous career. To God he was solemnly given in baptism. To God he was daily commended in fervent prayer. Under this happy cultivation he grows up "like an olive-tree in the courts of the Lord"; and, green, beautiful and flourishing, he blossoms; bears fruit; and is prepared to be transplanted by the divine hand to a kinder soil in the regions above.

How many, and how great, are the differences in these several children! How plainly do they all, in ordinary circumstances, arise out of their birth! From their birth is derived, of course, the education which I have ascribed to them; and from this education spring in a great measure both character and their destiny. The place, the persons, the circumstances, are here evidently the great things which, in the ordinary course of Providence, appear chiefly to determine what the respective men shall be; and what shall be those allotments which regularly follow their respective characters. As, then, they are not at all concerned in contriving or accomplishing either their birth or their education; it is certain that, in these most important particulars, the way of man is not in himself. God only can determine what child shall spring from parents, wise or foolish, virtuous or sinful, rich or poor, honorable or infamous, civilized or savage, Christian or heathen.

I wish it to be distinctly understood, and carefully remembered, that "in the moral conduct of all these individuals no physical necessity operates." Every one of them is absolutely a free agent; as free as any created agent can be. Whatever he does is the result of choice, absolutely unconstrained.

Let me add, that not one of them is placed in a situation in which, if he learns and performs his duty to the utmost of his power, he will fail of being finally accepted.

Secondly. The doctrine is strikingly evident from this great fact, also, that the course of life, which men usually pursue, is very different from that which they have intended.

Human life is ordinarily little else than a collection of disappointments. Rarely is the life of man such as he designs it shall be. Often do we fail of pursuing, at all, the business originally in our view. The intentional farmer becomes a mechanic, a seaman, a merchant, a lawyer, a physician, or a divine. The very place of settlement, and of residence through life, is often different, and distant, from that which was originally contemplated. Still more different is the success which follows our efforts.

All men intend to be rich and honorable; to enjoy ease; and to pursue pleasure. But how small is the number of those who compass these objects! In this country, the great body of mankind are, indeed, possest of competence; a safer and happier lot than that to which they aspire; yet few, very few are rich. Here, also, the great body of mankind possess a character, generally reputable; but very limited is the number of those who arrive at the honor which they so ardently desire, and of which they feel assured. Almost all stop at the moderate level, where human efforts appear to have their boundary established in the determination of God. Nay, far below this level creep multitudes of such as began life with full confidence in the attainment of distinction and splendor.

The lawyer, emulating the eloquence, business, and fame of Murray or Dunning, and secretly resolved not to slacken his efforts, until all his rivals in the race for glory are outstript is often astonished, as well as broken-hearted, to find business and fame pass by his door, and stop at the more favored mansion of some competitor, in his view less able, and less discerning, than himself.

The physician, devoted to medical science, and possest of distinguished powers of discerning and removing diseases, is obliged to walk; while a more fortunate empiric, ignorant and worthless, rolls through the streets in his coach.

The legislator beholds with anguish and amazement the suffrages of his countrymen given eagerly to a rival candidate devoid of knowledge and integrity; but skilled in flattering the base passions of men, and deterred by no hesitations of conscience, and no fears of infamy, from saying and doing anything which may secure his election.

The merchant often beholds with a despairing eye his own ships sunk in the ocean; his debtors fail; his goods unsold, his business cramped; and himself, his family and his hopes ruined; while a less skilful but more successful neighbor sees wealth blown to him by every wind, and floated on every wave.

The crops of the farmer are stinted; his cattle die; his markets are bad; and the purchaser of his commodities proves to be a cheat, who deceives his confidence and runs away with his property.

Thus the darling schemes and fondest hopes of man are daily frustrated by time. While sagacity contrives, patience matures, and labor industriously executes, disappointment laughs at the curious fabric, formed by so many efforts and gay with so many brilliant colors, and while the artists imagine the work arrived at the moment of completion, brushes away the beautiful web, and leaves nothing behind.

The designs of men, however, are in many respects not infrequently successful. The lawyer and physician acquire business and fame; the statesman, votes; and the farmer, wealth. But their real success, even in this case, is often substantially the same with that already recited. In all plans, and all labors, the supreme object is to become happy. Yet, when men have actually acquired riches and honor, or secured to themselves popular favor, they still find the happiness, which they expected, eluding their grasp. Neither wealth, fame, office, nor sensual pleasure can yield such good as we need. As these coveted objects are accumulated, the wishes of man always grow faster than his gratifications. Hence, whatever he acquires, he is usually as little satisfied as before, and often less.

A principal design of the mind in laboring for these things is to become superior to others. But almost all rich men are obliged to see, and usually with no small anguish, others richer than themselves; honorable men, others more honorable; voluptuous men, others who enjoy more pleasure. The great end of the strife is therefore unobtained; and the happiness expected never found. Even the successful competitor in the race utterly misses his aim. The real enjoyment existed, altho it was unperceived by him, in the mere strife for superiority. When he has outstript all his rivals the contest is at an end: and his spirits, which were invigorated only by contending, languish for want of a competitor.

Besides, the happiness in view was only the indulgence of pride, or mere animal pleasure. Neither of these can satisfy or endure. A rational mind may be, and often is, so narrow and groveling as not to aim at any higher good, to understand its nature or to believe its existence. Still, in its original constitution, it was formed with a capacity for intellectual and moral good, and was destined to find in this good its only satisfaction. Hence, no inferior good will fill its capacity or its desires. Nor can this bent of its nature ever be altered. Whatever other enjoyment, therefore, it may attain, it will, without this, still crave and still be unhappy.

No view of the ever-varying character and success of mankind in their expectations of happiness, and their efforts to obtain it, can illustrate this doctrine more satisfactorily than that of the progress and end of a class of students in this seminary. At their first appearance here they are all exactly on the same level. Their character, their hopes and their destination are the same. They are enrolled on one list; and enter upon a collegiate life with the same promise of success. At this moment they are plants, appearing just above the ground; all equally fair and flourishing. Within a short time, however, some begin to rise above others; indicating by a more rapid growth a structure of superior vigor, and promising both more early and more abundant fruit….

Were I to ask the youths who are before me what are their designs and expectations concerning their future life, and write down their several answers, what a vast difference would ultimately be found between those answers and the events which would actually befall them! To how great a part of that difference would facts, over which they could have no control, give birth! How many of them will in all probability be less prosperous, rich, and honorable than they now intend: how many devoted to employments of which at present they do not even dream; in circumstances, of which they never entertained even a thought, behind those whom they expected to outrun, poor, sick, in sorrow or in the grave.

First. You see here, my young friends, the most solid reasons for gratitude to your Creator.

God, only, directed that you should be born in this land, and in the midst of peace, plenty, civilization, freedom, learning and religion; and that your existence should not commence in a Tartarian forest or an African waste. God, alone, ordered that you should be born of parents who knew and worshiped Him, the glorious and eternal Jehovah; and not of parents who bowed before the Lama or the ox, an image of brass or the stock of a tree. In the book of His counsels, your names, so far as we are able to judge, were written in the fair lines of mercy. It is of His overflowing goodness that you are now here; surrounded with privileges, and beset with blessings, educated to knowledge, usefulness and piety, and prepared to begin an endless course of happiness and glory. All these delightful things have been poured into your lap, and have come, unbidden, to solicit your acceptance. If these blessings awaken not gratitude, it can not be awakened by the blessings in the present world. If they are not thankfully felt by you, it is because you know not how to be thankful. Think what you are, and where you are; and what and where you just as easily might have been. Remember that, instead of cherishing tender affections, imbibing refined sentiments, exploring the field of science, and assuming the name and character of the sons of God, you might as easily have been dozing in the smoke of a wigwam, brandishing a tomahawk, or dancing round an emboweled captive; or that you might yourself have been emboweled by the hand of superstition, and burnt on the altars of Moloch. If you remember these things, you can not but call to mind, also, who made you to differ from the miserable beings who have thus lived and died.

Secondly. This doctrine forcibly demands of you to moderate desires and expectations.

There are two modes in which men seek happiness in the enjoyments of the present world. "Most persons freely indulge their wishes, and intend to find objects sufficient in number and value to satisfy them." A few "aim at satisfaction by proportioning their desires to the number and measure of their probable gratifications." By the doctrine of the text, the latter method is stamped with the name of wisdom, and on the former is inscribed the name of folly. Desires indulged grow faster and farther than gratifications extend. Ungratified desire is misery. Expectations eagerly indulged and terminated by disappointment are often exquisite misery. But how frequently are expectations raised only to be disappointed, and desires let loose only to terminate in distress! The child pines for a toy: the moment he possesses it, he throws it by and cries for another. When they are piled up in heaps around him, he looks at them without pleasure, and leaves them without regret. He knew not that all the good which they could yield lay in expectation; nor that his wishes for more would increase faster than toys could be multiplied, and is unhappy at last for the same reason as at first: his wishes are ungratified. Still indulging them, and still believing that the gratification of them will furnish the enjoyment for which he pines, he goes on, only to be unhappy.

Men are merely taller children. Honor, wealth and splendor are the toys for which grown children pine; but which, however accumulated, leave them still disappointed and unhappy. God never designed that intelligent beings should be satisfied with these enjoyments. By his wisdom and goodness they were formed to derive their happiness and virtue.

Moderated desires constitute a character fitted to acquire all the good which this world can yield. He who is prepared, in whatever situation he is, therewith to be content, has learned effectually the science of being happy, and possesses the alchemic stone which will change every metal into gold. Such a man will smile upon a stool, while Alexander at his side sits weeping on the throne of the world.

The doctrine of the text teaches you irresistibly that, since you can not command gratifications, you should command your desires; and that, as the events of life do not accord with your wishes, your wishes should accord with them. Multiplied enjoyments fall to but few men, and are no more rationally expected than the highest prize in a lottery. But a well-regulated mind, a dignified independence of the world, and a wise preparation to possess one's soul in patience, whatever circumstances may exist, is in the power of every man, and is greater wealth than that of both Indies, and greater honor than Caesar ever required.

Thirdly. As your course and your success through life are not under your control, you are strongly urged to commit yourselves to God, who can control both.

That you can not direct your course through the world, that your best concerted plans will often fail, that your sanguine expectations will be disappointed, and that your fondest worldly wishes will terminate in mortification can not admit of a momentary doubt. That God can direct you, that He actually controls all your concerns, and that, if you commit yourselves to His care, He will direct you kindly and safely, can be doubted only of choice. Why, then, do you hesitate to yield yourselves and your interests to the guidance of your Maker? There are two reasons which appear especially to govern mankind in this important concern; they do not and will not realize the agency of God in their affairs; and they do not choose to have them directed as they imagine He will direct them. The former is the result of stupidity; the latter, of impiety. Both are foolish in the extreme, and not less sinful than foolish.

The infinitely wise, great and glorious benefactor of the universe has offered to take men by the hand, lead them through the journey of life, and conduct them to His own house in the heavens. The proof of His sincerity in making this offer has been already produced. He has given His own Son to live, and die, and rise, and reign, and intercede for our race. "Herein is love," if there ever was love; "not that we have loved him, but that he has loved us." That He, who has done this, should not be sincere is impossible. St. Paul, therefore, triumphantly asks what none can answer: "He, that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Trust, then, His word with undoubting confidence; take His hand with humble gratitude, and with all thy heart obey His voice, which you will everywhere hear, saying, "this is the way, walk ye therein." In sickness and in health, by night and by day, at home and in crowds, He will watch over you with tenderness inexpressible. He will make you lie down in green pastures, lead you beside the still waters and guide you in paths of righteousness, for His name's sake. He will prepare a table before you in the presence of your enemies, and cause your cup to run over with blessings. When you pass through the waters of affliction He will be with you, and through the rivers they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle on you. From their native heavens He will commission those charming twin sisters, goodness and mercy, to descend and "follow you all your days."

But if you wish God to be your guide and your friend, you must conform to his pleasure. Certainly you can not wonder that the infinitely Wise should prefer His own wisdom to yours, and that he should choose for His children their allotments, rather than leave them to choose for themselves. That part of His pleasure, which you are to obey, is all summed up in the single word duty, and it is perfectly disclosed in the Scriptures. The whole scheme is so formed as to be plain, easy, profitable, and delightful; profitable in hand, delightful in the possession. Every part and precept of the whole is calculated for this end, and will make you only wise, good, and happy.

Life has been often styled an ocean, and our progress through it a voyage. The ocean is tempestuous and billowy, overspread by a cloudy sky, and fraught beneath with shelves and quicksands. The voyage is eventful beyond comprehension, and at the same time full of uncertainty, and replete with danger. Every adventurer needs to be well prepared for whatever may befall him, and well secured against the manifold hazards of losing his course, sinking in the abyss, or of being wrecked against the shore.

These evils have all existed at all times. The present, and that part of the past which is known to you by experience, has seen them multiplied beyond example. It has seen the ancient and acknowledged standards of thinking violently thrown down. Religion, morals, government, and the estimate formed by man of crimes and virtues, and of all the means of usefulness and enjoyment, have been questioned, attacked, and in various places, and with respect to millions of the human race, finally overthrown. A licentiousness of opinion and conduct, daring, outrageous, and rending asunder every bond formed by God or man, has taken place of former good sense and sound morals, and has long threatened the destruction of human good. Industry, cunning, and fraud have toiled with unrivaled exertions to convert man into a savage and the world into a desert. A wretched and hypocritical philanthropy, also, not less mischievous, has stalked forth as the companion of these ravages: a philanthropy born in a dream, bred in a hovel, and living only in professions. This guardian genius of human interests, this friend of human rights, this redresser of human wrongs, is yet without a heart to feel, and without a hand to bless. But she is well furnished with lungs, with eyes, and a tongue. She can talk, and sigh, and weep at pleasure, but can neither pity nor give. The objects of her attachment are either knaves and villains at home, or unknown sufferers beyond her reach abroad. To the former, she ministers the sword and the dagger, that they may fight their way into place, and power, and profit. At the latter she only looks through a telescope of fancy, as an astronomer searches for stars invisible to the eye. To every real object of charity within her reach she complacently says, "Be thou warmed, and be thou filled; depart in peace."

By the daring spirit, the vigorous efforts, and the ingenious cunning so industriously exerted on the one hand, and the smooth and gentle benevolence so softly profest on the other, multitudes have been, and you easily may be, destroyed. The mischief has indeed been met, resisted, and overcome; but it has the heads and the lives of the hydra, and its wounds, which at times have seemed deadly, are much more readily healed than any good man could wish, than any sober man could expect. Hope not to escape the assaults of this enemy: To feel that you are in danger will ever be a preparation for your safety. But it will be only such a preparation; your deliverance must ultimately and only flow from your Maker. Resolve, then, to commit yourselves to Him with a cordial reliance on His wisdom, power, and protection. Consider how much you have at stake, that you are bound to eternity, that your existence will be immortal, and that you will either rise to endless glory or be lost in absolute perdition. Heaven is your proper home. The path, which I have recommended to you, will conduct you safely and certainly to that happy world. Fill up life, therefore, with obedience to God, with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance unto life, the obedience to the two great commands of the gospel, with supreme love to God and universal good-will to men, the obedience to the two great commands of the law. On all your sincere endeavors to honor Him, and befriend your fellow men, He will smile; every virtuous attempt He will bless; every act of obedience He will reward. Life in this manner will be pleasant amid all its sorrows; and beams of hope will continually shine through the gloom, by which it is so often overcast. Virtue, the seed that can not die, planted from heaven, and cultivated by the divine hand, will grow up in your hearts with increasing vigor, and blossom in your lives with supernal beauty. Your path will be that of the just, and will gloriously resemble the dawning light, "which shines brighter and brighter, to the perfect day." Peace will take you by the hand, and offer herself as the constant and delightful companion of your progress. Hope will walk before you, and with an unerring finger point out your course; and joy, at the end of the journey, will open her arms to receive you. You will wait on the Lord, and renew your strength; will mount up with wings as eagles; will run, and not be weary; will walk, and not faint.

**÷**03-08 ROBERT HALL

MARKS OF LOVE TO GOD

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Robert Hall, Baptist divine, was born at Arnesby, near Leicester, England, in 1764. Destined for the ministry, he was educated at the Baptist Academy at Bristol, and preached for the first time in 1779. In 1783 he began his ministry in Bristol and drew crowded congregations of all classes. The tradition of Hall's pupit oratory has secured his lasting fame. Many minds of a high order were fascinated by his eloquence, and his conversation was brilliant. His treatment of religious topics had the rare merit of commending evangelical doctrine to people of taste. Dugald Stewart declares that his writings and public utterances exhibited the English language in its perfection. He died in 1831.

ROBERT HALL

1764—1831

MARKS OF LOVE TO GOD

*But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.*—Joh 5:42.

The persons whom our Lord addrest in these words made a high profession of religion, valued themselves upon their peculiar opportunities of knowing the true God and His will, and proclaimed themselves as the Israel and the temple of the Lord, while they despised the surrounding pagans as those who were strangers to the divine law. Yet the self-complacent Pharisees of our Savior's age were as far from the love of God, he assures them in the text, as any of those who had never heard of His name. In this respect, many of "the first were last, and the last first." The rejection of the gospel evinces a hardness of heart which is decisive against the character; and, in the case of the Pharisees, it gave ample evidence that they possest no love of God. Had they really known God, as our Lord argues, they would have known Himself to be sent by God: whereas, in proving the bitter enemies of Christ, they proved that they were in a state of enmity against God. By parity of reason, we, my brethren, who know God and His Word in the way of Christian profession, ought not to take it for granted that we possess the love of God, and are in the way of eternal life: the same self-delusion may overtake us also; and similar admonitions may be no less necessary to many present, than to the Pharisees of old. Suffer then, my brethren, the word of exhortation, while I invite each individual seriously to consider this subject, with a view to the discovery of his real character.

In proceeding to lay down certain marks of grace, let it be premised, that either these marks partake of the nature of true religion, or they do not. If they do, they must be identified with it, and here the mark is the thing: if they do not partake of its nature, some of them may exist as indications where genuine religion is not. It is necessary, then, that we combine a variety of particular signs of grace: any one taken by itself, may, or may not, exist, without true religion; but where many are combined, no just doubt can remain.

Whether you have the love of God in your soul presents a most critical subject of inquiry; since the love of God will be acknowledged by all to be the great, the essential, principle of true religion. The simple question, then, to which I would call your attention, is this: "Am I, or am I not, a sincere lover of the Author of my being?"

In endeavoring to assist you in the decision of this momentous question, as it respects yourselves. I shall entreat your attention while I suggest a variety of marks which indicate love to God; and supposing the conviction produced by the statement to be, that you have not the love of God, I shall point out the proper improvement of such a conviction.

In suggesting various marks by which you may ascertain whether you love God or not, I would mention the general bent and turn of your thoughts, when not under the immediate control of circumstances; for these, you are aware, give a new and peculiar bias to our thoughts, and stamp them with an impress of their own. There is an infinite variety of thoughts continually passing through the mind of every individual: of these, some are thrown up by occasions; but others, and often the greater part, follow the habitual train of our associations. It is not to thoughts of the former kind that I refer; it is to those of the latter class—those involuntary thoughts which spring up of themselves in the mind of every person: it is these, not the former, that afford clear indication of the general temper and disposition. The question I would propose to you is, What is the bent of your thoughts when, disengaged from the influence of any particular occurrence, you are left to yourselves, in the intervals of retirement and tranquillity, in the silence of the midnight watches, and, in short, whenever your mind is left free to its own spontaneous musings? Are the thoughts most familiar to your mind, at such times, thoughts of God and the things of God—or are they thoughts that turn upon the present world and its transient concerns? Are they confined, for the most part, within the narrow circle of time and sense; or do they make frequent and large excursions into the spiritual and eternal world? The answer to this question will go far to decide whether you have, or have not, the love of God. It is impossible that such an object as the divine Being should be absent long from your thoughts; impossible that His remembrance should long remain merged in the stream of other imaginations; unless you are supposed chargeable with a decided indifference to divine things! Unless you are destitute of love to God you can never be so utterly uncongenial in sentiment and feeling with the psalmist, when he says, "My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, while I meditate upon thee in the night watches." "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God!" When that man of God gazed upon the starry heavens, his mind was not merely wrought into astonishment at the physical energy there displayed; he was still more deeply lost in grateful admiration of the mercy of Providence as manifested to man—a sinful child of dust, and yet visited by God in the midst of so magnificent a universe! But when day passes after day, and night after night, without any serious thoughts of God, it is plain that He is not the home of your mind, not your portion, center, and resting-place: and if this is the case, it is equally plain that you are not in a state of acceptance with Him; since nothing can be more certain than that, as our thoughts are, such must be our character. I do not ask what are your thoughts at particular times, or under the influence of some particular event: there may be little difference, on some occasions, between those who remember, and those who neglect, God habitually. The charge against the ungodly is, that "God is not in all their thoughts." If there are any here who feel this charge as bearing against themselves, let them take that solemn warning given by God himself at the close of the fiftieth psalm, "Oh, consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you!"

Let me request you to consider seriously how you stand disposed to the exercises of religion. If God is the object of your love, you will gladly avail yourselves of the most favorable opportunities of cultivating a closer friendship with the Father of your spirits: on the contrary, he who feels no regard for these opportunities, proves that he has no love to God, and will never be able to establish the conviction that God is his friend. Wherever there exists a sincere friendship, opportunities of cultivating it are gladly embraced, and the opposite privations are regretted. Where a habitual neglect of sacred exercises prevails it must be interpreted as if it said, like those whom the prophet describes, "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from amongst us. Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy way!" If your closets seldom witness your private devotions, if your moments in retirement are languid and uninteresting—your religion can have no hold on your heart; and the reason why your religion has no hold on your heart is because you have no love of God. There are some whose religion sits easy and delightful upon them; its acts and functions are free and lively: there are others who seem to bear their religion as a burden, to drag their duties as a chain—as no vital part of themselves, but rather a cumbrous appendage: this is a decisive and melancholy symptom of a heart alienated from God. There is no genuine religion, no real contact of the heart with the best of beings, unless it makes us continually resort to Him as our chief joy. The psalmist is always expressing his fervent desires after God: after the light of the divine countenance, and the sense of the divine favor: but do you suppose such desires peculiar to the state of believers under the Old Testament? No, my brethren; there exist more abundant reasons than ever, since the gospel of Christ has been displayed in all the glorious fulness of its blessings, why our souls should be inflamed with such feelings as those which inspired the psalmist, when he exclaimed, "As the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God!"

If you would ascertain whether you love God, consider how you stand affected toward the Word of God. We can entertain no just thoughts of God, but such as we derive from His own Word: we can acquire no true knowledge of God, nor cherish any suitable affections toward Him, unless they are such as His own revelation authorizes. Otherwise we must suppose that revelation insufficient for its specific purposes, and set the means against the end. All, therefore, who sincerely love God, are students of His Word; they here, also accord in soul with the psalmist, and like him, can say, "O how I love thy word! in it is my meditation all the day:" they eat it as food for their souls, and find it sweeter than honey. They go to it as to an inexhaustible fountain, and drink from it streams of sacred light and joy. A neglected Bible is too unambiguous a sign of an unsanctified heart; since that blest book can not fail to attract every one that loves its divine Author. How is it possible to delight in God, and yet neglect that Word which alone reveals Him in His true and glorious character—alone discovers the way by which He comes into unison with us, and condescends to pardon us, to love us, and to guide us through all this mysterious state of being? It is observable that the only persons who are inattentive to their own sacred books are to be found among Christians. Mohammedans commit large portions of the Koran to memory; the Jews regard the Old Testament with reverence; the Hindu Brahmans are enthusiastically attached to their Shastra; while Christians alone neglect their Bible. And the reason is, that the Scriptures are so much more spiritual than the religious books received by others; they afford so little scope for mere amusement or self-complacency; they place the reader alone with God; they withdraw him from the things that are seen and temporal, and fix him among the things that are unseen and eternal; they disclose to his view at once the secret evils of his own condition, and the awful purity of that Being with whom he has to do. No wonder the ungodly man hates their light, neither comes to their light, but retires from it farther and farther into the shades of guilty ignorance. How melancholy the infatuation of such a character!

Estimate your character in respect to your love of God, by reflecting, with what sentiments you regard the people of God. God has a people peculiarly His own: they are not of that world to which they outwardly belong—not conformed to it in the spirit of their mind; they stand apart, many of them at least, in conspicuous conformity to Jesus Christ, and in earnest expectation of the glory which He had promised. How, then, do you regard these decided followers of God? Do you shun their society with aversion and secret shame; or do you enjoy their communion as one of the most delightful among your Christian privileges? Are you content merely to be the companion of those who "have a name to live, but are dead": or can you say with the psalmist, "My delight is in the excellent of the earth"? or, with the beloved disciple, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren"? for, as he adds, "He that loveth him that begot, loveth him that is begotten"; if you do not love the image which you have seen, how can you love the unseen original? If the features of holiness and grace in the creature are not attractive to your view, how can your affections rise to the perfect essence? How can you ascend to the very sun itself, when you can not enjoy even the faint reflection of its glory? He who knew the heart, could alone say to those around Him, "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you": but tho none can address you now in the same tone of divine authority, yet we may hear it uttered by a voice—the voice of your own conscience: you may know, without any perturbations of hope or fear, by the spiritual insensibility and inaction of your soul—by this you may know, with equal certainty as by a voice from heaven, that you have not the love of God in you.

Consider the disposition you entertain toward the person and office of the Son of God. "If ye had loved the Father, ye would have loved me also," was the constant argument of Jesus Christ to those Pharisees whom He addresses in the text For Jesus Christ is the express image of God: the effulgence of the divine character is attempered in Him, to suit the views of sinful humanity. In the life of Jesus Christ we see how the divine Being conducts Himself in human form and in our own circumstances: we behold how He bears all the sorrows, and passes through all the temptations, of flesh and blood. Such, indeed, is the identity, so perfect the oneness of character, between the man Christ Jesus and the divine Being—that our Savior expressly assures us, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; I and my Father are one." The purpose for which God was manifested in the flesh was not to reveal high speculations concerning the nature of the Deity: it was to bear our sorrows, and to die for our sins. But can you contemplate Him, thus stooping to your condition, thus mingling with every interest of your own, and not be moved by such a spectacle?—not be attracted, fixt, filled with grateful astonishment and devotion—crucified, as it were, on the cross of Christ, to the flesh, and to the world? What mark, then, of our possessing no love of God can equal this, that we are without love to Jesus Christ?—that neither the visibility of His divine excellence, nor His participation of all our human sufferings, can reach our hearts and command our affections?

In examining whether you love God, examine how you are affected by His benefits. These are so numerous and so distinguished that they ought to excite our most ardent gratitude: night and day they are experienced by us; they pervade every moment of our being. We know that favors from an enemy derive a taint from the hands through which they are received, and excite alienation rather than attachment: but the kindness of a friend, by constantly reminding us of himself, endears that friend more and more to our hearts; and thus, he that has no love to God receives all His favors without the least attraction toward their Author, whom he regards rather as an enemy than as a friend. But the Christian feels his love of God excited by every fresh goodness. The mercies of God have accompanied you through every stage of your journey; and they are exhibited to you in His word as stretching through a vast eternity. Are these the only benefits you can receive without gratitude, and suffer to pass unregarded How, then, can any love of God dwell in your bosom?

Consider, in the next place, in what manner you are imprest by the sense of your sins. The question is not whether you have any sins,—none can admit a doubt on this point; the only inquiry is, how you are affected by those sins? Are they remembered by you with a sentiment of tender regret, of deep confusion and humiliation, that you should ever have so requited such infinite goodness? And is this sentiment combined with a sacred resolution to go and sin no more,—to devote yourself to the service of your divine Benefactor? If you can live without an habitual sense of penitential tenderness and reverential fear, be assured you can not love God; you have no experience of those Scripture declarations: "They shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days;" "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared;" you know not that "the goodness of God leadeth to repentence." If the mind is softened by the love of God, all His favors serve to inflame its gratitude, and confirm its devotion to His will: but he who has no love of God in his soul, thinks of nothing but how he may escape from God's hand, and selfishly devours all His favors, without an emotion of gratitude to the Giver.

Finally, let me remind you to consider how you are affected to the present world. If you could only be exempt from its afflictions, would you wish it to be your lasting home? If you could surround yourself with all its advantages and enjoyments, would you be content to dwell in it forever? Yet you know that it is a place of separation and exile from the divine majesty; that it is a scene of darkness, in comparison with heaven, very faintly illuminated with the beams of His distant glory; that its inhabitant is constrained to say, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but mine eye hath not yet seen thee";—while heaven is the proper dwelling-place of God and His people! Could you then consent to remain here always, without ever seeing as you are seen—seeing light in His light—without ever beholding His glory; without ever drinking at the fountain, and basking in that presence which is fulness of joy, and life forevermore? always to remain immersed in the shadows of time—entombed in its corruptible possessions? never to ascend up on high to God and Christ and the glories of the eternal world? If such is the state of your spirit, you want the essential principle of a Christian—you want the love of God. The genuine Christian, the lover of God, is certain to feel himself a "stranger on the earth." No splendor, no emolument of this world,—not all the fascinations of sensual pleasure,—can detain his heart below the skies, or keep him from sympathizing with the sentiment of the psalmist: "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I wake in thy likeness." I do not ask whether you have, at present, "a desire to depart": perhaps you may not be as yet sufficiently prepared and established to entertain so exalted a desire; but still, if you have received a new heart, you will deprecate nothing so much as having your portion in this life,—as having your eternal abode on earth. It is the character of faith to dwell much in eternity: the apostle says, in the name of all real believers, "We look not at the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal."

And now, my brethren, supposing the preceding remarks to have produced in any of you the conviction that you have not the love of God in you, permit me very briefly to point out the proper improvement of such a conviction.

First, it should be accompanied with deep humiliation. If you labored under the privation of some bodily organ, requisite to the discharge of an animal function, you would feel it as in some degree a humiliating circumstance; but what would be any defect of this kind, however serious, in comparison with that great want under which you labor—the want of piety, the calamity of a soul estranged from the love of God! What are the other subjects of humiliation compared with this—a moral fall, a spiritual death in sin: and this, unless it be removed, the sure precursor of the second death—eternal ruin! "This is a lamentation indeed, and it shall be for a lamentation."

Suppose the children of a family, reared and provided for by the most affectionate of parents, to rise up in rebellion against their father, and cast off all the feelings of filial tenderness and respect; would any qualities those children might possess, any appearance of virtue they might exhibit in other respects, compensate for such an unnatural, such an awful deformity of character? Transfer this representation to your conduct in relation to God: "If I," says He, "am a father, where is my fear? if I am a master, where is my honor?" "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me: the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

And let your humiliation be accompanied with concern and alarm. To be alienated from the great Origin of being; to be severed, or to sever yourself from the essential Author and element of all felicity, must be a calmity which none can understand, an infinite wo which none can measure or conceive. If the stream is cut off from the fountain, it soon ceases to flow, and its waters are dissipated in the air: and if the soul is cut off from God, it dies! Its vital contact with God,—its spiritual union with the Father of spirits through the blest Mediator, is the only life and beauty of the immortal soul. All, without this, are dead—"dead in trespasses and sins"! A living death—a state of restless wanderings, and unsatisfied desires! What a condition theirs! And, oh! what a prospect for such, when they look beyond this world! who will give them a welcome when they enter an eternal state? What reception will they meet with, and where? What consolation amid their losses and their sufferings, but that of the fellow-sufferers plunged in the same abyss of ruin? Impenitent sinners are allied to evil spirits, they have an affinity with the kingdom of darkness; and when they die, they are emphatically said to "go to their own place"!

This is an awful state for any to be in at present; but, blest be God, it is not yet a hopeless situation. Let no person say, "I find by what I have heard, that I do not love God, and therefore I can entertain no hope." There is a way of return and recovery open to all. Jesus Christ, my dear brethren, proclaims to you all, "I am the way. No man can come to the Father but by me":—but every one that will may come by this new and living way; and, if you lose life eternal, you lose it because—according to his words just before the text—because "you will not come to Christ that you may have life." If you feel the misery, deformity, and danger of your state, then listen to His invitation, and embrace His promise. See the whole weight of your guilt transferred to His cross! See how God can be at once the just and the justifier! Take of the blood of sprinkling, and be at peace! His blood cleanseth from all sin: He will send that Spirit into your heart which will manifest Him to you; and where that Spirit is, there is liberty and holy love. He is the mystical ladder, let down from heaven to earth, on which angels are continually ascending and descending, in token of an alliance established between God and man. United by faith to Jesus Christ, you shall become a habitation of God through the Spirit; the Father will make you a partaker of His love, the Son of His grace, angels of their friendship; and you shall be preserved, and progressively sanctified, until, by the last change, all remains of the great epidemic source of evils shall be forever removed from your soul; and the love of God shall constitute your eternal felicity.

**÷**03-09 EVANS

THE FALL AND RECOVERY OF MAN

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Christmas Evans, a Welsh Baptist preacher, was born at Isgaerwen, Cardiganshire, South Wales, in 1766. Brought up as a Presbyterian, he turned Baptist in 1788, and was ordained the following year and ministered among the Baptists in Carmaerthenshire. In 1792 he became a sort of bishop to those of his denomination in Anglesey, where he took up his residence. After a somewhat stormy experience with those he undertook to rule, he removed to Carmaerthen in 1832. He distinguished himself by his debt-raising tours, in which his eloquence brought him much success. It is said that once when he was preaching on the subject of the prodigal son, he pointed to a distant mountain as he described the father seeing him while yet a great way off, whereupon thousands in his congregation turned their heads in evident expectation of seeing the son actually coming down the hills. He died in 1838.

EVANS

1766—1838

THE FALL AND RECOVERY OF MAN

*For if, through the offense of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.*—Rom 5:15.

Man was created in the image of God. Knowledge and perfect holiness were imprest upon the very nature and faculties of his soul. He had constant access to his Maker, and enjoyed free communion with Him, on the ground of his spotless moral rectitude. But, alas! the glorious diadem is broken; the crown of righteousness is fallen. Man's purity is gone, and his happiness is forfeited. "There is none righteous; no, not one." "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." But the ruin is not hopeless. What was lost in Adam is restored in Christ. His blood redeems us from the bondage, and His gospel gives us back the forfeited inheritance. "For if, through the offense of one, many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." Let us consider, first, the corruption and condemnation of man; and secondly, his gracious restoration to the favor of his offended God.

I. To find the cause of man's corruption and condemnation, we must go back to Eden. The eating of the "forbidden tree" was "the offense of one," in consequence of which "many are dead." This was the "sin," the act of "disobedience," which "brought death into the world, and all our wo." It was the greatest ingratitude to the divine bounty, and the boldest rebellion against the divine sovereignty. The royalty of God was contemned; the riches of His goodness slighted; and His most desperate enemy preferred before Him, as if he were a wiser counsellor than infinite wisdom. Thus man joined in league with hell against heaven; with demons of the bottomless pit against the almighty maker and benefactor; robbing God of the obedience due to His command and the glory due to His name; worshiping the creature instead of the creator; and opening the door to pride, unbelief, enmity, and all the wicked and abominable passions. How is the "noble vine," which was planted "wholly a right seed," "turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine"!

Who can look for pure water from such a fountain? "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." All the faculties of the soul are corrupted by sin; the understanding dark; the will perverse; the affections carnal; the conscience full of shame, remorse, confusion, and mortal fear. Man is a hard-hearted and stiff-necked sinner; loving darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil; eating sin like bread, and drinking iniquity like water; holding fast deceit, and refusing to let it go. His heart is desperately wicked; full of pride, vanity, hypocrisy, covetousness, hatred of truth, and hostility to all that is good.

This depravity is universal. Among the natural children of Adam, there is no exemption from the original taint. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is as filthy rags." The corruption may vary in the degrees of development, in different persons; but the elements are in all, and their nature is everywhere the same; the same in the blooming youth, and the withered sire; in the haughty prince, and the humble peasant; in the strongest giant, and the feeblest invalid. The enemy has "come in like a flood." The deluge of sin has swept the world. From the highest to the lowest, there is no health or moral soundness. From the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, there is nothing but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores. The laws, and their violation, and the punishments everywhere invented for the suppression of vice, prove the universality of the evil. The bloody sacrifices, and various purifications, of the pagans, show the handwriting of remorse upon their consciences; proclaim their sense of guilt, and their dread of punishment. None of them are free from the fear which hath torment, whatever their efforts to overcome it, and however great their boldness in the service of sin and Satan. "Menel Tekel!" is written on every human heart. "Wanting! wanting!" is inscribed on heathen fanes and altars; on the laws, customs, and institutions of every nation; and on the universal consciousness of mankind.

This inward corruption manifests itself in outward actions. "The tree is known by its fruit." As the smoke and sparks of the chimney show that there is fire within; so all the "filthy conversation" of men, and all "the unfruitful works of darkness" in which they delight, evidently indicate the pollution of the source whence they proceed. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The sinner's speech betrayeth him. "Evil speaking" proceeds from malice and envy. "Foolish talking and jesting" are evidence of impure and trifling thoughts. The mouth full of cursing and bitterness, the throat an open sepulcher, the poison of asps under the tongue, the feet swift to shed blood, destruction and misery in their paths, and the way of peace unknown to them, are the clearest and amplest demonstration that men "have gone out of the way," "have together become unprofitable." We see the bitter fruit of the same corruption in robbery, adultery, gluttony, drunkenness, extortion, intolerance, persecution, apostasy, and every evil work—in all false religions; the Jew, obstinately adhering to the carnal ceremonies of an abrogated law; the Mohammedan, honoring an impostor, and receiving a lie for a revelation from God; the papist, worshiping images and relics, praying to departed saints, seeking absolution from sinful men, and trusting in the most absurd mummeries for salvation; the pagan, attributing divinity to the works of his own hands, adoring idols of wood and stone, sacrificing to malignant demons, casting his children into the fire or the flood as an offering to imaginary deities, and changing the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the beast and the worm.

"For these things' sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience." They are under the sentence of the broken law; the malediction of eternal justice. "By the offense of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation." "He that believeth not is condemned already." "The wrath of God abideth on him." "Curst is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them." "Wo unto the wicked; it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him." "They that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, shall reap the same." "Upon the wicked the Lord shall rain fire, and snares, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup." "God is angry with the wicked every day; if he turn not he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready."

Who shall describe the misery of fallen man! His days, tho few, are full of evil. Trouble and sorrow press him forward to the tomb. All the world, except Noah and his family, are drowning in the deluge. A storm of fire and brimstone is fallen from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah. The earth is opening her mouth to swallow up alive Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Wrath is coming upon "the beloved city," even "wrath unto the uttermost." The tender and delicate mother is devouring her darling infant. The sword of men is executing the vengeance of God. The earth is emptying its inhabitants into the bottomless pit. On every hand are "confused noises, and garments rolled in blood." Fire and sword fill the land with consternation and dismay. Amid the universal devastation wild shrieks and despairing groans fill the air. God of mercy! is Thy ear heavy, that Thou canst not hear? or Thy arm shortened, that Thou canst not save? The heavens above are brass, and the earth beneath is iron; for Jehovah is pouring His indignation upon His adversaries, and He will not pity or spare.

Verily, "the misery of man is great upon him"! Behold the wretched fallen creature! The pestilence pursues him. The leprosy cleaves to him. Consumption is wasting him. Inflammation is devouring his vitals. Burning fever has seized upon the very springs of life. The destroying angel has overtaken the sinner in his sins. The hand of God is upon him. The fires of wrath are kindling about him, drying up every well of comfort, and scorching all his hopes to ashes. Conscience is chastizing him with scorpions. See how he writhes! Hear how he shrieks for help! Mark what agony and terror are in his soul, and on his brow! Death stares him in the face, and shakes at him his iron spear. He trembles, he turns pale, as a culprit at the bar, as a convict on the scaffold. He is condemned already. Conscience has pronounced the sentence. Anguish has taken hold upon him. Terrors gather in battle array about him. He looks back, and the storms of Sinai pursue him; forward, and hell is moved to meet him; above, and the heavens are on fire; beneath, and the world is burning. He listens, and the judgment trump is calling; again, and the brazen chariots of vengeance are thundering from afar; yet again, the sentence penetrates his soul with anguish unspeakable—"Depart! ye accurst! into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!"

Thus, "by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." They are "dead in trespasses and sins," spiritually dead, and legally dead; dead by the mortal power of sin, and dead by the condemnatory sentence of the law; and helpless as sheep to the slaughter, they are driven fiercely on by the ministers of wrath to the all-devouring grave and the lake of fire!

But is there no mercy? Is there no means of salvation? Hark! amid all this prelude of wrath and ruin, comes a still small voice, saying: "Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."

II. This brings us to our second topic, man's gracious recovery to the favor of his offended God.

I know not how to present to you this glorious work, better than by the following figure. Suppose a vast graveyard, surrounded by a lofty wall, with only one entrance, which is by a massive iron gate, and that is fast bolted. Within are thousands and millions of human beings, of all ages and classes, by one epidemic disease bending to the grave. The graves yawn to swallow them, and they must all perish. There is no balm to relieve, no physician there. Such is the condition of man as a sinner. All have sinned; and it is written, "The soul that sinneth shall die." But while the unhappy race lay in that dismal prison, Mercy came and stood at the gate, and wept over the melancholy scene, exclaiming—"Oh, that I might enter! I would bind up their wounds; I would relieve their sorrows; I would save their souls!" An embassy of angels, commissioned from the court of heaven to some other world, paused at the sight, and heaven forgave that pause. Seeing Mercy standing there, they cried:—"Mercy! canst thou not enter? Canst thou look upon that scene and not pity? Canst thou pity, and not relieve?" Mercy replied: "I can see!" and in her tears she added, "I can pity, but I can not relieve!" "Why canst thou not enter?" inquired the heavenly host. "Oh!" said Mercy, "Justice has barred the gate against me, and I must not—can not unbar it!" At this moment, Justice appeared, as if to watch the gate. The angels asked, "Why wilt thou not suffer Mercy to enter?" He sternly replied: "The law is broken, and it must be honored! Die they, or Justice must!" Then appeared a form among the angelic band like unto the Son of God. Addressing Himself to Justice, He said: "What are thy demands?" Justice replied: "My demands are rigid; I must have ignominy for their honor, sickness for their health, death for their life. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission!" "Justice," said the Son of God, "I accept thy terms! On me be this wrong! Let Mercy enter, and stay the carnival of death!" "What pledge dost thou give for the performance of these conditions?" "My word; my oath!" "When wilt thou perform them?" "Four thousand years hence, on the hill of Calvary, without the walls of Jerusalem." The bond was prepared, and signed and sealed in the presence of attendant angels. Justice was satisfied, the gate was opened, and Mercy entered, preaching salvation in the name of Jesus. The bond was committed to patriarchs and prophets. A long series of rites and ceremonies, sacrifices and obligations, was instituted to perpetuate the memory of that solemn deed. At the close of the four thousandth year, when Daniel's "seventy weeks" were accomplished, Justice and Mercy appeared on the hill of Calvary. "Where," and Justice, "is the Son of God?" "Behold him," answered Mercy, "at the foot of the hill!" And there He came, bearing His own cross, and followed by His weeping church. Mercy retired, and stood aloof from the scene. Jesus ascended the hill like a lamb for the sacrifice. Justice presented the dreadful bond, saying, "This is the day on which this article must be canceled." The Redeemer took it. What did He do with it? Tear it to pieces, and scatter it to the winds? No! He nailed it to His cross, crying, "It is finished!" The victim ascended the altar. Justice called on Holy Fire to come down and consume the sacrifice. Holy Fire replied: "I come! I will consume the sacrifice, and then I will burn up the world!" It fell upon the Son of God, and rapidly consumed His humanity; but when it touched His deity, it expired. Then was there darkness over the whole land, and an earthquake shook the mountain; but the heavenly host broke forth in rapturous song—"Glory to God in the highest! on earth peace! good will to man!"

Thus grace has abounded, and the free gift has come upon all, and the gospel has gone forth proclaiming redemption to every creature. "By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." By grace ye are loved, redeemed, and justified. By grace ye are called, converted, reconciled and sanctified. Salvation is wholly of grace. The plan, the process, the consummation are all of grace.

"Where sin abounded, grace hath much more abounded." "Through the offense of one, many were dead." And as men multiplied, the offense abounded. The waters deluged the world, but could not wash away the dreadful stain. The fire fell from heaven, but could not burn out the accurst plague. The earth opened her mouth, but could not swallow up the monster sin. The law thundered forth its threat from the thick darkness on Sinai, but could not restrain, by all its, terrors, the children of disobedience. Still the offense abounded, and multiplied as the sands on the seashore. It waxed bold, and pitched its tents on Calvary, and nailed the Lawgiver to a tree. But in that conflict sin received its mortal wound. The victim was the victor. He fell, but in His fall He crusht the foe. He died unto sin, but sin and death were crucified upon His cross. Where sin abounded to condemn, grace hath much more abounded to justify. Where sin abounded to corrupt, grace hath much more abounded to purify. Where sin abounded to harden, grace hath much more abounded to soften and subdue. Where sin abounded to imprison men, grace hath much more abounded to proclaim liberty to the captives. Where sin abounded to break the law and dishonor the Lawgiver, grace hath much more abounded to repair the breach and efface the stain. Where sin abounded to consume the soul as with unquenchable fire and a gnawing worm, grace hath much more abounded to extinguish the flame and heal the wound. Grace hath abounded! It hath established its throne on the merit of the Redeemer's sufferings. It hath put on the crown, and laid hold of the golden scepter, and spoiled the dominion of the prince of darkness, and the gates of the great cemetery are thrown open, and there is the beating of a new life-pulse throughout its wretched population and immortality is walking among the tombs!

This abounding grace is manifested in the gift of Jesus Christ, by whose mediation our reconciliation and salvation are effected. With Him, believers are dead unto sin, and alive unto God. Our sins were slain at His cross, and buried in His tomb. His resurrection hath opened our graves, and given us an assurance of immortality. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from the wrath through him; for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

"The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Glory to God, for the death of His Son, by which this enmity is slain, and reconciliation is effected between the rebel and the law! This was the unspeakable gift that saved us from ruin; that wrestled with the storm, and turned it away from the devoted head of the sinner. Had all the angels of God attempted to stand between these two conflicting seas, they would have been swept to the gulf of destruction. "The blood of bulls and goats, on Jewish altars slain," could not take away sin, could not pacify the conscience. But Christ, the gift of divine grace, "Paschal Lamb by God appointed," a "sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they," bore our sins and carried our sorrows, and obtained for us the boon of eternal redemption. He met the fury of the tempest, and the floods went over His head; but His offering was an offering of peace, calming the storms and the waves, magnifying the law, glorifying its Author, and rescuing its violator from the wrath and ruin. Justice hath laid down his sword at the foot of the cross, and amity is restored between heaven and earth.

Hither, O ye guilty! come and cast away your weapons of rebellion! Come with your bad principles and wicked actions; your unbelief, and enmity, and pride; and throw them off at the Redeemer's feet! God is here waiting to be gracious. He will receive you; He will east all your sins behind His back, into the depths of the sea; and they shall be remembered against you no more forever. By Heaven's "unspeakable gift," by Christ's invaluable atonement, by the free, infinite grace of the Father and Son, we persuade you, we beseech you, we entreat you, "be ye reconciled to God"!

It is by the work of the Holy Spirit with us that we obtain a personal interest in the work wrought on Calvary for us. If our sins are canceled, they are also crucified. If we are reconciled in Christ, we fight against our God no more. This is the fruit of faith. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." May the Lord inspire in every one of us that saving principle!

But those who have been restored to the divine favor may sometimes be cast down and dejected. They have passed through the sea, and sung praises on the shore of deliverance; but there is yet between them and Canaan "a waste howling wilderness," a long and weary pilgrimage, hostile nations, fiery serpents, scarcity of food, and the river of Jordan. Fears within and fightings without, they may grow discouraged, and yield to temptation and murmur against God, and desire to return to Egypt. But fear not, thou worm Jacob! Reconciled by the death of Christ; much more, being reconciled, thou shalt be saved by His life. His death was the price of our redemption; His life insures liberty to the believer. If by His death He brought you through the Red Sea in the night, by His life He can lead you through the river Jordan in the day. If by His death He delivered you from the iron furnace in Egypt, by His life He can save you from all perils of the wilderness. If by His death He conquered Pharaoh, the chief foe, by His life He can subdue Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan. "We shall be saved by his life." Because He liveth, we shall live also. "Be of good cheer!" The work is finished; the ransom is effected; the kingdom of heaven is open to all believers. "Lift up your heads and rejoice," "ye prisoners of hope!" There is no debt unpaid, no devil unconquered, no enemy within your hearts that has not received a mortal wound! "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

**÷**03-10 SCHLEIERMACHER

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AN IMAGE OF OUR NEW LIFE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Friedrich Ernst Daniel Schleiermacher, German theologian and philosopher, was born at Breslau in 1768. He was brought up in a religious home and in 1787 went to the University of Halle, and in 1789 became a Privat-Docent. In 1794 he was ordained and preached successively at Landsberg and Berlin. The literary and philosophical side of his intellect developed itself in sympathy with the Romanticists, but he never lost his passion for religion, a subject on which he published five discurses in 1799. We find in them a trace of the pantheism of Spinoza. His translation of Plato, accomplished between 1804 and 1806, gave him high rank as a classical scholar. In 1817 he joined the movement toward the union of the Lutheran and Reformed churches. As a preacher he was unprepossessing in appearance, being sickly and hunchbacked, but his simplicity of manner, and his clear, earnest style endeared him to many thousands. He died in Berlin in 1834.

SCHLEIERMACHER

1768—1834

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AN IMAGE OF OUR NEW LIFE

*As Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life.*—Rom 6:4.

It is natural, my friends, that the glorious festival of our Savior's resurrection should attract the thoughts of believers to a far remote time, and that it should make them rejoice to think of the time when they shall be with Him who, after He had risen from the dead, returned to His and our Father. But the apostle, in the words of our text, recalls us from what is far off to what is close to us—to the immediate present of our life here. He takes hold of what is the most immediate concern, of what we are at once to share in and which is to form us, even here, into the likeness of Christ's resurrection. We are buried with Him, He says, unto death, that as He was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we also might walk in newness of life. And this new life is that which, as the Lord Himself says, all who believe in Him possess even now as having passed through death to life. The apostle compares this with those glorious days of our Lord's resurrection; and how could we more appropriately keep this feast—a feast in which, above all others, many Christians draw renewed strength for this new life from the most intimate union with our heavenly Head—how could we better celebrate it than by endeavoring to receive this directly for ourselves from the words of the apostle? Let us then, according to the teaching of these words, consider the resurrection life of our Lord, as the apostle presents it to us, as a glorious, tho it may be unattainable, model of the new life in which we are all to walk through Him.

1. This new life is like that of our risen Savior, first, in the manner of His resurrection. In order to appear to His disciples in that glorified form, which already bore in it the indications of the eternal and immortal glory, it was necessary that the Savior should pass through the pains of death. It was not an easy transformation; it was necessary for Him, tho not to see corruption, yet to have the shadow of death pass over Him; and friends and enemies vied with each other in trying to retain Him in the power of the grave; the friends rolling a stone before it, to keep the beloved corpse in safety, the enemies setting a watch lest it should be taken away. But when the hour came which the Father had reserved in His own power, the angel of the Lord appeared and rolled away the stone from the tomb, and the watch fled, and at the summons of omnipotence life came back into the dead form.

Thus, my friends, we know what is the new life that is to be like the resurrection life of the Lord. A previous life must die; the apostle calls it the body of sin, the law of sin in our members, and this needs no lengthened discussion. We all know and feel that this life, which Scripture calls a being dead in sins, pleasant and splendid as may be the form it often assumes, is yet nothing but what the mortal body of the Savior also was, an expression and evidence of the power of death, because even the fairest and strongest presentation of this kind lacks the element of being imperishable. Thus with the mortal body of the Savior, and thus also with the natural life of man, which is as yet not a life from God.

And this our old man must die a violent death in the name of the law, such as the Savior died, not without severe suffering and painful wounds. For if the body of sin dies out in a man of itself, through satiety of earthly things, and because no excitement can any longer affect his exhausted powers, that is a death from which we see no new life proceed. The power of sin must be slain in a man by violence; a man must go through the torture of self-knowledge, showing him the contrast between his wretched condition and the higher life to which he is called; he must hear the cry, and accept it as an irrevocable sentence; that an end is to be put to this life; he must groan and almost sink under the preparations for the execution of that sentence; all his accustomed habits of life must cease; he must be conscious of the wish that he were safely through it all, and it were at an end.

And when he has yielded up the old life to a welcome death, and the old man is crucified with Christ, then the world, which knows nothing better than that previous life, if it only goes on well and easily, uses all kinds of efforts to hinder the rising up of the new life, some of them well-meaning, others self-interested and therefore hostile. Some, with good intentions, like those friends of the Savior, consult together, and try all in their power, keeping away all extraneous influences, to preserve at least the appearance of their friend from being defaced, and tho no joyful movement can ever again be awakened, to preserve the form of the old life. Others, seeking their own interest and pleasure in a way by which they almost certainly accuse themselves, try to prevent an abuse being practised in this state of things, and also to guard against the gay, merry life which they lead, and into which they like so much to lead others, being brought into contempt by a question of a new life arising after this dying off of the old man, when, as they think, there is really nothing else and nothing better here on earth and when it is a vain pretense for some to assert that they know this new life, and a mischievous delusion for others to attempt attaining it. Therefore wherever they perceive such a state of things, they have their spies to watch against every deception that might be practised about such a new life, or at least at once to discover and publish what kind of delusions prevail in connection with it.

But when the hour has come which the Father has kept in His own power, then in one form or another His life-bringing angel appears to such a soul. Yet how little do we know about what part the angel had in the Savior's resurrection! We do not know if the Savior saw him or not; we can not determine the moment at which he rolled away the stone from the tomb and the reanimated Savior came forth; no one witnessed it, and the only persons of whom we are told that they might have been able to see it with their bodily eyes were smitten with blindness. And in like manner, neither do we know how the soul, lying, so to speak, in the tomb of self-destruction, is wrought upon by the angel of the Lord in order to call forth the life of God in it. It arises unseen in that grave-like silence, and can not be perceived until it is actually present; what is properly the beginning of it is hidden, as every beginning usually is, even from him to whom the life is imparted. But this is certain, as the apostle says, that the Lord was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and thus also, according to the words of the Savior, no man comes to the Son except the Father draw him; that same glory of the Father, which then called forth the Savior from the tomb, still awakens in the soul that has died to sin the new life, like the resurrection life of the Lord. Indeed, among all the proofs of the Father's glory in heaven and earth, there is none greater than this, that he has no pleasure in the death-like condition of the sinner, but that at some time or another the almighty, mysterious, life-giving call sounds in his ears—Arise and live.

2. And, secondly, this new life resembles its type and ideal, the resurrection life of Christ, not only in being risen from death, but also in its whole nature, way and manner. First, in this respect, that tho a new life, it is, nevertheless, the life of the same man, and in the closest connection with his former life. Thus, with our Savior; He was the same, and was recognized by His disciples as the same, to their great joy; His whole appearance was the very same; even in the glory of His resurrection He bore the marks of His wounds as a remembrance of His sufferings and as the tokens of His death; and the remembrance of His former state was most closely and constantly present with Him. And just so it is with the new life of the Spirit. If the old man has died in sin, and we now live in Christ, and with Him in God, yet we are the same persons that we were before. As the resurrection of the Lord was no new creation, but the same man, Jesus, who had gone down into the grave, come forth again from it; so in the soul before it died the death which leads to life in God, there must have lain the capability of receiving that life when the body of sin should die and perish; and that life is developed in the same human soul amid the same outward circumstances as before, and with its other powers and faculties remaining unchanged. We are entirely the same persons, only that the fire of the higher life is kindled in us, and also that we all bear the signs of death, and that the remembrance of our former state is present with us. Yes, in manifold ways we are often reminded of what we were and what we did before the call to new life sounded in our hearts; and it is not so easy to efface the scars of the wounds, and the numberless traces of the pains under which the old man had to die that the new man might live. And as the glad faith of the disciples rested on the very fact that they recognized the Lord as being, in the glory of His resurrection, the same person that He was before; so also in us, the confidence in this new life, as a permanent and now natural state with us, rests only on this—that we recognize ourselves in it as the same persons that we were before; that there are the same faculties, lower and higher, of the human soul, which formerly served sin, but are now created anew as instruments of righteousness. Indeed, all the traces of that death, as well as of the former life, make us more vividly conscious of the great change that the life-giving call of God has produced in us, and call for the most heartfelt gratitude.

And as the Savior was the same person in the days of His resurrection, so His life was also again of course a vigorous and active life; indeed, we might almost say it bore the traces of humanity, without which it could be no image of our new life, even in this, that it gradually grew stronger and acquired new powers. When the Savior first appeared to Mary, He said, as if His new life had been, as it were, timid and sensitive, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my God and your God." But after a few days He showed Himself to Thomas, and bade him boldly touch Him, put his hand in the Master's side, and his fingers into the marks left by the nails of the cross, so that He did not shrink from being touched even on the most sensitive spots. And also even in the earliest days, and as if the new life were to be fully strengthened by doing so, we find Him walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and from Emmaus back to Jerusalem, as well as going before His disciples into Galilee, and leading them back to Jerusalem, where He then ascended to heaven in their sight. And as He thus walked among them, living a life with them, human in every part, and exercising a human influence on them; so also His most important business was to talk with them of the kingdom of God, to reprove and rouse them up from their slowness of heart, and to open the eyes of their minds. Now so it is, my friends, with our new life—that is like the resurrection life of the Lord. Oh, how very gradually it gains its faculties in us, grows and becomes strong, only bearing still more than the new life of the Lord the traces of earthly imperfection. I can appeal on this point to the feeling of us all, for assuredly it is the same in all. How intermittent at first are the manifestations of this new life, and how limited the sphere of its action! How long does it retain its sensitive spots, which can not be touched without pain, or even without injurious consequences, and those are always the places in which the old man has been most deeply wounded in his dying hours! But in proportion as it becomes stronger, this new life ought the less to give the impression of being a mere fantom life,—the impression the Lord's disciples had when in the first moments they thought in their fear that they saw a spirit, so that He was obliged to appeal to the testimony of all their senses, that they might perceive He was no spirit, but had flesh and bones. And thus if our new life in God consisted in mere states of feeling and emotions, which were not in the least capable of passing into action, or perhaps did not even aim at doing so; which were too peculiar and special to ourselves to be actually communicated to others or to move them with good effect, but rather might touch them with a chill sense of awe; what would such a life be but a ghost-like apparition that would no doubt excite attention, but would find no credence, and would make men uneasy in their accustomed course, but without producing any improvement in it? No, it is a life of action, and ought to be ever becoming more so; not only being nourished and growing stronger and stronger through the word of the Lord and through heart-communion with Him, to which He calls us, giving Himself to us as the meat and drink of eternal life, but every one striving to make his new life intelligible to others about him, and to influence them by it. Oh, that we had our eyes more and more steadily fixt on the risen Savior! Oh, that we could ever be learning more and more from Him to breathe out blessing, as He did when He imparted His Spirit to the disciples! Oh, that we were more and more learning like Him to encourage the foolish and slow of heart to joyful faith in the divine promises, to active obedience to the divine will of their Lord and Master, to the glad enjoyment and use of all the heavenly treasures that He has thrown open to us! Oh, that we were ever speaking more effectively to all connected with us, of the kingdom of God and of our inheritance in it, so that they might see why it was necessary for Christ to suffer, but also into what glory He has gone! These are our desires, and they are not vain desires. The life-giving Spirit, whom He has obtained for us, effects all this in each in the measure that pleases Him; and if once the life of God is kindled in the human soul if we have once, as the apostle says, become like Him in His resurrection, then His powers are also more and more abundantly and gloriously manifested in us through the efficacy of His Spirit for the common good.

But along with all this activity and strength, the life of the risen Savior was yet, in another sense, a secluded and hidden life. It is probable that when, in order to show Himself to His disciples, He went here and there from one part of the land to another, he was seen by many besides them, who had known Him in His previous life. How could it be otherwise? But the eyes of men were holden, that they did not recognize Him; and He made Himself known only to those who belonged to Him in faithful love. At the same time, however, He said to them, Blest are they who do not see, yet believe! And what was the little number of those who were counted worthy of seeing Him, even if we add to them the five hundred whom Paul mentions, compared with the number of those who afterward believed in their testimony to the Lord's resurrection? And thus it is also, my friends, with the new life in which we walk, even if it is, as it ought to be, strong and vigorous, and ever at work for the kingdom of God; yet it is at the same time an unknown and hidden life, unrecognized by and hidden from the world, whose eyes are holden; and he who should set himself to force the knowledge of it upon them, who should hit upon extraordinary proceedings in order to attract their attention to the difference between the life of sin and the resurrection life, would not be walking in the likeness of the Lord's resurrection. As the people in the time of Christ had opportunity enough to inquire about His resurrection, in seeing how His disciples continued to hold together, so our neighbors also see our close alliance, which has nothing to do with the affairs of this world; and if they, because of this, inquire about what unites us, the answer will not be lacking to them. But our inner history we will as little thrust upon them as the risen Christ thrust His presence on those who had slain Him, and who had therefore no desire to see Him. Instead of this, as He showed Himself only to His own, we also will make known our inner life only to those who are just in the same way our own; who, glowing with the same love, and cheered by the same faith, can tell us in return how the Lord has revealed Himself to them. Not by any means as if we followed some mysterious course, and that those only whose experiences had been entirely alike should separate themselves into little exclusive groups; for even the days of the Lord's resurrection present examples of various kinds of experience, and of one common inner fellowship connected with them all. And not only so, but even those who as yet have experienced nothing at all are not sent empty away. Only they must first become aware, by what they see without our thrusting it upon them, that here a spirit is breathing to which they are strangers, that here is manifested a life as yet unknown to them. Then will we, as was done then, lead them by the word of our testimony to the foundation of this new life; and as, when the word of preaching pierced men's hearts, when to some of them the old man began to appear as he really is, and they felt the first pangs that precede the death of the sinful man, there also sprang up faith in the resurrection of Him whom they had themselves crucified; so will it always be with the knowledge of the new life proceeding from Him who has risen. Therefore let us have no anxiety; the circle of those who recognize this life will always be widening, just because they are beginning to share in it. And as soon as even the slightest premonition of it arises in a man's soul, as soon as he has come only so far as to be no longer pleased and satisfied with the perishing and evil things of the world, as soon as his soul absorbs even the first ray of heavenly light, then his eyes are opened, so that he recognizes this life, and becomes aware what a different life it is to serve righteousness, from living in the service of sin.

3. And lastly, my friends, we can not feel all these comforting and glorious things in which our new life resembles the resurrection life of our Lord, without being at the same time, on another side, moved to sorrow by this resemblance. For if we put together all that the evangelists and apostles of the Lord have preserved for us about His resurrection life, we still can not out of it all form an entirely consecutive history. There are separate moments and hours, separate conversations and actions, and then the Risen One vanishes again from the eyes that look for Him; in vain we ask where He can have tarried, we must wait till He appears again. Not that in Himself there was anything of this broken or uncertain life, but as to our view of it, it is and can not be but so; and we try in vain to penetrate into the intervals between those detached moments and hours. Well, and is it not, to our sorrow, with the new life that is like Christ's resurrection life? I do not mean that this life is limited to the few hours of social worship and prayer, glorious and profitable as they are; for in that case there would be cause to fear that it was a mere pretense; nor to the services, always but small and desultory, that each of us, actively working through the gifts of the Spirit, accomplishes, as it were, visibly and tangibly according to his measure, for the kingdom of God. In manifold ways besides these we become conscious of this new life; there are many quieter and secret moments in which it is strongly felt, tho only deep in our inmost heart. But notwithstanding this, I think all, without exception, must confess that we are by no means conscious of this new life as an entirely continuous state; on the contrary, each of us loses sight of it only too often, not only among friends, among disturbances and cares, but amid the commendable occupations of this world. But this experience, my dear friends, humbling as it is, ought not to make us unbelieving, as if perhaps our consciousness of being a new creature in Christ were a delusion, and what we had regarded as indications of this life were only morbid and overstrained emotions. As the Lord convinced His disciples that He had flesh and bones, so we may all convince ourselves and each other that this is an actual life; but in that case we must believe that, tho in a hidden way and not always present to our consciousness, yet it is always in existence, just as the Lord was still in existence even at the times when He did not appear to His disciples; and had neither returned to the grave, nor as yet ascended to heaven. Only let us not overlook this difference. In the case of Christ we do not apprehend it as a natural and necessary thing that during those forty days He led a life apparently so interrupted; but each of us must easily understand how, as the influence of this new life on our outward ways can only gradually become perceptible, it should often and for a long time be quite hidden from us, especially when we are very busy with outward work, and our attention is taken up with it. But this is an imperfection from which as time goes on we should be always becoming more free. Therefore always go back, my friends, to Him who is the only fountain of this spiritual life! If, ever and anon, we can not find it in ourselves, we always find it in Him, and it is always pouring forth afresh from Him the Head to us His members. If every moment in which we do not perceive it is a moment of longing, as soon as we become conscious of the void, then it is also a moment in which the Risen One appears to our spirit, and breathes on us anew with His life-giving power. And thus drawing only from Him, we shall attain to having His heavenly gifts becoming in us more and more an inexhaustible, continually flowing fountain of spiritual and eternal life. For this He rose from the dead by the glory of the Father, that we should be made into the likeness of His resurrection. That was finished in His return to the Father; our new life is to become more and more His and the Fathers return into the depths of our souls; there they desire to make their abode; and the life of God is to be ever assuming a more continuous, active and powerful form in us, that our life in the service of righteousness may become, and continue even here, according to the Lord's promise, an eternal life.

**÷**03-11 MASON

MESSIAH'S THRONE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Mitchell Mason, the eminent divine of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, was born in New York City in 1770. He completed his studies and took his degree at Columbia College and thence proceeded to take a theological course at Edinburgh. Ordained in 1793, he took charge of the Cedar Street Church, New York City, of which his father had been pastor. In 1807 he became editor of the *Christian Herald*, and in 1821 was made president of Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He died in 1829.

MASON

1770—1829

MESSIAH'S THRONE

*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*.—Heb. 1.18.

In the all-important argument which occupies this epistle, Paul assumes, what the believing Hebrews had already profest, that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah. To prepare them for the consequences of their own principle—a principle involving nothing less than the abolition of their law, the subversion of their state, the ruin of their city, the final extinction of their carnal hopes—he leads them to the doctrine of their Redeemer's person, in order to explain the nature of his offices, to evince the value of his spiritual salvation, and to show, in both, the accomplishment of their economy which was now "ready to vanish away." Under no apprehension of betraying the unwary into idolatrous homage by giving to the Lord Jesus greater glory than is due unto His name, the apostle sets out with ascribing to Him excellence and attributes which belong to no creature. Creatures of most elevated rank are introduced; but it is to display, by contrast, the preeminence of Him who is "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person." Angels are great in might and in dignity; but "unto them hath he not put in subjection the world to come. Unto which of them said he, at any time, Thou art my son?" To which of them, "Sit thou at my right hand." He saith they are spirits, "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. But unto the Son," in a style which annihilates competition and comparison—"unto the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

Brethren, if the majesty of Jesus is the subject which the Holy Ghost selected for the encouragement and consolation of His people, when He was shaking the earth and the heavens, and diffusing His gospel among the nations, can it be otherwise than suitable and precious to us on this occasion? Shall it not expand our views, and warm our hearts, and nerve our arm in our efforts to exalt His fame? Let me implore, then, the aid of your prayers, but far more importunately the aids of His own Spirit, while I speak of the things which concern the King: those great things contained in the text—His personal glory—His sovereign rule.

His personal glory shines forth in the name by which He is revealed; a name above every name: "Thy throne, O God." …

Messiah's throne is not one of those airy fabrics which are reared by vanity and overthrown by time: it is fixt of old; it is staple, and can not be shaken, for it is the throne of God. He who sitteth on it is the Omnipotent. Universal being is in His hand. Revolution, force, fear, as applied to His kingdom, are words without meaning. Rise up in rebellion, if thou hast courage. Associate with thee the whole mass of infernal power. Begin with the ruin of whatever is fair and good in this little globe. Pass hence to pluck the sun out of his place, and roll the volume of desolation through the starry world. What hast thou done unto Him? It is the puny menace of a worm against Him whose frown is perdition. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh."

With the stability which Messiah's Godhead communicates to His throne, let us connect the stability resulting from His Father's covenant.

His throne is founded not merely in strength, but in right. God hath laid the government upon the shoulder of His holy child Jesus, and set Him upon Mount Zion as His King forever. He has promised and sworn to build up His throne to all generations; to make it endure as the days of heaven; to beat down His foes before His face, and plague them that hate Him. "But my faithfulness," adds He, "and my mercy shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted. Hath he said it, and will he not do it? Hath he spoken it, and shall it not come to pass?" Whatever disappointments rebuke the visionary projects of men, or the more crafty schemes of Satan, "the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." The blood of sprinkling, which sealed all the promises made to Messiah, and binds down His Father's faithfulness to their accomplishment, witnesses continually in the heavenly sanctuary. "He must," therefore, "reign till he have put all his enemies under his feet." And altho the dispensation of His authority shall, upon this event, be changed, and He shall deliver it up, in its present form, to the Father, He shall still remain, in His substantial glory, a priest upon His throne, to be the eternal bond of our union, and the eternal medium of our fellowship with the living God.

Seeing that the throne of our King is as immovable as it is exalted, let us with joy draw water out of that well of salvation which is opened to us in the administration of His kingdom. Here we must consider its general characters, and the means by which it operates.

The general characters which I shall illustrate are the following:

1. Mystery. He is the unsearchable God, and His government must be like Himself. Facts concerning both He has graciously revealed. These we must admit upon the credit of His own testimony; with these we must satisfy our wishes and limit our inquiry. To intrude into those things which he hath not seen because God has not disclosed them, whether they relate to His arrangements for this world or the next, is the arrogance of one vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. There are secrets in our Lord's procedure which He will not explain to us in this life, and which may not perhaps be explained in the life to come. We can not tell how He makes evil the minister of good; how He combines physical and moral agencies of different kind and order, in the production of blessings. We can not so much as conjecture what bearings the system of redemption, in every part of its process, may have upon the relations of providence in the occurrences of this moment, or of the last. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us: it is high, we can not attain it. Our Sovereign's way is in the sea, and His path in the deep waters; and His footsteps are not known. When, therefore, we are surrounded with difficulty, when we can not unriddle His conduct in particular dispensations, we must remember that He is God—that we are to "walk by faith"; and to trust Him as implicitly when we are in the valley of the shadow of death, as when His candle shines upon our heads. We must remember that it is not for us to be admitted into the cabinet of the King of kings; that creatures constituted as we are could not sustain the view of His unveiled agency; that it would confound, and scatter, and annihilate our little intellects. As often, then, as He retires from our observation, blending goodness with majesty, let us lay our hands upon our mouths and worship. This stateliness of our King can afford us no just ground of uneasiness. On the contrary, it contributes to our tranquillity.

2. For we know that if His administration is mysterious, it is also wise. "Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite." That infinite understanding watches over, and arranges, and directs all the affairs of His Church and of the world. We are perplexed at every step, embarrassed by opposition, lost in confusion, fretted by disappointment, and ready to conclude, in our haste, that all things are against our own good and our Master's honor. But "this is our infirmity"; it is the dictate of impatience and indiscretion. We forget the "years of the right hand of the Most High." We are slow of heart in learning a lesson which shall soothe our spirits at the expense of our pride. We turn away from the consolation to be derived from believing that tho we know not the connections and results of holy providence, our Lord Jesus knows them perfectly. With Him there is no irregularity, no chance, no conjecture. Disposed before His eye in the most luminous and exquisite order, the whole series of events occupy the very place and crisis where they are most effectually to subserve the purposes of His love. Not a moment of time is wasted, nor a fragment of action misapplied. What He does, we do not indeed know at present, but, as far as we shall be permitted to know hereafter, we shall see that his most inscrutable procedure was guided by consummate wisdom; that our choice was often as foolish as our petulance was provoking; that the success of our own wishes would have been our most painful chastisement, would have diminished our happiness, and detracted from His praise. Let us study, therefore, brethren, to subject our ignorance to His knowledge; instead of prescribing, to obey; instead of questioning, to believe: to perform our part without that despondency which betrays a fear that our Lord may neglect His, and tacitly accuses Him of a less concern than we feel for the glory of His own name. Let us not shrink from this duty as imposing too rigorous a condition upon our obedience.

3. A third character of Messiah's administration is righteousness. "The scepter of his kingdom is a right scepter." If "clouds and darkness are around about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." In the times of old, His redeemed "wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; but, nevertheless, he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation." He loves His Church and the members of it too tenderly to lay upon them any burdens, or expose them to any trials, which are not indispensable to their good. It is right for them to go through fire and through water, that He may bring them out into a healthy place—right to endure chastening, that they may be partakers of His holiness—right to have the sentence of death in themselves, that they may trust in the living God, and that His strength may be perfect in their weakness. It is right that He should endure with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; that He should permit iniquity to abound, the love of many to wax cold, and the dangers of His Church to accumulate, till the interposition of His arm be necessary and decisive. In the day of final retribution, not one mouth shall be opened to complain of injustice. It will be seen that the Judge of all the earth has done right; that the works of His hands have been verity and judgment, and done, every one of them, in truth and uprightness. Let us then think not only respectfully but reverently of His dispensations, repress the voice of murmur, and rebuke the spirit of discontent; wait, in faith and patience, till He become His own interpreter, when "the heavens shall declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory."

You will anticipate me in enumerating the means which Messiah employs in the administration of His kingdom:

1. The gospel, of which Himself, as an all-sufficient and condescending Savior, is the great and affecting theme. Derided by the world, it is, nevertheless, effectual to the salvation of them who believe. "We preach Christ crucified: to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The doctrine of the cross connected with evangelical ordinances—the ministry of reconciliation; the holy Sabbath; the sacraments of His covenant: briefly, the whole system of instituted worship—is the rod of the Redeemer's strength, by which He subdues sinners to Himself, rules even in the midst of His enemies, exercises His glorious authority in His Church, and exhibits a visible proof to men and angels that He is King in Zion.

2. The efficient means to which the gospel owes its success, and the name of Jesus its praise, is the agency of the Holy Ghost.

Christianity is the ministration of the spirit. All real and sanctifying knowledge of the truth and love of God is from His inspiration. It was the last and best promise which the Savior made to His afflicted disciples at the moment of parting, "I will send the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth; he shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." It is He who convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: who infuses resistless vigor into means otherwise weak and useless. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, God the Spirit, to the pulling down of strongholds. Without His benediction, the ministry of an archangel would never convert one sinner from the error of his way. But when He descends with His life-giving influence from God out of heaven, then "foolish things of the world confound the wise; and weak things of the world confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, bring to naught things which are." It is this ministration of the Spirit which renders the preaching of the gospel to men dead in trespasses and sins a reasonable service. When I am set down in the valley of vision, and view the bones, very many and very dry, and am desired to try the effects of my own ability in recalling them to life, I will fold my hands and stand mute in astonishment and despair. But when the Lord God commands me to speak in His name, my closed lips shall be opened; when He calls upon the breath from the four winds to breathe upon the slain that they may live, I will prophesy without fear, "Oh, ye dry bones, hear the words of the Lord"; and, obedient to His voice, they shall come together, bone to His bone—shall be covered with sinews and flesh—shall receive new life, and stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. In this manner, from the graves of nature, and the dry bones of natural men, does the Holy Spirit recruit the "armies of the living God," and make them, collectively and individually, a name, and a praise, and a glory to the Captain of their salvation.

3. Among the instruments which the Lord Jesus employs in the administration of His government, are the resources of the physical and moral world.

Supreme in heaven and in earth, "upholding all things by the word of his power," the universe is His magazine of means. Nothing which acts or exists, is exempted from promoting in its own place the purposes of His kingdom. Beings rational and irrational, animate and inanimate; the heavens above, and the earth below; the obedience of sanctified, and the disobedience of unsanctified men; all holy spirits; all damned spirits; in one word, every agency, every element, every atom, are but the ministers of His will, and concur in the execution of His designs. And this He will demonstrate to the confusion of His enemies, and the joy of His people, in that great and terrible day when He shall sit upon the throne of His glory, and dispense ultimate judgment to the quick and the dead.

Upon these hills of holiness the stability of Messiah's throne, and the perfect administration of His kingdom, let us take our station, and survey the prospects which rise up before the Church of God.

When I look upon the magnificent scene, I can not repress the salutation, "Hail, thou that art highly favored!" She has the prospect of preservation, of increase and of triumph.

The long existence of the Christian Church would be pronounced, upon common principles of reasoning, impossible. She finds in every man a natural and inveterate enemy. To encounter and overcome the unanimous hostility of the world, she boasts no political stratagem, no disciplined legions, no outward coercion of any kind. Yet her expectation is, that she shall live forever. To mock this hope and blot out her memorial from under heaven, the most furious efforts of fanaticism, the most ingenious arts of statesmen, the concentrated strength of empires, have been frequently and perseveringly applied. The blood of her sons and her daughters has streamed like water; the smoke of the scaffold and the stake, where they won the crown of martyrdom in the cause of Jesus, has ascended in thick volumes to the skies. The tribes of persecutors have sported over her woes and erected monuments, as they imagined, of her perpetual ruin. But where are her tyrants, and where their empires? The tyrants have long since gone to their own place; their names have descended upon the roll of infamy; their empires have passed, like shadows over the rock—they have successively disappeared, and left not a trace behind.

But what became of the Church? She rose from her ashes fresh in beauty and in might. Celestial glory beamed around her; she dashed down the monumental marble of her foes, and they who hated her fled before her. She has celebrated the funeral of kings and kingdoms that plotted her destruction; and, with the inscriptions of their pride, has transmitted to posterity the record of their shame. How shall this phenomenon be explained? We are, at the present moment, witnesses of the fact; but who can unfold the mystery? This blest book, the book of truth and life, has made our wonder to cease. The Lord her God in the midst of her is mighty. His presence is a fountain of health, and his protection a wall of fire. He has betrothed her, in eternal covenant, to Himself. Her living head, in whom she lives, is above, and His quickening Spirit shall never depart from her. Armed with divine virtue, His gospel, secret, silent, unobserved, enters the hearts of men and sets up an everlasting kingdom. It eludes all the vigilance, and baffles all the power of the adversary. Bars and bolts, and dungeons are no obstacle to its approach. Bonds, and tortures, and death can not extinguish its influence. Let no man's heart tremble, then, because of fear. Let no man despair, in these days of rebuke and blasphemy, of the Christian cause. The ark is launched, indeed, upon the floods; the tempest sweeps along the deep; the billows break over her on every side. But Jehovah-Jesus has promised to conduct her in safety to the haven of peace. She can not be lost unless the Pilot perish. Why, then, do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? Hear, O Zion, the word of thy God, and rejoice for the consolation. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

Mere preservation, however, tho a most comfortable, is not the only hope of the Church; she has the prospect of increase.

Increase—from an effectual blessing upon the means of grace in places where they are already enjoyed; the Lord saith, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offering; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses."

Increase—from the diffusion of evangelical truth through pagan lands. "For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see and flow together, and thy heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

Increase—from the recovery of the rejected Jews to the faith and privileges of God's dear children. Blindness in part has happened unto Israel; they have been cut off, for their unbelief, from the olive-tree. Age has followed age, and they remain to this hour spread over the face of the earth, a fearful and affecting testimony to the truth of God's word. They are without their sanctuary, without their Messiah, without the hope of their believing ancestors. But it shall not be always thus. They are still "beloved for the father's sake." When the "fulness of the Gentiles shall come in," they too shall be gathered. They shall discover, in our Jesus, the marks of the promised Messiah; and with from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God; it must make you meet for the inheritance of the saints, or it shall fearfully aggravate your condemnation at last. You pray, "Thy kingdom come." But is the "kingdom of God within you?" Is the Lord Jesus "in you the hope of glory?" Be not deceived. The name of Christian will not save you. Better had it been for you not to have known the way of righteousness; better to have been the most idolatrous pagan; better, infinitely better, not to have been born, than to die strangers to the pardon of the Redeemer's blood and the sanctifying virtue of His Spirit. From His throne on high He calls—calls to you, "Look unto me, and be ye saved; for I am God, and there is none else. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

On the other hand, such as have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them, are commanded to be joyful in their King. He reigns, O believer, for thee. The stability of His throne is thy safety. The administration of His government is for thy good; and the precious pledge is, that He "will perfect that which concerneth thee." In all thy troubles, and in all thy joy, commit thy way unto Him. He will guard the sacred deposit. Fear not that thou shalt lack any good thing. Fear not that thou shalt be forsaken. Fear not that thou shalt fall beneath the arm of the oppressor. "He went through the fires of the pit to save thee." Sing, then, thou beloved, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."

And if we have "tasted that he is gracious"; if we look back with horror and transport upon the wretchedness and the wrath which we have escaped, with what anxiety shall we not hasten to the aid of our fellow men, who are sitting in "the region and shadow of death." What zeal will be too ardent, what labor too persevering, what sacrifice too costly, if, by any means, we may tell them of Jesus, and the resurrection, and the life eternal? Who shall be daunted by difficulties, or deterred by discouragement? If but one pagan shall be brought, savingly, by your instrumentality, to the knowledge of God and the kingdom of heaven, will you not have an ample recompense? Is there here a man who would give up all for lost because some favorite hope has been disappointed, or who regrets the wordly substance which he has expended on so divine an enterprise? Shame on thy coward spirit and thine avaricious heart! Do the holy Scriptures, does the experience of ages, does the nature of things justify the expectation that we shall carry war into the central regions of delusion and crime, without opposition, without trial? Show me a plan which encounters not fierce resistance from the prince of darkness and his allies in the human heart, and I will show you a plan which never came from the inspiration of God. If missionary effort suffer occasional embarrassment; if impressions on the heathen be less speedy, and powerful, and extensive than fond wishes have anticipated; if particular parts of the great system of operation be, at times, disconcerted; if any of the ministers of grace fall a sacrifice to the violence of those whom they go to bless in the name of the Lord—these are events which ought to exercise our faith and patience, to wean us from self-sufficiency, to teach where our strength lies, and where our dependence must be fixt; but not to enfeeble hope nor relax diligence. Let us not "despise the day of small things." Let us not overlook, as an important matter, the very existence of that missionary spirit which has already awakened Christians in different countries from their long and dishonorable slumbers, and bids fair to produce, in due season, a general movement of the Church upon earth. Let us not, for one instant, harbor the ungracious thought that the prayers, and tears, and wrestlings of those who make mention of the Lord, form no link in that vast chain of events by which He "will establish, and will make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." That dispensation which is most repulsive to flesh and blood, the violent death of faithful missionaries, should animate Christians with new resolution. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." The cry of martyred blood ascends the heavens: it enters into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. It will give Him no rest till He rain down righteousness upon the land where it has been shed, and which it has sealed as a future conquest for Him who "in his majesty rides prosperously because of truth, and meekness and righteousness."

For the world, indeed, and perhaps for the Church, many calamities and trials are in store, before the glory of the Lord shall be so revealed that all flesh shall see it together. "I will shake all nations," is the divine declaration—"I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come." The vials of wrath which are now running, and others which remain to be poured out, must be exhausted. The "supper of the great God" must be prepared, and his "strange work" have its course. Yet the missionary cause must ultimately succeed. It is the cause of God and shall prevail. The days, O brethren, roll rapidly on, when the shout of the isles shall swell the thunder of the continent; when the Thames and the Danube, when the Tiber and the Rhine, shall call upon Euphrates, the Ganges, and the Nile; and the loud concert shall be joined by the Hudson, the Mississippi, and the Amazon, singing with one heart and one voice, "Alleluia, salvation! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

Comfort one another with this faith and with these words.

Now, "Blest be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things. And blest be his glorious name forever: Let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen."

END OF VOL. III.

**÷**04-00 **The World's Great Sermons**  
  
VOLUME IV  
  
L. BEECHER TO BUSHNELL

THE  
World's  
Great  
Sermons

COMPILED BY  
GRENVILLE KLEISER

Formerly of Yale Divinity School Faculty;  
Author of "How to Speak  
in Public," Etc.

With Assistance from Many of the Foremost  
Living Preachers and Other Theologians

INTRODUCTION BY  
LEWIS O. BRASTOW, D.D.  
Professor Emeritus of Practical Theology  
in Yale University

IN TEN VOLUMES

VOLUME IV L. BEECHER TO BUSHNELL

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**÷**04-01 LYMAN BEECHER

THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD DESIRABLE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Lyman Beecher was born in New Haven, Conn., in 1775. He graduated from Yale in 1797, and in 1798 took charge of the Presbyterian Church at Easthampton, Long Island. He first attracted attention by his sermon on the death of Alexander Hamilton, and in 1810 became pastor of the Congregational Church at Litchfield, Conn. In the course of a pastorate of 16 years, he preached a remarkable series of sermons on temperance and became recognized as one of the foremost pulpit orators of the country. In 1826 he went to Boston as pastor of the Hanover Street Congregational Church. Six years later he became president of the Lane Theological Seminary in Ohio, an office he retained for twenty years. In 1852 he returned to Boston and subsequently retired to the house of his son, Henry Ward Beecher, where he died in 1863. His public utterances, whether platform or pulpit, were carefully elaborated. They were delivered extemporaneously and sparkled with wit, were convincing by their logic, and conciliating by their shrewd common sense.

[3]

LYMAN BEECHER

1775-1863

THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD DESIRABLE

Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.—Mat 6:10.

In this passage we are instructed to pray that the world may be governed, and not abandoned to the miseries of unrestrained sin; that God Himself would govern, and not another; and that God would administer the government of the world, in all respects, according to His own pleasure. The passage is a formal surrender to God of power and dominion over the earth, as entire as His dominion is in His heaven. The petition, therefore, "Thy will be done," contains the doctrine:

That it is greatly to be desired that God should govern the world, and dispose of men, in all respects, entirely according to His own pleasure.

The truth of this doctrine is so manifest, that it would seem to rank itself in the number of self-evident propositions, incapable of proof clearer than its own light, had not experience taught that, of all truths, it is the most universally and bitterly controverted.[4] Plain as it is, it has occasioned more argument than any other doctrine, and, by argument merely, has gained fewer proselytes; for it is one of those controversies in which the heart decides wholly, and argument, strong or feeble, is alike ineffectual.

This consideration would present, on the threshold, a hopeless impediment to further progress, did we not know, also, that arguments a thousand times repeated, and as often resisted, may at length become mighty through God, to the casting down of imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. I shall, therefore, suggest several considerations, to confirm this most obvious truth, that it is desirable that God should govern the world entirely according to His own good pleasure.

1. It is desirable that God should govern the world, and dispose of all events, according to His pleasure, because He knows perfectly in what manner it is best that the world should be governed.

The best way of disposing of men and their concerns is that which will effectually illustrate the glory of God. The glory of God is His benevolence, and His natural attributes for the manifestation of it, and sun of the moral universe, the light and life of His kingdom. All the blessedness of the intelligent creation arises, and ever will arise, from the manifestation and apprehension of the glory of God.[5] It was to manifest this glory that the worlds were created. It was that there might be creatures to behold and enjoy God, that His dominions were peopled with intelligent beings. And it is that His holy subjects may see and enjoy Him, that He upholds and governs the universe. The entire importance of our world, therefore, and of men and their concerns, is relative, and is great or small only as we are made to illustrate the glory of God. How this important end shall be most effectually accomplished none but Himself is able to determine. He, only, knows how so to order things as that the existence of every being, and every event, shall answer the purpose of its creation, and from the rolling of a world to the fall of a sparrow shall conspire to increase the exhibitions of the divine character, and expand the joy of the holy universe.

An inferior intelligence at the helm of government might conceive very desirable purposes of benevolence, and still be at a loss as to the means most fit and effectual to accomplish them. But, with God, there is no such deficiency. In Him, the knowledge which discovered the end discovers also, with unerring wisdom, the most appropriate means to bring it to pass. He is wise in heart; He hath established the world by His wisdom and stretched out the heavens by His discretion. And is He not wise enough to be intrusted with the government of the world? Who,[6] then, shall be His counsellor? Who shall supply the deficiencies of His skill? Oh, the presumption of vain man! and, oh! the depths both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

2. It is desirable that God should govern the world according to His own pleasure, because He is entirely able to execute His purposes.

A wise politician perceives, often, both the end and the means; and is still unable to bring to pass his counsels, because the means, though wise, are beyond his control. But God is as able to execute as He is to plan. Having chosen the end, and selected the means, his counsels stand. He is the Lord God omnipotent. The whole universe is a storehouse of means; and when He speaks every intelligence and every atom flies to execute His pleasure. The omnipotence of God, in giving efficacy to His government, inspires and perpetuates the ecstasy of heaven. "And a voice came out from the throne, saying, Praise our God. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many thunderings, saying Alleluia, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." What will that man do in heaven, who is afraid and reluctant to commit to God the government of the earth? And what will become of those who, unable to frustrate His counsels, murmur and rebel against His providence?

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3. It is desirable that God should govern the world according to His pleasure, because the pleasure of God is always good.

The angels who kept not their first estate, and many wicked men, have great knowledge, and skill, and power: and yet, on these accounts, are only the more terrible; because they employ these mighty faculties to do evil. And the government of God, were He a being of malevolence, armed as He is with skill and power, would justly fill the universe with dismay. But, as it is, brethren, "let not your hearts be troubled." With God there is no perversion of attributes. He is as good as He is wise and powerful. God is love! Love is that glory of God which He has undertaken to express to His intelligent creation in His works. The sole object of the government of God, from beginning to end, is, to express His benevolence. His eternal decrees, of which so many are afraid, are nothing but the plan which God has devised to express His benevolence, and to make His kingdom as vast and as blest as His own infinite goodness desires. It was to show His glory—to express, in action, His benevolence—that He created all the worlds that roll, and rejoice, and speak His name, through the regions of space. It is to accomplish the same blest design, that He upholds, and places under law, every intelligent being, and directs every event, causing every movement, in every world, to fall in, in its[8] appointed time and place, and to unite in promoting the grand result—the glory of God, and the highest good of His kingdom. And is there a mortal, who, from this great system of blest government, would wish this earth to be an exception? What sort of beings must those be who are afraid of a government administered by infinite benevolence, to express, so far as it can be expressed, the infinite goodness of God? I repeat the question,—What kind of characters must those be who feel as if they had good reason to fear a government the sole object of which is to express the immeasurable goodness of God?

4. It is greatly to be desired that God should govern the world according to His pleasure, because it is His pleasure to rule as a moral governor.

A moral government is a government exercised over free agents, accountable beings; a government of laws, administered by motives.

The importance of such a government below is manifest from the consideration, that it is in His moral government, chiefly, that the glory of God is displayed.

The superintendence of an empty world, or a world of mere animals, would not exhibit, at all, the moral character of God. The glory of God, shining in His law, could never be made manifest, and the brighter glory of God, as displayed in the gospel, must remain forever hid; and all that happiness of which we[9] are capable, as moral beings, the joys of religion below, and the boundless joys of heaven above, would be extinguished, in a moment, by the suspension of the divine moral government.

Will any pretend that the Almighty cannot maintain a moral government on earth, if He governs according to His own pleasure? Can He wield the elements, and control, at His pleasure, every work of His hands, but just the mind of man? Is the most noble work of God—that which is the most worthy of attention, and in reference to which all beside is upheld and governed—itself wholly unmanageable? Has Omnipotence formed minds, which, the moment they are made, escape from His hands, and defy the control of their Maker? Has the Almighty erected a moral kingdom which He cannot govern without destroying its moral nature? Can He only watch, and mend, and rectify, the lawless wanderings of mind? Has He filled the earth with untamed and untamable spirits, whose wickedness and rebellion He can merely mitigate, but cannot control? Does He superintend a world of madmen, full of darkness and disorder, cheered and blest by no internal pervading government of His own? Are we bound to submit to all events, as parts of the holy providence of God; and yet, is there actually no hand of God controlling the movements of the moral world? But if the Almighty[10] can, and if he does, govern the earth as a part of His moral kingdom, is there any method of government more safe and wise than that which pleases God? Can there be a better government? We may safely pray, then, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," without fearing at all the loss of moral agency; for all the glory of God, in His Law and Gospel, and all the eternal manifestations of glory to principalities and powers in heavenly places, depend wholly upon the fact, that men, though living under the government of God, and controlled according to His pleasure, are still entirely free, and accountable for all the deeds done in the body. There could be no justice in punishment and no condescension, no wisdom, no mercy, in the glorious gospel, did not the government of God, though administered according to His pleasure, include and insure the accountable agency of man.

Seeing, therefore, that all the glory of God, which He ever proposes to manifest to the intelligent creation, is to be made known by the Church, and is to shine in the face of Jesus Christ, and is to depend upon the perfect consistency of the moral government of God with human freedom, we have boundless assurance that, among His absolute, immutable, eternal purposes, one, and a leading one, is, so to govern the world according to His counsels, that, if men sin, there shall be complete desert of[11] punishment, and boundless mercy in their redemption.

5. It is greatly to be desired that God should rule in the earth according to His pleasure, because it is His pleasure to govern the world in mercy, by Jesus Christ.

The government is in the hand of a Mediator, by whom God is reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them that believe. Mercy is the bestowment of pardon upon the sinful and undeserving. Now, mankind are so eminently sinful, that no government but one administered in infinite mercy, could afford the least consolation. Had any being but the God of mercy sat upon the throne, or any will but His will prevailed, there would have been no plan of redemption, and no purposes of election, to perplex and alarm the wicked. There would have been but one decree, and that would have been, destruction to the whole race of man. Are any reluctant to be entirely in the hands of God? Are they afraid to trust Him to dispose of soul and body, for time and eternity? Let them surrender their mercies, then, and go out naked from that government which feeds, protects and comforts them. Let them give up their Bibles, and relinquish the means of grace, and the hopes of glory, and descend and make their bed in hell, where they have long since deserved to be, and where they long since would have been, if God had not governed[12] the world according to His own good pleasure. If they would escape the evils which they fear from the hand of God, let them abandon the blessings they receive from it, and they will soon discover whether the absolute dominion of God, and their dependence upon Him, be, in reality, a ground of murmuring and alarm. Our only hope of heaven arises from being entirely in the hands of God. Our destruction could not be made more certain than it would be were we to be given up to our own disposal, or to the disposal of any being but God. Would sinful mortals change their own hearts? Could the combined universe, without God, change the depraved affections of men? Surely, then, we have cause for unceasing joy, that we are in the hands of God; seeing He is a God of mercy, and has decreed to rule in mercy, and actually is administering the government of the world in mercy, by Jesus Christ.

We have nothing to fear, from the entire dominion of God, which we should not have cause equally to fear, as outcasts from the divine government; but we have everything to hope, while He rules the earth according to His most merciful pleasure. The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.

6. It is greatly to be desired that God[13] should dispose of mankind according to His pleasure, because, if He does so, it is certain that there will be no injustice done to anyone.

He will do no injustice to His holy kingdom by any whom He saves. He will bring none to heaven who are not holy, and prepared for heaven. He will bring none there in any way not consistent with His perfections, and the best good of His kingdom; none in any way but that prescribed in the gospel, the way of faith in Jesus Christ, of repentance for sin, and of good works as the constituted fruit and evidence of faith.

Earthly monarchs have their favorites, whom, if guilty of a violation of the laws, they will often interpose to save, although the welfare of the kingdom requires their punishment. But God has no such favorites—He is no respecter of persons: He spared not the angels: and upon the earth distinctions of intellect, or wealth, or honor, will have no effect; he only that believeth shall be saved. The great and the learned shall not be obtruded upon heaven without holiness because they are great or learned; and the humble and contrite shall not be excluded because they are poor, or ignorant, or obscure. God has provided a way for all men to return to Him. He has opened the door of their prison, and set open before them a door of admission into the kingdom of His dear Son; and commanded and entreated them to abandon their dreary[14] abode, and come into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. But all, with one consent, refuse to comply. Each prefers his own loathsome dwelling to the building of God, and chooses, stedfastly, the darkness of his own dungeon, to the light of God's kingdom. But, as God has determined that the redemption of His Son shall not be unavailing through human obstinacy, so He hath chosen, in Christ, multitudes which no man can number, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love. And in bringing these sons and daughters to glory, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, He will introduce not one whom all the inhabitants of heaven will not hail joyfully, as the companion of their glory. And if God does in the earth just as He pleases, He will make willing, and obedient, and bring to heaven, just those persons who it was most desirable should come. And He will bring just as many obstinate rebels to abandon their prison, and enter cheerfully His kingdom, as infinite wisdom, goodness, and mercy, see fit and desire. He will not mar His glory, or the happiness of His kingdom, by bringing in too many, nor by omitting to bring in enough. His redeemed kingdom, as to the number and the persons who compose it, and the happiness included in it, will be such as shall be wholly satisfactory to God, and to every subject of His kingdom.

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And if God governs according to His pleasure, He will do no injustice to His impenitent enemies. He will send to misery no harmless animals without souls—no mere machines—none who have done, or even attempted to do, as well as they could. He will leave to walk in their own way none who do not deserve to be left; and punish none for walking in it who did not walk therein knowingly, deliberately and with wilful obstinacy. He will give up to death none who did not choose death, and choose it with as entire freedom as Himself chooses holiness; and who did not deserve eternal punishment as truly as Himself deserves eternal praise. He will send to hell none who are not opposed to Him, and to holiness, and to heaven; none who are not, by voluntary sin and rebellion, unfitted for heaven, and fitted for destruction, as eminently as saints are prepared for glory. He will consign to perdition no poor, feeble, inoffensive beings, sacrificing one innocent creature to increase the happiness of another. He will cause the punishment of the wicked to illustrate His glory, and thus indirectly to promote the happiness of heaven. But God will not illumine heaven with His glory, and fill it with praise, by sacrificing helpless, unoffending creatures to eternal torment; nor will He doom to hell one whom He will not convince also, that he deserves to go thither. The justice of God, in the condemnation of[16] the impenitent, will be as unquestionable, as His infinite mercy will be in the salvation of the redeemed.

If the will of God is done on earth, among men, there will be no more injustice done to the inhabitants of the earth than there is done to the blessed in heaven. Was it ever known—did any ever complain—was it ever conceived—that God was a tyrant, in heaven? Why, then, should we question the justice of His government on earth? Is He not the same God below as above? Are not all His attributes equally employed? Does He not govern for the same end, and will not His government below conspire to promote the same joyful end as His government above?

7. It is greatly to be desired that God should govern the world according to His pleasure, because His own infinite blessedness, as well as the happiness of His kingdom, depends upon His working all things according to the counsel of His own will.

Could the Almighty be prevented from expressing the benevolence of His nature, according to His purposes, His present boundless blessedness would become the pain of ungratified desire. God is love, and His happiness consists in the exercise and expression of it, according to His own eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began. It is therefore declared, "The Lord hath made all things for himself;" that is,[17] to express and gratify His infinite benevolence. The moral excellence of God does not consist in quiescent love, but in love active, bursting forth, and abounding. Nor does the divine happiness arise from the contemplation of idle perfections, but from perfections which comprehend boundless capacity, and activity in doing good.

From what has been said, we may be led to contemplate with satisfaction the infinite blessedness of God.

God is love! This is a disposition which, beyond all others, is happy in its own nature. He is perfect in love; there is, therefore, in His happiness no alloy. His love is infinite; and, of course, His blessedness is unbounded. If the little holiness existing in good men, though balanced by remaining sin, occasions, at times, unutterable joy, how blessed must God be, who is perfectly and infinitely holy! It is to be remembered, also, that the benevolence of God is at all times perfectly gratified. The universe which God has created and upholds, including what He has done, and what He will yet do, will be brought into a condition which will satisfy His infinite benevolence. The great plan of government which God has chosen, and which His power and wisdom will execute, will embrace as much good as in the nature of things is possible. He is not, like erring man, straitened and perplexed, through lack of knowledge or power. There is in His[18] plan no defect, and in His execution no failure. God, therefore, is infinitely happy in His holiness, and in the expression of it which it pleases Him to make.

The revolt of angels, the fall of man, and the miseries of sin, do not, for a moment, interrupt the blessedness of God. They were not, to Him, unexpected events, starting up suddenly while the watchman of Israel slumbered. They were foreseen by God as clearly as any other events of His government, and have occasioned neither perplexity nor dismay. With infinite complacency He beholds still His unshaken counsels, and with almighty hand rolls on His undisturbed decrees. Surrounded by unnumbered millions, created by His hand, and upheld by His power, He shines forth, God over all, blest for ever. What an object of joyful contemplation, then, is the blessedness of God! It is infinite; His boundless capacity is full. It is eternal; He is God blest forever. The happiness of the created universe is but a drop—a drop to the mighty ocean of divine enjoyment. How delightful the thought, that in God there is such an immensity of joy, beyond the reach of vicissitude! When we look around below, a melancholy sensation pervades the mind. What miserable creatures! What a wretched world! But when, from this scene of darkness and misery, we look up to the throne of God, and behold Him, high above the darkness and[19] miseries of sin, dwelling in light inaccessible and full of glory, the prospect brightens. If a few rebels, who refuse to love and participate in His munificence, are groping in darkness on His footstool, God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

Those who are opposed to the decrees of God, and to His sovereignty, as displayed in the salvation of sinners, are enemies of God.

They are unwilling that His will should be done in earth as it is in heaven; for the decrees of God are nothing but His choice as to the manner in which He will govern His own kingdom. He did not enter upon His government to learn wisdom by experience. Before they were yet formed, His vast dominion lay open to His view; and before He took the reins of created empire, He saw in what manner it became Him to govern. His ways are everlasting. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning. To be opposed to the decrees of God, therefore, is to be unwilling that God should have any choice concerning the government of the world. And can those be willing that God should govern the world entirely according to His pleasure who object to His having any pleasure upon the subject? To object to the choice of God, with respect to the management of the world, because it is eternal, is to object to the existence of God. A God of eternal knowledge, without an eternal[20] will or choice, would be a God without moral character.

To suppose that God did not know what events would exist in His kingdom, is to divest Him of omniscience. To suppose that He did know, and did not care,—had no choice, no purpose,—is to blot out His benevolence, to nullify His wisdom and convert His power into infinite indolence. To suppose that He did know, and choose, and decree, and that events do not accord with His purposes, is to suppose that God has made a world which He can not govern; has undertaken a work too vast; has begun to build, but is not able to finish. But to suppose that God did, from the beginning, behold all things open and naked before Him, and that He did choose, with unerring wisdom and infinite goodness, how to govern His empire,—and yet at the same time, to employ heart, and head, and tongue, in continual opposition to this great and blessed truth,—is, most clearly, to cherish enmity to God and His government.

To object to the choice of God because it is immutable, is to cavil against that which constitutes its consummating excellence. Caprice is a most alarming feature in a bad government; but in a government absolutely perfect, none, surely, can object to its immutability, but those, who, if able, would alter it for the worse.

To say that, if God always knew how to govern[21] so as to display His glory, and bless His kingdom, and always chooses thus to govern, there can be, therefore, no accountable agency in the conduct of His creatures, is to deny the possibility of a moral government, to contradict the express testimony of God; and this, too, at the expense of common sense, and the actual experience of every subject of His moral government on earth.

From the character of God, and the nature of His government, as explained in this discourse, may be inferred, the nature and necessity of unconditional submission to God.

Unconditional submission is an entire surrender of the soul to God, to be disposed of according to His pleasure,—occasioned by confidence in His character as God.

There are many who would trust the Almighty to regulate the rolling of worlds, and to rule in the armies of heaven, just as He pleases; and devils they would consign to His disposal, without the least hesitation; and their own nation, if they were sure that God would dispose of it according to their pleasure; even their own temporal concerns they would risk in the hands of God, could they know that all things would work together for their good; their souls, also, they would cheerfully trust to His disposal, for the world to come, if God would stipulate, at all events, to make them happy.

And to what does all this amount? Truly,[22] that they care much about their own happiness, and their own will, but nothing at all about the will of God, and the welfare of His kingdom. He may decree, and execute His decrees, in heaven, and may turn its inhabitants into machines, or uphold their freedom, as He pleases; and apostate spirits are relinquished to their doom, whether just or unjust. It is only when the government of God descends to particulars, and draws near and enters their own selfish enclosures, and claims a right to dispose of them, and extends its influence to the unseen world, that selfishness and fear take the alarm. Has God determined how to dispose of my soul? Ah! that alters the case. If He can, consistently with freedom, govern angels, and devils, and nations, how can He govern individuals? How can He dispose of me according to His eternal purpose and I be free? Here reason, all-penetrating, and all-comprehensive, becomes weak; the clouds begin to collect, and the understanding, veiled by the darkness of the heart, can "find no end, in wandering mazes lost."

But if God has purposes of mercy in reserve for the sinner, he is convinced, at length, of his sin, and finds himself in an evil case. He reforms, prays, weeps, resolves, and re-resolves, regardless of the righteousness of Christ, and intent only to establish a righteousness of his own. But, through all his windings, sin cleaves to him, and the law, with[23] its fearful curse, pursues him. Whither shall he flee? What shall he do? A rebel heart, that will not bow, fills him with despair. An angry God, who will not clear the guilty, fills him with terror. His strength is gone, his resources fail, his mouth is stopped. With restless anxiety, or wild amazement, he surveys the gloomy prospect. At length, amidst the wanderings of despair, the character of God meets his eye. It is new, it is amiable, and full of glory. Forgetful of danger, he turns aside to behold this great sight; and while he gazes, new affections awake in his soul, inspiring new confidence in God, and in His holy government. Now God appears qualified to govern, and now he is willing that He should govern, and willing himself to be in the hands of God, to be disposed of according to His pleasure. What is the occasion of this change? Has the divine character changed? There is no variableness with God. Did he, then, misapprehend the divine character? Was all this glory visible before? Or has a revelation of new truth been granted? There has been no new revelation. The character now admitted is the same which just before appeared so gloomy and terrible. What, then, has produced this alteration? Has a vision of angels appeared, to announce that God is reconciled? Has some sudden light burst upon him, in token of forgiveness? Has Christ been seen upon the cross, beckoning the sinner[24] to come to Him? Has heaven been thrown open to his admiring eyes? Have enrapturing sounds of music stolen upon the ear, to entrance the soul? Has some text of Scripture been sent to whisper that his sins are forgiven, tho no repentance, nor faith, nor love, has dawned in his soul? And does he now submit, because God has given him assurance of personal safety? None of these. Considerations of personal safety are, at the time, out of the question. It is the uncreated, essential excellence of God, shining in upon the heart, which claims the attention, fixes the adoring eye, and fills the soul with love, and peace, and joy; and the act of submission is past, before the subject begins to reflect upon his altered views, with dawning hope of personal redemption.

The change produced, then, is the effect of benevolence, raising the affections of the soul from the world, and resting them upon God. Holiness is now most ardently loved. This is seen to dwell in God and His kingdom, and to be upheld and perfected by His moral government. It is the treasure of the soul, and all the attributes of God stand pledged to protect it. The solicitude, therefore, is not merely, What will become of me? but, What, O Lord, will become of Thy glory, and the glory of Thy kingdom? And in the character of God, these inquiries are satisfactorily answered. If God be glorified, and His kingdom[25] upheld and made happy, the soul is satisfied. There is nothing else to be anxious about; for individual happiness is included in the general good, as the drop is included in the ocean.

**÷**04-02 CHANNING

THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Ellery Channing, the famous Unitarian divine, was born at Newport, R. I., in 1780. He took his degree at Harvard in 1798, studied theology and was ordained pastor of the Federal Street Church in Boston, 1803. He has been called the Apostle of Unitarianism, because he was first among the orthodox divines of New England to give Unitarianism a clear, dogmatic expression, as he did in a sermon preached at the ordination of Jared Sparks, in opposition to the current Calvinism of the day. But he hated the controversy in which the publication of his views involved him and professed in 1841, "I am little of a Unitarian and stand aloof from all but those who strive and pray for clearer light." He had made the acquaintance of Wordsworth and Coleridge on his visit to England, and the latter justly described him as one who had "the love of wisdom and the wisdom of love." He was a voluminous writer on theological and literary subjects and what he wrote was vigorous, of fastidious taste and fired with moral earnestness. He died in 1842.

[29]

CHANNING

1780-1842

THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.—Mat 17:5.

The character of Christ may be studied for various purposes. It is singularly fitted to call forth the heart, to awaken love, admiration, and moral delight. As an example it has no rival. As an evidence of His religion perhaps it yields to no other proof; perhaps no other has so often conquered unbelief. It is chiefly to this last view of it that I now ask your attention. The character of Christ is a strong confirmation of the truth of His religion. As such I would now place it before you. I shall not, however, think only of confirming your faith; the very illustrations which I shall adduce for this purpose will show the claims of Jesus to our reverence, obedience, imitation, and fervent love.

The more we contemplate Christ's character as exhibited in the gospel, the more we shall be impressed with its genuineness and reality. It was plainly drawn from the life. The narratives of the evangelists bear the marks[30] of truth perhaps beyond all other histories. They set before us the most extraordinary being who ever appeared on earth, and yet they are as artless as the stories of childhood. The authors do not think of themselves. They have plainly but one aim, to show us their Master; and they manifest the deep veneration which He inspired by leaving Him to reveal Himself, by giving us His actions and sayings without comment, explanation, or eulogy.

You see in these narratives no varnishing, no high coloring, no attempts to make His actions striking or to bring out the beauties of His character. We are never pointed to any circumstance as illustrative of His greatness. The evangelists write with a calm trust in His character, with a feeling that it needed no aid from their hands, and with a deep veneration, as if comment or praise of their own were not worthy to mingle with the recital of such a life.

It is the effect of our familiarity with the history of Jesus that we are not struck by it as we ought to be. We read it before we are capable of understanding its excellence. His stupendous works become as familiar to us as the events of ordinary life, and His high offices seem as much matters of course as the common relations which men bear to each other.

On this account it is fit for the ministers of religion to do what the evangelists did not[31] attempt, to offer comments on Christ's character, to bring out its features, to point men to its higher beauties, to awaken their awe by unfolding its wonderful majesty. Indeed, one of our most important functions as teachers is to give freshness and vividness to truths which have become worn, I had almost said tarnished, by long and familiar handling. We have to fight with the power of habit. Through habit men look on this glorious creation with insensibility, and are less moved by the all-enlightening sun than by a show of fireworks. It is the duty of a moral and religious teacher almost to create a new sense in men, that they may learn in what a world of beauty and magnificence they live. And so in regard to Christ's character; men become used to it until they imagine that there is something more admirable in a great man of their own day, a statesman or a conqueror, than in Him the latchet of whose shoes statesmen and conquerors are not worthy to unloose.

In this discourse I wish to show that the character of Christ, taken as a whole, is one which could not have entered the thoughts of man, could not have been imagined or feigned; that it bears every mark of genuineness and truth; that it ought therefore to be acknowledged as real and of divine origin.

It is all-important, my friends, if we would[32] feel the force of this argument, to transport ourselves to the times when Jesus lived. We are very apt to think that He was moving about in such a city as this, or among a people agreeing with ourselves in modes of thinking and habits of life. But the truth is, he lived in a state of society singularly remote from our own.

Of all the nations the Jewish was the most strongly marked. The Jew hardly felt himself to belong to the human family. He was accustomed to speak of himself as chosen by God, holy, clean; whilst the Gentiles were sinners, dogs, polluted, unclean. His common dress, the phylactery on his brow or arm, the hem of his garment, his food, the ordinary circumstances of his life, as well as his temple, his sacrifices, his ablutions, all held him up to himself as a peculiar favorite of God, and all separated him from the rest of the world. With other nations he could not eat or marry. They were unworthy of his communion. Still, with all these notions of superiority he saw himself conquered by those whom he despised. He was obliged to wear the shackles of Rome, to see Roman legions in his territory, a Roman guard near his temple, and a Roman tax-gatherer extorting, for the support of an idolatrous government and an idolatrous worship, what he regarded as due only to God. The hatred which burned in the breast of the Jew toward his foreign oppressor perhaps[33] never glowed with equal intenseness in any other conquered state.

He had, however, his secret consolation. The time was near, the prophetic age was at hand, when Judea was to break her chains and rise from the dust. Her long-promised king and deliverer was near, and was coming to wear the crown of universal empire. From Jerusalem was to go forth His law, and all nations were to serve the chosen people of God. To this conqueror the Jews indeed ascribed the office of promoting religion; but the religion of Moses, corrupted into an outward service, was to them the perfection of human nature. They clung to its forms with the whole energy of their souls. To the Mosaic institution they ascribed their distinction from all other nations. It lay at the foundation of their hopes of dominion. I believe no strength of prejudice ever equalled the intense attachment of the Jew to his peculiar national religion. You may judge of its power by the fact of its having been transmitted through so many ages, amidst persecution and sufferings which would have subdued any spirit but that of a Jew. You must bring these things to your mind. You must place yourselves in the midst of this singular people.

Among this singular people, burning with impatient expectation, appeared Jesus of Nazareth. His first words were, "Repent,[34] for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." These words we hear with little emotion; but to the Jews, who had been watching for this kingdom for ages, and who were looking for its immediate manifestation, they must have been awakening as an earthquake. Accordingly we find Jesus thronged by multitudes which no building could contain. He repairs to a mountain, as affording him advantages for addressing the crowd. I see them surrounding Him with eager looks, and ready to drink in every word from His lips. And what do I hear? Not one word of Judea, of Rome, of freedom, of conquest, of the glories of God's chosen people, and of the thronging of all nations to the temple on Mount Zion.

Almost every word was a death-blow to the hopes and feelings which glowed through the whole people, and were consecrated under the name of religion. He speaks of the long-expected kingdom of heaven; but speaks of it as a felicity promised to, and only to be partaken of by, the humble and pure in heart. The righteousness of the Pharisees, that which was deemed the perfection of religion, and which the new deliverer was expected to spread far and wide, He pronounces worthless, and declares the kingdom of heaven, or of the Messiah, to be shut against all who do not cultivate a new, spiritual, and disinterested virtue.

Instead of war and victory He commands[35] His impatient hearers to love, to forgive, to bless their enemies; and holds forth this spirit of benignity, mercy, peace, as the special badge of the people of the true Messiah. Instead of national interests and glories, he commands them to seek first a spirit of impartial charity and love, unconfined by the bounds of tribe or nation, and proclaims this to be the happiness and honor of the reign for which they hoped. Instead of this world's riches, which they expected to flow from all lands into their own, He commands them to lay up treasures in heaven, and directs them to an incorruptible, immortal life, as the true end of their being.

Nor is this all. He does not merely offer himself as a spiritual deliverer, as the founder of a new empire of inward piety and universal charity; He closes with language announcing a more mysterious office. "Many will say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Here I meet the annunciation of a character as august as it must have been startling. I hear Him foretelling a dominion to be exercised in the future world. He begins to announce, what entered largely into His future teaching, that His power was not bounded to this earth. These words I better understand when I hear Him subsequently[36] declaring that, after a painful death, He was to rise again and ascend to heaven, and there, in a state of preeminent power and glory, was to be the advocate and judge of the human race.

Such are some of the views given by Jesus, of His character and reign, in the Sermon on the Mount. Immediately afterwards I hear another lesson from Him, bringing out some of these truths still more strongly. A Roman centurion makes application to Him for the cure of a servant whom he particularly valued; and on expressing, in a strong manner, his conviction of the power of Jesus to heal at a distance, Jesus, according to the historian, "marvelled, and said to those that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith in Israel; and I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom" (that is, the Jews) "shall be cast out."

Here all the hopes which the Jews had cherished of an exclusive or peculiar possession of the Messiah's kingdom were crushed; and the reception of the despised Gentile world to all His blessings, or, in other words, the extension of His pure religion to the ends of the earth, began to be proclaimed.

Here I pause for the present, and I ask you whether the character of Jesus be not the[37] most extraordinary in history, and wholly inexplicable on human principles. Review the ground over which we have gone. Recollect that He was born and grew up a Jew in the midst of Jews, a people burning with one passion, and throwing their whole souls into the expectation of a national and earthly deliverer. He grew up among them in poverty, seclusion, and labors fitted to contract His thoughts, purposes, and hopes; and yet we find Him escaping every influence of education and society. We find Him as untouched by the feelings which prevailed universally around Him, which religion and patriotism concurred to consecrate, which the mother breathed into the ear of the child, and which the teacher of the synagog strengthened in the adult, as if He had been brought up in another world. We find Him conceiving a sublime purpose, such as had never dawned on sage or hero, and see Him possessed with a consciousness of sustaining a relation to God and mankind, and of being invested with powers in this world and the world to come, such as had never entered the human mind. Whence now, I ask, came the conception of this character?

Will any say it had its origin in imposture; that it was a fabrication of a deceiver? I answer, the character claimed by Christ excludes this supposition by its very nature. It was so remote from all the ideas and anticipations[38] of the times, so unfit to awaken sympathy, so unattractive to the heathen, so exasperating to the Jew, that it was the last to enter the mind of an impostor. A deceiver of the dullest vision must have foreseen that it would expose him to bitter scorn, abhorrence, and persecution, and that he would be left to carry on his work alone, just as Jesus always stood alone and could find not an individual to enter into His spirit and design. What allurements an unprincipled, self-seeking man could find to such an enterprise, no common ingenuity can discover.

I affirm next that the sublimity of the character claimed by Christ forbids us to trace it to imposture. That a selfish, designing, depraved mind could have formed the idea and purpose of a work unparalleled in beneficence, in vastness, and in moral grandeur, would certainly be a strange departure from the laws of the human mind. I add, that if an impostor could have lighted on the conception of so sublime and wonderful a work as that claimed by Jesus, he could not, I say, he could not have thrown into his personation of it the air of truth and reality. The part would have been too high for him. He would have overacted it or fallen short of it perpetually. His true character would have rebelled against his assumed one. We should have seen something strained, forced, artificial, awkward, showing that he was not in his[39] true sphere. To act up to a character so singular and grand, and one for which no precedent could be found, seems to me utterly impossible for a man who had not the true spirit of it, or who was only wearing it as a mask.

Now, how stands the case with Jesus? Bred a Jewish peasant or carpenter, He issues from obscurity, and claims for Himself a divine office, a superhuman dignity, such as had not been imagined; and in no instance does He fall below the character. The peasant, and still more the Jew, wholly disappears.

We feel that a new being, of a new order of mind, is taking a part in human affairs. There is a native tone of grandeur and authority in His teaching. He speaks as a being related to the whole human race. His mind never shrinks within the ordinary limits of human agency. A narrower sphere than the world never enters His thoughts. He speaks in a natural, spontaneous style, of accomplishing the most arduous and important change in human affairs. This unlabored manner of expressing great thoughts is particularly worthy of attention. You never hear from Jesus that swelling, pompous, ostentatious language, which almost necessarily springs from an attempt to sustain a character above our powers. He talks of His glories as one to whom they were familiar, and of His intimacy and oneness with God as simply as[40] a child speaks of his connection with his parents. He speaks of saving and judging the world, of drawing all men to Himself, and of giving everlasting life, as we speak of the ordinary powers which we exert. He makes no set harangues about the grandeur of His office and character. His consciousness of it gives a hue to His whole language, breaks out in indirect, undesigned expressions, showing that it was the deepest and most familiar of His convictions.

This argument is only to be understood by reading the Gospels with a wakeful mind and heart. It does not lie on their surface, and it is the stronger for lying beneath it. When I read these books with care, when I trace the unaffected majesty which runs through the life of Jesus, and see him never falling below His sublime claims amidst poverty, and scorn, and in His last agony, I have a feeling of the reality of His character which I can not express. I feel that the Jewish carpenter could no more have conceived and sustained this character under motives of imposture than an infant's arm could repeat the deeds of Hercules, or his unawakened intellect comprehend and rival the matchless works of genius.

Am I told that the claims of Jesus had their origin not in imposture, but in enthusiasm; that the imagination, kindled by strong feeling, overpowered the judgment so far as to[41] give Him the notion of being destined to some strange and unparalleled work? I know that enthusiasm, or a kindled imagination, has great power; and we are never to lose sight of it, in judging of the claims of religious teachers. But I say first, that, except in cases where it amounts to insanity, enthusiasm works, in a greater or less degree, according to a man's previous conceptions and modes of thought.

In Judea, where the minds of men were burning with feverish expectation of a messiah, I can easily conceive of a Jew imagining that in himself this ardent conception, this ideal of glory, was to be realized. I can conceive of his seating himself in fancy on the throne of David, and secretly pondering the means of his appointed triumphs. But that a Jew should fancy himself the Messiah, and at the same time should strip that character of all the attributes which had fired his youthful imagination and heart—that he should start aside from all the feelings and hopes of his age, and should acquire a consciousness of being destined to a wholly new career, and one as unbounded as it was now—this is exceedingly improbable; and one thing is certain that an imagination so erratic, so ungoverned, and able to generate the conviction of being destined to work so immeasurably disproportioned to the power of the individual, must have partaken of insanity.

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Now, is it conceivable that an individual, mastered by so wild and fervid an imagination, should have sustained the dignity claimed by Christ, should have acted worthily the highest part ever assumed on earth? Would not his enthusiasm have broken out amidst the peculiar excitements of the life of Jesus, and have left a touch of madness on his teaching and conduct? Is it to such a man that we should look for the inculcation of a new and perfect form of virtue, and for the exemplification of humanity in its fairest form?

The charge of an extravagant, self-deluding enthusiasm is the last to be fastened on Jesus. Where can we find the traces of it in His history? Do we detect them in the calm authority of His precepts; in the mild, practical and beneficial spirit of His religion; in the unlabored simplicity of the language with which He unfolds His high powers and the sublime truths of religion; or in the good sense, the knowledge of human nature, which He always discovers in His estimate and treatment of the different classes of men with whom He acted? Do we discover this enthusiasm in the singular fact that, whilst He claimed power in the future world, and always turned men's minds to Heaven, He never indulged His own imagination or stimulated that of His disciples by giving vivid pictures or any minute description of that unseen state?

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The truth is, that, remarkable as was the character of Jesus, it was distinguished by nothing more than by calmness and self-possession. This trait pervades His other excellences. How calm was His piety! Point me, if you can, to one vehement, passionate expression of His religious feelings. Does the Lord's Prayer breathe a feverish enthusiasm? The habitual style of Jesus on the subject of religion, if introduced into many churches of His followers at the present day, would be charged with coldness. The calm and the rational character of His piety is particularly seen in the doctrine which He so earnestly inculcates, that disinterested love and self-denying service to our fellow creatures are the most acceptable worship we can offer to our Creator.

His benevolence, too, tho singularly earnest and deep, was composed and serene. He never lost the possession of Himself in His sympathy with others; was never hurried into the impatient and rash enterprises of an enthusiastic philanthropy; but did good with the tranquility and constancy which mark the providence of God. The depth of this calmness may best be understood by considering the opposition made to His claims.

His labors were everywhere insidiously watched and industriously thwarted by vindictive foes who had even conspired to compass, through His death, the ruin of His cause.[44] Now, a feverish enthusiasm which fancies itself to be intrusted with a great work of God is singularly liable to impatient indignation under furious and malignant opposition. Obstacles increase its vehemence; it becomes more eager and hurried in the accomplishment of its purposes, in proportion as they are withstood.

Be it therefore remembered that the malignity of Christ's foes, tho never surpassed, and for the time triumphant, never robbed Him of self-possession, roused no passion, and threw no vehemence or precipitation into His exertions. He did not disguise from Himself or His followers the impression made on the multitude by His adversaries. He distinctly foresaw the violent death towards which He was fast approaching. Yet, confiding in God and in the silent progress of His truth, He possest His soul in peace. Not only was He calm, but His calmness rises into sublimity when we consider the storms which raged around Him and the vastness of the prospects in which His spirit found repose. I say then that serenity and self-possession were peculiarly the attributes of Jesus. I affirm that the singular and sublime character claimed by Jesus can be traced neither to imposture nor to an ungoverned, insane imagination. It can only be accounted for by its truth, its reality.

I began with observing how our long familiarity with Jesus blunts our minds to His singular[45] excellence. We probably have often read of the character which He claimed, without a thought of its extraordinary nature. But I know nothing so sublime. The plans and labors of statesmen sink into the sports of children when compared with the work which Jesus announced, and to which He devoted Himself in life and death with a thorough consciousness of its reality.

The idea of changing the moral aspect of the whole earth, of recovering all nations to the pure and inward worship of one God and to a spirit of divine and fraternal love, was one of which we meet not a trace in philosopher or legislator before Him. The human mind had given no promise of this extent of view. The conception of this enterprise, and the calm, unshaken expectation of success in one who had no station and no wealth, who cast from Him the sword with abhorrence, and who forbade His disciples to use any weapons but those of love, discover a wonderful trust in the power of God and the power of love; and when to this we add that Jesus looked not only to the triumph of His pure faith in the present world, but to a mighty and beneficent power in Heaven, we witness a vastness of purpose, a grandeur of thought and feeling so original, so superior to the workings of all other minds, that nothing but our familiarity can prevent our contemplation of it with wonder and profound awe. \* \* \*

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Here is the most striking view of Jesus. This combination of the spirit of humanity, in its lowliest, tenderest form, with the consciousness of unrivaled and divine glories, is the most wonderful distinction of this wonderful character. Here we learn the chief reason why He chose poverty and refused every peculiarity of manner and appearance. He did this because He desired to come near to the multitude of men, to make Himself accessible to all, to pour out the fulness of His sympathy upon all, to know and weep over their sorrows and sins, and to manifest His interest in their affections and joys.

I can offer but a few instances of this sympathy of Christ with human nature in all its varieties of character and condition. But how beautiful are they! At the very opening of His ministry we find Him present at a marriage to which He and His disciples had been called. Among the Jews this was an occasion of peculiar exhilaration and festivity; but Jesus did not therefore decline it. He knew what affections, joys, sorrows, and moral influences are bound up in this institution, and He went to the celebration, not as an ascetic, to frown on its bright hopes and warm congratulations, but to sanction it by His presence and to heighten its enjoyments.

How little does this comport with the solitary dignity which we should have pronounced most accordant with His character,[47] and what a spirit of humanity does it breathe! But this event stands almost alone in His history. His chief sympathy was not with them that rejoice, but with the ignorant, sinful, sorrowful; and with these we find Him cultivating an habitual intimacy. Tho so exalted in thought and purpose, He chose uneducated men to be His chief disciples; and He lived with them, not as a superior, giving occasional and formal instruction, but became their companion traveled with them on foot, slept in their dwellings, sat at their tables, partook of their plain fare, communicated to them His truth in the simplest form; and tho they constantly misunderstood Him and never perceived His full meaning, He was never wearied with teaching them.

So familiar was His intercourse that we find Peter reproving Him with an affectionate zeal for announcing His approaching death, and we find John leaning on His bosom. Of His last discourse to these disciples I need not speak. It stands alone among all writings for the union of tenderness and majesty. His own sorrows are forgotten in His solicitude to speak peace and comfort to His humble followers.

The depth of His human sympathies was beautifully manifested when children were brought Him. His disciples, judging as all men would judge, thought that He was sent to wear the crown of universal empire, had too[48] great a work before Him to give His time and attention to children, and reproved the parents who brought them; but Jesus, rebuking His disciples, called to Him the children. Never, I believe, did childhood awaken such deep love as at that moment. He took them in His arms and blest them, and not only said that "of such was the kingdom of heaven," but added, "He that receiveth a little child in My name, receiveth Me;" so entirely did He identify Himself with this primitive, innocent, beautiful form of human nature.

There was no class of human beings so low as to be beneath His sympathy. He not merely taught the publican and sinner, but, with all His consciousness of purity, sat down and dined with them, and, when reproved by the malignant Pharisee for such companionship, answered by the touching parables of the Lost Sheep and the Prodigal Son, and said, "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost."

No personal suffering dried up this fountain of love in His breast. On His way to the cross He heard some women of Jerusalem bewailing Him, and at the sound, forgetting His own grief, He turned to them and said, "Women of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and your children." On the cross, whilst His mind was divided between intense suffering and the contemplation of the infinite blessings in which His sufferings were[49] to issue, His eye lighted on His mother and John, and the sensibilities of a son and a friend mingled with the sublime consciousness of the universal Lord and Savior. Never before did natural affection find so tender and beautiful an utterance. To His mother He said, directing her to John, "Behold thy son; I leave My beloved disciple to take My place, to perform My filial offices, and to enjoy a share of that affection with which you have followed Me through life;" and to John He said, "Behold thy mother; I bequeath to you the happiness of ministering to My dearest earthly friend." Nor is this all. The spirit of humanity had one higher triumph. Whilst His enemies surrounded Him with a malignity unsoftened by His last agonies, and, to give the keenest edge to insult, reminded Him scoffingly of the high character and office which He had claimed, His only notice of them was the prayer, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

Thus Jesus lived with men; with the consciousness of unutterable majesty He joined a lowliness, gentleness, humanity, and sympathy, which have no example in human history. I ask you to contemplate this wonderful union. In proportion to the superiority of Jesus to all around Him was the intimacy, the brotherly love, with which He bound Himself to them. I maintain that this is a character wholly remote from human conception. To[50] imagine it to be the production of imposture or enthusiasm shows a strange unsoundness of mind. I contemplate it with a veneration second only to the profound awe with which I look up to God. It bears no mark of human invention. It was real. It belonged to and it manifested the beloved Son of God.

But I have not done. May I ask your attention a few moments more? We have not yet reached the depth of Christ's character. We have not touched the great principle on which His wonderful sympathy was founded, and which endeared to Him His office of universal Savior. Do you ask what this deep principle was? I answer, it was His conviction of the greatness of the human soul. He saw in man the impress and image of the Divinity, and therefore thirsted for his redemption, and took the tenderest interest in him, whatever might be the rank, character, or condition in which he was found. This spiritual view of man pervades and distinguishes the teaching of Christ.

Jesus looked on men with an eye which pierced beneath the material frame. The body vanished before Him. The trappings of the rich, the rags of the poor, were nothing to Him. He looked through them, as tho they did not exist, to the soul; and there, amidst clouds of ignorance and plague-spots of sin, He recognized a spiritual and immortal nature, and the germs of power and perfection[51] which might be unfolded forever. In the most fallen and depraved man He saw a being who might become an angel of light.

Still more, He felt that there was nothing in Himself to which men might not ascend. His own lofty consciousness did not sever Him from the multitude; for He saw in His own greatness the model of what men might become. So deeply was He thus imprest that, again and again, in speaking of His future glories, He announced that in these His true followers were to share. They were to sit on His throne and partake of His beneficent power.

Here I pause, and indeed I know not what can be added to heighten the wonder, reverence, and love which are due to Jesus. When I consider Him, not only as possest with the consciousness of an unexampled and unbounded majesty, but as recognizing a kindred nature in human beings, and living and dying to raise them to a participation of His divine glories; and when I see Him under these views allying Himself to men by the tenderest ties, embracing them with a spirit of humanity which no insult, injury, or pain could for a moment repel or overpower, I am filled with wonder as well as reverence and love. I feel that this character is not of human invention, that it was not assumed through fraud, or struck out by enthusiasm; for it is infinitely above their reach. When I add this character[52] of Jesus to the other evidences of His religion, it gives to what before seemed so strange a new and a vast accession of strength; I feel as if I could not be deceived.

The Gospels must be true; they were drawn from a living original; they were founded on reality. The character of Jesus is not a fiction; He was what He claimed to be, and what His followers attested. Nor is this all. Jesus not only was, He is still the Son of God, the Savior of the world. He exists now; He has entered that heaven to which He always looked forward on earth. There He lives and reigns. With a clear, calm faith I see Him in that state of glory; and I confidently expect, at no distant period, to see Him face to face. We have indeed no absent friend whom we shall so surely meet.

Let us then, my hearers, by imitation of His virtues and obedience to His word, prepare ourselves to join Him in those pure mansions where He is surrounding Himself with the good and pure of our race, and will communicate to them forever His own spirit, power, and joy.

**÷**04-03 CHALMERS

THE EXPULSIVE POWER OF A NEW AFFECTION

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Thomas Chalmers, theologian, preacher and philanthropist, was born at Anstruther, near St. Andrews, Scotland, in 1780. In his thirty-fifth year he experienced a profound religious change and became a pronounced, tho independent, evangelical preacher. On being appointed to the Tron Church in Glasgow, he set about to face what he called "the home heathenism." During the week days he delivered his series of "Astronomical Discourses," in which he endeavored to bring science into harmony with Christianity. His "Commercial Discourses" were designed to Christianize the principles of trade. But he reduced pauperism chiefly by fighting against intemperance in Glasgow. On being transferred to St. John's Parish, the largest, but poorest in the city, he made Edward Irving his assistant. In 1828 he was called to the chair of theology in Edinburgh University.

But it was as a preacher that he exerted most influence by bringing the evangelical message into relations with the science, the culture, the thinking of his age. In doing this he carried his hearers away by the blazing force of his eloquence. Many times in his preaching he was "in an agony of earnestness," and one of his hearers speaks of "that voice, that face, those great, simple, living thoughts, those floods of resistless eloquence, that piercing, shattering voice!" He died in 1847.

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CHALMERS

1780-1847

THE EXPULSIVE POWER OF A NEW AFFECTION

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.—1Jn 2:15.

There are two ways in which a practical moralist may attempt to displace from the human heart its love of the world; either by a demonstration of the world's vanity, so as that the heart shall be prevailed upon simply to withdraw its regards from an object that is not worthy of it; or, by setting forth another object, even God, as more worthy of its attachment; so as that the heart shall be prevailed upon, not to resign an old affection which shall have nothing to succeed it, but to exchange an old affection for a new one. My purpose is to show, that from the constitution of our nature, the former method is altogether incompetent and ineffectual—and that the latter method will alone suffice for the rescue and recovery of the heart from the wrong affection that domineers over it. After having accomplished this purpose, I shall attempt a few practical observations.

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Love may be regarded in two different conditions. The first is when its object is at a distance, and when it becomes love in a state of desire. The second is when its object is in possession, and then it becomes love in a state of indulgence. Under the impulse of desire, man feels himself urged onward in some path or pursuit of activity for its gratification. The faculties of his mind are put into busy exercise. In the steady direction of one great and engrossing interest, his attention is recalled from the many reveries into which it might otherwise have wandered; and the powers of his body are forced away from an indolence in which it else might have languished; and that time is crowded with occupation, which but for some object of keen and devoted ambition, might have driveled along in successive hours of weariness and distaste—and tho hope does not always enliven, and success does not always crown the career of exertion, yet in the midst of this very variety, and with the alternations of occasional disappointment, is the machinery of the whole man kept in a sort of congenial play, and upholden in that tone and temper which are most agreeable to it; insomuch that, if through the extirpation of that desire which forms the originating principle of all this movement, the machinery were to stop, and to receive no impulse from another desire substituted in its place, the man would be left[57] with all his propensities to action in a state of most painful and unnatural abandonment. A sensitive being suffers, and is in violence, if, after having thoroughly rested from his fatigue, or been relieved from his pain, he continue in possession of powers without any excitement to these powers; if he possess a capacity of desire without having an object of desire; or if he have a spare energy upon his person, without a counterpart, and without a stimulus to call it into operation. The misery of such a condition is often realized by him who is retired from business, or who is retired from law, or who is even retired from the occupations of the chase, and of the gaming-table. Such is the demand of our nature for an object in pursuit, that no accumulation of previous success can extinguish it—and thus it is, that the most prosperous merchant, and the most victorious general, and the most fortunate gamester, when the labor of their respective vocations has come to a close, are often found to languish in the midst of all their acquisitions, as if out of their kindred and rejoicing element. It is quite in vain, with such a constitutional appetite for employment in man, to attempt cutting away from him the spring or the principle of one employment, without providing him with another. The whole heart and habit will rise in resistance against such an undertaking. The else unoccupied female, who spends the hours of[58] every evening at some play of hazard, knows as well as you, that the pecuniary gain, or the honorable triumph of a successful contest, are altogether paltry. It is not such a demonstration of vanity as this that will force her away from her dear and delightful occupation. The habit can not so be displaced as to leave nothing but a negative and cheerless vacancy behind it—tho it may be so supplanted as to be followed up by another habit of employment, to which the power of some new affection has constrained her. It is willingly suspended, for example, on any single evening, should the time that is wont to be allotted to gaming be required to be spent on the preparations of an approaching assembly.

The ascendant power of a second affection will do what no exposition, however forcible, of the folly and worthlessness of the first, ever could effectuate. And it is the same in the great world. You never will be able to arrest any of its leading pursuits by a naked demonstration of their vanity. It is quite in vain to think of stopping one of these pursuits in any way else but by stimulating to another. In attempting to bring a worthy man, intent and busied with the prosecution of his objects, to a dead stand, you have not merely to encounter the charm which he annexes to these objects, but you have to encounter the pleasure which he feels in the very prosecution of them. It is not enough, then, that you dissipate[59] the charm by your moral and eloquent and affecting exposure of its illusiveness. You must address to the eye of his mind another object, with a charm powerful enough to dispossess the first of its influence, and to engage him in some other prosecution as full of interest and hope and congenial activity as the former. It is this which stamps an impotency on all moral and pathetic declamation about the insignificance of the world. A man will no more consent to the misery of being without an object, because that object is a trifle, or of being without a pursuit, because that pursuit terminates in some frivolous or fugitive acquirement, than he will voluntarily submit himself to the torture, because that torture is to be of short duration. If to be without desire and without exertion altogether is a state of violence and discomfort, then the present desire, with its correspondent train of exertion, is not to be got rid of simply by destroying it. It must be by substituting another desire, and another line or habit of exertion in its place, and the most effectual way of withdrawing the mind from one object is not by turning it away upon desolate and unpeopled vacancy, but by presenting to its regards another object still more alluring.

These remarks apply not merely to love considered in its state of desire for an object not yet obtained. They apply also to love considered in its state of indulgence, or placid[60] gratification, with an object already in possession. It is seldom that any of our tastes are made to disappear by a mere process of natural extinction. At least, it is very seldom that this is done through the instrumentality of reasoning. It may be done by excessive pampering, but it is almost never done by the mere force of mental determination. But what can not be thus destroyed, may be dispossest—and one taste may be made to give way to another, and to lose its power entirely as the reigning affection of the mind. It is thus that the boy ceases, at length, to be the slave of his appetite; but it is because a manlier taste has now brought it into subordination, and that the youth ceases to idolize pleasure; but it is because the idol of wealth has become the stronger and gotten the ascendency, and that even the love of money ceases to have the mastery over the heart of many a thriving citizen; but it is because, drawn into the whirl of city politics, another affection has been wrought into his moral system, and he is now lorded over by the love of power. There is not one of these transformations in which the heart is left without an object. Its desire for one particular object may be conquered; but as to its desire for having some one object or other, this is unconquerable. Its adhesion to that on which it has fastened the preference of its regards, can not willingly be overcome by the rending away of a simple[61] separation. It can be done only by the application of something else, to which it may feel the adhesion of a still stronger and more powerful preference. Such is the grasping tendency of the human heart, that it must have a something to lay hold of—and which, if wrested away without the substitution of another something in its place, would leave a void and a vacancy as painful to the mind as hunger is to the natural system. It may be dispossest of one object, or of any, but it can not be desolated of all. Let there be a breathing and a sensitive heart, but without a liking and without affinity to any of the things that are around it, and in a state of cheerless abandonment, it would be alive to nothing but the burden of its own consciousness, and feel it to be intolerable. It would make no difference to its owner, whether he dwelt in the midst of a gay and a goodly world, or, placed afar beyond the outskirts of creation, he dwelt a solitary unit in dark and unpeopled nothingness. The heart must have something to cling to—and never, by its own voluntary consent, will it so denude itself of all its attachments that there shall not be one remaining object that can draw or solicit it.

The misery of a heart thus bereft of all relish for that which is wont to minister enjoyment, is strikingly exemplified in those who, satiated with indulgence, have been so belabored, as it were, with the variety and the[62] poignancy of the pleasurable sensations that they have experienced, that they are at length fatigued out of all capacity for sensation whatever. The disease of ennui is more frequent in the French metropolis, where amusement is more exclusively the occupation of higher classes, than it is in the British metropolis, where the longings of the heart are more diversified by the resources of business and politics. There are the votaries of fashion, who, in this way, have at length become the victims of fashionable excess; in whom the very multitude of their enjoyments has at last extinguished their power of enjoyment; who, with the gratifications of art and nature at command, now look upon all that is around them with an eye of tastelessness; who, plied with the delights of sense and of splendor even to weariness, and incapable of higher delights, have come to the end of all their perfection, and, like Solomon of old, found it to be vanity and vexation. The man whose heart has thus been turned into a desert can vouch for the insupportable languor which must ensue, when one affection is thus plucked away from the bosom, without another to replace it. It is not necessary that a man receive pain from anything, in order to become miserable. It is barely enough that he looks with distaste to everything, and in that asylum which is the repository of minds out of joint, and where the organ of feeling as well as the organ of[63] intellect has been impaired, it is not in the cell of loud and frantic outcries where you will meet with the acme of mental suffering; but that is the individual who outpeers in wretchedness all his fellows, who throughout the whole expanse of nature and society meets not an object that has at all the power to detain or to interest him; who neither in earth beneath, nor in heaven above, knows of a single charm to which his heart can send forth one desirous or responding movement; to whom the world, in his eye a vast and empty desolation, has left him nothing but his own consciousness to feed upon, dead to all that is without him, and alive to nothing but to the load of his own torpid and useless existence.

We know not a more sweeping interdict upon the affections of nature, than that which is delivered by the apostle in the verse before us. To bid a man into whom there is not yet entered the great and ascendant influence of the principle of regeneration, to bid him withdraw his love from all the things that are in the world, is to bid him give up all the affections that are in his heart. The world is the all of a natural man. He has not a taste, nor a desire, that points not to a something placed within the confines of its visible horizon. He loves nothing above it, and he cares for nothing beyond it; and to bid him love not the world is to pass a sentence of expulsion on all the inmates of his bosom. To estimate the[64] magnitude and the difficulty of such a surrender, let us only think that it were just as arduous to prevail on him not to love wealth, which is but one of the things in the world, as to prevail on him to set wilful fire to his own property. This he might do with sore and painful reluctance, if he saw that the salvation of his life hung upon it. But this he would do willingly if he saw that a new property of tenfold value was instantly to emerge from the wreck of the old one. In this case there is something more than the mere displacement of an affection. There is the overbearing of one affection by another. But to desolate his heart of all love for the things of the world without the substitution of any love in its place, were to him a process of as unnatural violence as to destroy all the things he has in the world, and give him nothing in their room. So if to love not the world be indispensable to one's Christianity, then the crucifixion of the old man is not too strong a term to mark that transition in his history, when all old things are done away, and all things are become new.

The love of the world can not be expunged by a mere demonstration of the world's worthlessness. But may it not be supplanted by the love of that which is more worthy than itself? The heart can not be prevailed upon to part with the world, by a simple act of resignation. But may not the heart be prevailed upon to[65] admit into its preference another, who shall subordinate the world, and bring it down from its wonted ascendency? If the throne which is placed there must have an occupier, and the tyrant that now reigns has occupied it wrongfully, he may not leave a bosom which would rather detain him than be left in desolation. But may he not give way to the lawful Sovereign, appearing with every charm that can secure His willing admittance, and taking unto Himself His great power to subdue the moral nature of man, and to reign over it? In a word, if the way to disengage the heart from the positive love of one great and ascendant object is to fasten it in positive love to another, then it is not by exposing the worthlessness of the former, but by addressing to the mental eye the worth and excellence of the latter, that all old things are to be done away, and all things are to become new.

This, we trust, will explain the operation of that charm which accompanies the effectual preaching of the gospel. The love of God, and the love of the world, are two affections, not merely in a state of rivalship, but in a state of enmity, and that so irreconcilable that they can not dwell together in the same bosom. We have already affirmed how impossible it were for the heart, by any innate elasticity of its own, to cast the world away from it, and thus reduce itself to a wilderness. The heart is not so constituted, and the only way to dispossess[66] it of an old affection is by the expulsive power of a new one. Nothing can exceed the magnitude of the required change in a man's character—when bidden, as he is in the New Testament, to love not the world; no, nor any of the things that are in the world—for this so comprehends all that is dear to him in existence as to be equivalent to a command of self-annihilation. But the same revelation which dictates so mighty an obedience places within our reach as mighty an instrument of obedience. It brings for admittance, to the very door of our heart, an affection which, once seated upon its throne, will either subordinate every previous inmate, or bid it away. Beside the world it places before the eye of the mind Him who made the world, and with this peculiarity, which is all its own—that in the gospel do we so behold God as that we may love God. It is there, and there only, where God stands revealed as an object of confidence to sinners—and where our desire after Him is not chilled into apathy by that barrier of human guilt which intercepts every approach that is not made to Him through the appointed Mediator. It is the bringing in of this better hope, whereby we draw nigh unto God—and to live without hope is to live without God, and if the heart be without God the world will then have all the ascendency. It is God apprehended by the believer as God in Christ who alone can dispost it from this ascendency.[67] It is when He stands dismantled of the terrors which belong to Him as an offended lawgiver, and when we are enabled by faith, which is His own gift, to see His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and to hear His beseeching voice, as it protests good-will to men, and entreats the return of all who will to a full pardon, and a gracious acceptance—it is then that a love paramount to the love of the world, and at length expulsive of it, first arises in the regenerating bosom. It is when released from the spirit of bondage, with which love can not dwell, and when admitted into the number of God's children, through the faith that is in Christ Jesus, the spirit of adoption is poured upon us—it is then that the heart, brought under the mastery of one great and predominant affection, is delivered from the tyranny of its former desires, and in the only way in which deliverance is possible. And that faith which is revealed to us from heaven, as indispensable to a sinner's justification in the sight of God, is also the instrument of the greatest of all moral and spiritual achievements on a nature dead to the influence, and beyond the reach of every other application.

Let us not cease then to ply the only instrument of powerful and positive operation, to do away from you the love of the world. Let us try every legitimate method of finding access to your hearts for the love of Him who[68] is greater than the world. For this purpose let us, if possible, clear away that shroud of unbelief which so hides and darkens the face of Deity. Let us insist on His claims to your affection; and whether in the shape of gratitude, or in the shape of esteem, let us never cease to affirm that in the whole of that wondrous economy, the purpose of which is to reclaim a sinful world unto Himself, He, the God of love, so sets Himself forth in characters of endearment that naught but faith, and naught but understanding are wanting, on your part, to call forth the love of your hearts back again.

And here let me advert to the incredulity of a worldly man when he brings his own sound and secular experience to bear upon the high doctrines of Christianity, when he looks on regeneration as a thing impossible, when, feeling, as he does, the obstinacies of his own heart on the side of things present, and casting an intelligent eye, much exercised perhaps in the observation of human life, on the equal obstinacies of all who are around him, he pronounces this whole matter about the crucifixion of the old man, and the resurrection of a new man in his place, to be in downright opposition to all that is known and witnessed of the real nature of humanity. We think that we have seen such men, who, firmly trenched in their own vigorous and home-bred sagacity, and shrewdly regardful of all that[69] passes before them through the week, and upon the scenes of ordinary business, look on that transition of the heart by which it gradually dies unto time, and awakens in all the life of a new-felt and ever-growing desire toward God, as a mere Sabbath speculation; and who thus, with all their attention engrossed upon the concerns of earthliness, continue unmoved, to the end of their days, among the feelings, and the appetites, and the pursuits of earthliness. If the thought of death, and another state of being after it, comes across them at all, it is not with a change so radical as that of being born again that they ever connect the idea of preparation. They have some vague conception of its being quite enough that they acquit themselves in some decent and tolerable way of their relative obligations; and that, upon the strength of some such social and domestic moralities as are often realized by him in whose heart the love of God has never entered, they will be transplanted in safety from this world, where God is the Being with whom, it may almost be said that, they have had nothing to do, to that world where God is the Being with whom they will have mainly and immediately to do throughout all eternity. They will admit all that is said of the utter vanity of time, when taken up with as a resting-place. But they resist every application made upon the heart of man, with the view of so shifting its tendencies that it shall not[70] henceforth find in the interests of time all its rest and all its refreshment. They, in fact, regard such an attempt as an enterprise that is altogether aerial—and with a tone of secular wisdom, caught from the familiarities of every day of experience, do they see a visionary character in all that is said of setting our affections on the things that are above; and of walking by faith; and of keeping our hearts in such a love of God as shall shut out from them the love of the world; and of having no confidence in the flesh; and of so renouncing earthly things as to have our conversation in heaven.

Now, it is altogether worthy of being remarked of those men who thus disrelish spiritual Christianity, and, in fact, deem it an impracticable acquirement, how much of a piece their incredulity about the demands of Christianity, and their incredulity about the doctrines of Christianity, are with one another. No wonder that they feel the work of the New Testament to be beyond their strength, so long as they hold the words of the New Testament to be beneath their attention. Neither they nor anyone else can dispossess the heart of an old affection, but by the impulsive power of a new one—and, if that new affection be the love of God, neither they nor anyone else can be made to entertain it, but on such a representation of the Deity as shall draw the heart of the sinner toward Him. Now it is just[71] their belief which screens from the discernment of their minds this representation. They do not see the love of God in sending His Son into the world. They do not see the expression of His tenderness to men, in sparing Him not, but giving Him up unto the death for us all. They do not see the sufficiency of the atonement, or of the sufferings that were endured by Him who bore the burden that sinners should have borne. They do not see the blended holiness and compassion of the Godhead, in that He passed by the transgressions of His creatures, yet could not pass them by without an expiation. It is a mystery to them how a man should pass to the state of godliness from a state of nature—but had they only a believing view of God manifest in the flesh, this would resolve for them the whole mystery of godliness. As it is, they can not get quit of their old affections, because they are out of sight from all those truths which have influence to raise a new one. They are like the children of Israel in the land of Egypt, when required to make bricks without straw they cannot love God, while they want the only food which can aliment this affection in a sinner's bosom—and however great their errors may be, both in resisting the demands of the gospel as impracticable, and in rejecting the doctrines of the gospel as inadmissible, yet there is not a spiritual man (and it is the prerogative of him who is spiritual to[72] judge all men) who will not perceive that there is a consistency in these errors.

But if there be a consistency in the errors, in like manner, is there a consistency in the truths which are opposite to them? The man who believes in the peculiar doctrines will readily bow to the peculiar demands of Christianity. When he is told to love God supremely, this may startle another, but it will not startle him to whom God has been revealed in peace, and in pardon, and in all the freeness of an offered reconciliation. When told to shut out the world from his heart, this may be impossible with him who has nothing to replace it—but not impossible with him who has found in God a sure and satisfying portion. When told to withdraw his affections from the things that are beneath, this were laying an order of self-extinction upon the man, who knows not another quarter in the whole sphere of his contemplation to which he could transfer them, but it were not grievous to him whose view had been opened to the loveliness and glory of the things that are above, and can there find, for every feeling of his soul, a most ample and delighted occupation. When told to look not to the things that are seen and temporal, this were blotting out the light of all that is visible from the prospect of him in whose eye there is a wall of partition between guilty nature and the joys of eternity—but he who believes that[73] Christ has broken down this wall finds a gathering radiance upon his soul, as he looks onward in faith to the things that are unseen and eternal. Tell a man to be holy—and how can he compass such a performance, when his fellowship with holiness is a fellowship of despair? It is the atonement of the cross reconciling the holiness of the lawgiver with the safety of the offender, that hath opened the way for a sanctifying influence into the sinner's heart, and he can take a kindred impression from the character of God now brought nigh, and now at peace with him. Separate the demand from the doctrine, and you have either a system of righteousness that is impracticable, or a barren orthodoxy. Bring the demand and the doctrine together, and the true disciple of Christ is able to do the one, through the other strengthening him. The motive is adequate to the movement; and the bidden obedience to the gospel is not beyond the measure of his strength, just because the doctrine of the gospel is not beyond the measure of his acceptance. The shield of faith, and the hope of salvation, and the Word of God, and the girdle of truth, these are the armor that he has put on; and with these the battle is won, and the eminence is reached, and the man stands on the vantage ground of a new field and a new prospect. The effect is great, but the cause is equal to it, and stupendous as this moral resurrection to the precepts[74] of Christianity undoubtedly is, there is an element of strength enough to give it being and continuance in the principles of Christianity.

The object of the gospel is both to pacify the sinner's conscience and to purify his heart; and it is of importance to observe, that what mars the one of these objects mars the other also. The best way of casting out an impure affection is to admit a pure one; and by the love of what is good to expel the love of what is evil. Thus it is, that the freer gospel, the more sanctifying is the gospel; and the more it is received as a doctrine of grace, the more will it be felt as a doctrine according to godliness. This is one of the secrets of the Christian life, that the more a man holds of God as a pensioner, the greater is the payment of service that He renders back again. On the venture of "Do this and live," a spirit of fearfulness is sure to enter; and the jealousies of a legal bargain chase away all confidence from the intercourse between God and man; and the creature striving to be square and even with his creator is, in fact, pursuing all the while his own selfishness instead of God's glory; and with all the conformities which he labors to accomplish, the soul of obedience is not there, the mind is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed under such an economy ever can be. It is only when, as in the gospel, acceptance is bestowed as a[75] present, without money and without price, that the security which man feels in God is placed beyond the reach of disturbance, or that he can repose in Him as one friend reposes in another; or that any liberal and generous understanding can be established betwixt them, the one party rejoicing over the other to do him good, the other finding that the truest gladness of his heart lies in the impulse of a gratitude by which it is awakened to the charms of a new moral existence. Salvation by grace—salvation by free grace—salvation not of works, but according to the mercy of God, salvation on such a footing is not more indispensable to the deliverance of our persons from the hand of justice than it is to the deliverance of our hearts from the chill and the weight of ungodliness. Retain a single shred or fragment of legality with the gospel, and you raise a topic of distrust between man and God. You take away from the power of the gospel to melt and to conciliate. For this purpose the freer it is the better it is. That very peculiarity which so many dread as the germ of Antinomianism, is, in fact, the germ of a new spirit and a new inclination against it. Along with the lights of a free gospel does there enter the love of the gospel, which, in proportion as you impair the freeness, you are sure to chase away. And never does the sinner find within himself so mighty a moral transformation as when, under[76] the belief that he is saved by grace, he feels constrained thereby to offer his heart a devoted thing, and to deny ungodliness.

To do any work in the best manner, you would make use of the fittest tools for it. And we trust that what has been said may serve in some degree for the practical guidance of those who would like to reach the great moral achievement of our text, but feel that the tendencies and desires of nature are too strong for them. We know of no other way by which to keep the love of the world out of our heart than to keep in our hearts the love of God—and no other way by which to keep our hearts in the love of God, than by building ourselves on our most holy faith. That denial of the world which is not possible to him that dissents from the gospel testimony, is possible, even as all things are possible, to him that believeth. To try this without faith is to work without the right tool or the right instrument. But faith worketh by love; and the way of expelling from the heart the love that transgresseth the law is to admit into its receptacles the love which fulfilleth the law.

Conceive a man to be standing on the margin of this green world, and that, when he looked toward it, he saw abundance smiling upon every field, and all the blessings which earth can afford scattered in profusion throughout every family, and the light of the sun sweetly resting upon all the pleasant habitations,[77] and the joys of human companionship brightening many a happy circle of society; conceive this to be the general character of the scene upon one side of his contemplation, and that on the other, beyond the verge of the goodly planet on which he was situated, he could descry nothing but a dark and fathomless unknown. Think you that he would bid a voluntary adieu to all the brightness and all the beauty that were before him upon earth, and commit himself to the frightful solitude away from it? Would he leave its peopled dwelling places, and become a solitary wanderer through the fields of nonentity? If space offered him nothing but a wilderness, would he for it abandon the home-bred scenes of life and cheerfulness that lay so near, and exerted such a power of urgency to detain him? Would not he cling to the regions of sense, and of life, and of society? Shrinking away from the desolation that was beyond it, would not he be glad to keep his firm footing on the territory of this world, and to take shelter under the silver canopy that was stretched over it?

But if, during the time of his contemplation, some happy island of the blest had floated by, and there had burst upon his senses the light of surpassing glories, and its sounds of sweeter melody, and he clearly saw there a purer beauty rested upon every field, and a more heartfelt joy spread itself among all[78] the families, and he could discern there a peace, and a piety, and a benevolence which put a moral gladness into every bosom, and united the whole society in one rejoicing sympathy with each other, and with the beneficent Father of them all. Could he further see that pain and mortality were there unknown, and above all, that signals of welcome were hung out, and an avenue of communication was made before him—perceive you not that what was before the wilderness, would become the land of invitation, and that now the world would be the wilderness? What unpeopled space could not do, can be done by space teeming with beatific scenes, and beatific society. And let the existing tendencies of the heart be what they may to the scene that is near and visible around us, still if another stood revealed to the prospect of man, either through the channel of faith or through the channel of his senses—then, without violence done to the constitution of his moral nature, may he die unto the present world, and live to the lovelier world that stands in the distance away from it.

**÷**04-04 CAMPBELL

THE MISSIONARY CAUSE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Alexander Campbell, prominent in the body known as Disciples or Christians, was born in Ireland in 1788, and received his education in Glasgow University. In 1809 he emigrated to the United States and took charge of a Presbyterian congregation in Bethany, Va. He did not long remain in this pastorate, but proceeded to institute a society based upon the abolition of all confessions and formularies and the acknowledgment of the text of the Holy Scriptures as the sole creed of the Church. In 1841 he founded Bethany College (Bethany, Va.), and remained its president until his death in 1866. In 1823 he founded the Christian Baptist, changed its name in 1829 to the Millennial Harbinger, but abandoned it three years before his death. He was a prolific controversial writer and published over fifty volumes, among which were hymn books and a translation of the New Testament.

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CAMPBELL

1788-1866

THE MISSIONARY CAUSE[1]

He that winneth souls is wise.—Pro 11:30.

The missionary cause is older than the material universe. It was celebrated by Job—the oldest poet on the pages of time.

Jehovah challenges Job to answer Him a few questions on the institutions of the universe. "Gird up now thy loins," said He; "and I will demand of thee a few responses. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who has fixt the measure thereof? Or who has stretched the line upon it? What are the foundations thereof? Who has laid the corner-stone thereof when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Who shut up the sea with doors when it burst forth issuing from the womb of eternity—when I made a cloud its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band? I appointed its limits, saying, Thus[82] far shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall the pride of thy waves be stayed.

"Has the rain a father? Who has begotten the drops of the dew? Who was the mother of the ice? And the hoar-frost of heaven, who has begotten it? Can mortal man bind the bands of the Seven Stars, or loose the cords of Orion? Can he bring forth and commission the twelve signs of the Zodiac, or bind Arcturus with his seven sons?

"Knowest thou, oh man, the missionaries of the starry heavens? Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? Canst thou command the lightnings, so that they may say to thee, Here we are? Who can number the clouds in wisdom? Or who can pour out the bottles of heaven upon the thirsty fields?"

If such be a single page in the volume of God's physical missionaries, what must be its contents could we, by the telescope of an angel, survey one single province of the universe, of universes, which occupy topless, bottomless, boundless space!

We have data in the Bible, and, in the phenomena of the material universe, sufficient to authorize the assumption that the missionary idea circumscribes and permeates the entire area of creations.

Need we inquire into the meaning of a celestial title given to the tenantries of the heaven of heavens? But you all, my Christian[83] brethren, know it. You anticipate me. The sweet poet of Israel told you long since, in his sixty-eighth ode, that the chariots of God are about twenty thousand of angels.[2]

And what is an angel but a messenger, a missionary? Hence the seven angels of the seven churches in Asia were seven missionaries, or messengers, sent to John in his exile; and by these John wrote letters to the seven congregations in Asia.

Figuratively, God makes the winds and lightnings his angels, his messengers of wrath or of mercy, as the case may be.

But we are a missionary society—a society assembled from all points of the compass, assembled, too, we hope, in the true missionary spirit, which is the spirit of Christianity in its primordial conception. God Himself instituted it. Moses is the oldest missionary whose name is inscribed on the rolls of time.

He was the first divine missionary, and, if we except John the Baptist, he was the second in rank and character to the Lord Messiah Himself.

Angels and missionaries are rudimentally but two names for the same officers. But of the incarnate Word, God's only begotten Son,[84] He says, "Thou art my son, the beloved, in whom I delight." And He commands the world of humanity to hearken to Him. He was, indeed, God's own special ambassador, invested with all power in heaven and on earth—a true, a real, an everlasting plenipotentiary, having vested in Him all the rights of God and all the rights of man. And were not all the angels of heaven placed under Him as His missionaries, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation?

His commission, given to the twelve apostles, is a splendid and glorious commission. Its preamble is wholly unprecedented—"All authority in heaven and on earth is given to me." In pursuance thereof, he gave commission to His apostles, saying, "Go, convert all the nations, immersing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Angels, apostles and evangelists were placed under this command, and by Him commissioned as His ambassadors to the world.

The missionary institution, we repeat, is older than Adam—older than our earth. It is coeval with the origin of angels.

Satan had been expelled from heaven before Adam was created. His assault upon our mother Eve, by an incarnation in the most[85] subtle animal in Paradise, is positive proof of the intensity of his malignity to God and to man. He, too, has his missionaries in the whole area of humanity. Michael and his angels, or missionaries, are, and long have been, in conflict against the devil and his missionaries. The battle, in this our planet, is yet in progress, and therefore missionaries are in perpetual demand. Hence the necessity incumbent on us to carry on this warfare as loyal subjects of the Hero of our redemption.

The Christian armory is well supplied with all the weapons essential to the conflict. We need them all. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in the regions of the air." Hence the need of having our "loins girded with the truth"; having on the breastplate of righteousness, our feet shod with the preparation to publish the gospel of peace, taking the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, always praying and making supplication for our fellow-missionaries and for all saints.

The missionary fields are numerous and various. They are both domestic and foreign. The harvest is great in both. The laborers are still few, comparatively very few, in either of them.

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The supply is not a tithe of the demand. The Macedonians cry, "Come over and help us;" "Send us an evangelist;" "Send us missionaries;" "The fields are large, the people are desirous, anxious, to hear the original gospel. What can you do for us?" Nothing! Nothing! My brethren, ought this so to be?

Schools for the prophets are wanting. But there is a too general apathy or indifference on the subject. We pray to the Lord of the harvest to send our reapers to gather it into His garner. But what do we besides praying for it? Do we work for it? Suppose a farmer should pray to the Lord for an abundant harvest next year, and should never, in seed-time, turn over one furrow or scatter one handful of seed: what would we think of him? Would not his neighbors regard him as a monomaniac or a simpleton? And wherein does he excel such a one in wisdom or in prudence who prays to the Lord to send out reapers—missionaries, or evangelists—to gather a harvest of souls, when he himself never gives a dollar to a missionary, or the value of it, to enable him to go into the field? Can such a person be in earnest, or have one sincere desire in his heart to effect such an object or purpose? We must confess that we could have no faith either in his head or in his heart.

The heavenly missionaries require neither gold nor silver, neither food nor raiment. Not so the earthly missionaries. They themselves,[87] their wives and children, demand both food and clothing, to say nothing of houses and furniture. Their present home is not

"The gorgeous city, garnish'd like a bride,  
Where Christ for spouse expected is to pass,  
The walls of jasper compass'd on each side,  
And streets all paved with gold, more bright than glass."

If such were the missionary's home on earth, he might, indeed, labor gratuitously all the days of his life. In an humble cottage—rather an unsightly cabin—we sometimes see the wife of his youth, in garments quite as unsightly as those of her children, impatiently waiting "their sire's return, to climb to his knees the envied kiss to share." But, when the supper table is spread, what a beggarly account of almost empty plates and dishes! Whose soul would not sicken at such a sight? I have twice, if not thrice, in days gone by, when travelling on my early missionary tours—over not the poorest lands nor the poorest settlements, either—witnessed some such cases, and heard of more.

I was then my own missionary, with the consent, however, of one church. I desired to mingle with all classes of religious society, that I might personally and truthfully know, not the theories, but the facts and the actualities, of the Christian ministry and the so-called Christian public. I spent a considerable portion[88] of my time during the years 1812, '13, '14, '15, '16, traveling throughout western Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.

I then spent seven years in reviewing my past studies, and in teaching the languages and the sciences—after which I extended my evangelical labors into other States and communities, that I might still more satisfactorily apprehend and appreciate the status, or the actual condition, of the nominally and profest religious or Christian world.

Having shortly after my baptism connected myself with the Baptist people, and attending their associations as often as I could, I became more and more penetrated with the conviction that theory had usurped the place of faith, and that consequently, human institutions had been, more or less, substituted for the apostolic and the divine.

During this period of investigation I had the pleasure of forming an intimate acquaintance with sundry Baptist ministers, East and West, as well as with the ministry of other denominations. Flattering prospects of usefulness on all sides began to expand before me and to inspire me with the hope of achieving a long-cherished object—doing some good in the advocacy of the primitive and apostolic gospel—having in the year 1820 a discussion on the subject of the first positive institution enacted by the Lord Messiah, and in A. D. 1823 another on the same subject—the[89] former more especially on the subject and action of Christian baptism, the latter more emphatically on the design of that institution tho including the former two.

These discussions, more or less, embraced the rudimental elements of the Christian institution, and gave to the public a bold relief outline of the whole genius, spirit, letter and doctrine of the gospel.

Its missionary spirit, tho not formally propounded, was yet indicated, in these discussions; because this institution was the terminus of the missionary work. It was a component element of the gospel, as clearly seen in the commission of the enthroned Messiah. Its preamble is the superlative fact of the whole Bible. We regret, indeed, that this most sublime preamble has been so much lost sight of even by the present living generation. If we ask when the Church of Jesus Christ began or when the reign of the Heavens commenced, the answer, in what is usually called Christendom, will make it either to be contemporaneous with the ministry of John the Harbinger, or with the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. We will find one of these two opinions almost universally entertained. The Baptists are generally much attached to John the Baptist; the Pedobaptists, to the commencement of Christ's public ministry. John the Baptist was the first Christian missionary with a very considerable class of living Baptists;[90] the birth of Christ is the most popular and orthodox theory at the respective meridians of Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Arminianism.

But, by the more intelligent, the resurrection, or the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, is generally regarded as the definite commencement of the Christian age or institution.

Give us Paul's or Peter's testimony, against that of all theologians, living or dead. Let us look at the facts.

Did not the Savior teach His personal pupils, or disciples, to pray, "Thy kingdom"—more truthfully, "Thy reign—come"? Does any king's reign or kingdom commence with his birth? Still less with his death? Did not our Savior Himself, in person, decline the honors of a worldly or temporal prince? Did He not declare that His kingdom "is not of this world"? Did He not say that He was going hence, or leaving this world, to receive or obtain a kingdom? And were not the keys of the kingdom first given to Peter to open, to announce it? And did he not, when in Jerusalem, on the first Pentecost, after the ascension of the Lord Jesus, make a public proclamation, saying, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made (or constituted) the identical Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Mary, both the Lord and the Christ, or the anointed Lord"?

Do kings reign before they are crowned?[91] Before they are anointed? There was not a Christian Church on earth, or any man called a Christian, until after the consecration and coronation of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of God.

The era of a son's birth was never, since the world began, the era of his reign or of the commencement of it. It is a strange fact, to me a wonderful fact, and, considering the age in which we live, an overwhelming fact, that we, as a community, are the only people on the checkered map of all Christendom, Greek, Roman, Anglican or American, that preach and teach that the commonly called Christian era is not the era or the commencement of the Christian Church or kingdom of the Lord Jesus the Christ.

The kingdom of the Christ could not antedate His coronation. Hence Peter, in announcing His coronation, after His ascension, proclaimed, saying, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made—touton ton Ieesoun—the same, the identical Jesus whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ"; or, in other words, has crowned Him the legitimate Lord of all. Then indeed His reign began. Then was verified the oracle uttered by the royal bard of Israel, "Jehovah said to my Jehovah"—or, "the Lord said to my Lord,"—"Sit thou on my right hand till I make thy foes thy footstool."

Hence He could say, and did say, to His[92] apostles, "All authority in the heavens and on the earth is given to me." In pursuance thereof, "Go you into all the world, proclaim the gospel to the whole creation; assuring them that everyone who believes this proclamation and is immersed into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, shall be saved."

Here, then, the missionary field is declared to be the whole world—the broad earth. They were, as we are afterwards informed, to begin at the first capital in the land of Judea, then to proceed to Samaria, the capital of the ten tribes, and thence to the last domicile of man on earth.

There was, and there is still, in all this arrangement, a gracious and a glorious propriety.

The Jews had murdered the Messiah under the false charge of an impostor. Was it not, then, divinely grand and supremely glorious to make this awfully bloodstained capital the beginning, the fountain, of the gospel age and mission? Hence it was decreed that all the earth should be the parish, and all the nations and languages of earth the objects, and millions of them the subjects, of the redeeming grace and tender mercies of our Savior and our God.

What an extended and still extending area is the missionary field! There are the four mighty realms of Pagandom, of Papaldom, of[93] Mohammedandom and of ecclesiastic Sectariandom. These are, one and all, essentially and constitutionally, more or less, not of the apostolic Christendom.

The divinely inspired constitution of the Church contains only seven articles. These are the seven hills, not of Rome, but of the true Zion of Israel's God. Paul's summary of them is found in the following words: "One body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all."

The clear perception, the grateful reception, the cordial entertainment of these seven divinely constructed and instituted pillars, are the alone sufficient, and the all-sufficient, foundation—the indestructible basis—of Christ's kingdom on this earth, and of man's spiritual and eternal salvation in the full enjoyment of himself, his Creator, his Redeemer, and the whole universe of spiritual intelligence through all the circles and the cycles of an infinite, an everlasting future of being and of blessedness.

The missionary spirit is, indeed, an emanation of the whole Godhead. God the Father sent His Son, His only begotten Son, into our world. The Son sent the Holy Spirit to bear witness through His twelve missionaries, the consecrated and Heaven-inspired apostles. They proclaimed the glad tidings of great joy to all people—to the Jews, to the Samaritans,[94] to the Gentiles, of all nations, kindreds and tongues. They gave in solemn charge to others to sound out and proclaim the glad tidings of great joy to all people. And need we ask, is not the Christian Church itself, in its own institution and constitution, virtually and essentially a missionary institution? Does not Paul formally state to the Thessalonians in his first epistle that from them sounded out the Word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and in Achaia, but in every place?

No man can really or truthfully enjoy the spiritual, the soul-stirring, the heart-reviving honors and felicities of the Christian institution and kingdom, who does not intelligently, cordially and efficiently espouse the missionary cause.

In other words, he must feel, he must have compassion for his fellow man; and, still further, he must practically sympathize with him in communicating to his spiritual necessities as well as to his physical wants and infirmities. The true ideal of all perfection—our blest and blissful Redeemer—went about continually doing good—to both the souls and the bodies of his fellow men; healing all that were, in body, soul or spirit, opprest by Satan, the enemy of God and of man.

To follow his example is the grand climax of humanity. It is not necessary to this end that he should occupy the pulpit. There are,[95] as we conceive, myriads of Christian men in the private walks of life, who never aspired to the "sacred desk," that will far outshine, in eternal glory and blessedness, hosts of the reverend, the boasted and the boastful right reverend occupants of the sacred desks of this our day and generation.

But Solomon has furnished our motto:—"He that winneth" or taketh "souls is wise" (Prov. xi. 30). Was he not the wisest of men, the most potent and the richest of kings, that ever lived? He had, therefore, all the means and facilities of acquiring what we call knowledge—the knowledge of men and things; and, consequently, the value of men and things was legitimately within the area of his understanding; or, in this case, we might prefer to say, with all propriety, within the area of his comprehension.

Need I say that comprehension incomparably transcends apprehension? Simpletons may apprehend, but only wise men can comprehend anything. Solomon's rare gift was, that both his apprehension and his comprehension transcended those of all other men, and gave him a perspicacity and promptitude of decision never before or since possest by any man. His oracles, indeed, were the oracles of God. But God especially gave to him a power and opportunity of making one grand experiment and development for the benefit of his living contemporaries, and of[96] all posterity, to whom God presents his biography, his Proverbs and his Ecclesiastes.

"The winning of souls" is, therefore, the richest and best business, trade or calling, according to Solomon, ever undertaken or prosecuted by mortal man. Paul was fully aware of this, and therefore had always in his eye a "triple crown"—"a crown of righteousness," a "crown of life," a "crown of glory." And even in this life he had "a crown of rejoicing," in prospect of an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, imperishable in the heavens.

There is, too, a present reward, a present pleasure, a present joy and peace which the wisdom, and the riches, and the dignity, and the glory, and the honors of this world never did, never can, and consequently never will, confer on its most devoted and persevering votaries.

There is, indeed, a lawful and an honorable covetousness, which any and every Christian, man and woman, may cultivate and cherish.

Paul himself justifies the poetic license, when he says, "Covet earnestly the best gifts."

The best gifts in his horizon, however, were those which, when duly cultivated and employed, confer the greatest amount of profit and felicity upon others. We should, indeed, desire, even covet, the means and the opportunities of beatifying and aggrandizing one another with the true riches, the honors and[97] the dignities that appertain to the spiritual, the heavenly and the eternal inheritance.

But we need not propound to your consideration or inquiry the claims—the paramount, the transcendent claims—which our enjoyment of the gospel and its soul-cheering, soul-animating, soul-enrapturing influences present to us as arguments and motives to extend and to animate its proclamation by every instrumentality and means which we can legitimately employ, to present it in all its attractions and claims upon the understanding, the conscience and the affections of our contemporaries, in our own country and in all others, as far as our most gracious and bountiful Benefactor affords the means and the opportunities of co-operating with Him, in the rescue and recovery of our fellow men, who, without such means and efforts, must forever perish, as aliens and enemies, in heart and in life, to God and to His divinely-commissioned ambassador, the glorious Messiah.

We plead for the original apostolic gospel and its positive institutions. If the great apostles Peter and Paul—the former to the Jews and the latter to the Gentiles—announced the true gospel of the grace of God, shall we hesitate a moment on the propriety and the necessity, divinely imposed upon us, of preaching the same gospel which they preached, and in advocating the same institutions which they established, under the plenary[98] inspiration and direction of the Holy Spirit? Can we improve upon their institutions and enactments? What means that singular imperative enunciated by the evangelical prophet Isaiah (Isa. viii.), "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples?" What were its antecedents? Hearken! The prophet had just foretold. He, the subject of this oracle, viz: "The desire of all nations," was coming to be a sanctuary; but not a sanctuary alone, but for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense (as at this day) to both the houses of Israel—for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The Church, therefore, of right is, and ought to be, a great missionary society. Her parish is the whole earth, from sea to sea, and from the Euphrates to the last domicile of man.

But the crowning and consummating argument of the missionary cause has not been fully presented. There is but one word, in the languages of earth, that fully indicates it. And that word indicates neither less nor more than what is represented—literally, exactly, perspicuously represented—by the word philanthropy. But this being a Greek word needs, perhaps in some cases, an exact definition. And to make it memorable we will preface it with the statement of the fact that this word is found but twice in the Greek original New Testament (Acts xxviii., 2, and[99] Titus iii., 4.). In the first passage this word is, in the common version, translated "kindness," and in the second, "love toward man." Literally and exactly, it signifies the love of man, objectively; but, more fully exprest, the love of one to another.

The love of God to man is one form of philanthropy; the love of angels to one man is another form of philanthropy; and the love of man to man, as such, is the true philanthropy of the law. It is not the love of one man to another man, because of favors received from him; this is only gratitude. It is not the love of one man to another man, because of a common country: this is mere patriotism. It is not the love of man to man, because of a common ancestry: this is mere natural affection. But it is the love of man to man, merely because he is a man. This is pure philanthropy. Such was the love of God to man as exhibited in the gift of His dearly beloved Son as a sin-offering for him. This is the name which the inspired writers of the New Testament give it. So Paul uses it, Titus iii. and iv. It should have been translated, "After that the kindness and philanthropy of God our Savior appeared." Again, Acts xxviii., 2, "The barbarous people of the Island of Melita showed us no little philanthropy.[3] They kindled a fire for us on their island,[100] because of the impending rain and the cold."

There are, indeed, many forms and demonstrations of philanthropy. For one good man another good man might presume to die. But the philanthropy of God to man incomparably transcends all other forms of philanthropy known on earth or reported from heaven.

While we were sinners, in positive and actual rebellion against our Father and our God, He freely gave up His only begotten and dearly beloved Son, as a sin-offering for us, and laid upon Him, or placed in His account, the sin, the aggregate sin, of the world. He became in the hand of His Father and our Father a sin-offering for us. He took upon Himself, and His Father "laid upon him, the iniquity of us all." Was ever love like this? Angels of all ranks, spirits of all capacities, still contemplate it with increasing wonder and delight.

This gospel message is to be announced to all the world, to men of every nation under heaven. And this, too, with the promise of the forgiveness of sins and of a life everlasting in the heavens, to everyone who will cordially accept and obey it.

**÷**04-05 IRVING

PREPARATION FOR CONSULTING THE ORACLES OF GOD

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Edward Irving was born at Annan, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, in 1792. He was an early friend and lover of Jane Welsh, who afterwards married Thomas Carlyle. He showed ability at school, but had also a taste for the preaching of extreme Presbyterian seceders from the Church of Scotland. After graduating at the University of Edinburgh, in 1809, he began life by teaching school, but obtained a license to preach in 1815. He became assistant to Chalmers at Glasgow in 1819, where, great preacher as he was, he felt himself eclipsed by Chalmers, and in 1822 accepted the pulpit at a chapel in Hatton Garden, London. Here he leapt into fame. His melodious and resonant voice, his noble presence and the beauty of his features, enhanced the eloquence of his language. Eventually he became unbalanced by the adulation of the aristocratic and intellectual crowd that listened to him. They, however, grew tired of his prophecies and denunciations, and his eccentricities of judgment finally led to disruption, and "after a few years of futile but splendid evangelization, he died a broken-hearted man, tender and true to the last, altho the victim of unsubstantial religious vagaries." Carlyle wrote a touching memoir of his life. He died in 1834.

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IRVING

1792-1834

PREPARATION FOR CONSULTING THE ORACLES OF GOD

Search the scriptures.—Joh 5:39.

There was a time when each revelation of the word of God had an introduction into this earth, which neither permitted men to doubt whence it came, nor wherefore it was sent. If at the giving of each several truth a star was not lighted up in heaven, as at the birth of the Prince of Truth, there was done upon the earth a wonder, to make her children listen to the message of their Maker. The Almighty made bare His arm; and, through mighty acts shown by His holy servants, gave demonstration of His truth, and found for it a sure place among the other matters of human knowledge and belief.

But now the miracles of God have ceased, and nature, secure and unmolested, is no longer called on for testimonies to her Creator's voice. No burning bush draws the footsteps to His presence chamber; no invisible voice holds the ear awake; no hand cometh forth from the obscurity to write His purposes[104] in letters of flame. The vision is shut up, and the testimony is sealed, and the Word of the Lord is ended, and this solitary volume, with its chapters and verses, is the sum total of all for which the chariot of heaven made so many visits to the earth, and the Son of God Himself tabernacled and dwelt among us.

The truth which it contains once dwelt undivulged in the bosom of God; and, on coming forth to take its place among things revealed, the heavens and the earth, and nature, through all her chambers, gave reverent welcome. Beyond what it contains, the mysteries of the future are unknown. To gain it acceptation and currency, the noble company of martyrs testified unto the death. The general assembly of the first-born in heaven made it the day-star of their hopes, and the pavilion of their peace. Its every sentence is charmed with the power of God, and powerful to the everlasting salvation of souls.

Having our minds filled with these thoughts of the primeval divinity of revealed wisdom when she dwelt in the bosom of God, and was of His eternal Self a part, long before He prepared the heavens, or set a compass upon the face of the deep; revolving also how, by the space of four thousand years, every faculty of mute nature did solemn obeisance to this daughter of the Divine mind, whenever He pleased to commission her forth to the help of mortals; and further meditating upon the delights[105] which she had of old with the sons of men, the height of heavenly temper to which she raised them, and the offspring of magnanimous deeds which these two—the wisdom of God, and the soul of man—did engender between themselves—meditating, I say, upon these mighty topics, our soul is smitten with grief and shame to remark how in this latter day she hath fallen from her high estate; and fallen along with her the great and noble character of men. Or, if there be still a few names, as of the missionary martyr, to emulate the saints of old—how to the commonalty of Christians her oracles have fallen into a household commonness, and her visits into a cheap familiarity; while by the multitude she is mistaken for a minister of terror sent to oppress poor mortals with moping melancholy, and inflict a wound upon the happiness of human kind.

For there is now no express stirring up the faculties to meditate her high and heavenly strains—there is no formal sequestration of the mind from all other concerns, on purpose for her special entertainment—there is no house of solemn seeking and solemn waiting for a spiritual frame, before entering and listening to the voice of the Almighty's wisdom. Who feels the sublime dignity there is in a saying, fresh descended from the porch of heaven? Who feels the awful weight there is in the least iota that hath dropped from[106] the lips of God? Who feels the thrilling fear or trembling hope there is in words whereon the destinies of himself do hang? Who feels the swelling tide of gratitude within his breast, for redemption and salvation, instead of flat despair and everlasting retribution? Yea, that which is the guide and spur of all duty, the necessary aliment of Christian life, the first and the last of Christian knowledge and Christian feeling, hath, to speak the best, degenerated in these days to stand, rank and file, among those duties whereof it is parent, preserver, and commander. And, to speak not the best, but the fair and common truth, this book, the offspring of the Divine mind, and the perfection of heavenly wisdom, is permitted to lie from day to day, perhaps from week to week, unheeded and unperused, never welcome to our happy, healthy, and energetic moods; admitted, if admitted at all, in seasons of sickness, feeble-mindedness, and disabling sorrow. Yes, that which was sent to be a spirit of ceaseless joy and hope within the heart of man, is treated as the enemy of happiness, and the murderer of enjoyment; and eyed askance, as the remembrancer of death, and the very messenger of hell.

Oh! if books had but tongues to speak their wrongs, then might this book well exclaim: Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth! I came from the love and embrace of God, and mute nature, to whom I brought no boon,[107] did me rightful homage. To men I come, and my words were to the children of men. I disclosed to you the mysteries hereafter, and the secrets of the throne of God. I set open to you the gates of salvation, and the way of eternal life, hitherto unknown. Nothing in heaven did I withhold from your hope and ambition; and upon your earthly lot I poured the full horn of Divine providence and consolation. But ye requited me with no welcome, ye held no festivity on my arrival; ye sequester me from happiness and heroism, closeting me with sickness and infirmity: ye make not of me, nor use me for, your guide to wisdom and prudence, but put me into a place in your last of duties, and withdraw me to a mere corner of your time; and most of ye set me at naught and utterly disregard me. I come, the fulness of the knowledge of God; angels delighted in my company, and desired to dive into my secrets. But ye, mortals, place masters over me, subjecting me to the discipline and dogmatism of men, and tutoring me in your schools of learning. I came, not to be silent in your dwellings, but to speak welfare to you and to your children. I came to rule, and my throne to set up in the hearts of men. Mine ancient residence was the bosom of God; no residence will I have but the soul of an immortal; and if you had entertained me, I should have possest you of the peace which I had with God, "when I was with Him and[108] was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him. Because I have called you and ye have refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they cry upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

From this cheap estimation and wanton neglect of God's counsel, and from the terror of the curse consequent thereon, we have resolved, in the strength of God, to do our endeavor to deliver this congregation of His intelligent and worshiping people—an endeavor which we make with a full perception of the difficulties to be overcome on every side, within no less than without the sacred pale; and upon which we enter with the utmost diffidence of our powers, yet with the full purpose of straining them to the utmost, according to the measure with which it hath pleased God to endow our mind. And do Thou, O Lord, from whom cometh the perception of truth, vouchsafe to Thy servant an unction from Thine own Spirit, who searcheth all things, yes, the deep things of God; and vouchsafe to Thy people "the hearing ear and the understanding heart, that they may[109] hear and understand, and their souls may live!"

Before the Almighty made His appearance upon Sinai, there were awful precursors sent to prepare His way; while He abode in sight, there were solemn ceremonies and a strict ritual of attendance; when He departed, the whole camp set itself to conform unto His revealed will. Likewise, before the Savior appeared, with His better law, there was a noble procession of seers and prophets, who decried and warned the world of His coming; when He came there were solemn announcements in the heavens and on the earth; He did not depart without due honors; and then followed, on His departure, a succession of changes and alterations which are still in progress, and shall continue in progress till the world's end. This may serve to teach us, that a revelation of the Almighty's will makes demand for these three things, on the part of those to whom it is revealed: A due preparation for receiving it; a diligent attention to it while it is disclosing; a strict observance of it when it is delivered.

In the whole book of the Lord's revelations you shall search in vain for one which is devoid of these necessary parts. Witness the awestruck Isaiah, while the Lord displayed before him the sublime pomp of His presence; and, not content with overpowering the frail sense of the prophet, dispatched a seraph to[110] do the ceremonial of touching his lip with hallowed fire, all before He uttered one word into his astonished ear. Witness the majestic apparition to Saint John, in the Apocalypse, of all the emblematical glory of the Son of Man, allowed to take silent effect upon the apostle's spirit, and prepare it for the revelation of things to come. These heard with all their absorbed faculties, and with all their powers addrest them to the bidding of the Lord. But, if this was in aught flinched from, witness, in the persecution of the prophet Jonah, the fearful issues which ensued. From the presence of the Lord he could not flee. Fain would he have escaped to the uttermost parts of the earth; but in the mighty waters the terrors of the Lord fell upon him; and when engulfed in the deep, and entombed in the monster of the deep, still the Lord's word was upon the obdurate prophet, who had no rest, not the rest of the grave, till he had fulfilled it to the very uttermost.

Now, judging that every time we open the pages of this holy book, we are to be favored with no less than a communication from on high, in substance the same as those whereof we have detailed the three distinct and several parts, we conceive it due to the majesty of Him who speaks, that we, in like manner, discipline our spirits with a due preparation, and have them in proper frame, before we listen to the voice; that, while it is disclosing[111] to us the important message, we be wrapt in full attention; and that, when it hath disburdened itself into our opened and enlarged spirits, we proceed forthwith to the business of its fulfilment, whithersoever and to whatsoever it summon us forth. Upon each of these three duties, incumbent upon one who would not forego the benefit of a heavenly message, we will discourse apart, addressing ourselves in this discourse to the first-mentioned of the three.

The preparation for the announcement.—"When God uttereth His voice," says the Psalmist, "coals of fire are kindled; the hills melt down like wax; the earth quakes; and deep proclaims itself unto hollow deep." These sensible images of the Creator have now vanished, and we are left alone, in the deep recesses of the meditative mind, to discern His coming forth. No trump of heaven now speaketh in the world's ear. No angelic conveyance of Heaven's will taketh shape from the vacant air; and having done his errand, retireth into his airy habitation. No human messenger putteth forth his miraculous hand to heal nature's unmedicable wounds, winning for his words a silent and astonished audience. Majesty and might no longer precede the oracles of Heaven. They lie silent and unobtrusive, wrapt up in their little compass, one volume among many, innocently handed to and fro, having no distinction but[112] that in which our mustered thoughts are enabled to invest them. The want of solemn preparation and circumstantial pomp, the imagination of the mind hath now to supply. The presence of the Deity, and the authority of His voice, our thoughtful spirits must discern. Conscience must supply the terrors that were wont to go before Him; and the brightness of His coming, which the sense can no longer behold, the heart, ravished with His word, must feel.

For the solemn vocation of all her powers, to do her Maker honor and give Him welcome, it is, at the very least, necessary that the soul stand absolved from every call. Every foreign influence or authority arising out of the world, or the things of the world, should be burst when about to stand before the fountain of all authority; every argument, every invention, every opinion of man forgot, when about to approach to the Father and oracle of all intelligence. And as subjects, when their honors, with invitations, are held disengaged, tho preoccupied with a thousand appointments, so, upon an audience, fixt and about to be holden with the King of Kings, it will become the honored mortal to break loose from all thraldom of men and things, and be arrayed in liberty of thought and action to drink in the rivers of His pleasure, and to perform the mission of His lips.

Now far otherwise it hath appeared to us,[113] that Christians as well as worldly men come to this most august occupation of listening to the word of God; preoccupied and prepossest, inclining to it a partial ear, and straitened understanding, and a disaffected will.

The Christian public are prone to preoccupy themselves with the admiration of those opinions by which they stand distinguished as a Church or sect from other Christians, and instead of being quite unfettered to receive the whole counsel of the Divinity, they are prepared to welcome it no further than it bears upon, and stands with opinions which they already favor. To this pre-judgment the early use of catechisms mainly contributes, which, however serviceable in their place, have the disadvantage of presenting the truth in a form altogether different from what it occupies in the world itself. In the one it is presented to the intellect chiefly (and in our catechisms to an intellect of a very subtle order), in the other it is presented more frequently to the heart, to the affections, to the emotions, to the fancy, and to all the faculties of the soul. In early youth, which is so applied to those compilations, an association takes place between religion and intellect, and a divorcement of religion from the other powers of the inner man. This derangement, judging from observation and experience, it is exceedingly difficult to put to rights in afterlife; and so it comes to pass, that in listening[114] to the oracles of religion, the intellect is chiefly awake, and the better parts of the message—those which address the heart and its affections, those which dilate and enlarge our admiration of the Godhead, and those which speak to the various sympathies of our nature—we are, by the injudicious use of these narrow epitomes, disqualified to receive.

In the train of these comes controversy with its rough voice and unmeek aspect, to disqualify the soul for a full and fair audience of its Maker's word. The points of the faith we have been called on to defend, or which are reputable with our party, assume, in our esteem, an importance disproportionate to their importance in the Word, which we come to relish chiefly when it goes to sustain them, and the Bible is hunted for arguments and texts of controversy, which are treasured up for future service. The solemn stillness which the soul should hold before his Maker, so favorable to meditation and rapt communion with the throne of God, is destroyed at every turn by suggestions of what is orthodox and evangelical—where all is orthodox and evangelical; the spirit of such readers becomes lean, being fed with abstract truths and formal propositions; their temper uncongenial, being ever disturbed with controversial suggestions; their prayers undevout recitals of their opinions; their discourse technical announcements of their faith. Intellect, old intellect,[115] hath the sway over heavenward devotion and holy fervor. Man, contentious man, hath the attention which the unsearchable God should undivided have; and the fine, full harmony of heaven's melodious voice, which, heard apart, were sufficient to lap the soul in ecstasies unspeakable, is jarred and interfered with, and the heavenly spell is broken by the recurring conceits, sophisms, and passions of men. Now truly an utter degradation it is of the Godhead to have His word in league with that of man, or any council of men. What matter to me whether the Pope, or any work of any mind, be exalted to the quality of God? If any helps are to be imposed for the understanding, or safeguarding, or sustaining of the word, why not the help of statues and pictures of my devotions? Therefore, while the warm fancies of the Southerns have given their idolatry to the ideal forms of noble art, let us Northerns beware we give not our idolatry to the cold and coarse abstractions of human intellect.

For the preoccupations of worldly minds, they are not to be reckoned up, being manifold as their favorite passions and pursuits. One thing only can be said, that before coming to the oracles of God they are not preoccupied with the expectation and fear of Him. No chord in their heart is in unison with things unseen; no moments are set apart for religious thought and meditation; no anticipations of[116] the honored interview; no prayer of preparation like that of Daniel before Gabriel was sent to teach him; no devoutness like that of Cornelius before the celestial visitation; no fastings like that of Peter before the revelation of the glory of the Gentiles! Now to minds which are not attuned to holiness, the words of God find no entrance, striking heavy on the ear, seldom making way to the understanding, almost never to the heart. To spirits hot with conversation, perhaps heady with argument, uncomposed by solemn thought, but ruffled and in uproar from the concourse of worldly interests, the sacred page may be spread out, but its accents are drowned in the noise which hath not yet subsided in the breast. All the awe, and pathos, and awakened consciousness of a Divine approach, imprest upon the ancients by the procession of solemnities, is to worldly men without a substitute. They have not yet solicited themselves to be in readiness. In a usual mood and vulgar frame they come to God's word as to other compositions, reading it without any active imaginations about Him who speaks; feeling no awe of a sovereign Lord, nor care of a tender Father, nor devotion to a merciful Savior. Nowise deprest themselves out of their wonted dependence, nor humiliated before the King of Kings—no prostrations of the soul, nor falling at His feet as dead—no exclamation, as of Isaiah,[117] "Wo is me, for I am of unclean lips!"—no request "Send me"—nor fervent ejaculation of welcome, as of Samuel, "Lord, speak, for Thy servant heareth!" Truly they feel toward His word much as to the word of an equal. No wonder it shall fail of happy influence upon the spirits which have, as it were, on purpose, disqualified themselves for its benefits by removing from the regions of thought and feeling which it accords with, into other regions, which it is of too severe dignity to affect, otherwise than with stern menace and direful foreboding! If they would have it bless them and do them good, they must change their manner of approaching it, and endeavor to bring themselves into that prepared, and collected, and reverential frame which becomes an interview with the High and Holy One who inhabiteth the praises of eternity.

Having thus spoken without equivocation, and we hope without offense, to the contradictoriness and preoccupation with which Christians and worldly men are apt to come to the perusal of the Word of God, we shall now set forth the two master-feelings under which we shall address ourselves to the sacred occupation.

It is a good custom, inherited from the hallowed days of Scottish piety, and in our cottages still preserved, tho in our cities generally given up, to preface the morning[118] and evening worship of the family with a short invocation of blessing from the Lord. This is in unison with the practise and recommendation of pious men, never to open the Divine Word without a silent invocation of the Divine Spirit. But no address to heaven is of any virtue, save as it is the expression of certain pious sentiments with which the mind is full and overflowing. Of those sentiments which befit the mind that comes into conference with its Maker, the first and most prominent should be gratitude for His ever having condescended to hold commerce with such wretched and fallen creatures. Gratitude not only expressing itself in proper terms, but possessing the mind with one abiding and over-mastering mood, under which it shall sit imprest the whole duration of the interview. Such an emotion as can not utter itself in language—tho by language it indicates its presence—but keeps us in a devout and adoring frame, while the Lord is uttering His voice.

Go visit a desolate widow with consolation, and help, and fatherhood of her orphan children—do it again and again—and your presence, the sound of your approaching footstep, the soft utterance of your voice, the very mention of your name, shall come to dilate her heart with a fulness which defies her tongue to utter, but speaking by the tokens of a swimming eye, and clasped hands,[119] and fervent ejaculations to heaven upon your head! No less copious acknowledgment of God, the author of our well-being, and the Father of our better hopes, ought we to feel when His Word discloseth to us the excess of His love. Tho a veil be now cast over the Majesty which speaks, it is the voice of the Eternal which we hear, coming in soft cadences to win our favor, yet omnipotent as the voice of the thunder, and overpowering as the rushing of many waters. And tho the evil of the future intervene between our hand and the promised goods, still are they from His lips who speaks, and it is done, who commands, and all things stand fast. With no less emotion, therefore, should this book be opened, than if, like him in the Apocalypse, you saw the voice which spake; or, like him in the trance, you were into the third heaven translated, companying and communing with the realities of glory which the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived.

Far and foreign from such an opened and awakened bosom is that cold and formal hand which is generally laid upon the sacred volume; that unfeeling and unimpressive tone with which its accents are pronounced; and that listless and incurious ear into which its blessed sounds are received. How can you, thus unimpassioned, hold communion with themes in which everything awful, vital, and[120] endearing meet together? Why is not curiosity, curiosity ever hungry, on edge to know the doings and intentions of Jehovah, King of Kings? Why is not interest, interest ever awake, on tip-toe to hear the future destiny of itself? Why is not the heart, that panteth over the world after love and friendship, overpowered with the full tide of the divine acts and expressions of love? Where is nature gone when she is not moved with the tender mercy of Christ? Methinks the affections of men are fallen into the yellow leaf. Of the poets which charm the world's ear, who is he that inditeth a song unto his God? Some will tune their harps to sensual pleasure, and by the enchantment of their genius well-nigh commend their unholy themes to the imagination of saints. Others, to the high and noble sentiments of the heart, will sing of domestic joys and happy unions, casting around sorrow the radiancy of virtue, and bodying forth, in undying forms, the short-lived visions of joy! Others have enrolled themselves the high-priests of mute nature's charms, enchanting her echoes with their minstrelsy, and peopling her solitudes with the bright creatures of their fancy. But when, since the days of the blind master of English song, hath any poured forth a lay worthy of the Christian theme? Nor in philosophy, "the palace of the soul," have men been more mindful of their Maker. The flowers[121] of the garden and the herbs of the field have their unwearied devotees, crossing the ocean, wayfaring in the desert, and making devout pilgrimages to every region of nature for offerings to their patron muse. The rocks, from their residences among the clouds to their deep rests in the dark bowels of the earth, have a bold and most venturous priesthood, who see in their rough and flinty faces a more delectable image to adore than in the revealed countenance of God. And the political warfare of the world is a very Moloch, who can at any time command his hecatomb of human victims. But the revealed suspense of God, to which the harp of David, and the prophetic lyre of Isaiah were strung, the prudence of God, which the wisest of men coveted after, preferring it to every gift which heaven could confer, and the eternal intelligence Himself in human form, and the unction of the Holy One which abideth—these the common heart of man hath forsaken, and refused to be charmed withal.

I testify, that there ascendeth not from earth a hosanna of her children to bear witness in the ear of the upper regions to the wonderful manifestations of her God! From a few scattered hamlets in a small portion of her territory a small voice ascendeth, like the voice of one crying in the wilderness. But to the service of our general Preserver there is no concourse, from Dan unto Beersheba, of[122] our people, the greater part of whom, after two thousand years of apostolic commission, have not the testimonials of our God; and the multitude of those who disrespect or despise them!

But, to return from this lamentation, which may God hear, who doth not disregard the cries of His afflicted people! With the full sense of obligation to the giver, combine a humble sense of your own incapacity to value and to use the gift of His oracles. Having no taste whatever for the mean estimates which are made, and the coarse invectives that are vented, against human nature, which, tho true in the main, are often in the manner so unfeeling and triumphant, as to reveal hot zeal rather than tender and deep sorrow, we will not give in to this popular strain. And yet it is a truth by experience, revealed, that tho there be in man most noble faculties, and a nature restless after the knowledge and truth of things, there are toward God and His revealed will an indisposition and a regardlessness, which the most tender and enlightened consciences are the most ready to acknowledge. Of our emancipated youth, who, bound after the knowledge of the visible works of God, and the gratification of the various instincts of nature, how few betake themselves at all, how few absorb themselves with the study and obedience of the Word of God! And when, by God's visitation, we address[123] ourselves to the task, how slow is our progress and how imperfect our performance! It is most true that nature is unwilling to the subject of the Scriptures. The soul is previously possest with adverse interests; the world hath laid an embargo on her faculties, and monopolized them to herself; old habit hath perhaps added to his almost incurable callousness; and the enemy of God and man is skilful to defend what he hath already won. So circumstanced, and every man is so circumstanced, we come to the audience of the Word of God, and listen in the worse tune than a wanton to a sermon, or a hardened knave to a judicial address. Our understanding is prepossest with a thousand idols of the world—religious or irreligious—which corrupt the reading of the Word into a straining of the text to their service, and when it will not strain, cause it to be skimmed, and perhaps despised or hated. Such a thing as a free and unlimited reception of all parts of the Scripture into the mind, is a thing most rare to be met with, and when met with will be found the result of many a sore submission of nature's opinions as well as of nature's likings.

But the Word, as hath been said, is not for the intellect alone, but for the heart, and for the will. Now if any one be so wedded to his own candor as to think he doth accept the divine truth unabated, surely no one will[124] flatter himself into the belief that his heart is attuned and enlarged for all divine commandments. The man who thus misdeems of himself must, if his opinions were just, be like a sheet of fair paper, unblotted and unwritten on; whereas all men are already occupied, to the very fulness, with other opinions and attachments and desires than the Word reveals. We do not grow Christians by the same culture by which we grow men, otherwise what need of divine revelation, and divine assistance? But being unacquainted from the womb with God, and attached to what is seen and felt, through early and close acquaintance, we are ignorant and detached from what is unseen and unfelt. The Word is a novelty to our nature, its truths fresh truths, its affections fresh affections, its obedience gathered from the apprehension of nature and the commerce of the worldly life. Therefore there needeth, in one that would be served from this storehouse opened by heaven, a disrelish of his old acquisitions, and a preference of the new, a simple, child-like teachableness, an allowance of ignorance and error, with whatever else beseems an anxious learner. Coming to the Word of God, we are like children brought into the conversations of experienced men; and we should humbly listen and reverently inquire; or we are like raw rustics introduced into high and polished life, and we should unlearn our coarseness, and copy the habits of[125] the station; nay we are like offenders caught, and for the moment committed to the bosom of honorable society, with the power of regaining our lost condition and inheriting honor and trust—therefore we should walk softly and tenderly, covering our former reproach with modesty and humbleness, hasting to redeem our reputation by distinguished performances, against offense doubly guarded, doubly watchful for dangerous and extreme positions to demonstrate our recovered goodness.

These two sentiments—devout veneration of God for His unspeakable gift, and deep distrust of our capacity to estimate and use it aright—will generate in the mind a constant aspiration after the guidance and instruction of a higher power; the first sentiment of goodness remembered, emboldening us to draw near to Him who first drew near to us, and who with Christ will not refuse us any gift; the second sentiment, of weakness remembered, teaching us our need, and prompting us by every interest of religion and every feeling of helplessness to seek of Him who hath said, "If any one lack wisdom let him ask God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not." The soul which under these two master-feelings cometh to read, shall not read without profit. Every new revelation, feeding his gratitude and nourishing his former ignorance, will confirm the emotions he is under, and carry them onward to an unlimited[126] dimension. Such a one will prosper in the way; enlargement of the inner man will be his portion and the establishment in the truth his exceeding great reward. "In the strength of the Lord shall his right hand get victory—even in the name of the Lord of Hosts. His soul shall also flourish with the fruits of righteousness from the seed of the word, which liveth and abideth forever."

Thus delivered from prepossessions of all other masters, and arrayed in the raiment of humility and love, the soul should advance to the meeting of her God; and she should call a muster of her faculties and have all her poor grace in attendance, and anything she knows of His excellent works and exalted ways she should summon up to her remembrance; her understanding she should quicken, her memory refresh, her imagination stimulate, her affections cherish, and her conscience arouse. All that is within her should be stirred up, her whole glory should awake and her whole beauty display itself for the meeting of her King. As His hand-maiden she should meet Him; His own handiwork, tho sore defaced, yet seeking restoration; His humble, because offending, servant—yet nothing slavish, tho humble—nothing superstitious, tho devout—nothing tame, tho modest in her demeanor; but quick and ready, all addrest and wound up for her Maker's will.

How different the ordinary proceeding of[127] Christians, who, with timorous, mistrustful spirits, with an abeyance of intellect, and a dwarfish reduction of their natural powers, enter to the conference of the Word of God! The natural powers of man are to be mistrusted, doubtless, as the willing instruments of the evil one; but they must be honored also as the necessary instruments of the Spirit of God, whose operation is a dream, if it be not through knowledge, intellect, conscience, and action. Now Christians, heedless of the grand resurrection of the mighty instruments of thought and action, at the same time coveting hard after holy attainment, do often resign the mastery of themselves, and are taken into the counsel of the religious world—whirling around the eddy of some popular leader—and so drifted, I will not say from godliness, but drifted certainly from that noble, manly and independent course, which, under steerage of the Word of God, they might safely have pursued for the precious interests of their immortal souls. Meanwhile these popular leaders, finding no necessity for strenuous endeavors and high science in the ways of God, but having a gathering host to follow them, deviate from the ways of deep and penetrating thought—refuse the contest with the literary and accomplished enemies of the faith—bring a contempt upon the cause in which mighty men did formerly gird themselves to the combat—and so cast the stumbling-block[128] of a mistaken paltryness between enlightened men and the cross of Christ! So far from this simple-mindedness (but its proper name is feeble-mindedness), Christians should be—as aforetime in this island they were wont to be—the princes of human intellect, the lights of the world, the salt of the political and social state. Till they come forth from the swaddling-bands, in which foreign schools have girt them, and walk boldly upon the high places of human understanding, they shall never obtain that influence in the upper regions of knowledge and power, of which, unfortunately, they have not the apostolic unction to be in quest. They will never be the master and commanding spirit of the time, until they cast off the wrinkled and withered skin of an obsolete old age, and clothe themselves with intelligence as with a garment, and bring forth the fruits of power and love and of a sound mind.

Mistake us not, for we steer in a narrow, very narrow channel, with rocks of popular prejudice on every side. While we thus invocate to the reading of the Word, the highest strains of the human soul, mistake us not as derogating from the office of the Spirit of God. Far be it from any Christian, much further from any Christian pastor, to withdraw from God the honor which is everywhere His due; but there most of all His due where the human mind labored alone for thousands of years,[129] and labored with no success—viz., the regeneration of itself, and its restoration to the last semblance of the divinity! Oh! let him be reverently inquired after, devoutly meditated on, and most thankfully acknowledged in every step of progress from the soul's fresh awakening out of her dark, oblivious sleep—even to her ultimate attainment upon earth and full accomplishment for heaven. And there may be a fuller choir of awakened men to advance His honor and glory here on earth, and hereafter in heaven above; let the saints bestir themselves like angels and the ministers of religion like archangels strong! And now at length let us have a demonstration made of all that is noble in thought, and generous in action, and devoted in piety, for bestirring this lethargy, and breaking the bonds of hell, and redeeming the whole world to the service of its God and King!

**÷**04-06 ARNOLD

ALIVE IN GOD

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Thomas Arnold, schoolmaster and preacher, was born at West Cowes, Isle of Wight, in 1795. He was educated at Oxford, and after his graduation taught as fellow of Oriel College, until in 1820 he removed to Laleham near Haines and took pupils to prepare for the universities. In 1827 he was elected to the head mastership of Rugby, and took priest's orders before entering upon his duties. At Rugby he remained till his death in 1842. His great work as an educator consisted in teaching boys the duty of self-government, self-control and freedom of intellectual judgement. His sermons in the school chapel were distinguished by simplicity and profound moral and religious earnestness.

[133]

ARNOLD

1795-1842

ALIVE IN GOD

God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.—Mat 22:32.

We hear these words as a part of our Lord's answer to the Sadducees; and as their question was put in evident profaneness, and the answer to it is one which to our minds is quite obvious and natural, so we are apt to think that in this particular story there is less than usual that particularly concerns us. But it so happens that our Lord in answering the Sadducees has brought in one of the most universal and most solemn of all truths,—which is indeed implied in many parts of the Old Testament, but which the Gospel has revealed to us in all its fulness,—the truth contained in the words of the text, that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

I would wish to unfold a little what is contained in these words which we often hear, even, perhaps, without quite understanding them, and many times oftener without fully entering into them. And we may take them, without fully entering into them. And we[134] may take them, first, in their first part, where they say that "God is not the God of the dead."

The word "dead," we know, is constantly used in Scripture in a double sense, as meaning those who are dead spiritually as well as those who are dead naturally. And in either sense the words are alike applicable: "God is not the God of the dead."

God's not being the God of the dead signifies two things: that they who are without Him are dead, as well as that they who are dead are also without Him. So far as our knowledge goes respecting inferior animals they appear to be examples of this truth. They appear to us to have no knowledge of God; and we are not told that they have any other life than the short one of which our senses inform us. I am well aware that our ignorance of their condition is so great that we may not dare to say anything of them positively; there may be a hundred things true respecting them which we neither know nor imagine. I would only say that according to that most imperfect light in which we see them the two points of which I have been speaking appear to meet in them: we believe that they have no consciousness of God, and we believe that they will die. And so far, therefore, they afford an example of the agreement, if I may so speak, between these two points; and were intended, perhaps, to be to our view a continual image of it. But[135] we had far better speak of ourselves. And here, too, it is the case that "God is not the God of the dead." If we are without Him we are dead, and if we are dead we are without Him; in other words, the two ideas of death and absence from God are in fact synonymous.

Thus, in the account given of the fall of man, the sentence of death and of being cast out of Eden go together; and if any one compares the description of the second Eden in the Revelation, and recollects how especially it is there said that God dwells in the midst of it, and is its light by day and night, he will see that the banishment from the first Eden means a banishment from the presence of God. And thus, in the day that Adam sinned he died; for he was cast out of Eden immediately, however long he may have moved about afterward upon the earth where God was not. And how very strong to the same point are the words of Hezekiah's prayer, "The grave cannot praise Thee, Death cannot celebrate Thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth"; words which express completely the feeling that God is not the God of the dead. This, too, appears to be the sense generally of the expression used in various parts of the Old Testament, "Thou shalt surely die."

It is, no doubt, left purposely obscure; nor are we ever told in so many words all that is[136] meant by death; but, surely, it always implies a separation from God, and the being—whatever the notion may extend to—the being dead to Him.

Thus, when David had committed his great sin and had expressed his repentance for it, Nathan tells him, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die"; which means most expressively, thou shalt not die to God.

In one sense David died, as all men die; nor was he by any means freed from the punishment of his sin; he was not, in that sense, forgiven, but he was allowed still to regard God as his God; and therefore his punishments were but fatherly chastisements from God's hand, designed for his profit that he might be partaker of God's holiness.

And thus altho Saul was sentenced to lose his kingdom, and altho he was killed with his sons on Mount Gilboa, yet I do not think that we find the sentence passed upon him, "Thou shalt surely die"; and therefore we have no right to say that God had ceased to be his God altho He visited him with severe chastisements and would not allow him to hand down to his sons the crown of Israel. Observe also the language of the eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel, where the expressions occur so often, "He shall surely live," and "He shall surely die."

We have no right to refer these to a mere[137] extension on the one hand, or a cutting short on the other, of the term of earthly existence. The promise of living long in the land or, as in Hezekiah's case, of adding to his days fifteen years, is very different from the full and unreserved blessing, "Thou shalt surely live." And we know, undoubtedly, that both the good and the bad to whom Ezekiel spoke died alike the natural death of the body. But the peculiar force of the promise and of the threat was, in the one case, Thou shalt belong to God; in the other, Thou shalt cease to belong to Him; although the veil was not yet drawn up which concealed the full import of those terms, "belonging to God," and "ceasing to belong to Him": nay, can we venture to affirm that it is fully drawn aside even now?

I have dwelt on this at some length, because it really seems to place the common state of the minds of too many amongst us in a light which is exceedingly awful; for if it be true, as I think the Scripture implies, that to be dead and to be without God are precisely the same thing, then can it be denied that the symptoms of death are strongly marked upon many of us? Are there not many who never think of God or care about His service? Are there not many who live, to all appearance, as unconscious of His existence, as we fancy the inferior animals to be?

And is it not quite clear that to such persons God cannot be said to be their God? He[138] may be the God of heaven and earth, the God of the universe, the God of Christ's Church; but He is not their God, for they feel to have nothing at all to do with Him; and therefore, as He is not their God, they are, and must be according to the Scripture, reckoned among the dead.

But God is the God "of the living." That is, as before, all who are alive live unto Him; all who live unto Him are alive. "God said, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"; and therefore, says our Lord, "Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob are not and cannot be dead." They cannot be dead, because God owns them: He is not ashamed to be called their God; therefore they are not cast out from Him; therefore, by necessity, they live.

Wonderful, indeed, is the truth here implied, in exact agreement, as we have seen, with the general language of Scripture; that, as she who but touched the hem of Christ's garment was in a moment relieved from her infirmity, so great was the virtue which went out from Him; so they who are not cast out from God, but have anything whatever to do with Him, feel the virtue of His gracious presence penetrating their whole nature; because He lives, they must live also.

Behold, then, life and death set before us; not remote (if a few years be, indeed, to be called remote), but even now present before[139] us; even now suffered or enjoyed. Even now, we are alive unto God, or dead unto God; and, as we are either the one or the other, so we are, in the highest possible sense of the terms, alive or dead. In the highest possible sense of the terms; but who can tell what that highest possible sense of the terms is? So much has, indeed, been revealed to us, that we know now that death means a conscious and perpetual death, as life means a conscious and perpetual life.

But greatly, indeed, do we deceive ourselves, if we fancy that, by having thus much told us, we have also risen to the infinite heights, or descended to the infinite depths, contained in those little words, life and death. They are far higher, and far deeper, than ever thought or fancy of man has reached to. But, even on the first edge of either, at the visible beginnings of that infinite ascent or descent, there is surely something which may give us a foretaste of what is beyond. Even to us in this mortal state, even to you, advanced but so short a way on your very earthly journey, life and death have a meaning: to be dead unto God, or to be alive to Him, are things perceptibly different.

For, let me ask of those who think least of God, who are most separate from Him, and most without Him, whether there is not now actually, perceptibly, in their state, something of the coldness, the loneliness, the fearfulness[140] of death? I do not ask them whether they are made unhappy by the fear of God's anger; of course they are not: for they who fear God are not dead to Him, nor He to them.

The thought of Him gives them no disquiet at all; this is the very point we start from. But I would ask them whether they know what it is to feel God's blessing. For instance: we all of us have our troubles of some sort or other, our disappointments, if not our sorrows. In these troubles, in these disappointments,—I care not how small they may be,—have they known what it is to feel that God's hand is over them; that these little annoyances are but His fatherly correction; that He is all the time loving us, and supporting us? In seasons of joy, such as they taste very often, have they known what it is to feel that they are tasting the kindness of their heavenly Father, that their good things come from His hand and are but an infinitely slight foretaste of His love? Sickness, danger; I know that they come to many of us but rarely; but if we have known them, or at least sickness, even in its lighter form, if not in its graver,—have we felt what it is to know that we are in our Father's hands, that He is with us, and will be with us to the end; that nothing can hurt those whom He loves?

Surely, then, if we have never tasted anything of this: if in trouble, or in joy, or in sickness, we are left wholly to ourselves to[141] bear as we can and enjoy as we can; if there is no voice that ever speaks out of the heights and the depths around us to give any answer to our own; if we are thus left to ourselves in this vast world,—there is in this a coldness and a loneliness; and whenever we come to be, of necessity, driven to be with our own hearts alone, the coldness and the loneliness must be felt. But consider that the things which we see around us cannot remain with us nor we with them. The coldness and loneliness of the world, without God, must be felt more and more as life wears on; in every change of our own state, in every separation from or loss of a friend, in every more sensible weakness of our own bodies, in every additional experience of the uncertainty of our own counsels,—the deathlike feeling will come upon us more and more strongly: we shall gain more of that fearful knowledge which tells us that "God is not the God of the dead."

And so, also, the blessed knowledge that He is the God "of the living" grows upon those who are truly alive. Surely He "is not far from every one of us." No occasion of life fails to remind those who live unto Him that He is their God and that they are His children. On light occasions or on grave ones, in sorrow and in joy, still the warmth of His love is spread, as it were, all through the atmosphere of their lives; they forever feel His[142] blessing. And if it fills them with joy unspeakable even now, when they so often feel how little they deserve it; if they delight still in being with God, and in living to Him, let them be sure that they have in themselves the unerring witness of life eternal: God is the God of the living, and all who are with Him must live.

Hard it is, I well know, to bring this home in any degree to the minds of those who are dead; for it is of the very nature of the dead that they can hear no words of life. But it has happened that, even whilst writing what I have just been uttering to you, the news reached me that one who two months ago was one of your number, who this very half-year has shared in all the business and amusements of this place, is passed already into that state where the meanings of the terms life and death are become fully revealed. He knows what it is to live unto God and what it is to die to Him. Those things which are to us unfathomable mysteries are to him all plain: and yet but two months ago he might have thought himself as far from attaining this knowledge as any of us can do. Wherefore it is clear that these things, life and death, may hurry their lesson upon us sooner than we deem of, sooner than we are prepared to receive it. And that were indeed awful, if, being dead to God, and yet little feeling it because of the enjoyments of our worldly life, those enjoyments[143] were on a sudden to be struck away from us, and we should find then that to be dead to God was death indeed, a death from which there is no waking, and in which there is no sleeping forever.

**÷**04-07 WAYLAND

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS OF NAZARETH

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Francis Wayland, preacher and philosopher, was born in New York, in 1796. He graduated at Union College in 1813 and in 1816 entered Hudson Theological Seminary. His first charge was the First Baptist Church in Boston. Here he established his reputation as an able and vigorous pulpit orator. Five years later he accepted a chair in Union College, but in 1827 entered upon an incumbency of twenty-eight years as President of Brown University, Providence. This institution he built up on a broad and liberal basis, quite emancipating it from narrow sectarianism. In 1855 he became pastor of the First Baptist Church in Providence and died in 1865.

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WAYLAND

1796-1865

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS OF NAZARETH

And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place, belonging to the city called Bethsaida. And the people when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing. And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place. But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people. For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company. And they did so, and made them all sit down. Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes and looking up to heaven, he blessed them and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.—Luk 9:10-17.

It was the sagacious opinion of, I think, the late Professor Porson, that he would rather see a single copy of a daily newspaper of ancient Athens, than read all the[148] commentaries upon the Grecian tragedies that have ever been written. The reason for this preference is obvious. A single sheet, similar to our daily newspapers, published in the time of Pericles, would admit us at once to a knowledge of the habits, manners, modes of opinion, political relations, social condition, and moral attainments of the people, such as we never could gain from the study of all the writers that have ever attempted to illustrate the nature of Grecian civilization.

The same remark is true in respect to our knowledge of the character of individuals who have lived in a former age. What would we not, at the present day, give for a few pages of the private diary of Julius Cesar, or Cicero, or Brutus, or Augustus; or for the minute reminiscences of any one who had spent a few days in the company of either of these distinguished men? What a flood of life would the discovery of such a manuscript throw upon Roman life, but especially upon the private opinions, the motives, the aspirations, the moral estimates of the men whose names have become household words throughout the world! A few such pages might, perchance, dissipate the authority of many a bulky folio on which we now rely with implicit confidence. Not only would the characters of these heroes of antiquity stand out in bolder relief than they have ever done before, but the individuals themselves would be brought within the[149] range of our personal sympathy; and we should seem to commune with them as we do with an intimate acquaintance.

It is worthy of remark, that we are favored with a larger portion of this kind of information, respecting Jesus of Nazareth, than almost any other distinguished person that has ever lived. He left no writings Himself; hence all that we know of Him has been written by others. The narrators, however, were the personal attendants, and not the mere auditors or pupils of their master. The apostles were members of the family of Jesus; they traveled with Him, on foot, throughout the length and breadth of Palestine; they partook with Him of his frugal meals, and bore with Him the trial of hunger, weariness, and want of shelter; they followed Him through the lonely wilderness and the crowded street; they saw His miracles in every variety of form, and listened to His discourses in public as well as to His explanations in private. Hence their whole narrative is instinct with life; a vivid picture of Jewish manners and customs, rendered more definite and characteristic by the moral light which then, for the first time, shone upon it. Hence it is that these few pages are replete with moral lessons that never weary us in the perusal, and which have been the source of unfailing illumination to all succeeding ages.

The verses which I have read, as the text of[150] this discourse, may well be taken as an illustration of all that I have here said. They may, without impropriety, be styled a day in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. By observing the manner in which our blessed Lord spent a single day, we may form some conception of the kind of life which He ordinarily led; and we may, perchance, treasure up some lessons which it were well if we should exemplify in our daily practice.

The place at which these events occurred was near the head of the Sea of Galilee, where it receives the waters of the upper Jordan. This was one of the Savior's favorite places of resort. Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, all in this immediate vicinity, are always spoken of in the gospels as towns which enjoyed the largest share of His ministerial labors, and were distinguished most frequently with the honor of His personal presence. The scenery of the neighborhood is wild and romantic. To the north and west, the eye rests on the lofty summits of Lebanon and Hermon. To the south, there opens upon the view the blue expanse of the lake, enclosed by frowning rocks, which here and there jut over far into the waters, and then again retire towards the land, leaving a level beach to invite the labors of the fishermen. The people, removed at a considerable distance from the metropolis of Judea, cultivated those rural habits with which the simple tastes of the Savior[151] would most readily harmonize. Near this spot was also one of the most frequented fords of the Jordan, on the road from Damascus to Jerusalem; and thus, while residing here, He enjoyed unusual facilities for disseminating throughout this whole region a knowledge of those truths which He came on earth to promulgate.

Some weeks previous to the time in which the events spoken of in the text occurred, our Lord had sent His disciples to announce the approach of the kingdom of heaven, in all the cities and villages which He Himself proposed to visit. He conferred on them the power to work miracles, in attestation of their authority, and of the divine character of Him by whom they were sent. He imposed upon them strict rules of conduct, and directed them to make known to every one who would hear them the good news of the coming dispensation. As soon as He sent them forth, He Himself went immediately abroad to teach and to preach in their cities. As their Master and Lord, He might reasonably have claimed exemption from the personal toil and the rigid self-denials to which they were by necessity subjected. But He had laid no claim to such exemption. He commenced without delay the performance of the very same duties which He had imposed upon them. He felt himself under obligation to set an example of obedience to His own rules. "The Son of Man,"[152] said He, "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." "Which," said He, "is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? but I am among you as He that serveth." Would it not be well, if, in this respect, we copied more minutely the example of our Lord, and held ourselves responsible for the performance of the very same duties which we so willingly impose upon our brethren? We best prove that we believe an act obligatory, when we commence the performance of it ourselves. Many zealous Christians employ themselves in no other labor than that of urging their brethren to effort. Our Savior acted otherwise. In this respect, His example is specially to be imitated by His ministers. When they urge upon others a moral duty, they must be the first to perform it. When they inculcate an act of self-denial, they themselves must make the noblest sacrifice. Can we conceive of anything which could so much increase the moral power of the ministry, and rouse to a flame the dormant energy of the churches, as obedience to this teaching of Christ by the preachers of His gospel?

It seems that the Savior had selected a well-known spot, at the head of the lake, for the place of meeting for his apostles, after this their first missionary tour had been completed. "The apostles gathered themselves unto Jesus, and told Him all things, both what[153] they had done, and what they had taught." There is something delightful in this filial confidence which these simple-hearted men reposed in their almighty Redeemer. They told Him of their success and their failure, of their wisdom and their folly, of their reliance and their unbelief. We can almost imagine ourselves spectators of this meeting between Christ and them, after this their first separation from each other. The place appointed was most probably some well-known locality on the shore of the lake, under the shadow of its overhanging rocks, where the cool air from the bosom of the water refreshed each returning laborer, as he came back beaten out with the fatigues of travel, under the burning sun of Syria. You can imagine the joy with which each drew near to the Master, after this temporary absence; and the honest greetings with which every newcomer was welcomed by those who had chanced to arrive before him. We can seem to perceive the Savior of men listening with affectionate earnestness to the recital of their various adventures; and interposing, from time to time, a word either of encouragement or of caution, as the character and circumstances of each narrator required it. The bosom of each was unveiled before the Searcher of Hearts, and the consolation which each one needed was bestowed upon him abundantly. The toilsomeness of their journey was no longer remembered,[154] as each one received from the Son of God the smile of His approbation. That was truly a joyful meeting. Of all that company there is not one who has forgotten that day; nor will he forget it ever. With unreserved frankness they told Jesus of all that they had done, and what they had taught; of all their acts, and all their conversations. Would it not be better for us, if we cultivated more assiduously this habit of intimate intercourse with the Savior? Were we every day to tell Jesus of all that we have done and said; did we spread before Him our joys and our sorrows, our faults and our infirmities, our successes and our failures, we should be saved from many an error and many a sin. Setting the Lord always before us, He would be on our right hand, and we should not be moved. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

The Savior perceived that the apostles needed much instruction which could not be communicated in a place where both He and they were so well known. They had committed many errors, which He preferred to correct in private. By doing His will, they had learned to repose greater confidence in His wisdom, and were prepared to receive from Him more important instruction. But these lessons could not be delivered in the hearing of a promiscuous audience. Nor was[155] this all. He perceived that the apostles were worn out with their labors, and needed repose. Surrounded as they were by the multitude, which had already begun to collect about them, rest and retirement were equally impossible. "There were many coming and going, and they had no leisure, even so much as to eat." He therefore said to them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." For this purpose, He "took ship, and crossed over with his disciples alone, and went into a desert place belonging to Bethsaida."

The religion of Christ imposes upon us duties of retirement, as well as duties of publicity. The apostles had been for some time past before the eyes of all men, preaching and working miracles. Their souls needed retirement. "Solitude," said Cecil, "is my great ordinance." They would be greatly improved by private communion both with Him and with each other. It was for the purpose of affording them such a season of moral recreation, that our Lord withdrew them from the public gaze into a desert place. Nor was this all. Their labor for some weeks past had been severe. They had traveled on foot under a tropical sun, reasoning with unbelievers, instructing the ignorant, and comforting the cast-down. Called upon, at all hours, both of the day and night, to work cures on those that were opprest with diseases, their[156] bodies, no less than their spirits, needed rest. Our Lord saw this, and He made provision for it. He withdrew them from labor, that they might find, tho it were but for a day, the repose which their exhausted natures demanded. The religion of Christ is ever merciful, and ever consistent in its benevolence. It is thoughtful of the benefactor as well as the recipient. It requires of us all labor and self-sacrifice, but to these it affixes a limit. It never commands us to ruin our health and enfeeble our minds by unnatural exhaustion. It teaches us to obey the laws of our physical organization, and to prepare ourselves for the labors of to-morrow by the judiciously conducted labors of to-day. It was on this principle that our Lord conducted His intercourse with His disciples. "He knew their frame, and remembered that they were dust."

May we not from this incident derive a lesson of practical instruction? I well know that there are persons who are always sparing themselves, who, while it is difficult to tell what they do, are always complaining of the crushing weight of their labors, and who are rather exhausted with the dread of what they shall do, than with the experience of what they have actually done. It is not of those that we speak. Those who do not labor have no need of rest. It is to the honest, the painstaking, the laborious, that we address the example in the text. We sometimes meet with[157] the industrious, self-denying servant of Christ, in feeble health, and with an exhausted nature, bemoaning his condition, and condemning himself because he can accomplish no more, while so much yet remains to be done. To such a one we may safely present the example of the blessed Savior. When His apostles had done to the utmost of their strength, altho the harvest was great, and the laborers few, He did not urge upon them additional labor, nor tell them that because there was so much to be done they must never cease from doing. No; He tells them to turn aside and rest for a while. It is as tho He had said, "Your strength is exhausted; you cannot be qualified for subsequent duty until you be refreshed. Economize, then, your power, that you may accomplish the more." The Savior addresses the same language to us now. When we are worn down in His service, as in any other, He would have us rest, not for the sake of self-indulgence, but that we may be the better prepared for future effort. We do nothing at variance with His will, when we, with a good conscience, use the liberty which he has thus conceded to us.

Jesus, with His disciples, crossed the water, and entered the desert; that is, the sparsely inhabited country of Bethsaida. Desert, or wilderness, in the New Testament, does not mean an arid waste, but pasture land, forest, or any district to which one could retire for[158] seclusion. Here, in the cool and tranquil neighborhood of the lake, he began to instruct His disciples, and, without interruption, make known to them the mysteries of the kingdom. It was one of those seasons that the Savior Himself rarely enjoyed. Everything tended to repose: the rustling leaves, the rippling waves, the song of the birds, heard more distinctly in this rural solitude, all served to calm the spirit ruffled by the agitations of the world, and prepared it to listen to the truths which unveil to us eternity. Here our Lord could unbosom Himself, without reserve, to His chosen few, and hold with them that communion which He was rarely permitted to enjoy during His ministry on earth.

Soon, however, the whole scene is changed. The multitude, whom he had so recently left, having observed the direction in which He had gone, have discovered the place of His retreat. An immense crowd approaches, and the little company is surrounded by a dense mass of human beings pressing upon them on every side. These are, however, only the pioneers. At last, five thousand men, besides women and children, are beheld thronging around them.

Some of these suitors present most importunate claims. They are in search of cure for diseases which have baffled the skill of the medical profession, and, as a last resort, they[159] have come to the Messiah for aid. Here was a parent bringing a consumptive child. There were children bearing on a couch a paralytic parent. Here was a sister leading a brother blind from his birth, while her supplications were drowned by the shout of a frenzied lunatic who was standing by her side. Every one, believing his own claim to be the most urgent, prest forward with selfish importunity. Each one, caring for no other than himself, was striving to attain the front rank, while those behind, disappointed, and fearing to lose this important opportunity, were eager to occupy the places of those more fortunate than themselves. The necessary tumult and disorder of such a scene you can better imagine than I can describe.

This was, doubtless, by no means a welcome interruption. The apostles needed the time for rest; for they were worn out in the public service. They wanted it for instruction; for such opportunities of intercourse with Christ were rare. But what did they do? Did our Lord inform the multitude that this day was set apart for their own refreshment and improvement, and that they could not be interrupted? As He beheld them approaching, did He quietly take to His boat, and leave them to go home disappointed? Did He plead His own convenience, or His need of repose, as any reason for not attending to the pressing necessities of His fellow men?

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No, my brethren, very far from it. That providence of God had brought these multitudes before Him, and that same providence forbade Him to send them away unblest. He at once broke up the conference with His disciples and addrest Himself to the work before Him. His instructions were of inestimable importance; but I doubt if even they were as important as the example of deep humility, exhaustless kindness, and affecting compassion which He here exhibited. When the Master places work before us which can be done at no other time, our convenience must yield to other men's necessities. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." You can imagine to yourself the Savior rising from His seat, in the midst of His disciples, and presenting Himself to the approaching multitudes. His calm dignity awes into silence this tumultuous gathering of the people. Those who came out to witness the tricks of an empiric, or listen to the ravings of a fanatic, find themselves, unexpectedly, in a presence that repels every emotion but that of profound veneration. The light-hearted and frivolous are awestruck by the unearthly majesty that seems to clothe the Messiah as with a garment. And yet it was a majesty that shone forth conspicuous, most of all, by the manifestation of unparalleled goodness. Every eye that met the eye of the Savior quailed before Him; for it[161] looked into a soul that had never sinned; and the spirit of the sinner felt, for the first time, the full power of immaculate virtue.

Thus the Savior passed among the crowd, and "healed all that had need of healing." The lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the blind received their sight, the paralytic were restored to soundness, and the bloom of health revisited the cheeks of those that but just now were sick unto death.

The work to be done for the bodies of men was accomplished, and there yet remained some hours of the summer's day unconsumed. The power and goodness displayed in this miraculous healing would naturally predispose the people to listen to the instructions of the Savior. This was too valuable an opportunity to be lost. Our Lord therefore proceeded to speak to them of the things concerning the kingdom of God. We can seem to perceive the Savior seeking an eminence from whence He could the more conveniently address this vast assembly. You hear Him unfold the laws of God's moral government. He unmasks the hypocrisy of the Pharisees; He rebukes the infidelity of the Sadducees; He exposes the folly of the frivolous, as well as of the selfish worldling; He speaks peaceably to the humble penitent; He encourages the meek, and comforts those that be cast down. The intellect and the conscience of this vast assembly are swayed at His will.[162] The soul of man bows down in reverence in the presence of its Creator. "He stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people." As He closes His address, every eye is moistened with compunction for sin. Every soul cherishes the hope of amendment. Every one is conscious that a new moral light has dawned upon his soul, and that a new moral universe has been unveiled to his spiritual vision. As the closing words of the Savior fell upon their ears, the whole multitude stood for a while unmoved, as tho transfixt to the earth by some mighty spell; until, at last, the murmur is heard from thousands of voices, "Never man spake like this man."

But the shades of evening are gathering around them. The multitude have nothing to eat. To send them away fasting would be inhuman, for divers of them came from far, and many were women and children, who could not perform their journey homeward without previous refreshment. To purchase food in the surrounding towns and villages would be difficult; but even were this possible, whence could the necessary funds be provided? A famishing multitude was thus unexpectedly cast upon the bounty of our Lord. He had not tempted God by leading them into the wilderness. They came to Him of themselves, to hear His words and to be healed of their infirmities. He could not[163] "send them away fasting, lest they should faint by the way." In this dilemma, what was to be done? He puts this question to His disciples, and they can suggest no means of relief. The little stock of provisions which they had brought with them was barely sufficient for themselves. They can perceive no means whatever by which the multitude can be fed, and they at once confess it.

The Savior, however, commands the twelve to give them to eat. They produce their slender store of provisions, amounting to five loaves and two small fishes. He commands the multitude to sit down by companies on the grass. As soon as silence is obtained, He lifts up His eyes to heaven, and supplicates the blessing of God upon their scanty meal. He begins to break the loaves and fishes, and distribute them to His disciples, and His disciples distribute them to the multitude. He continues to break and distribute. Basket after basket is filled and emptied, yet the supply is undiminished. Food is carried in abundance to the famishing thousands. Company after company is supplied with food, but the five loaves and two fishes remain unexhausted. At last, the baskets are returned full, and it is announced that the wants of the multitude are supplied. The miracle then ceases, and the multiplication of food is at an end.

But even here the provident care of the[164] Savior is manifested. Altho this food has been so easily provided, it is not right that it be lightly suffered to perish. Christ wrought no miracles for the sake of teaching men wastefulness. That food, by what means soever provided, was a creature of God, and it were sin to allow it to decay without accomplishing the purposes for which it was created. "Gather up the fragments," said the Master of the feast, "that nothing be lost." "And they gathered up the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full."

Dissimilar as are our circumstances to those of our Lord, we may learn from this latter incident a lesson of instruction.

In the first place, as I have remarked, the Savior did not lead the multitude into the wilderness without making provision for their sustenance. This would have been presumption. They followed Him without His command, and He found Himself with them in this necessity. He had provided for His own wants, but they had not provided for theirs. The providence of God had, however, placed Him in His present circumstances, and He might therefore properly look to providence for deliverance. This event, then, furnishes the rule by which we are to be governed. When we plunge ourselves into difficulty, by a neglect of the means or by a misuse of the faculties which God has bestowed upon us, it is to be expected that He will leave us to[165] our own devices. But when, in the honest discharge of our duties, we find ourselves in circumstances beyond the reach of human aid, we may then confidently look up to God for deliverance. He will always take care of us while we are in the spot where He has placed us. When He appoints for us trials, He also appoints for us the means of escape. The path of duty, tho it may seem arduous, is ever the path of safety. We can more easily maintain ourselves in the most difficult position, God being our helper, than in apparent security relying on our own strength.

The Savior, in full reliance upon God, with only five loaves and two fishes, commenced the distribution of food amongst the vast multitude. Tho His whole store was barely sufficient to supply the wants of His immediate family, He began to share it with the thousands who surrounded Him. Small as was His provision at the commencement, it remained unconsumed until the deed of mercy was done, and the wants of the famished host supplied. Nor were the disciples losers by this act of charity. After the multitude had eaten and were satisfied, twelve baskets full of fragments remained, a reward for their deed of benevolence.

From this portion of the narrative, we may, I think, learn that if we act in faith, and in the spirit of Christian love, we may frequently be justified in commencing the most important[166] good work, even when in possession of apparently inadequate means. If the work be of God, He will furnish us with helpers as fast as they are needed. In all ages, God has rewarded abundantly simple trust in Him, and has bestowed upon it in the highest honor. We must, however, remember the conditions upon which alone we may expect His aid, lest we be led into fanaticism. The service which we undertake must be such as God has commanded, and His providence must either designate us for the work, or, at least, open the door by which we shall enter upon it. It must be God's work, and not our own; for the good of others, and not for the gratification of our own passions; and, in the doing of it, we must, first of all, make sacrifice of ourselves, and not of others. Under such circumstances, there is hardly a good design which we may not undertake with cheerful hopes of success, for God has promised us His assistance. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The calculations of the men of this world are of small account in such a matter. It would have provoked the smile of an infidel to behold the Savior commencing the work of feeding five thousand men with a handful of provisions. But the supply increased as fast as it was needed, and it ceased not until all that He had prayed for was accomplished.

Perhaps, also, we may learn from this incident another lesson. If I mistake not, it suggests[167] to us that in works of benevolence we are accustomed to rely too much on human, and too little on divine, aid. When we attempt to do good, we commence by forming large associations, and suppose that our success depends upon the number of men whom we can unite in the promotion of our undertaking. Every one is apt thus to forget his own personal duty, and rely upon the labor of others, and it is well if he does not put his organization in the place of God Himself. Would it not be better if we made benevolence much more a matter between God and our own souls, each one doing with his own hands, in firm reliance on divine aid, the work which Providence has placed directly before him? Our Lord did not send to the villages round to organize a general effort to relieve the famishing. In reliance upon God, He set about to work Himself, with just such means as God had afforded Him. All the miracles of benevolence have, if I mistake not, been wrought in the same manner. The little band of disciples in Jerusalem accomplished more for the conversion of the world than all the Christians of the present day united. And why? Because every individual Christian felt that the conversion of the world was a work for which he himself, and not an abstraction that he called the Church, was responsible. Instead of relying on man for aid, every one looked up directly to God, and went forth to the work.[168] God was thus exalted, the power was confest to be His own, and, in a few years, the standard of the Cross was carried to the remotest extremities of the then known world.

Such has, I think, been the case ever since. Every great moral reformation has proceeded upon principles analogous of these. It was Luther, standing up alone in simple reliance upon God, that smote the Papal hierarchy; and the effects of that blow are now agitating the nations of Europe. Roger Williams, amid persecution and banishment, held forth that doctrine of soul-liberty which, in its onward march, is disenthralling a world. Howard, alone, undertook the work of showing mercy to the prisoner, and his example is now enlisting the choicest minds in Christendom in this labor of benevolence. Clarkson, unaided, a young man, and without influences, consecrated himself to the work of abolishing the slave trade; and, before he rested from his labor, his country had repented of and forsaken this atrocious sin. Raikes saw the children of Gloucester profaning the Sabbath day; he set on foot a Sabbath school on his own account, and now millions of children are reaping the benefit of his labors, and his example has turned the attention of the whole world to the religious instruction of the young. With such facts before us, we surely should be encouraged to attempt individually the accomplishment of some good design, relying in[169] humility and faith upon Him who is able to grant prosperity to the feeblest effort put forth in earnest reliance on His almightiness.

Such were the occupations that filled up a day in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. There was not an act done for Himself; all was done for others. Every hour was employed in the labor which that hour set before Him. Private kindness, the relief of distress, public teaching, and ministration to the wants of the famishing, filled up the entire day. Let His disciples learn to follow His example. Let us, like Him, forget ourselves, our own wants, and our own weariness, that we may, as he did, scatter blessings on every side, as we move onward in the pathway of our daily life. If such were the occupations of the Son of God, can we do more wisely than to imitate His example? Every disciple would then be as a city set upon a hill, and men, seeing our good works, would glorify our Father who is in heaven. "Then would our righteousness go forth as brightness, and our salvation as a lamp that burneth."

**÷**04-08 VINET

THE MYSTERIES OF CHRISTIANITY

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Alexander Vinet, the eminent Swiss divine and author, was born at Ouchy, Canton, in 1797. He was professor of theology at Lausanne (1837-45), where he gained reputation as a preacher, a philosopher, and a writer. He was tolerant tho critical, and many of his utterances are marked by rare brilliancy. His supreme and intense faith led him to say: "The gospel is believed when it has ceased to be to us an external and has become an internal truth, when it has become a fact in our consciousness. Christianity is conscience raised to its highest exercise." He died in 1847.

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VINET

1797-1847

THE MYSTERIES OF CHRISTIANITY

Things which have not entered into the heart of man.—1Co 2:9.

"I do not comprehend, therefore I do not believe." "The gospel is full of mysteries, therefore I do not receive the gospel:"—such is one of the favorite arguments of infidelity. To see how much is made of this, and what confidence it inspires, we might believe it solid, or, at least, specious; but it is neither the one nor the other; it will not bear the slightest attention, the most superficial examination of reason; and if it still enjoys some favor in the world, this is but a proof of the lightness of our judgments upon things worthy of our most serious attention.

Upon what, in fact, does this argument rest? Upon the claim of comprehending every thing in the religion which God has offered or could offer us—a claim equally unjust, unreasonable, useless. This we proceed to develop.

1. In the first place, it is an unjust claim. It is to demand of God what He does not[174] owe us. To prove this, let us suppose that God has given a religion to man, and let us further suppose that religion to be the gospel: for this absolutely changes nothing to the argument. We may believe that God was free, at least, with reference to us, to give us or not to give us a religion; but it must be admitted that in granting it He contracts engagements to us, and that the first favor lays Him under a necessity of conferring other favors. For this is merely to say that God must be consistent, and that He finishes what He has begun. Since it is by a written revelation He manifests His designs respecting us, it is necessary He should fortify that revelation by all the authority which would at least determine us to receive it; it is necessary He should give us the means of judging whether the men who speak to us in His name are really sent by Him; in a word, it is necessary we should be assured that the Bible is truly the Word of God.

It would not indeed be necessary that the conviction of each of us should be gained by the same kind of evidence. Some shall be led to Christianity by the historical or external arguments; they shall prove to themselves the truth of the Bible as the truth of all history is proved; they shall satisfy themselves that the books of which it is composed are certainly those of the times and of the authors to which they are ascribed. This settled,[175] they shall compare the prophecies contained in these ancient documents with the events that have happened in subsequent ages; they shall assure themselves of the reality of the miraculous facts related in these books, and shall thence infer the necessary intervention of divine power, which alone disposes the forces of nature, and can alone interrupt or modify their action. Others, less fitted for such investigations, shall be struck with the internal evidence of the Holy Scriptures. Finding there the state of their souls perfectly described, their wants fully exprest, and the true remedies for their maladies completely indicated; struck with a character of truth and candor which nothing can imitate; in fine, feeling themselves in their inner nature moved, changed, renovated, by the mysterious influence of these holy writings, they shall acquire, by such means, a conviction of which they can not always give an account to others, but which is not the less legitimate, irresistible, and immovable. Such is the double road by which an entrance is gained into the asylum of faith. But it was due from the wisdom of God, from His justice, and, we venture to say it, from the honor of His government, that He should open to man this double road; for, if He desired man to be saved by knowledge, on the same principle He engaged Himself to furnish him the means of knowledge.

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Behold, whence come the obligations of the Deity with reference to us, which obligations He has fulfilled. Enter on this double method of proof. Interrogate history, time and places, respecting the authenticity of the Scriptures; grasp all the difficulties, sound all the objections; do not permit yourselves to be too easily convinced; be the more severe upon that book, as it professes to contain the sovereign rule of your life, and the disposal of your destiny; you are permitted to do this, nay, you are encouraged to do it, provided you proceed to the investigation with the requisite capacities and with pure intentions. Or, if you prefer another method, examine, with an honest heart, the contents of the Scriptures; inquire, while you run over the words of Jesus, if ever man spake like this Man; inquire if the wants of your soul, long deceived, and the anxieties of your spirit, long cherished in vain, do not, in the teaching and work of Christ, find that satisfaction and repose which no wisdom was ever able to procure you; breathe, if I may thus express myself, that perfume of truth, of candor and purity, which exhales from every page of the gospel; see, if, in all these respects, it does not bear the undeniable seal of inspiration and divinity. Finally, test it, and if the gospel produces upon you a contrary effect, return to the books and the wisdom of men, and ask of them what Christ has not been able to give you.

But if, neglecting these two ways, made[177] accessible to you, and trodden by the feet of ages, you desire, before all, that the Christian religion should, in every point, render itself comprehensible to your mind, and complacently strip itself of all mysteries; if you wish to penetrate beyond the veil, to find there, not the aliment which gives life to the soul, but that which would gratify your restless curiosity, I maintain that you raise against God a claim the most indiscreet, the most rash and unjust; for He has never engaged, either tacitly or expressly, to discover to you the secret which your eye craves; and such audacious importunity is fit to excite His indignation. He has given you what He owed you, more indeed than He owed you; the rest is with Himself.

If a claim so unjust could be admitted, where, I ask you, would be the limit of your demands? Already you require more from God than He has accorded to angels; for these eternal mysteries which trouble you, the harmony of the divine prescience with human freedom, the origin of evil and its ineffable remedy, the incarnation of the eternal Word—the relations of the God-man with His Father—the atoning virtue of His sacrifice, the regenerating efficacy of the Spirit-comforter, all these things are secrets, the knowledge of which is hidden from angels themselves, who, according to the word of the Apostle, stoop to explore their depths, and can not.

If you reproach the Eternal for having[178] kept the knowledge of these divine mysteries to Himself, why do you not reproach Him for the thousand other limits He has prescribed for you? Why not reproach Him for not having given you wings like a bird, to visit the regions, which, till now, have been scanned only by your eyes? Why not reproach Him for not giving you, besides the five senses with which you are provided, ten other senses which He has perhaps granted to other creatures, and which procure for them perceptions of which you have no idea? Why not, in fine, reproach Him for having caused the darkness of night to succeed the brightness of day invariably on the earth? Ah! you do not reproach Him for that. You love that night which brings rest to so many fatigued bodies and weary spirits; which suspends in so many wretches, the feeling of grief; that night, during which orphans, slaves, and criminals cease to be, because over all their misfortunes and sufferings it spreads, with the opiate of sleep, the thick veil of oblivion; you love that night which, peopling the deserts of the heavens with ten thousand stars, not known to the day, reveals the infinite to our ravished imagination.

Well, then, why do you not, for a similar reason, love the night of divine mysteries, night, gracious and salutary, in which reason humbles itself, and finds refreshment and repose; where the darkness even is a revelation;[179] where one of the principal attributes of God, immensity, discovers itself much more fully to our mind; where, in fine, the tender relations He has permitted us to form with Himself, are guarded from all admixture of familiarity by the thought that the Being who has humbled Himself to us, is, at the same time, the inconceivable God who reigns before all time, who includes in Himself all existences and all conditions of existence, the center of all thought, the law of all law, the supreme and final reason of every thing! So that, if you are just, instead of reproaching Him for the secrets of religion, you will bless Him that He has enveloped you in mysteries.

2. But this claim is not only unjust toward God; it is also in itself exceedingly unreasonable.

What is religion? It is God putting Himself in communication with man; the Creator with the creature, the infinite with the finite. There already, without going further, is a mystery; a mystery common to all religions, impenetrable in all religions. If, then, every thing which is a mystery offends you, you are arrested on the threshold, I will not say of Christianity, but of every religion; I say, even of that religion which is called natural, because it rejects revelation and miracles; for it necessarily implies, at the very least, a connection, a communication of some sort between God and man—the contrary being[180] equivalent to atheism. Your claim prevents you from having any belief; and because you have not been willing to be Christians, it will not allow you to be deists.

"It is of no consequence," you say, "we pass over that difficulty; we suppose between God and us connections we can not conceive; we admit them because they are necessary to us. But this is the only step we are willing to take: we have already yielded too much to yield more." Say more, say you have granted too much not to grant much more, not to grant all! You have consented to admit, without comprehending it, that there may be communications from God to you, and from you to God. But consider well what is implied in such a supposition. It implies that you are dependent, and yet free: this you do not comprehend; it implies that the Spirit of God can make itself understood by your spirit: this you do not comprehend; it implies that your prayers may exert an influence on the will of God: this you do not comprehend. It is necessary you should receive all these mysteries, in order to establish with God connections the most vague and superficial, and by the very side of which atheism is placed. And when, by a powerful effort with yourselves you have done so much as to admit these mysteries, you recoil from those of Christianity! You have accepted the foundation, and refuse the superstructure! You have accepted the principle[181] and refuse the details! You are right, no doubt, so soon as it is proved to you, that the religion which contains these mysteries does not come from God; or rather, that these mysteries contain contradictory ideas. But you are not justified in denying them, for the sole reason that you do not understand them; and the reception you have given to the first kind of mysteries compels you, by the same rule, to receive the others.

This is not all. Not only are mysteries an inseparable part, nay, the very substance of all religion, but it is absolutely impossible that a true religion should not present a great number of mysteries. If it is true, it ought to teach more truths respecting God and divine things than any other, than all others together; but each of these truths has a relation to the infinite, and by consequence borders on a mystery. How should it be otherwise in religion, when it is thus in nature itself? Behold God in nature! The more He gives us to contemplate, the more He gives to astonish us. To each creature is attached some mystery. A grain of sand is an abyss! Now, if the manifestations which God has made of Himself in nature suggest to the observer a thousand questions which can not be answered, how will it be, when to that first revelation, another is added; when God the Creator and Preserver reveals Himself under new aspects as God the Reconciler and[182] Savior? Shall not mysteries multiply with discoveries? With each new day shall we not see associated a new night? And shall we not purchase each increase of knowledge with an increase of ignorance? Has not the doctrine of grace, so necessary, so consoling, alone opened a profound abyss, into which, for eighteen centuries, rash and restless spirits have been constantly plunging?

It is, then, clearly necessary that Christianity should, more than any other religion, be mysterious, simply because it is true. Like mountains, which, the higher they are, cast the larger shadows, the gospel is the more obscure and mysterious on account of its sublimity. After this, will you be indignant that you do not comprehend every thing in the gospel? It would, forsooth, be a truly surprising thing if the ocean could not be held in the hollow of your hand, or uncreated wisdom within the limits of your intelligence! It would be truly unfortunate if a finite being could not embrace the infinite, and that, in the vast assemblage of things there should be some idea beyond its grasp! In other words, it would be truly unfortunate if God Himself should know something which man does not know!

Let us acknowledge, then, how insensate is such a claim when it is made with reference to religion.

But let us also recollect how much, in making[183] such a claim, we shall be in opposition to ourselves; for the submission we dislike in religion, we cherish in a thousand other things. It happens to us every day to admit things we do not understand, and to do so without the least repugnance. The things, the knowledge of which is refused us, are much more numerous than we perhaps think. Few diamonds are perfectly pure; still fewer truths are perfectly clear. The union of our soul with our body is a mystery—our most familiar emotions and affections are a mystery—the action of thought and of will is a mystery—our very existence is a mystery. Why do we admit these various facts? Is it because we understand them? No, certainly, but because they are self-evident, and because they are truths by which we live. In religion we have no other course to take. We ought to know whether it is true and necessary; and once convinced of these two points, we ought, like the angels, to submit to the necessity of being ignorant of some things. And why do we not submit cheerfully to a privation which, after all, is not one?

3. To desire the knowledge of mysteries is to desire what is utterly useless; it is to raise, as I have said before, a claim the most vain and idle. What in reference to us is the object of the gospel? Evidently to regenerate and save us. But it attains this end wholly by the things it reveals. Of what use would it[184] be to know those it conceals from us? We possess the knowledge which can enlighten our consciences, rectify our inclinations, renew our hearts; what should we gain if we possest other knowledge? It infinitely concerns us to know that the Bible is the Word of God; does it equally concern us to know in what way the holy men that wrote it were moved by the Holy Ghost? It is of infinite moment to us to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; need we know precisely in what way the divine and human natures are united in His adorable person? It is of infinite importance for us to know that unless we are born again we can not enter the kingdom of God, and that the Holy Spirit is the author of the new birth; shall we be further advanced if we know the divine process by which that wonder is performed? Is it not enough for us to know the truths that save? Of what use, then, would it be to know those which have not the slightest bearing on our salvation? "Tho I know all mysteries," says St. Paul, "and have not charity, I am nothing." St. Paul was content not to know, provided he had charity; shall not we, following his example, be content also without knowledge, provided that, like him, we have charity, that is to say, life?

But some one will say "If the knowledge of mysteries is really without influence on our salvation, why have they been indicated to[185] us at all?" What if it should be to teach us not to be too prodigal of our "wherefores!" if it should be to serve as an exercise of our faith, a test of our submission! But we will not stop with such a reply.

Observe, I pray you, in what manner the mysteries of which you complain have taken their part in religion. You readily perceive they are not by themselves, but associated with truths which have a direct bearing on your salvation. They contain them, they serve to develop them; but they are not themselves the truths that save. It is with these mysteries as it is with the vessel that contains a medicinal draft—it is not the vessel that cures, but the draft; yet the draft could not be presented without the vessel. Thus each truth that saves is contained in a mystery, which, in itself, has no power to save. So the great work of expiation is necessarily attached to the incarnation of the Son of God, which is a mystery; so the sanctifying graces of the new covenant are necessarily connected with the effluence of the Holy Spirit, which is a mystery; so, too, the divinity of religion finds a seal and an attestation in the miracles, which are mysteries. Everywhere the light is born from darkness, and darkness accompanies the light. These two orders of truths are so united, so interlinked, that you can not remove the one without the other, and each of the mysteries you attempt to tear from religion[186] would carry with it one of the truths which bear directly on your regeneration and salvation. Accept the mysteries, then, not as truths that can save you, but as the necessary conditions of the merciful work of the Lord in your behalf.

The true point at issue in reference to religion is this:—Does the religion which is proposed to us change the heart, unite to God, prepare for heaven? If Christianity produces these effects, we will leave the enemies of the cross free to revolt against its mysteries, and tax them with absurdity. The gospel, we will say to them, is then an absurdity; you have discovered it. But behold what a new species of absurdity that certainly is which attaches man to all his duties, regulates human life better than all the doctrines of sages, plants in his bosom harmony, order, and peace, causes him joyfully to fulfil all the offices of civil life, renders him better fitted to live, better fitted to die, and which, were it generally received, would be the support and safeguard of society! Cite to us, among all human absurdities, a single one which produces such effects. If that "foolishness" we preach produces effects like these, is it not natural to conclude that it is truth itself? And if these things have not entered the heart of man, it is not because they are absurd, but because they are divine.

Make but a single reflection. You are[187] obliged to confess that none of the religions which man may invent can satisfy his wants, or save his soul. Thereupon you have a choice to make. You will either reject them all as insufficient and false, and seek for nothing better, since man can not invent better, and then you will abandon to chance, to caprice of temperament or of opinion, your moral life and future destiny; or you will adopt that other religion which some treat as folly, and it will render you holy and pure, blameless in the midst of a perverse generation, united to God by love, and to your brethren by charity, indefatigable in doing good, happy in life, happy in death. Suppose, after all this, you shall be told that this religion is false; but meanwhile, it has restored in you the image of God, reestablished your primitive connections with that great Being, and put you in a condition to enjoy life and the happiness of heaven. By means of it you have become such that at the last day, it is impossible that God should not receive you as His children and make you partakers of His glory. You are made fit for paradise, nay, paradise has commenced for you even here, because you love. This religion has done for you what all religions propose, and what no other has realized. Nevertheless, by the supposition, it is false! And what more could it do, were it true? Rather do you not see that this is a splendid proof of its truth? Do you[188] not see that it is impossible that a religion which leads to God should not come from God, and that the absurdity is precisely that of supposing that you can be regenerated by a falsehood?

Suppose that afterward, as at the first, you do not comprehend. It seems necessary, then, you should be saved by the things you do not comprehend. Is that a misfortune? Are you the less saved? Does it become you to demand from God an explanation of an obscurity which does not injure you, when, with reference to every thing essential, He has been prodigal of light? The first disciples of Jesus, men without culture and learning, received truths which they did not comprehend, and spread them through the world. A crowd of sages and men of genius have received, from the hands of these poor people, truths which they comprehended no more than they. The ignorance of the one, and the science of the other, have been equally docile. Do, then, as the ignorant and the wise have done. Embrace with affection those truths which have never entered into your heart, and which will save you. Do not lose, in vain discussions, the time which is gliding away, and which is bearing you into the cheering or appalling light of eternity. Hasten to be saved. Love now; one day you will know. May the Lord Jesus prepare you for that period of light, of repose, and of happiness!

**÷**04-09 SUMMERFIELD

THE HEAVENLY INHERITANCE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Summerfield was born in England in 1798, and came to New York in 1821, where he soon became one of the most popular and eloquent preachers of that day. He belonged to the Methodist Communion and his name is still perpetuated in the names of many Methodist churches. He was unusually simple and modest in his tastes and habits, but when he spoke from the pulpit he produced a great impression by the force and daring of his style. He gave promise of equaling Whitefield as a pulpit orator, but he was subject to delicate health and prematurely died in 1825, twenty-seven years of age.

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SUMMERFIELD

1798-1825

THE HEAVENLY INHERITANCE

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—2Pe 1:11.

Of all the causes which may be adduced to account for the indifference which is so generally manifested toward those great concerns of eternity, in which men are so awfully interested, none appears to me so likely to resolve the mystery, as that unbelief which lies at the core of every heart, hindering repentance, and so making faith impossible. Men hear that there is a hell to shun, a heaven to win; and, though they give their assent to both these truths, they never impress them on their mind. It is plain that, whatever their lips may confess, they never believed with the heart, otherwise some effect would have been produced in the life. The germ of unbelief lies within, and discovers itself in all that indifference which is displayed, in the majority of that class of beings whose existence is to be perpetuated throughout eternity. If these thoughts do sometimes obtrude themselves on their serious attention, they are[192] immediately banished from their minds; and the dying exclamation of Moses may be taken up with tears by every lover of perishing sinners: "O! that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" When God, by His prophet Isaiah, called the Israelites to a sense of their awful departure from Him, His language was, "My people do not know: My people do not consider." How few are there like Mary, who "ponder those things in their heart," who are willing to look at themselves, to pry into eternity, to put the question home,

"Shall I be with the damn'd cast out,  
Or numbered with the bless'd?"

This question must sooner or later have a place in your minds, or awful will be your state indeed; let it reach your hearts to-day; and if you pray to the Father of light, you will soon be enabled in His light to discern so much of yourselves as will cause you to cry, "What shall I do to be saved?" While we shall this morning attempt to point out some of the privileges of the sons of God, oh! may your hearts catch the strong desire to be conformed to the living Head, that so an abundant entrance may be administered unto you also, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The privilege to which our text leads us, is[193] exclusively applicable to those to whom that question has been solved by the Spirit of God; those who have believed to the saving of their souls; who have experienced redemption through His blood, and the forgiveness of sins; and who are walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.

I. The state to which we look forward: the "everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior."

1. It is a kingdom. By this figurative expression our Lord has described the state of grace here and of glory hereafter; our happiness in time and our happiness in eternity. They were wisely so called: Jesus has said, as well as done, all things well; for these two states differ not in kind, but in degree; the one is merely a preparative for the other, and he who has been a subject of the former kingdom will be a subject of the latter. Grace is but the seed of glory, glory is the maturity of grace; grace is but the bud of glory, glory is grace full blown; grace is but the blossom of glory, glory is the ripe fruit of grace; grace is but the infant of glory, glory is the perfection of grace. Hence our hymn beautifully says, "The men of grace have found glory begun below," agreeing with our Lord's own words, "He that believeth hath everlasting life"; he feels even here its glories beginning—a foretaste of its bliss.

Now the propriety with which these two[194] states are called kingdoms is manifest from the analogy which might be traced between them and the model of a human sovereignty. Two or three of the outlines of this model will be sufficient.

In the idea of a kingdom it is implied that in some part of its extent there is the residence of a sovereign; for this is essential to constitute it. Now in the kingdom of grace the heart of the believer is made the residence of the King invisible! "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" Such know what that promise means, "I will dwell in them, and they shall be my people." St. Paul exultingly cries, "Christ liveth in me."

Again, it is essential that the inhabitants of a kingdom be under the government of its laws. An empire without laws is no sovereignty at all; it ceases to be such, for every inhabitant has an equal right to do that which seems good in his own eyes. Now the subjects of Christ's kingdom of grace are "not without law, but are under a law to Christ"; they do His righteous will!

Lastly, it is essential that the subjects of a kingdom be under the protection of the presiding monarch, and that they repose their confidence in him. To the subjects of the kingdom of grace, Christ imparts His kingly protection; this is their heritage: "No weapon formed against them shall prosper"; nay, He[195] imparts to them of His royal bounty, and they enjoy all the blessings of an inward heaven.

But how great the perfection of the kingdom of glory mentioned in our text! Does He make these vile bodies His residence here? How much more glorious is His temple above! how splendid the court of heaven! There, indeed, he fixes His throne, and they see Him as He is. Does He exercise His authority here and rule His happy subjects by the law, the perfect law of love? How much more in heaven! He reigns there forever over them; His government is there wholly by Himself; He knows nothing of a rival there; His rule is sole and perfect: there they serve Him day and night. Are His subjects here partakers of His kingly bounty? Much more in heaven! He calls them to a participation of all the joys, the spiritual joys which are at His right hand, and the pleasures which are there forevermore. Yet, after all our descriptions of that glory, it is not yet revealed, and, therefore, inconceivable. But who would not hail such a Son of David? who would not desire to be swayed by such a Prince of Peace? Whose heart would not ascend with the affections of our poet, "O! that with yonder sacred throng, we at His feet may fall"?

2. But it is an everlasting kingdom! Here it rises in the scale of comparison. Weigh the kingdoms of this world in this balance, and they are found wanting; for on many we read[196] their fatal history, and ere long we shall see them all branded with the writing of the invisible Agent, "The kingdom is taken from thee, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof"; "For the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ"; they will be absorbed and swallowed up in the fulness of eternity, and leave not a wrack behind! Every thing here is perishable! The towering diadem of Caesar has fallen from his head and crumbled into dust; and that kingdom whose scepter once swayed the world, betwixt whose colossal stride all nations were glad to creep to find themselves dishonored graves, is now forgotten, or, if its recollection be preserved, its history is emphatically called "The Decline and Fall."

But bring the matter nearer home; apply it not to multitudes of subjects, but to your individual experience, and has not that good teacher instructed you in this sad lesson? We tremble to look at our earthly possessions and employments, lest we should see them in motion, spreading their wings to fly away! How many are there already who, in talking of their comforts, are obliged to go back in their reckoning! Would not this be the language of some of you: "I had—I had a husband, the sharer of my joys, the soother of my sorrows; but he is not! I had a wife, a helpmeet for me; but where is she? I had[197] children to whom I looked up as my support and staff in the decline of life, while passing down the hill; but I am bereaved of my children! I had health, and I highly prized its wealth; but now my emaciated frame, my shriveled system, and the pains of nature bespeak that comfort fled! I had, or fondly thought I had, happiness in possession! Then I said with Job, 'I shall die in my nest!' but ah! an unexpected blast passed over me, and now my joys are blighted! 'They have fled as a shadow, and continued not.'" Yes! time promised you much! perhaps it performed a little; but it can not do any thing for you on which it can grave "eternal." Its name is mortal, its nature is decay; it was born with man, and when the generations of men shall cease to exist, it will cease also: "Time shall be no longer!" We know concerning these that, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord endureth forever." Yes! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; glory can not corrupt! the crown of glory can not fade! Why? Death will be destroyed; Christ will put this last enemy under His feet, and all will then be eternal life! Oh, happy, happy kingdom; nay, thrice happy he who shall be privileged to be its subject!

3. It is the everlasting kingdom of our own Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is His by[198] claim: "Him hath God the Father highly exalted"; yea, Him hath He appointed to be "the judge of quick and dead"; for tho by the sufferings of death He was made a little lower than the angels, yet immediately after His resurrection He declares that now "All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth"! The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and He has now the disposal of the offices and privileges of the empire among His faithful followers. This is the idea that the penitent dying thief had on the subject: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom"; and St. Paul expresses the same when he says to Timothy in the confidence of faith, "The Lord shall deliver me and preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." Oh! how pleasing the thought to the child of God, that his ruler to all eternity will be his elder Brother; for He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; and though He is heir of all things, yet we, as younger branches of the same heavenly family, shall be joint heirs, fellow-heirs of the same glorious inheritance. How great will be our joy to behold Him who humbled Himself for us to death, even the death of the cross, now exalted God over all, blest for evermore; and while contemplating Him under the character of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, how great the relish which will be given to that feeling of the redeemed[199] which will constrain them to cry, "Thou alone art worthy to receive glory, and honor, and power."

II. But the apostle reminds us of the entrance into this kingdom!

1. The entrance into this kingdom is death: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin:"

"Death, like a narrow sea, divides  
That heavenly land from ours!"

"A messenger is sent to bring us to God, but it is the King of Terrors. We enter the land flowing with milk and honey, but it is through the valley of the shadow of death." Yet fear not, O thou child of God! there is no need that thou, through the fear of death, shouldst be all thy lifetime subject to bondage.

2. No; hear the apostle: the entrance is ministered unto thee! Death is but His minister; he can not lock his ice-cold hand in thine till He permit. Our Jesus has the keys of hell and death; and till He liberates the vassal to bring thee home, not a hair of thy head can fall to the ground! Fear not, thou worm! He who minds the sparrows appoints the time for thy removal: fear not; only be thou always ready, that, whenever the messenger comes to take down the tabernacle in which thy spirit has long made her abode, thou mayest be able to exclaim, "Amen! even so,[200] Lord Jesus, come quickly." Death need have no terrors for thee; he is the vassal of thy Lord, and, however unwilling to do Him reverence, yet to Him that sits at God's right hand shall even death pay, if not a joyful, yet a trembling homage; nay, more:

"To Him shall earth and hell submit,  
And every foe shall fall,  
Till death expires beneath His feet,  
And God is all in all."

Christ has already had one triumph over death; His iron pangs could not detain the Prince who has "life in himself"; and in His strength thou shalt triumph, for the power of Christ is promised to rest upon thee! He has had the same entrance; His footsteps marked the way, and His cry to thee is, "Follow thou me." "My sheep," says He, "hear my voice, and they do follow me"; they follow Me gladly, even into this gloomy vale; and what is the consequence? "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

3. It is ministered unto you abundantly. Perhaps the apostle means that the death of some is distinguished by indulgences and honors not vouchsafed to all. In the experience of some, the passage appears difficult; in others it is comparatively easy; they gently fall asleep in Jesus. But we not only see diversities in the mortal agony—this would be a[201] small thing.... Some get in with sails full spread and carrying a rich cargo indeed, while others arrive barely on a single plank. Some, who have long had their conversation in heaven, are anxious to be wafted into the celestial haven; while others, who never sought God till alarmed at the speedy approach of death, have little confidence,

"And linger shivering on the brink,  
And fear to launch away."

This doctrine must have been peculiarly encouraging to the early converts to whom St. Peter wrote. From the tenor of both of his epistles it is clear that they were in a state of severe suffering, and in great danger of apostatizing through fear of persecution. He reminds them that if they hold fast their professions, an abundant entrance will be administered unto them. The death of the martyr is far more glorious than that of the Christian who concealed his profession through fear of man. Witness the case of Stephen: he was not ashamed of being a witness for Jesus in the face of the violent death which awaited him, and which crushed the tabernacle of his devoted spirit; his Lord reserved the highest display of His love and of His glory for that awful hour! "Behold!" says he to his enemies, while gnashing on him with their teeth, "Behold! I see heaven opened, and the Son[202] of man standing on the right hand of God"; then, in the full triumph of faith, he cries out, "Lord Jesus! receive my spirit!"

But did these things apply merely to the believers to whom St. Peter originally wrote? No; you are the men to whom they equally apply; according to your walk and profession of that gospel will be the entrance which will be ministered unto you. Some of you have heard, in another of our houses, during the past week, the dangerous tendency of the spirit of fear, the fear of man. I would you had all heard that discourse: alas! many who have a name and a place among us are becoming mere Sabbath-day worshipers in the courts of the Lord, and lightly esteem the daily means of grace. I believe this is one cause at least why many are weak and sickly among us in divine things. The inner man does not make due increase; the world is stealing a march unawares upon us. May God revive among us the spirit of our fathers!

These things, then, I say, equally apply to you. Behold the strait, the royal, the king's highway! Are you afraid of the reproach of Christ?

"Ashamed of Jesus, that dear Friend,  
On whom our hopes of heaven depend?"

How soon would the world be overcome if all who profess that faith were faithful to it![203] Wo to the rebellious children who compromise truth with the world, and in effect deny their Lord and Master! Who hath required this at their hands? Do they not follow with the crowd who cry, "Lord, Lord! and yet do not the things which He says"? Will they have the adoption and the glory? Will they aim at the honor implied in these words, "Ye are my witnesses?" Will ye indeed be sons? Then see the path wherein His footsteps shine! The way is open! see that ye walk therein! The false apostles, the deceitful workers shall have their reward; the same that those of old had, the praise and esteem of men; while the faith of those who truly call Him Father and Lord, and who walk in the light as He is in the light, who submit, like Him and His true followers, to be counted as "the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things", shall be found unto praise, and honor, and glory!

The true Christian does not seek to hide himself in a corner; he lets his light shine before men, whether they will receive it or not; and thereby is his Father glorified. Having thus served, by the will of God, the hour of his departure at length arrives. The angels beckon him away; Jesus bids him come; and as he departs this life he looks back with a heavenly smile on surviving friends, and is enabled to say, "Whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know." An entrance is ministered[204] unto him abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of his Lord and Savior.

III. Having considered the state to which we look, and the mode of our admission, let us consider the condition of it. This is implied in the word "so." "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you." In the preceding part of this chapter, the apostle has pointed out the meaning of this expression, and in the text merely sums it all up in that short mode of expression.

The first condition he shows to be, the obtaining like precious faith with him, through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Not a faith which merely assents to the truths of the gospel record, but a faith which applies the merits of the death of Christ to expiate my individual guilt; which lays hold on Him as my sacrifice, and produces, in its exercises, peace with God, a knowledge of the divine favor, a sense of sin forgiven, and a full certainty, arising from a divine impression on the heart, made by the Spirit of God, that I am accepted in the Beloved and made a child of God.

If those who profess the Gospel of Christ were but half as zealous in seeking after this enjoyment as they are in discovering creaturely objections to its attainment, it would be enjoyed by thousands who at present know nothing of its happy reality. Such persons, unfortunately for themselves, employ much[205] more assiduity in searching a vocabulary to find out epithets of reproach to attach to those who maintain the doctrine than in searching that volume which declares that "if you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father"; and that "he that believeth hath the witness in himself." In whatever light a scorner may view this doctrine now, the time will come when, being found without the wedding garment, he will be cast into outer darkness.

O sinner! cry to God this day to convince thee of thy need of this salvation, and then thou wilt be in a condition to receive it:

"Shalt know, shalt feel thy sins forgiven,  
Bless'd with this antepast of heaven."

But, besides this, the apostle requires that we then henceforth preserve consciences void of offense toward God and toward man. This faith which obtains the forgiveness of sin unites to Christ, and by this union we are made, as St. Peter declares, "partakers of the divine nature": and as He who has called you is holy, so you are to be holy in all manner of conversation. For yours is a faith which not only casts out sin, but purifies the heart—the conscience having been once purged by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, you are not to suffer guilt to be again contracted; for the salvation of Christ is not only from the penalty, but from the very stain[206] of sin; not only from its guilt, but from its pollution; not only from its condemnation, but from its very "in-being"; "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin"; and "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." You are therefore required by St. Peter, "to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust," and thus to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord!

Finally, live in progressive and practical godliness. Not only possess, but practise, the virtues of religion; not only practise, but increase therein, abounding in the work of the Lord! Lead up, hand in hand, in the same delightful chorus, all the graces which adorn the Christian character. Having the divine nature, possessing a new and living principle, let diligent exercise reduce it to practical holiness; and you will be easily discerned from those formal hypocrites, whose faith and religion are but a barren and unfruitful speculation.

To conclude: live to God—live for God—live in God; and let your moderation be known unto all men—the Lord is at hand: "Therefore giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity."

**÷**04-10 NEWMAN

GOD'S WILL THE END OF LIFE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Henry Newman was born in London in 1801. He won high honors at Oxford, and in 1828 was appointed vicar of the University Church, St. Mary's, and with Keble and Pusey headed the Oxford Movement. In the pulpit of St. Mary's he soon showed himself to be a power. His sermons, exquisite, tho simple in style, chiefly deal with various phases of personal religion which he illustrated with a keen spiritual insight, a sympathetic glow, an exalted earnestness and a breadth of range, unparalleled in English pulpit utterances before his time. His extreme views on questions of catholicity, sacerdotalism and the sacraments, as well as his craving for an infallible authority in matters of faith, shook his confidence in the Church of England and he went over to Rome in 1845. He was made Cardinal in 1879 and died in 1890.

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NEWMAN

1801-1890

GOD'S WILL THE END OF LIFE

I came down from heaven not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me.—Joh 6:38.

I am going to ask you a question, my dear brethren, so trite, and therefore so uninteresting at first sight, that you may wonder why I put it, and may object that it will be difficult to fix the mind on it, and may anticipate that nothing profitable can be made of it. It is this: "Why were you sent into the world?" Yet, after all, it is perhaps a thought more obvious than it is common, more easy than it is familiar; I mean it ought to come into your minds, but it does not, and you never had more than a distant acquaintance with it, tho that sort of acquaintance with it you have had for many years. Nay, once or twice, perhaps you have been thrown across the thought somewhat intimately, for a short season, but this was an accident which did not last. There are those who recollect the first time, as it would seem, when it came home to them. They were but little children, and they were by themselves, and they spontaneously asked themselves, or rather God[210] spake in them, "Why am I here? how came I here? who brought me here? What am I to do here?" Perhaps it was the first act of reason, the beginning of their real responsibility, the commencement of their trial; perhaps from that day they may date their capacity, their awful power, of choosing between good and evil, and of committing mortal sin. And so, as life goes on, the thought comes vividly, from time to time, for a short season across their conscience; whether in illness, or in some anxiety, or at some season of solitude, or on hearing some preacher, or reading some religious work. A vivid feeling comes over them of the vanity and unprofitableness of the world, and then the question recurs, "Why then am I sent into it?"

And a great contrast indeed does this vain, unprofitable, yet overbearing world present with such a question as that. It seems out of place to ask such a question in so magnificent, so imposing a presence, as that of the great Babylon. The world professes to supply all that we need, as if we were sent into it for the sake of being sent here, and for nothing beyond the sending. It is a great favor to have an introduction to this august world. This is to be our exposition, forsooth, of the mystery of life. Every man is doing his own will here, seeking his own pleasure, pursuing his own ends; that is why he was brought into existence. Go abroad into the streets of[211] the populous city, contemplate the continuous outpouring there of human energy, and the countless varieties of human character, and be satisfied! The ways are thronged, carriage-way and pavement; multitudes are hurrying to and fro, each on his own errand, or are loitering about from listlessness, or from want of work, or have come forth into the public concourse, to see and to be seen, for amusement or for display, or on the excuse of business. The carriages of the wealthy mingle with the slow wains laden with provisions or merchandise, the productions of art or the demands of luxury. The streets are lined with shops, open and gay, inviting customers, and widen now and then into some spacious square or place, with lofty masses of brickwork or of stone, gleaming in the fitful sunbeam, and surrounded or fronted with what simulates a garden's foliage. Follow them in another direction, and you find the whole groundstead covered with large buildings, planted thickly up and down, the homes of the mechanical arts. The air is filled, below, with a ceaseless, importunate, monotonous din, which penetrates even to your innermost chamber, and rings in your ears even when you are not conscious of it; and overhead, with a canopy of smoke, shrouding God's day from the realms of obstinate, sullen toil. This is the end of man!

Or stay at home, and take up one of those[212] daily prints, which are so true a picture of the world; look down the columns of advertisements, and you will see the catalog of pursuits, projects, aims, anxieties, amusements, indulgences which occupy the mind of man. He plays many parts: here he has goods to sell, there he wants employment; there again he seeks to borrow money, here he offers you houses, great seats or small tenements; he has food for the million, and luxuries for the wealthy, and sovereign medicines for the credulous, and books, new and cheap, for the inquisitive. Pass on to the news of the day, and you will learn what great men are doing at home and abroad: you will read of wars and rumors of wars; of debates in the legislature; of rising men, and old statesmen going off the scene; of political contests in this city or that country; of the collision of rival interests. You will read of the money market, and the provision market, and the market for metals; of the state of trade, the call for manufactures, news of ships arrived in port, of accidents at sea, of exports and imports, of gains and losses, of frauds and their detection. Go forward, and you arrive at discoveries in art and science, discoveries (so-called) in religion, the court and royalty, the entertainments of the great, places of amusement, strange trials, offenses, accidents, escapes, exploits, experiments, contests, ventures. Oh, this curious restless, clamorous, panting being,[213] which we call life!—and is there to be no end to all this? Is there no object in it? It never has an end, it is forsooth its own object!

And now, once more, my brethren, put aside what you see and what you read of the world, and try to penetrate into the hearts, and to reach the ideas and the feelings of those who constitute it; look into them as closely as you can; enter into their houses and private rooms; strike at random through the streets and lanes: take as they come, palace and hovel, office or factory, and what will you find? Listen to their words, witness, alas! their works; you will find in the main the same lawless thoughts, the same unrestrained desires, the same ungoverned passions, the same earthly opinions, the same wilful deeds, in high and low, learned and unlearned; you will find them all to be living for the sake of living; they one and all seem to tell you, "We are our own center, our own end." Why are they toiling? why are they scheming? for what are they living? "We live to please ourselves; life is worthless except we have our own way; we are not sent here at all, but we find ourselves here, and we are but slaves unless we can think what we will, believe what we will, love what we will, hate what we will, do what we will. We detest interference on the part of God or man. We do not bargain to be rich or to be great; but we do bargain, whether rich or poor, high or low, to live for ourselves, to live[214] for the lust of the moment, or, according to the doctrine of the hour, thinking of the future and the unseen just as much or as little as we please."

Oh, my brethren, is it not a shocking thought, but who can deny its truth? The multitude of men are living without any aim beyond this visible scene; they may from time to time use religious words, or they may profess a communion or a worship, as a matter of course, or of expedience, or of duty, but, if there was sincerity in such profession, the course of the world could not run as it does. What a contrast is all this to the end of life, as it is set before us in our most holy faith! If there was one among the sons of men, who might allowably have taken his pleasure, and have done his own will here below, surely it was He who came down on earth from the bosom of the Father, and who was so pure and spotless in that human nature which He put on Him, that He could have no human purpose or aim inconsistent with the will of His Father. Yet He, the Son of God, the Eternal Word, came, not to do His own will, but His who sent Him, as you know very well is told us again and again in Scripture. Thus the Prophet in the Psalter, speaking in His person, says, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." And He says in the Prophet Isaiah, "The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I do not resist; I have not gone back." And in[215] the gospel, when He hath come on earth, "My food is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Hence, too, in His agony, He cried out, "Not my will, but thine, be done;" and St. Paul, in like manner, says, that "Christ pleased not himself;" and elsewhere, that, "tho he was God's Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." Surely so it was; as being indeed the eternal coequal Son, His will was one and the same with the Father's will, and He had no submission of will to make; but He chose to take on Him man's nature and the will of that nature; he chose to take on Him affections, feelings, and inclinations proper to man, a will innocent indeed and good, but still a man's will, distinct from God's will; a will, which, had it acted simply according to what was pleasing to its nature, would, when pain and toil were to be endured, have held back from an active cooperation with the will of God. But, tho He took on Himself the nature of man, He took not on Him that selfishness, with which fallen man wraps himself round, but in all things He devoted Himself as a ready sacrifice to His Father. He came on earth, not to take His pleasure, not to follow His taste, not for the mere exercise of human affection, but simply to glorify His Father and to do His will. He came charged with a mission, deputed for a work; He looked not to the right[216] nor to the left, He thought not of Himself, He offered Himself up to God.

Hence it is that He was carried in the womb of a poor woman, who, before His birth, had two journeys to make, of love and of obedience, to the mountains and to Bethlehem. He was born in a stable, and laid in a manger. He was hurried off to Egypt to sojourn there; then He lived till He was thirty years of age in a poor way, by a rough trade, in a small house, in a despised town. Then, when He went out to preach, He had not where to lay His head; He wandered up and down the country, as a stranger upon earth. He was driven out into the wilderness, and dwelt among the wild beasts. He endured heat and cold, hunger and weariness, reproach and calumny. His food was coarse bread, and fish from the lake, or depended on the hospitality of strangers. And as He had already left His Father's greatness on high, and had chosen an earthly home; so again, at that Father's bidding, He gave up the sole solace given Him in this world, and denied Himself His mother's presence. He parted with her who bore Him; He endured to be strange to her; He endured to call her coldly "woman," who was His own undefiled one, all beautiful, all gracious, the best creature of His hands, and the sweet nurse of His infancy. He put her aside, as Levi, His type, merited the sacred ministry, by saying to His parents and kinsmen,[217] "I know you not." He exemplified in His own person the severe maxim, which He gave to His disciples, "He that loveth more than me is not worthy of me." In all these many ways He sacrificed every wish of His own; that we might understand, that, if He, the Creator, came into His world, not for His own pleasure, but to do His Father's will, we too have most surely some work to do, and have seriously to bethink ourselves what that work is.

Yes, so it is; realize it, my brethren;—every one who breathes, high and low, educated and ignorant, young and old, man and woman, has a mission, has a work. We are not sent into this world for nothing; we are not born at random; we are not here, that we may go to bed at night, and get up in the morning, toil for our bread, eat and drink, laugh and joke, sin when we have a mind, and reform when we are tired of sinning, rear a family and die. God sees every one of us; He creates every soul, He lodges it in the body, one by one, for a purpose. He needs, He deigns to need, every one of us. He has an end for each of us; we are all equal in His sight, and we are placed in our different ranks and stations, not to get what we can out of them for ourselves, but to labor in them for Him. As Christ had His work, we too have ours; as He rejoiced to do His work, we must rejoice in ours also.

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St. Paul on one occasion speaks of the world as a scene in a theater. Consider what is meant by this. You know, actors on a stage are on an equality with each other really, but for the occasion they assume a difference of character; some are high, some are low, some are merry, and some sad. Well, would it not be simple absurdity in any actor to pride himself on his mock diadem, or his edgeless sword, instead of attending to his part? What, if he did but gaze at himself and his dress? what, if he secreted, or turned to his own use, what was valuable in it? Is it not his business, and nothing else, to act his part well? Common sense tells us so. Now we are all but actors in this world; we are one and all equal, we shall be judged as equals as soon as life is over; yet, equal and similar in ourselves, each has his special part at present, each has his work, each has his mission,—not to indulge his passions, not to make money, not to get a name in the world, not to save himself trouble, not to follow his bent, not to be selfish and self-willed, but to do what God puts on him to do.

Look at the poor profligate in the gospel, look at Dives; do you think he understood that his wealth was to be spent, not on himself, but for the glory of God?—yet forgetting this, he was lost for ever and ever. I will tell you what he thought, and how he viewed things: he was a young man, and had succeeded[219] to a good estate, and he determined to enjoy himself. It did not strike him that his wealth had any other use than that of enabling him to take his pleasure. Lazarus lay at his gate; he might have relieved Lazarus; that was God's will; but he managed to put conscience aside, and he persuaded himself he should be a fool, if he did not make the most of this world, while he had the means. So he resolved to have his fill of pleasure; and feasting was to his mind a principal part of it. "He fared sumptuously every day"; everything belonging to him was in the best style, as men speak; his house, his furniture, his plate of silver and gold, his attendants, his establishments. Everything was for enjoyment, and for show, too; to attract the eyes of the world, and to gain the applause and admiration of his equals, who were the companions of his sins. These companions were doubtless such as became a person of such pretensions; they were fashionable men; a collection of refined, high-bred, haughty men, eating, not gluttonously, but what was rare and costly; delicate, exact, fastidious in their taste, from their very habits of indulgence; not eating for the mere sake of eating, or drinking for the mere sake of drinking, but making a sort of science of their sensuality; sensual, carnal, as flesh and blood can be, with eyes, ears, tongue steeped in impurity, every thought, look, and sense, witnessing or ministering[220] to the evil one who ruled them; yet, with exquisite correctness of idea and judgment, laying down rules for sinning;—heartless and selfish, high, punctilious, and disdainful in their outward deportment, and shrinking from Lazarus, who lay at the gate, as an eye-sore, who ought for the sake of decency to be put out of the way. Dives was one of such, and so he lived his short span, thinking of nothing but himself, till one day he got into a fatal quarrel with one of his godless associates, or he caught some bad illness; and then he lay helpless on his bed of pain, cursing fortune and his physician that he was no better, and impatient that he was thus kept from enjoying his youth, trying to fancy himself mending when he was getting worse, and disgusted at those who would not throw him some word of comfort in his suspense, and turning more resolutely from his Creator in proportion to his suffering;—and then at last his day came, and he died, and (oh! miserable!) "was buried in hell." And so ended he and his mission.

This was the fate of your pattern and idol, oh, ye, if any of you be present, young men, who, tho not possest of wealth and rank, yet affect the fashions of those who have them. You, my brethren, have not been born splendidly, or nobly; you have not been brought up in the seats of liberal education; you have no high connections; you have not learned[221] the manners nor caught the tone of good society; you have no share of the largeness of mind, the candor, the romantic sense of honor, the correctness of taste, the consideration for others, and the gentleness which the world puts forth as its highest type of excellence; you have not come near the courts of the mansions of the great; yet you ape the sin of Dives, while you are strangers to his refinement. You think it the sign of a gentleman to set yourselves above religion; to criticize the religious and professors of religion; to look at Catholic and Methodist with impartial contempt; to gain a smattering of knowledge on a number of subjects; to dip into a number of frivolous publications, if they are popular; to have read the latest novel; to have heard the singer and seen the actor of the day; to be well up with the news; to know the names and, if so be, the persons of public men, to be able to bow to them; to walk up and down the street with your heads on high, and to stare at whatever meets you; and to say and do worse things, of which these outward extravagances are but the symbol. And this is what you conceive you have come upon the earth for! The Creator made you, it seems, oh, my children, for this work and office, to be a bad imitation of polished ungodliness, to be a piece of tawdry and faded finery, or a scent which has lost its freshness, and does not but offend the sense! O! that you could see how[222] absurd and base are such pretenses in the eyes of any but yourselves! No calling of life but is honorable; no one is ridiculous who acts suitably to his calling and estate; no one, who has good sense and humility, but may, in any state of life, be truly well-bred and refined; but ostentation, affectation, and ambitious efforts are, in every station of life, high or low, nothing but vulgarities. Put them aside, despise them yourselves. Oh, my very dear sons, whom I love, and whom I would fain serve;—oh, that you could feel that you have souls! oh, that you would have mercy on your souls! oh, that, before it is too late, you would betake yourselves to Him who is the source of all that is truly high and magnificent and beautiful, all that is bright and pleasant and secure what you ignorantly seek, in Him whom you so wilfully, so awfully despise!

He, alone, the Son of God, "the brightness of the Eternal Light, and the spotless mirror of His Majesty," is the source of all good and all happiness to rich and poor, high and low. If you were ever so high, you would need Him; if you were ever so low, you could offend Him. The poor can offend Him; the poor man can neglect his divinely appointed mission as well as the rich. Do not suppose, my brethren, that what I have said against the upper or the middle class will not, if you happen to be poor, also lie against you. Though a man were as poor as Lazarus, he[223] could be as guilty as Dives. If you were resolved to degrade yourselves to the brutes of the field, who have no reason and no conscience, you need not wealth or rank to enable you to do so. Brutes have no wealth; they have no pride of life; they have no purple and fine linen, no splendid table, no retinue of servants, and yet they are brutes. They are brutes by the law of their nature; they are the poorest among the poor; there is not a vagrant and outcast who is so poor as they; they differ from him, not in their possessions, but in their want of a soul, in that he has a mission and they have not, he can sin and they can not. Oh, my brethren, it stands to reason, a man may intoxicate himself with a cheap draft, as well as with a costly one; he may steal another's money for his appetites, though he does not waste his own upon them; he may break through the natural and social laws which encircle him, and profane the sanctity of family duties, tho he be not a child of nobles, but a peasant or artisan,—nay, and perhaps he does so more frequently than they. This is not the poor's blessedness, that he has less temptations to self-indulgence, for he has as many, but that from his circumstances he receives the penances and corrections of self-indulgence. Poverty is the mother of many pains and sorrows in their season, and these are God's messengers to lead the soul to repentance; but,[224] alas! if the poor man indulges his passions, thinks little of religion, puts off repentance, refuses to make an effort, and dies without conversion, it matters nothing that he was poor in this world, it matters nothing that he was less daring than the rich, it matters not that he promised himself God's favor, that he sent for the priest when death came, and received the last sacraments; Lazarus too, in that case, shall be buried with Dives in hell, and shall have had his consolation neither in this world nor in the world to come.

My brethren, the simple question is, whatever a man's rank in life may be, does he in that rank perform the work which God has given him to do? Now then, let me turn to others, of a very different description, and let me hear what they will say, when the question is asked them. Why, they will parry it thus: "You give us no alternative," they will say to me, "except that of being sinners or saints. You put before us our Lord's pattern, and you spread before us the guilt and ruin of the deliberate transgressor; whereas we have no intention of going so far one way or the other; we do not aim at being saints, but we have no desire at all to be sinners. We neither intend to disobey God's will, nor to give up our own. Surely there is a middle way, and a safe one, in which God's will and our will may both be satisfied. We mean to enjoy both this world and the next. We will[225] guard against mortal sin; we are not obliged to guard against venial; indeed it would be endless to attempt it. None but saints do so; it is the work of a life; we need have nothing else to do. We are not monks, we are in the world, we are in business, we are parents, we have families; we must live for the day. It is a consolation to keep from mortal sin; that we do, and it is enough for salvation. It is a great thing to keep in God's favor; what indeed can we desire more? We come at due time to the sacraments; this is our comfort and our stay; did we die, we should die in grace, and escape the doom of the wicked. But if we once attempted to go further, where should we stop? how will you draw the line for us? The line between mortal and venial sin is very distinct; we understand that; but do you not see that, if we attended to our venial sins, there would be just as much reason to attend to one as to another? If we began to repress our anger, why not also repress vainglory? Why not also guard against niggardliness? Why not also keep from falsehood, from gossiping, from idling, from excess in eating? And, after all, without venial sin we never can be, unless indeed we have the prerogative of the Mother of God, which it would be almost heresy to ascribe to any one but her. You are not asking us to be converted; that we understand; we are converted, we were converted a long time ago.[226] You bid us aim at an indefinite vague something, which is less than perfection, yet more than obedience, and which, without resulting in any tangible advantage, debars us from the pleasures and embarrasses us in the duties of this world."

This is what you will say; but your premises, my brethren, are better than your reasoning, and your conclusions will not stand. You have a right view why God has sent you into the world; viz., in order that you may get to heaven; it is quite true also that you would fare well indeed if you found yourselves there, you could desire nothing better; nor, it is true, can you live any time without venial sin. It is true also that you are not obliged to aim at being saints; it is no sin not to aim at perfection. So much is true and to the purpose; but it does not follow from it that you, with such views and feelings as you have exprest, are using sufficient exertions even for attaining purgatory. Has your religion any difficulty in it, or is it in all respects easy to you? Are you simply taking your own pleasure in your mode of living, or do you find your pleasure in submitting yourself to God's pleasure? In a word, is your religion a work? For if it be not, it is not religion at all. Here at once, before going into your argument, is a proof that it is an unsound one, because it brings you to the conclusion that, whereas Christ came to do a[227] work, and all saints, nay, nay, and sinners to do a work too, you, on the contrary, have no work to do, because, forsooth, you are neither sinners nor saints; or, if you once had a work, at least that you have despatched it already, and you have nothing upon your hands. You have attained your salvation, it seems, before your time, and have nothing to occupy you, and are detained on earth too long. The work days are over, and your perpetual holiday is begun. Did then God send you, above all other men, into the world to be idle in spiritual matters? Is it your mission only to find pleasure in this world, in which you are but as pilgrims and sojourners? Are you more than sons of Adam, who, by the sweat of their brow, are to eat bread till they return to the earth out of which they are taken? Unless you have some work in hand, unless you are struggling, unless you are fighting with yourselves, you are no followers of those who "through many tribulations entered into the kingdom of God." A fight is the very token of a Christian. He is a soldier of Christ; high or low, he is this and nothing else. If you have triumphed over all mortal sin, as you seem to think, then you must attack your venial sins; there is no help for it; there is nothing else to do, if you would be soldiers of Jesus Christ. But, oh, simple souls! to think you have gained any triumph at all! No; you cannot safely be at peace with any, even the[228] least malignant, of the foes of God; if you are at peace with venial sins, be certain that in their company and under their shadow mortal sins are lurking. Mortal sins are the children of venial, which, tho they be not deadly themselves, yet are prolific of death. You may think that you have killed the giants who had possession of your hearts, and that you have nothing to fear, but may sit at rest under your vine and under your fig-tree; but the giants will live again, they will rise from the dust, and, before you know where you are, you will be taken captive and slaughtered by the fierce, powerful, and eternal enemies of God.

The end of a thing is the test. It was our Lord's rejoicing in His last solemn hour, that He had done the work for which He was sent. "I have glorified thee on earth." He says in His prayer, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou hast given me out of the world." It was St. Paul's consolation also, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord shall render to me in that day, the just judge." Alas! alas! how different will be our view of things when we come to die, or when we have passed into eternity, from the dreams and pretenses with which we beguile ourselves now! What[229] will Babel do for us then? Will it rescue our souls from the purgatory or the hell to which it sends them? If we were created, it was that we might serve God; if we have His gifts, it is that we may glorify Him; if we have a conscience, it is that we may obey it; if we have the prospect of heaven, it is that we may keep it before us; if we have light, that we may follow it, if we have grace, that we may save ourselves by means of it. Alas! alas! for those who die without fulfilling their mission; who were called to be holy, and lived in sin; who were called to worship Christ, and who plunged into this giddy and unbelieving world; who were called to fight, and who remained idle; who were called to be Catholics, and who did but remain in the religion of their birth! Alas for those who have had gifts and talent, and have not used, or have misused, or abused them; who have had wealth, and have spent it on themselves; who have had abilities, and have advocated what was sinful, or ridiculed what was true, or scattered doubts against what was sacred; who have had leisure, and have wasted it on wicked companions, or evil books, or foolish amusements! Alas! for those of whom the best can be said is, that they are harmless and naturally blameless, while they never have attempted to cleanse their hearts or to live in God's sight!

The world goes on from age to age, but the Holy Angels and Blessed Saints are always[230] crying Alas, alas! and Wo, wo! over the loss of vocations, and the disappointment of hopes, and the scorn of God's love, and the ruin of souls. One generation succeeds another, and whenever they look down upon earth from their golden thrones, they see scarcely anything but a multitude of guardian spirits, downcast and sad, each following his own charge, in anxiety, or in terror, or in despair, vainly endeavoring to shield him from the enemy, and failing because he will not be shielded. Times come and go, and man will not believe, that that is to be which is not yet, or that what now is only continues for a season, and is not eternity. The end is the trial; the world passes; it is but a pageant and a scene; the lofty palace crumbles, the busy city is mute, the ships of Tarshish have sped away. On heart and flesh death is coming; the veil is breaking. Departing soul, how hast thou used thy talents, thy opportunities, the light poured around thee, the warnings given thee, the grace inspired into thee? Oh, my Lord and Savior, support me in that hour in the strong arms of Thy sacraments, and by the fresh fragrance of Thy consolations. Let the absolving words be said over me, and the holy oil sign and seal me, and Thy own body be my food, and Thy blood my sprinkling; and let my sweet mother Mary breathe on me, and my angel whisper peace to me, and my glorious saints, and my own dear father, Philip,[231] smile on me; that in them all, and through them all, I may receive the gift of perseverance, and die, as I desire to live, in Thy faith, in Thy Church, in Thy service, and in Thy love.

**÷**04-11 BUSHNELL

UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Horace Bushnell was born at Litchfield, Connecticut, in 1802. Graduated at Yale 1827. In 1833 he became pastor of the North Congregational Church, Hartford, Conn., resigned in 1859 and died in 1876. He wrote many theological works. Among them "Christian Nurture" (1847), a book now looked upon as of classical authority. Considerable discussion among Calvinists was aroused by his "Nature and the Supernatural," and his "The Vicarious Sacrifice" (1865) as being out of accord with the accepted creeds of the Congregational churches. He lacked the sympathy and dramatic instinct necessary to great oratorical achievement, but his sermons prove by their profound suggestiveness that he was a man of keen spiritual insight, and preached with force and impressiveness. His influence upon the ministers of America in modifying theology and remolding the general type of preaching is fairly comparable with that of Robertson.

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BUSHNELL

1802-1876

UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE[4]

Then went in also that other disciple.—Joh 20:8.

In this slight touch or turn of history, is opened to us, if we scan closely, one of the most serious and fruitful chapters of Christian doctrine. Thus it is that men are ever touching unconsciously the springs of motion in each other; thus it is that one man, without thought or intention, or even a consciousness of the fact, is ever leading some other after him. Little does Peter think, as he comes up where his doubting brother is looking into the sepulcher, and goes straight in, after his peculiar manner, that he is drawing in his brother apostle after him. As little does John think, when he loses his misgivings, and goes into the sepulcher after Peter, that he is following his brother. And just so, unaware to himself, is every man, the whole race through, laying hold of his fellow-man, to lead him where otherwise he would not go. We overrun the boundaries of our personality—we flow together. A Peter leads a John, a John goes after Peter, both of them unconscious of any influence exerted or received.[236] And thus our life and conduct are ever propagating themselves, by a law of social contagion, throughout the circles and times in which we live.

There are, then, you will perceive, two sorts of influence belonging to man; that which is active or voluntary, and that which is unconscious—that which we exert purposely or in the endeavor to sway another, as by teaching, by argument, by persuasion, by threatenings, by offers and promises, and that which flows out from us, unaware to ourselves, the same which Peter had over John when he led him into the sepulcher. The importance of our efforts to do good, that is of our voluntary influence, and the sacred obligation we are under to exert ourselves in this way, are often and seriously insisted on. It is thus that Christianity has become, in the present age, a principle of so much greater activity than it has been for many centuries before; and we fervently hope that it will yet become far more active than it now is, nor cease to multiply its industry, till it is seen by all mankind to embody the beneficence and the living energy of Christ Himself.

But there needs to be reproduced, at the same time, and partly for this object, a more thorough appreciation of the relative importance of that kind of influence or beneficence which is insensibly exerted. The tremendous weight and efficacy of this, compared with[237] the other, and the sacred responsibility laid upon us in regard to this, are felt in no such degree or proportion as they should be; and the consequent loss we suffer in character, as well as that which the Church suffers in beauty and strength, is incalculable. The more stress, too, needs to be laid on this subject of insensible influence, because it is insensible; because it is out of mind, and, when we seek to trace it, beyond a full discovery.

If the doubt occur to any of you, in the announcement of this subject, whether we are properly responsible for an influence which we exert insensibly; we are not, I reply, except so far as this influence flows directly from our character and conduct. And this it does, even much more uniformly than our active influence. In the latter we may fail of our end by a want of wisdom or skill, in which case we are still as meritorious, in God's sight, as if we succeeded. So, again, we may really succeed, and do great good by our active endeavors, from motives altogether base and hypocritical, in which case we are as evil, in God's sight, as if we had failed. But the influences we exert unconsciously will almost never disagree with our real character. They are honest influences, following our character, as the shadow follows the sun. And, therefore, we are much more certainly responsible for them, and their effects on the world. They go streaming from us in all directions, tho[238] in channels that we do not see, poisoning or healing around the roots of society, and among the hidden wells of character. If good ourselves, they are good; if bad, they are bad. And, since they reflect so exactly our character, it is impossible to doubt our responsibility for their effects on the world. We must answer not only for what we do with a purpose, but for the influence we exert insensibly. To give you any just impressions of the breadth and seriousness of such a reckoning I know to be impossible. No mind can trace it. But it will be something gained if I am able to awaken only a suspicion of the vast extent and power of those influences, which are ever flowing out unbidden upon society, from your life and character.

In the prosecution of my design, let me ask of you, first of all, to expel the common prejudice that there can be nothing of consequence in unconscious influences, because they make no report, and fall on the world unobserved. Histories and biographies make little account of the power men exert insensibly over each other. They tell how men have led armies, established empires, enacted laws, gained causes, sung, reasoned, and taught—always occupied in setting forth what they do with a purpose. But what they do without purpose, the streams of influence that flow out from their persons unbidden on the world, they can not trace or compute, and seldom even mention.[239] So also the public laws make men responsible only for what they do with a positive purpose, and take no account of the mischiefs or benefits that are communicated by their noxious or healthful example. The same is true in the discipline of families, churches, and schools; they make no account of the things we do, except we will them. What we do insensibly passes for nothing, because no human government can trace such influences with sufficient certainty to make their authors responsible.

But you must not conclude that influences of this kind are insignificant, because they are unnoticed and noiseless. How is it in the natural world? Behind the mere show, the outward noise and stir of the world, nature always conceals her hand of control, and the laws by which she rules. Who ever saw with the eye, for example, or heard with the ear, the exertions of that tremendous astronomic force, which every moment holds the compact of the physical universe together? The lightning is, in fact, but a mere firefly spark in comparison; but, because it glares on the clouds, and thunders so terribly in the ear, and rives the tree or the rock where it falls, many will be ready to think that it is a vastly more potent agent than gravity.

The Bible calls the good man's life a light, and it is the nature of light to flow out spontaneously in all directions, and fill the world[240] unconsciously with its beams. So the Christian shines, it would say, not so much because he will, as because he is a luminous object. Not that the active influence of Christians is made of no account in the figure, but only that this symbol of light has its propriety in the fact that their unconscious influence is the chief influence, and has the precedence in its power over the world. And yet, there are many who will be ready to think that light is a very tame and feeble instrument, because it is noiseless. An earthquake, for example, is to them a much more vigorous and effective agency. Hear how it comes thundering through solid foundations of nature. It rocks a whole continent. The noblest works of man—cities, monuments, and temples—are in a moment leveled to the ground, or swallowed down the opening gulfs of fire. Little do they think that the light of every morning, the soft, and genial, and silent light, is an agent many times more powerful. But let the light of the morning cease and return no more, let the hour of morning come, and bring with it no dawn; the outcries of a horror-stricken world fill the air, and make, as it were, the darkness audible. The beasts go wild and frantic at the loss of the sun. The vegetable growths turn pale and die. A chill creeps on, and frosty winds begin to howl across the freezing earth. Colder, and yet colder, is the night. The vital blood, at length, of all creatures, stops congealed.[241] Down goes the frost toward the earth's center. The heart of the sea is frozen; nay, the earthquakes are themselves frozen in, under their fiery caverns. The very globe itself, too, and all the fellow planets that have lost their sun, are become mere balls of ice, swinging silent in the darkness. Such is the light, which revisits us in the silence of the morning. It makes no shock or scar. It would not wake an infant in his cradle. And yet it perpetually new creates the world, rescuing it each morning, as a prey, from night and chaos. So the Christian is a light, even "the light of the world," and we must not think that, because he shines insensibly or silently, as a mere luminous object, he is therefore powerless. The greatest powers are ever those which lie back of the little stirs and commotion of nature; and I verily believe that the insensible influences of good men are much more potent than what I have called their voluntary, or active, as the great silent powers of nature are of greater consequence than her little disturbances and tumults. The law of human influences is deeper than many suspect, and they lose sight of it altogether. The outward endeavors made by good men or bad to sway others, they call their influence; whereas, it is, in fact, but a fraction, and, in most cases, but a very small fraction, of the good or evil that flows out of their lives. Nay, I will even go further. How many persons do[242] you meet, the insensible influence of whose manners and character is so decided as often to thwart their voluntary influence; so that, whatever they attempt to do, in the way of controlling others, they are sure to carry the exact opposite of what they intend! And it will generally be found that, where men undertake by argument or persuasion to exert a power, in the face of qualities that make them odious or detestable, or only not entitled to respect, their insensible influence will be too strong for them. The total effect of the life is then of a kind directly opposite to the voluntary endeavor, which, of course, does not add so much as a fraction to it.

I call your attention, next, to the twofold powers of effect and expression by which man connects with his fellow man. If we distinguish man as a creature of language, and thus qualified to communicate himself to others, there are in him two sets or kinds of language, one which is voluntary in the use, and one that is involuntary; that of speech in the literal sense, and that expression of the eye, the face, the look, the gait, the motion, the tone of cadence, which is sometimes called the natural language of the sentiments. This natural language, too, is greatly enlarged by the conduct of life, that which, in business and society, reveals the principles and spirit of men. Speech, or voluntary language, is a door to the soul, that we may open or shut[243] at will; the other is a door that stands open evermore, and reveals to others constantly, and often very clearly, the tempers, tastes, and motives of their hearts. Within, as we may represent, is character, charging the common reservoir of influence, and through these twofold gates of the soul pouring itself out on the world. Out of one it flows at choice, and whensoever we purpose to do good or evil to men. Out of the other it flows each moment, as light from the sun, and propagates itself in all beholders.

Then if we go to others, that is, to the subjects of influence, we find every man endowed with two inlets of impression; the ear and the understanding for the reception of speech, and the sympathetic powers, the sensibilities or affections, for tinder to those sparks of emotion revealed by looks, tones, manners and general conduct. And these sympathetic powers, tho not immediately rational, are yet inlets, open on all sides, to the understanding and character. They have a certain wonderful capacity to receive impressions, and catch the meaning of signs, and propagate in us whatsoever falls into their passive molds from others. The impressions they receive do not come through verbal propositions, and are never received into verbal propositions, it may be, in the mind, and therefore many think nothing of them. But precisely on this account are they the more powerful, because it is as[244] if one heart were thus going directly into another, and carrying in its feelings with it. Beholding, as in a glass, the feelings of our neighbor, we are changed into the same image, by the assimilating power of sensibility and fellow-feeling. Many have gone so far, and not without show, at least, of reason, as to maintain that the look or expression, and even the very features of children, are often changed by exclusive intercourse with nurses and attendants. Furthermore, if we carefully consider, we shall find it scarcely possible to doubt, that simply to look on bad and malignant faces, or those whose expressions have become infected by vice, to be with them and become familiarized to them, is enough permanently to affect the character of persons of mature age. I do not say that it must of necessity subvert their character, for the evil looked upon may never be loved or welcomed in practise; but it is something to have these bad images in the soul, giving out their expressions there, and diffusing their odor among the thoughts, as long as we live. How dangerous a thing is it, for example, for a man to become accustomed to sights of cruelty? What man, valuing the honor of his soul, would not shrink from yielding himself to such an influence? No more is it a thing of indifference to become accustomed to look on the manners, and receive the bad expression of any kind of sin.

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The door of involuntary communication, I have said, is always open. Of course we are communicating ourselves in this way to others at every moment of our intercourse or presence with them. But how very seldom, in comparison, do we undertake by means of speech to influence others! Even the best Christian, one who most improves his opportunities to do good, attempts but seldom to sway another by voluntary influence, whereas he is all the while shining as a luminous object unawares, and communicating of his heart to the world.

But there is yet another view of this double line of communication which man has with his fellow-men, which is more general, and displays the import of the truth yet more convincingly. It is by one of these modes of communication that we are constituted members of voluntary society, and by the other, parts of a general mass, or members of involuntary society. You are all, in a certain view, individuals, and separate as persons from each other; you are also, in a certain other view, parts of a common body, as truly as the parts of a stone. Thus if you ask how it is that you and all men came without your consent to exist in society, to be within its power, to be under its laws, the answer is, that while you are a man, you are also a fractional element of a larger and more comprehensive being, called society—be it the[246] family, the church, the state. In a certain department of your nature, it is open; its sympathies and feelings are open. On this open side you will adhere together, as parts of a larger nature, in which there is a common circulation of want, impulse, and law. Being thus made common to each other voluntarily, you become one mass, one consolidated social body, animated by one life. And observe how far this involuntary communication and sympathy between the members of a state or a family is sovereign over their character. It always results in what we call the national or family spirit; for there is a spirit peculiar to every state and family in the world. Sometimes, too, this national or family spirit takes a religious or an irreligious character, and appears almost to absorb the religious self-government of individuals. What was the national spirit of France, for example, at a certain time, but a spirit of infidelity? What is the religious spirit of Spain at this moment, but a spirit of bigotry, quite as wide of Christianity and destructive of character as the spirit of falsehood? What is the family spirit in many a house, but the spirit of gain, or pleasure, or appetite, in which everything that is warm, dignified, genial, and good in religion, is visibly absent? Sometimes you will almost fancy that you see the shapes of money in the eyes of children. So it is that we are led on by nations, as it were, to good[247] or bad immortality. Far down in the secret foundations of life and society there lie concealed great laws and channels of influence, which make the race common to each other in all the main departments or divisions of the social mass, laws which often escape our notice altogether, but which are to society as gravity to the general system of God's works.

But these are general considerations, and more fit, perhaps, to give you a rational conception of the modes of influence and their relative power, than to verify that conception, or establish its truth. I now proceed to add, therefore, some miscellaneous proofs of a more particular nature.

And I mention, first of all, the instinct of imitation in children. We begin our mortal experience, not with acts grounded in judgment or reason, or with ideas received through language, but by simple imitation, and, under the guidance of this, we lay our foundations. The child looks and listens, and whatsoever tone of feeling or manner of conduct is displayed around him, sinks into his plastic, passive soul, and becomes a mold of his being ever after. The very handling of the nursery is significant, and the petulance, the passion, the gentleness, the tranquillity indicated by it, are all reproduced in the child. His soul is a purely receptive nature, and that for a considerable period, without choice or selection. A little further on he begins voluntarily[248] to copy everything he sees. Voice, manner, gait, everything which the eye sees, the mimic instinct delights to act over. And thus we have a whole generation of future men, receiving from us their beginnings, and the deepest impulses of their life and immortality. They watch us every moment, in the family, before the hearth, and at the table; and when we are meaning them no good or evil, when we are conscious of exerting no influence over them, they are drawing from us impressions and molds of habit, which, if wrong, no heavenly discipline can wholly remove; or, if right, no bad associations utterly dissipate. Now it may be doubted, I think, whether, in all the active influence of our lives, we do as much to shape the destiny of our fellow-men as we do in this single article of unconscious influence over children.

Still further on, respect for others takes the place of imitation. We naturally desire the approbation or good opinion of others. You see the strength of this feeling in the article of fashion. How few persons have the nerve to resist a fashion! We have fashions, too, in literature, and in worship, and in moral and religious doctrine, almost equally powerful. How many will violate the best rules of society, because it is the practise of the circle! How many reject Christ because of friends or acquaintance, who have no suspicion of the influence they exert, and will not have,[249] till the last days show them what they have done! Every good man has thus a power in his person, more mighty than his words and arguments, and which others feel when he little suspects it. Every bad man, too, has a fund of poison in his character, which is tainting those around him, when it is not in his thoughts to do them injury. He is read and understood. His sensual tastes and habits, his unbelieving spirit, his suppressed leer at religions, have all a power, and take hold of the heart of others, whether he will have it so or not.

Again, how well understood is it that the most active feelings and impulses of mankind are contagious. How quick enthusiasm of any sort is to kindle, and how rapidly it catches from one to another, till a nation blazes in the flame! In the case of the Crusades you have an example where the personal enthusiasm of one man put all the states of Europe in motion. Fanaticism is almost equally contagious. Fear and superstition always infect the mind of the circle in which they are manifested. The spirit of war generally becomes an epidemic of madness, when once it has got possession of a few minds. The spirit of party is propagated in a similar manner. How any slight operation in the market may spread, like a fire, if successful, till trade runs wild in a general infatuation, is well known. Now, in all these examples, the effect is produced,[250] not by active endeavor to carry influence, but mostly by that insensible propagation which follows, when a flame of any kind is once more kindled.

It is also true, you may ask, that the religious spirit propagates itself or tends to propagate itself in the same way? I see no reason to question that it does. Nor does anything in the doctrine of spiritual influences, when rightly understood, forbid the supposition. For spiritual influences are never separated from the laws of thought in the individual, and the laws of feeling and influence in society. If, too, every disciple is to be an "epistle known and read of all men," what shall we expect, but that all men will be somehow affected by the reading? Or if he is to be a light in the world, what shall we look for, but that others, seeing his good works, shall glorify God on his account? How often is it seen, too, as a fact of observation, that one or a few good men kindle at length a holy fire in the community in which they live, and become the leaven of general reformation! Such men give a more vivid proof in their persons of the reality of religious faith than any words or arguments could yield. They are active; they endeavor, of course, to exert a good voluntary influence; but still their chief power lies in their holiness and the sense they produce in others of their close relation to God.

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It now remains to exhibit the very important fact, that where the direct or active influence of men is supposed to be great, even this is due, in a principal degree, to that insensible influence by which their arguments, reproofs, and persuasions are secretly invigorating. It is not mere words which turn men; it is the heart mounting, uncalled, into the expression of the features; it is the eye illuminated by reason, the look beaming with goodness; it is the tone of the voice, that instrument of the soul, which changes quality with such amazing facility, and gives out in the soft, the tender, the tremulous, the firm, every shade of emotion and character. And so much is there in this, that the moral stature and character of the man that speaks are likely to be well represented in his manner. If he is a stranger, his way will inspire confidence and attract good will. His virtues will be seen, as it were, gathering round him to minister words and forms of thought, and their voices will be heard in the fall of his cadences. And the same is true of bad men, or men who have nothing in their character corresponding to what they attempt to do. If without heart or interest you attempt to move another, the involuntary man tells what you are doing in a hundred ways at once. A hypocrite, endeavoring to exert a good influence, only tries to convey by words what the lying look, and the faithless affectation, or dry exaggeration of[252] his manner perpetually resists. We have it for a fashion to attribute great or even prodigious results to the voluntary efforts and labors of men. Whatever they effect is commonly referred to nothing but the immediate power of what they do. Let us take an example, like that of Paul, and analyze it. Paul was a man of great fervor and enthusiasm. He combined, withal, more of what is lofty and morally commanding in his character, than most of the very distinguished men of the world. Having this for his natural character, and his natural character exalted and made luminous by Christian faith, and the manifest indwelling of God, he had of course an almost superhuman sway over others. Doubtless he was intelligent, strong in argument, eloquent, active, to the utmost of his powers, but still he moved the world more by what he was than by what he did. The grandeur and spiritual splendor of his character were ever adding to his active efforts an element of silent power, which was the real and chief cause of their efficacy. He convinced, subdued, inspired, and led, because of the half-divine authority which appeared in his conduct, and his glowing spirit. He fought the good fight, because he kept the faith, and filled his powerful nature with influences drawn from higher worlds.

And here I must conduct you to a yet higher example, even that of the Son of God,[253] the light of the world. Men dislike to be swayed by direct, voluntary influence. They are jealous of such control, and are therefore best approached by conduct and feeling, and the authority of simple worth, which seem to make no purposed onset. If goodness appears, they welcome its celestial smile; if heaven descends to encircle them, they yield to its sweetness; if truth appears in the life, they honor it with a secret homage; if personal majesty and glory appear, they bow with reverence, and acknowledge with shame their own vileness. Now it is on this side of human nature that Christ visits us, preparing just that kind of influence which the spirit of truth may wield with the most persuasive and subduing effect. It is the grandeur of His character which constitutes the chief power of His ministry, not His miracles or teachings apart from His character. Miracles were useful, at the time, to arrest attention, and His doctrine is useful at all times as the highest revelation of truth possible in speech; but the greatest truth of the gospel, notwithstanding, is Christ Himself—a human body becomes the organ of the divine nature, and reveals, under the conditions of an earthly life, the glory of God! The Scripture writers have much to say, in this connection, of the image of God; and an image, you know, is that which simply represents, not that which acts, or reasons, or persuades.[254] Now it is this image of God which makes the center, the sun itself, of the gospel. The journeyings, teachings, miracles, and sufferings of Christ, all had their use in bringing out this image, or what is the same, in making conspicuous the character and feelings of God, both toward sinners and toward sin. And here is the power of Christ—it is that God's beauty, love, truth, and justice shines through Him. It is the influence which flows unconsciously and spontaneously out of Christ, as the friend of man, the light of the world, the glory of the Father, made visible. And some have gone so far as to conjecture that God made the human person, originally, with a view to its becoming the organ or vehicle by which He might reveal His communicable attributes to other worlds. Christ, they believe, came to inhabit this organ, that He might execute a purpose so sublime. The human person is constituted, they say, to be a mirror of God; and God, being imaged in that mirror, as in Christ, is held up to the view of this and other worlds. It certainly is to the view of this; and if the Divine nature can use the organ so effectively to express itself unto us, if it can bring itself, through the looks, tones, motions, and conduct of a human person, more close to our sympathies than by any other means, how can we think that an organ so communicative, inhabited by us, is not always breathing our spirit[255] and transferring our image insensibly to others?

I have protracted the argument on this subject beyond what I could have wished, but I can not dismiss it without suggesting a few thoughts necessary to its complete practical effect.

One very obvious and serious inference from it, and the first which I will name, is, that it is impossible to live in this world and escape responsibility. It is not that they alone, as you have seen, who are trying purposely to convert or corrupt others, who exert an influence; you can not live without exerting influence. The doors of your soul are open on others, and theirs on you. You inhabit a house which is well-nigh transparent; and what you are within, you are ever showing yourself to be without, by signs that have no ambiguous expression. If you had the seeds of a pestilence in your body, you would not have a more active contagion than you have in your tempers, tastes, and principles. Simply to be in this world, whatever you are, is to exert an influence—an influence, too, compared with which mere language and persuasion are feeble. You say that you mean well; at least, you think you mean to injure no one. Do you injure no one? Is your example harmless? Is it ever on the side of God and duty? You can not reasonably doubt that others are continually receiving impressions[256] from your character. As little you can doubt that you must answer for these impressions. If the influence you exert is unconsciously exerted, then it is only the most sincere, the truest expression of your character. And for what can you be held responsible, if not for this? Do not deceive yourselves in the thought that you are at least doing no injury, and are, therefore, living without responsibility; first, make it sure that you are not every hour infusing moral death insensibly into your children, wives, husbands, friends, and acquaintances. By a mere look or glance, not unlikely, you are conveying the influence that shall turn the scale of some one's immortality. Dismiss, therefore, the thought that you are living without responsibility; that is impossible. Better is it frankly to admit the truth; and if you will risk the influence of a character unsanctified by duty and religion, prepare to meet your reckoning manfully, and receive the just recompense of reward.

The true philosophy or method of doing good is also here explained. It is, first of all and principally, to be good—to have a character that will of itself communicate good. There must and will be active effort where there is goodness of principle; but the latter we should hold to be the principal thing, the root and life of all. Whether it is a mistake more sad or more ridiculous, to make mere stir synonymous with doing good, we need[257] not inquire; enough, to be sure that one who has taken up such a notion of doing good, is for that reason a nuisance to the Church. The Christian is called a light, not lightning. In order to act with effect on others, he must walk in the Spirit, and thus become the image of goodness; he must be so akin to God, and so filled with His dispositions, that he shall seem to surround himself with a hallowed atmosphere. It is folly to endeavor to make ourselves shine before we are luminous. If the sun without his beams should talk to the planets, and argue with them till the final day, it would not make them shine; there must be light in the sun itself; and then they will shine, of course. And this, my brethren, is what God intends for you all. It is the great idea of His gospel, and the work of His spirit, to make you lights in the world. His greatest joy is to give you character, to beautify your example, to exalt your principles, and make you each the depository of His own almighty grace. But in order to do this, something is necessary on your part—a full surrender of your mind to duty and to God, and a perpetual desire of this spiritual intimacy; having this, having a participation thus of the goodness of God, you will as naturally communicate good as the sun communicates his beams.

Our doctrine of unconscious and undesigning influence shows how it is, also, that the[258] preaching of Christ is often unfruitful, and especially in times of spiritual coldness. It is not because truth ceases to be truth, nor, of necessity, because it is preached in a less vivid manner, but because there are so many influences preaching against the preacher. He is one, the people are many; his attempt to convince and persuade is a voluntary influence; their lives, on the other hand, and especially the lives of those who profess what is better, are so many unconscious influences ever streaming forth upon the people, and back and forth between each other. He preaches the truth, and they, with one consent, are preaching the truth down; and how can he prevail against so many, and by a kind of influence so unequal? When the people of God are glowing with spiritual devotion to Him, and love to men, the case is different; then they are all preaching with the preacher, and making an atmosphere of warmth for his words to fall in; great is the company of them that publish the truth, and proportionally great its power. Shall I say more? Have you not already felt, my brethren, the application to which I would bring you? We do not exonerate ourselves; we do not claim to be nearer to God or holier than you; but, ah! you know how easy it is to make a winter about us, or how cold it feels! Our endeavor is to preach the truth of Christ and His cross as clearly and as forcefully as we can. Sometimes it[259] has a visible effect, and we are filled with joy; sometimes it has no effect, and then we struggle on, as we must, but under great oppression. Have we none among you that preach against us in your lives? If we show you the light of God's truth, does it never fall on banks of ice; which if the light shows through, the crystal masses are yet as cold as before? We do not accuse you; that we leave to God, and to those who may rise up in the last day to testify against you. If they shall come out of your own families; if they are the children that wear your names, the husband or wife of your affections; if they declare that you, by your example, kept them away from Christ's truth and mercy, we may have accusations to meet of our own, and we leave you to acquit yourselves as best you may. I only warn you, here, of the guilt which our Lord Jesus Christ will impute to them that hinder His gospel.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Delivered to the American Christian Missionary Society, Cincinnati, October, 1860.

[2] This is an exact literal version of *Rebotayim alphey shenan*. The Targum says, "The chariots of God are two myriads—and two thousand angels draw them." A myriad is 10,000—two myriads 20,000. "To know this," Adam Clarke says, "we must die."

[3] So we have always translated this term, in this passage.

[4] From "Sermons for the New Life," published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Transcriber's note:

Minor typographical errors have been corrected without note.

Page 203: "the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things", shall be found unto praise, and honor, and glory!—The transcriber has supplied the missing closing quoteation mark.

Page 206: not only from its condemnation, but from its very "in-being";—The transcriber has supplied the opening quotation mark.

÷05-00 **The World's Great Sermons**  
  
VOLUME V  
  
GUTHRIE TO MOSLEY

THE  
World's  
Great  
Sermons

COMPILED BY  
GRENVILLE KLEISER

Formerly of Yale Divinity School Faculty;  
Author of "How to Speak  
in Public," Etc.

With Assistance from Many of the Foremost  
Living Preachers and Other Theologians

INTRODUCTION BY  
LEWIS O. BRASTOW, D.D.  
Professor Emeritus of Practical Theology  
in Yale University

IN TEN VOLUMES

VOLUME V—GUTHRIE TO MOSLEY

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**÷**05-01 GUTHRIE

THE NEW HEART

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Thomas Guthrie, preacher, philanthropist, and social reformer, was born at Brechin, Forfarshire, Scotland, in 1803. He spent ten years at the University of Edinburgh and was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Brechin in 1825. In 1830 he was ordained minister of Arbirlot. After a valuable experience in evangelical preaching among the farmers, weavers and peasants of his congregation, he became one of the ministers of Old Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh, in 1827. Lord Cockburn described his sermons in that city as appealing equally "to the poor woman on the steps of the pulpit" as to the "stranger attracted solely by his eloquence." He was a great temperance advocate, becoming a total abstainer in 1844, and has been styled "the apostle of the ragged school movement." Retiring from the active work of the ministry in 1864, he still remained in public life until he died in 1873. Through long practise, Dr. Guthrie delivered his memorized discourses as tho they fell spontaneously from his lips. His voice has been described as powerful and musical. He was fond of vivid illustration, and even on his death bed, as he lay dying in the arms of his sons, he exclaimed: "I am just as helpless in your arms now as you once were in mine."

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GUTHRIE

1803-1873

THE NEW HEART

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.—Eze 36:26.

As in a machine where the parts all fit each other, and, bathed in oil, move without din or discord, the most perfect harmony reigns throughout the kingdom of grace. Jesus Christ is the "wisdom," as well as the "power" of God; nor in this kingdom is anything found corresponding to the anomalies and incongruities of the world lying without. There we sometimes see a high station disgraced by a man of low habits; while others are doomed to an inferior condition, who would shine like gilded ornaments on the very pinnacles of society. That beautiful congruity in Christ's kingdom is secured by those who are the objects of saving mercy being so renewed and sanctified that their nature is in harmony with their position, and the man within corresponds to all without.

Observe how this property of "new" runs through the whole economy of grace. When mercy first rose upon this world, an attribute[4] of Divinity appeared which was new to the eyes of men and angels. Again, the Savior was born of a virgin; and He who came forth from a womb where no child had been previously conceived, was sepulchered in a tomb where no man had been previously interred. The infant had a new birthplace, the crucified had a new burial-place. Again, Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant, the author of a new testament, the founder of a new faith. Again, the redeemed receive a new name; they sing a new song; their home is not to be in the old, but in the new, Jerusalem, where they shall dwell on a new earth, and walk in glory beneath a new heaven. Now it were surely strange, when all things else are new, if they themselves were not to partake of this general renovation. Nor strange only, for such a change is indispensable. A new name without a new nature were an imposture. It were not more an untruth to call a lion a lamb, or the rapacious vulture by the name of the gentle dove, than to give the title of sons of God to the venomous seed of the serpent.

Then, again, unless man received a new nature, how could he sing the new song? The raven, perched on the rock, where she whets her bloody beak, and impatiently watches the dying struggles of some unhappy lamb can not tune her croaking voice to the rich, mellow music of a thrush; and, since it is out of[5] the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh, how could a sinner take up the strain and sing the song of saints? Besides, unless a man were a new creature, he were out of place in the new creation. In circumstances neither adapted to his nature, nor fitted to minister to his happiness, a sinner in heaven would find himself as much out of his element as a finny inhabitant of the deep, or a sightless burrower in the soil, beside an eagle, soaring in the sky, or surveying her wide domain from the mountain crag.

In the works of God we see nothing more beautiful than the divine skill with which He suits His creatures to their condition. He gives wings to birds, fins to fishes, sails to the thistle-seed, a lamp to light the glowworm, great roots to moor the cedar, and to the aspiring ivy her thousand hands to climb the wall. Nor is the wisdom so conspicuous in nature, less remarkable and adorable in the kingdom of grace. He forms a holy people for a holy heaven—fits heaven for them, and them for heaven. And calling up His Son to prepare the mansions for their tenants, and sending down His Spirit to prepare the tenants for their mansions, He thus establishes a perfect harmony between the new creature and the new creation.

You can not have two hearts beating in the same bosom, else you would be, not a man, but a monster. Therefore, the very first[6] thing to be done, in order to make things new, is just to take that which is old out of the way. And the taking away of the old heart is, after all, but a preparatory process. It is a means, but not the end. For, strange as it may at first sound, he is not religious who is without sin. A dead man is without sin; and he is sinless, who lies buried in dreamless slumber, so long as his eyes are sealed. Now, God requires more than a negative religion. Piety, like fire, light, electricity, magnetism, is an active, not a passive element; it has a positive, not merely a negative existence. For how is pure and undefiled religion defined? "Pure religion and undefiled is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." And on whom does Jesus pronounce His beatitude? "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." And what is the sum of practical piety—the most portable form in which you can put an answer to Saul's question, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" What but this, "Depart from evil, and do good." Therefore, while God promises to take the stony heart out of our flesh, He promises more. In taking away one heart, He engages to supply us with another; and to this further change and onward stage in the process of redemption, I now proceed to turn your attention.

By way of general observation, I remark that our affections are engaged in religion.[7] An oak—not as it stands choked up in the crowded wood, with room neither to spread nor breathe, but as it stands in the open field, swelling out below where it anchors its roots in the ground, and swelling out above where it stretches its arms into the air,—presents us with the most perfect form of firmness, self-support, stout and sturdy independence. So perfectly formed, indeed, is the monarch of the forest to stand alone, and fight its own battles with the elements, that the architect of the Bell Rock lighthouse is said to have borrowed his idea of its form from God in nature, and that, copying the work of a divine Architect, he took the trunk of the oak as the model of a building which was to stand the blast of the storm, and the swell of the winter seas.

Observe, that although the state of the natural affections does not furnish any certain evidence of conversion, it is the glory of piety that these are strengthened, elevated, sanctified by the change. The lover of God will be the kindest, best, wisest lover of his fellow-creatures. The heart that has room in it for God, grows so large, that it finds room for all God's train, for all that He loves, and for all that He has made; so that the Church, with all its denominations of true Christians, the world, with all its perishing sinners, nay, all the worlds which He has created, find orbit-room to move, as in an expansive universe,[8] within the capacious enlargement of a believer's heart. For while the love of sin acts as an astringent—contracting the dimensions of the natural heart, shutting and shriveling it up—the love of God expands and enlarges its capacity. Piety quickens the pulse of love, warms and strengthens our heart, and sends forth fuller streams of natural affection toward all that have a claim on us, just as a strong and healthy heart sends tides of blood along the elastic arteries to every extremity of the body.

This new heart, however, mainly consists in a change of the affections as they regard spiritual objects. Without again traveling over ground which we have already surveyed, just look at the heart and feelings of an unconverted man. His mind being carnal, is enmity or hatred against God. This may be latent, not at first sight apparent, nor suspected, but how soon does it appear when put to the proof? Fairly tried, it comes out like those unseen elements which chemical tests reveal. Let God, for instance, by His providences or laws, thwart the wishes or cross the propensities of our unrenewed nature—let there be a collision between His will and ours—and the latent enmity flashes out like latent fire when the cold black flint is struck with steel.

In conversion God gives a new spirit. Conversion does not bestow new faculties. It[9] does not turn a weak man into a philosopher. Yet, along with our affections, the temper, the will, the judgment partake of this great and holy change. Thus, while the heart ceases to be dead, the head, illuminated by a light within, ceases to be dark; the understanding is enlightened; the will is renewed; and our whole temper is sweetened and sanctified by the Spirit of God. To consider these in their order, I remark—

By this change the understanding and judgment are enlightened. Sin is the greatest folly, and the sinner the greatest fool in the world. There is no such madness in the most fitful lunacy. Think of a man risking eternity and his everlasting happiness on the uncertain chance of surviving another year. Think of a man purchasing a momentary pleasure at the cost of endless pain. Think of a dying man living as if he were never to die. Is there a convert to God who looks back upon his unconverted state, and does not say with David, "Lord, I was as a beast before Thee."

Now conversion not only restores God to the heart, but reason also to her throne. Time and eternity are now seen in their just proportions—in their right relative dimensions; the one in its littleness, and the other in its greatness. When the light of heaven rises on the soul, what grand discoveries does she make—of the exceeding evil of sin, of the holiness of the divine law, of the infinite purity of[10] divine justice, of the grace and greatness of divine love. On Sinai's summit and on Calvary's cross, what new, sublime, affecting scenes open on her astonished eyes! She now, as by one convulsive bound, leaps to the conclusion that salvation is the one thing needful, and that if a man will give all he hath for the life that now is, much more should he part with all for the life to come. The Savior and Satan, the soul and body, holiness and sin, have competing claims. Between these reason now holds the balance even, and man finds, in the visit of converting grace, what the demoniac found in Jesus' advent. The man whose dwelling was among the tombs, whom no chains could bind, is seated at the feet of Jesus, "clothed, and in his right mind."

By this change the will is renewed. Bad men are worse, and good men are better than they appear. In conversion the will is so changed and sanctified, that altho a pious man is in some respects less, in other respects he is more holy than the world gives him credit for. The attainments of a believer are always beneath his aims; his desires are nobler than his deeds; his wishes are holier than his works. Give other men their will, full swing to their passions, and they would be worse than they are; give that to him, and he would be better than he is. And if you have experienced the gracious change, it will be your daily grief that you are not what you not only know you[11] should be, but what you wish to be. To be complaining with Paul, "When I would do good, evil is present with me; that which I would I do not, and what I would not, that I do," is one of the best evidences of a gracious, saving change.

Children of God! let not your souls be cast down. This struggle between the new will and the old man—painful and prolonged altho it be—proves beyond all doubt the advent of the Holy Spirit. Until the Savior appeared there was no sword drawn, nor blood shed in Bethlehem, nor murderous decree issued against its innocents—they slept safely in their mothers' bosoms, Herod enjoyed his security and pleasure, and Rachel rose not from her grave to weep for her children because they were not. Christ's coming rouses all the devil in the soul. The fruits of holy peace are reaped with swords on the fields of war; and this struggle within your breast proves that grace, even in its infancy a cradled Savior, is engaged in strangling the old Serpent. When the shadow of calamity falls on many homes, and the tidings of victory come with sad news to many a family, and the brave are lying thick in the deadly breach, men comfort us by saying, that there are things worse than war. That is emphatically true of this holy war. Rejoice that the peace of death is gone.

By conversion the temper and disposition are changed and sanctified. Christians are[12] occasionally to be found with a tone of mind and a temper as little calculated to recommend their faith as to promote their happiness. I believe that there are cases in which this is due to a deranged condition of the nervous system, or the presence of disease in some other vital organ. These unhappy persons are more deserving of our pity than our censure. This is not only the judgment of Christian charity, but of sound philosophy, and is a conclusion to which we are conducted in studying the union between mind and body, and the manner in which they act and re-act upon each other. So long as grace dwells in a "vile body," which is the seat of frequent disorder and many diseases—these infirmities of temper admit no more, perhaps, of being entirely removed, than a defect of speech, or any physical deformity. The good temper for which some take credit may be the result of good health and a well-developed frame—a physical more than a moral virtue; and an ill temper, springing from bad health, or an imperfect organization, may be a physical rather than a moral defect—giving its victim a claim on our charity and forbearance. But, admitting this apology for the unhappy tone and temper of some pious men, the true Christian will bitterly bewail his defect, and, regretting his infirmity more than others do a deformity, he will carefully guard and earnestly pray against it. Considering it as a[13] thorn in his flesh, a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him, it will often send him to his knees in prayer to God, that the grace which conquers nature may be made "sufficient for him."

I pray you to cultivate the temper that was in Jesus Christ. Is he like a follower of the Lamb who is raging like a roaring lion? Is he like a pardoned criminal who sits moping with a cloud upon his brow? Is he like an heir of heaven, like a man destined to a crown, who is vexed and fretted with some petty loss? Is he like one in whose bosom the dove of heaven is nestling, who is full of all manner of bile and bitterness? Oh, let the same mind be in you that was in Jesus. A kind, catholic, gentle, loving temper is one of the most winning features of religion; and by its silent and softening influence you will do more real service to Christianity than by the loudest professions, or the exhibition of a cold and skeleton orthodoxy. Let it appear in you, that it is with the believer under the influence of the Spirit as with fruit ripened beneath the genial influences of heaven's dews and sunbeams. At first hard, it grows soft; at first sour, it becomes sweet; at first green, it assumes in time a rich and mellow color; at first adhering tenaciously to the tree, when it becomes ripe, it is ready to drop at the slightest touch. So with the man who is ripening for heaven. His affections and temper[14] grow sweet, soft, mellow, loose from earth and earthly things. He comes away readily to the hand of death, and leaves the world without a wrench.

In conversion God gives a heart of flesh. "I will give you a heart of flesh."

Near by a stone, a mass of rock that had fallen from the overhanging crag, which had some wild flowers growing in its fissures, and on its top the foxglove, with its spike of beautiful but deadly flowers, we once came upon an adder as it lay in ribbon coil, basking on the sunny ground. At our approach the reptile stirred, uncoiled itself, and raising its venomous head, with eyes like burning coals, it shook its cloven tongue, and, hissing, gave signs of battle. Attacked, it retreated; and, making for that gray stone, wormed itself into a hole in its side. Its nest and home were there. And in looking on that shattered rock—fallen from its primeval elevation—with its flowery but fatal charms, the home and nest of the adder, where nothing grew but poisoned beauty, and nothing dwelt but a poisoned brood, it seemed to us an emblem of that heart which the text describes as a stone, which experience proves is a habitation of devils, and which the prophet pronounces to be desperately wicked. I have already explained why the heart is described as a stone. It is cold as a stone; hard as a stone; dead and insensible as a stone. Now, as by the term[15] "flesh" we understand qualities the very opposite of these, I therefore remark that—

In conversion a man gets a warm heart.

Let us restrict ourselves to a single example. When faith receives the Savior, how does the heart warm to Jesus Christ! There is music in His name. "His name is an ointment poured forth." All the old indifference to His cause, His people, and the interests of His kingdom, has passed away; and now these have the warmest place in a believer's bosom, and are the object of its strongest and tenderest affections. The only place, alas! that religion has in the hearts of many is a burial-place; but the believer can say with Paul, "Christ liveth in me." Nor is his heart like the cottage of Bethany, favored only with occasional visits. Jesus abides there in the double character of guest and master, its most loving and best loved inmate; and there is a difference as great between that heart as it is, and that heart as it was, as between the warm bosom where the Infant slept or smiled in Mary's arms and the dark, cold sepulcher where weeping followers laid and left the Crucified.

Is there such a heart in you? Do you appreciate Christ's matchless excellences? Having cast away every sin to embrace him, do you set him above your chiefest joy? Would you leave father, mother, wife, children, to follow Him, with bleeding feet, over life's[16] roughest path? Rather than part with Him, would you part with a thousand worlds? Were He now on earth, would you leave a throne to stoop and tie His latchet? If I might so speak, would you be proud to carry His shoes? Then, indeed, you have got the new, warm heart of flesh. The new love of Christ, and the old love of the world, may still meet in opposing currents; but in the war and strife of these antagonistic principles, the celestial shall overpower the terrestrial, as, at the river's mouth, I have seen the ocean tide, when it came rolling in with a thousand billows at its back, fill all the channel, carry all before its conquering swell, dam up the fresh water of the land, and drive it back with resistless power.

In conversion a man gets a soft heart.

As "flesh," it is soft and sensitive. It is flesh, and can be wounded or healed. It is flesh, and feels alike the kiss of kindness and the rod of correction. It is flesh; and no longer a stone, hard, obdurate, impenetrable to the genial influences of heaven. A hard block of ice, it has yielded to the beams of the sun, and been melted into flowing water. How are you moved now, stirred now, quickened now, sanctified now, by truths once felt no more than dews falling out of starry heavens, in soft silence upon rugged rock. The heart of grace is endowed with a delicate sensibility, and vibrates to the slightest touch of a Savior's[17] fingers. How does the truth of God affect it now! A stone no longer, it melts under the heavenly fire—a stone no longer, it bends beneath the hammer of the word; no longer like the rugged rock, on which rains and sunbeams were wasted, it receives the impression of God's power, and retains the footprints of His presence. Like the flowers that close their eyes at night, but waken at the voice of morning, like the earth that gapes in summer drought, the new heart opens to receive the bounties of grace and the gifts of heaven. Have you experienced such a change? In proof and evidence of its reality, is David's language yours—"I have stretched out my hands unto thee. My soul thirsteth after thee as a thirsty land"?

In conversion a man gets a living heart.

The perfection of this life is death—it is dead to be sin, but alive to righteousness, alive to Christ, alive to everything which touches His honor, and crown, and kingdom. With Christ living in his heart, the believer feels that now he is not himself, not his own; and, as another's, the grand object of his life is to live to Christ. He reckons him an object worth living for, had he a thousand lives to live; worth dying for, had he a thousand deaths to die. He says with Paul, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live." In the highest sense alive, he is dead, dead to things he was once alive to; and he wishes[18] that he were more dead to them, thoroughly dead. He wishes that he could look on the seductions of the world, and sin's voluptuous charms, with the cold, unmoved stare of death, and that these had no more power to kindle a desire in him than in the icy bosom of a corpse. "Understandest thou what thou readest?"

It is a mark of grace that the believer, in his progress heavenward, grows more and more alive to the claims of Jesus. If you "know the love of Christ," His is the latest name you will desire to utter; His is the latest thought you will desire to form; upon Him you will fix your last look on earth; upon Him your first in heaven. When memory is oblivious of all other objects—when all that attracted the natural eye is wrapt in the mists of death, when the tongue is cleaving to the roof of our mouth, and speech is gone, and sight is gone, and hearing gone, and the right hand, lying powerless by our side, has lost its cunning, Jesus! then may we remember Thee! If the shadows of death are to be thrown in deepest darkness on the valley, when we are passing along it to glory, may it be ours to die like that saint, beside whose bed wife and children once stood, weeping over the wreck of faded faculties, and a blank, departed memory. One had asked him, "Father, do you remember me?" and received no answer; and another, and another, but still no[19] answer. And then, all making way for the venerable companion of a long and loving pilgrimage—the tender partner of many a past joy and sorrow, his wife draws near. She bends over him, and as her tears fall thick upon his face, she cries, "Do you not remember me?" A stare, but it is vacant. There is no soul in that filmy eye; and the seal of death lies upon these lips. The sun is down, and life's brief twilight is darkening fast into a starless night. At this moment, one calm enough to remember how the love of Christ's spouse is "strong as death," a love that "many waters can not quench," stooped to his ear, and said, "Do you remember Jesus Christ?" The word was no sooner uttered than it seemed to recall the spirit, hovering for a moment, ere it took wing to heaven. Touched as by an electric influence, the heart beat once more to the name of Jesus; the features, fixt in death, relax; the countenance, dark in death, flushes up like the last gleam of day; and, with a smile in which the soul passed away to glory, he replied, "Remember Jesus Christ! dear Jesus Christ! He is all my salvation, and all my desire."

By conversion man is ennobled.

While infidelity regards man as a mere animal, to be dissolved at death into ashes and air, and vice changes man into a brute or devil, Mammon enslaves him. She makes him a serf, and condemns him to be a gold-digger[20] for life in the mines. She puts her collar on his neck, and locks it; and bending his head to the soil, and bathing his brow in sweat, she says, Toil, toil, toil; as if this creature, originally made in the image of God, this dethroned and exiled monarch, to save whom the Son of God descended from the skies, and bled on Calvary, were a living machine, constructed of sinew, bone, and muscle, and made for no higher end than to work to live, and live to work.

Contrast with these the benign aspect in which the gospel looks on man. Religion descends from heaven to break our chains. She alone raises me from degradation, and bids me lift my drooping head, and look up to heaven. Yes; it is that very gospel which by some is supposed to present such dark, degrading, gloomy views of man and his destiny, which lifts me from the dust to set me among princes—on a level with angels—in a sense above them. To say nothing of the divine nobility grace imparts to a soul which is stamped anew with the likeness and image of God, how sacred and venerable does even this body appear in the eye of piety! No longer a form of animated dust; no longer the subject of passions shared in common with the brutes; no longer the drudge and slave of Mammon, the once "vile body" rises into a temple of the Holy Ghost. Vile in one sense it may be; yet what, although it be covered with sores?[21] What, although it be clothed in rags? What, although, in unseemly decrepitude, it want its fair proportions? That poor, sickly, shattered form is the casket of a precious jewel. This mean and crumbling tabernacle lodges a guest nobler than palaces may boast of; angels hover around its walls; the Spirit of God dwells within it. What an incentive to holiness, to purity of life and conduct, lies in the fact that the body of a saint is the temple of God, a truer, nobler temple than that which Solomon dedicated by his prayers, and Jesus consecrated His presence! In popish cathedrals, where the light streamed through painted window, and the organ pealed along lofty aisles, and candles gleamed on golden cups and silver crosses, and incense floated in fragrant clouds, we have seen the blinded worshiper uncover his head, drop reverently on his knees, and raise his awestruck eye on the imposing spectacle; we have seen him kiss the marble floor, and knew that sooner would he be smitten dead upon that floor than be guilty of defiling it. How does this devotee rebuke us! We wonder at his superstition; how may he wonder at our profanity! Can we look on the lowly veneration he expresses for an edifice which has been erected by some dead man's genius, which holds but some image of a deified virgin, or bones of a canonized saint, and which, proudly as it raises its cathedral towers, time shall one day cast to[22] the ground, and bury in the dust; can we, I say, look on that, and, if sensible to rebuke, not feel reproved by the spectacle? In how much more respect, in how much holier veneration should we hold this body? The shrine of immortality, and a temple dedicated to the Son of God, it is consecrated by the presence of the Spirit—a living temple, over whose porch the eye of piety reads what the finger of inspiration has written: "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

**÷**05-02 MAURICE

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Frederick Denison Maurice, English divine and author, was born in 1805. He was the son of a Unitarian clergyman, and after studying in Cambridge began a literary career in London, where his friend Coleridge and others persuaded him to take orders in the Church of England. In 1836 he was appointed chaplain to Guy's Hospital. In 1840 he was elected professor of English literature and history and in 1846 of divinity at King's College, London, but lost both positions in 1853 because of his radical views. He was professor of moral philosophy at Cambridge from 1860 until his death in 1872.

[25]

MAURICE

1805-1872

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about. And behold there were very many in the open valley, and lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord God, thou knowest."—Eze 37:1-3.

We are naturally curious to know whether two contemporary prophets ever conversed with each other. In Micah we found such evident indications of sympathy with the mind of Isaiah as warranted the supposition that he was his pupil. I can not trace any signs of a similar relation, or indeed of any personal relation, between Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Tho they were passing through the same crisis; tho they had both to witness the evils which were destroying their nation; both to share its miseries; tho the false prophets were the common enemies of both; yet their circumstances, their character, and their work were entirely distinct, in some points even contrasted. Their very differences, however, show us that they were both alike prophets and priests.

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The Book of Lamentations exhibits the spirit of the individual man Jeremiah more transparently than his longer book, which is so mixed up with historical details, with anticipations of a ruin not yet accomplished, with hopes, however faint and soon dispelled, of a national repentance. Most of those whom the prophet had denounced were banished or dead. Men could talk no more about the temple of the Lord, could boast no more that the word of the Lord was with them; the vessel which the potter was shaping had been broken to pieces. The sadness of the prophet, which had been checked sometimes by indignation, sometimes by the consciousness of a word which must still be spoken, of a work which must be done, became complete and absorbing. Heretofore his intense sympathy with his country might seem to be qualified by his lively apprehension of its crimes; now both feelings were blended into one. When he looked upon the desolation of the city there sat upon his soul a weight of sorrow and evil, as if he were representing his whole people, as if there was no wrong which they had committed, no evil habits which they had contracted, which did not cling to him, for which he was not responsible. And this was no imaginary fictitious state of mind into which he had worked himself. God had made him inwardly conscious of the very corruptions which had destroyed the land. If he had[27] made any fight against them; if they did not actually overpower him and enslave him, this was God's work and not his; the promise of the covenant made with his fathers, which was as good for every one as for himself, was fulfilled to him. And now he was realizing the full effect of this discipline. The third chapter of the Lamentations, beginning "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath," contains the climax of his experience. In the memorable passages which follow, the history of a life is gathered up. "I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord; remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance. This I recall to mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed. They are new every morning; great is thy faithlessness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him, he is filled full with reproach. The Lord will not cast off for ever; but tho he cause grief, yet will he have[28] compassion according to the multitude of his mercies for he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men."

Anything more individual than these utterances it is impossible to conceive; and yet it is just by these that one understands the sacerdotal work to which Jeremiah was called. There was no longer any temple. The priests as well as the princes had been for the most part carried away by Nebuchadnezzar. But there was a man walking about in the deserted city to which the twelve tribes had come up,—in the midst of the ruins of the holy place into which the sons of Aaron had gone with the memorial of their names on their breastplates,—who really entered into the meaning of that function, who really bore the iniquities of the children of Israel before the Lord;—one to whom it was given to translate the ceremonies and services of the divine house into life and reality. He had been taught more perfectly, perhaps, than anyone who had served in the temple, what was implied in its worship and sacrifices. He felt the burden to which those sacrifices pointed, the burden of individual and national sins. Yet, with that burden resting upon him, he could enter into the presence of the Holy One of Israel. He was sure there was a deliverance for his people as well as for himself; that there could not be one for him if there was not also one for them. Thus when part of his work was over, when he[29] had nothing more to say in the ears of kings or priests or people, this office,—which had been so closely connected with his prophetical office, and which, if it had depended upon outward conditions, must have been more entirely at an end than that,—still remained in all its original power. And the words of the prophet remained to explain to all generations the spiritual character and acts of the priest.

The office of the priest must have seemed to be more utterly extinct for Ezekiel than even for Jeremiah. He was forcibly removed from all the associations of the temple while it was yet standing. When he was called to be a prophet to the captives by the river Chebar, he might have supposed that the earlier designation which belonged to him as one of the Levitical family, had been extinguished in the later one. Yet we have seen how he was instructed, at the very commencement of his work as a prophet, that the glory of Him who filled the temple was surrounding him in Mesopotamia as it surrounded him when he went up to present the morning or the evening sacrifice in Jerusalem. Such a vision was given him of that glory as he had never beheld in the holy place. He found that the earth,—that common, profane, Babylonian earth upon which he dwelt,—was filled with it. All the powers of nature, the forms of animals, man as the highest of the animals, the motions and[30] order of the outward world and of human society, were pointing towards it. And the central object, the highest object which he could behold, tho there was an ineffable brightness beyond, was a Man upon a throne, One who could command him, in whose name he was to go forth, whose words he was to speak.

This was no isolated revelation or dream. The very name which the prophet thenceforth bore, the name by which he was to know himself, depended upon it. "Son of man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee," were the first words which he heard after he fell upon his face. That great title is bestowed upon him through all the time in which he was prophesying. It was in many ways more suitable to him than to those who had gone before him. There was now no Hezekiah or Josiah to represent the Divine king. The witnesses for the kingdom seemed to be at an end. Nebuchadnezzar was the lord of the earth. At such a time the natural position of the Jewish seer became a human position. The Israelite's glory was to be a "Son of man."

Yet he was not absolved from any of the obligations of the older prophets; he was not to expect a more willing or attentive audience among captives than they had found at home; briars, thorns would be with him; he must dwell among scorpions. Lamentations and mourning and woe filled his roll as much as that which Baruch wrote out for Jeremiah.[31] And he must eat this roll; it must become a part of his very soul; its words must come forth living and burning out of himself.

He must understand, besides, all the fearful responsibilities of the prophet. He was to speak whether the men about him would hear or whether they would forbear. There were times when his tongue would cleave to the roof of his mouth, when he should be dumb and should not be to them a reprover. But when God opened his lips, the blood of those to whom he was sent was upon him; it would be required at his hands if they died in their iniquity and he had not warned them. He must submit to do all symbolical acts, however strange and fantastical they might seem in themselves, which might bring the feeling of coming judgments home to a sense-bound people. He must act a mimic siege, he must eat defiled bread; he must cut off his hair and weigh it in balances, if so the people could be made to understand,—in spite of their false prophets who spoke of coming peace and enacted their signs, which of course involved no discomfort or humiliation to themselves,—that the city would really be destroyed and the sanctuary laid waste. He was to persuade his brother captives that they were a remnant in which the nation still lived, a stock out of which it should hereafter grow and flourish, even tho they were most rebellious, dreaming of good things which would never come, not[32] waiting for that good which God had designed for them. There was to be the same end in all the punishments which were coming upon the land and in all its deliverances. God was saying in all "I am the Lord."

This sentence recurs again and again in the prophecies of Ezekiel. It is the thought of his mind, the one which gives all the sublimity and all the practical worth to his discourses,—that the knowledge of God is the supreme good of man, and that the desolation of his countrymen has come from their not liking to retain it. He is transported in spirit to the temple. There the same vision of the glory of God which he had seen by the river returns to him. The light of it shows him, portrayed upon the wall of the temple round about, the abominable beasts and creeping things, and the idols of the house of Israel; what the ancients of the house of Israel did in the dark, every one in the chambers of his imagery; how the women were weeping for Tammuz; how the men were worshiping the sun towards the east. Whether such abominations as these were actually to be seen in the temple, or whether the prophet's eye opened by the divine Spirit saw that they were possessing the hearts of those who seemed to others, perhaps to themselves, to be worshiping the God of their fathers, it is clear that the mind of Ezekiel was led back to the place in which he had ministered, that he might be[33] taught how little the sacred building could preserve the truth which was enshrined in it.

What Ezekiel has seen in the temple enables him to answer the elders of Israel when they come to consult him in his own house. Just what was going on among those who worshiped in Jerusalem, was going on in the hearts of those who sought his oracles. They were setting up idols there. They wanted to know what God would do with them or against them; they did not want to know Him. And therefore Ezekiel announces to them a great and eternal moral law, one of the most varied application; "God will answer you according to your idols." The truth which is presented to you, will be colored, distorted, inverted by the eye which receives it. The covetousness which you are cherishing will make the best and divinest word you hear, a minister of covetousness. Your pride and your lust will make it a minister of lust and pride. No bolder or more awful paradox was ever enunciated than this, nor one which the conscience of everyone will more surely verify. And there was this special proof of courage in making such an announcement, that it must have destroyed Ezekiel's reputation as a prophet. The elders came in terror, feeling that they wanted guidance and expecting some ready-made answer, such as the regular traders in prophecy could always furnish. The truly inspired man answers, "I can tell you nothing,[34]—nothing at least that will not deceive you and become a lie in your minds. For you bring lies in your minds, and except they be extirpated, they must convert whatever is added to them from without, to their own quality."

Ezekiel himself illustrates in another case this great principle. No commandment had established itself more completely by the experience of the people to whom it was addrest, than the second. The idolatries of the land had accumulated with each generation. Each had cause to complain of the last as bequeathing it a stock of corrupt habits and traditions; the sins of the fathers had been visited upon the children. These were facts not to be gainsaid. The captives had leisure to reflect upon them. It might have been a most profound and profitable reflection.

The use they made of it was to prove they were under a necessary law of degeneracy. How could they help themselves? The fathers had eaten sour grapes, and their teeth were set on edge. Who dared dispute it? There was God's own word for it. Had he not told them the plan and method of His own government? Such language addrest to one of the favorite preachers or prophets of the people, would have silenced him altogether. He would have said, "It is a mystery, no doubt; we must take the words of the commandment tho we can not understand them. God is[35] Sovereign; He can do what He likes. If it pleases Him that each generation should be more corrupt than the last, we must submit and not dispute His will." Others there would be who would complain boldly and with good reason of a will that compelled to evil, but yet would lazily submit to it, supposing it to be inevitable, tho feeling the absurdity of calling it divine. Ezekiel boldly stands forth to dispute and deny the whole principle. He does not dispute or deny the second commandment,—that was probably the text of his discourse. But he will not let the second commandment or any other words in the world be pleaded against the character of God. Righteousness and equity he maintains to be the foundations of the divine character and of the divine acts. He will tolerate no resolution of them into a heathenish notion of sovereignty or self-will. "The ways of God are equal," he says, "and your ways are unequal." The sins of the father only descend upon the son, they are only punished in the son, when the son accepts them, entertains them, makes them his own. At any time he may turn round and repudiate them and cleave to the God who doth not will the death of the sinner, but desires that he should return and live. The doctrine of the second commandment and of the whole law, is that a man is righteous so long as he cleaves to the righteous God who has made a covenant with[36] him, unrighteous when he forsakes that covenant and acts independently. Therefore the notion of any perpetuity in righteousness, or in evil, is equally cut off. Every man has the capacity of righteousness, the capacity of evil. Let him be ever so righteous, he must become evil the moment he ceases to trust in God and begins to trust in himself. Let him be ever so evil, he must become righteous the moment he begins to trust in God and ceases to trust in himself.

The enunciation of laws or principles seems more especially to belong to Ezekiel, as the experience of personal evil and the sympathy with national sorrow belong more to the tender and womanly nature of Jeremiah. Nevertheless, Ezekiel was to be a priest in this sense also, as well as in that higher sense of beholding the glory of God and proclaiming His name. Suffering was not the destination of one prophet; it was the badge of all the tribe. Ezekiel's life was to be a continual parable, illustrative of the life of the nation. A man scrupulously careful of the law, was to violate the precepts of it respecting food, and to eat what was loathsome. A man sensitive probably as to his reputation, and with that kind of lofty imagination which makes attention to details and all petty acts unspeakably painful, must submit, for the sake of his countrymen, to such as seemed most ignominious to himself and perplexing to them. Finally, the desire[37] of his eyes must be taken from him with a stroke, and he must not mourn or weep. Even at such a time he must be a sign to the people, tho by doing so he should seem to refuse the sympathy that he most wants, and should only lead the captives to say, "Wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us that thou doest so?"

Apart from these sufferings which concern him individually and domestically, the vision of the desolation of Israel became every day more overwhelming to him. Nor was it only the desolation of Israel. He who was called "Son of man," was not likely to speak less of Egypt and Tyrus and the land in which he was himself dwelling, than those older prophets who had so many more reasons for regarding Judea as the one garden of the Lord. The arms of Nebuchadnezzar had been turning the earth upside down and making it waste. Everything must have seemed to him disjointed, incoherent, withered. Could it ever be renovated? Was it possible even for that country which God had blest above all others and man had curst above all others, to breathe and live again?

This was the question which was proposed to the prophet on that day when the hand of the Lord was upon him, and he was carried into the valley which was full of bones. The vision, clear as it is in itself, must not be read apart from the context of the prophecy.[38] You should remember where Ezekiel was dwelling; by what kind of people he was surrounded; what was the condition of his own land; what had come and was coming upon all lands; or you will not understand the picture which now rose up before him. You should think, too, of the man himself, of the heat of his spirit, of the words which he had uttered in vain, of the acts which had only made the captives stare vacantly, of the desolation of his house and his heart. You should think of those other visions he had of the ascending scale of creatures, of the mysterious order of the universe, of the glory of God, before you place yourself beside him in the valley, and walk with him round about it, and look at the different bones, and see how each separately how altogether, they expound to him the condition of the house of Israel. It was dead,—that body from which he had believed that life was to go forth to quicken the universe. It had none of the beauty of a corpse in which there is still form, on which the spirit has left its impression. There had been a time of gradual decay, a time when the pulses of the nation beat feebly and faintly, but when they might still be felt; a time after that when you knew it had ceased to breathe, but when you could still speak of it as entire. But another stage had come, the stage of utter dissolution, when each limb looked as if it had nothing to do with any other, when[39] you could scarcely force yourself to believe that they had ever been joined together. Can these bones live? what a thought to come into the mind of any man gazing on such a scene! It could not have come from himself, certainly, nor from any of these relics. God must have sent it to him; He must have led him to dream that such a resurrection was possible. And now the process of it is also revealed to him. The prophet is commanded to speak. His speech seems a mere sound in the air. But there is a noise and a shaking; then a frightful movement of the bones towards each other, each claiming its fellow to which it had once belonged. This strange effort at a union of dead things betokens a power that has not yet declared itself. And soon the sinews and the flesh come up upon them. They have acquired a form, tho they have no life. "Then said he unto me, 'Prophesy unto the wind; Thus saith the Lord God: come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.' So I prophesied as he commanded. And the breath came unto them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

"Doth he not speak parables?" was the phrase by which the Jews of the captivity exprest their dislike and contempt for the troublesome and mystical prophet who was among them. "Doth he not speak parables?" is a question which men, looking round with[40] weary hearts upon the condition of Christ's Church in various periods of its existence, have asked themselves, with a very different intention and spirit, when they have read this vision of the valley of dry bones. "Is not this written," they have said, "for the ages to come? Is not this one of parables concerning the kingdom of God?" Yes, brethren, if we will first read it fairly and honestly, as describing what Ezekiel says it described to him,—if we will not search for a distant application till we have acknowledged the immediate one,—we shall find that here, as everywhere, Ezekiel is exhibiting facts which belong to other times as well as his own, and laws and methods of a divine government which belong to all times as well as his own.

And that I may not waste your time in enumerating different crises of history in which the facts may be discerned, and by which the law and the method may be tested, I say at once, they are all for us; the vision and the interpretation are of this day. Do you not hear men on all sides of you crying, "The Church which we read of in books exists only in them. Christendom consists of Romanists, Greeks, Protestants, divided from each other, disputing about questions to which nineteen-twentieths of those who belong to their communions are indifferent. And meantime what is becoming of the countries in which these different confessions are established?[41] What populations are growing up in them? Does the present generation believe that which its fathers believed? Will the next generation believe anything?" Brethren, you hear such words as these spoken. I do not mean to inquire how much there is of truth in them, how much of exaggeration, what evidences there are on the other side which have been overlooked; what signs of life there are anywhere in the midst of apparent death. But this I must say; Christians in general are far too eager to urge special exceptions when they hear these charges preferred; far too ready to make out a case for themselves while they admit their application to others; far too ready to think that the cause of God is interested in this suppression of facts. The prophets should have taught us a different lesson. They should have led us to feel that it was a solemn duty, not to conceal, but to bring forward all the evidence which proves, not that one country is better than another, or one portion of the Church better than another, but that there is a principle of decay, a tendency to apostasy in all, and that no comfort can come from merely balancing symptoms of good here against symptoms of evil there, no comfort from considering whether we are a little less contentious, a little less idolatrous than our neighbors. Alas, for this Church, or for any church, if its existence now, if its prospects for the future, are to be determined[42] by such calculations as these! No, brethren, our hope has a deeper foundation. It is this; that when the bones have become most dry, when they are lying most scattered and separate from each other, there is still a word going forth, if not through the lips of any prophet on this earth, then through the lips of those who have left it,—yet not proceeding from them, but from Him who liveth for ever and ever, the voice which says, "These bones shall rise." It is this; that every shaking among the bones, everything which seems at first a sign of terror,—men leaving the churches in which they have been born, forsaking all the affections and sympathies and traditions of their childhood,—infidel questionings, doubts whether the world is left to itself or whether it is governed by an evil spirit,—are themselves not indeed signs of life, but at least movements in the midst of death which are better than the silence of the charnel-house, which foretell the approach of that which they can not produce. It is this; that all struggles after union, tho they may be of the most abortive kind, tho they may produce fresh sects and fresh divisions, tho they must do so as long as they rest on the notion that unity is something visible and material, yet indicate a deep and divine necessity which men could not be conscious of in their dreams if they were not beginning to awake. It is this; that[43] there are other visions true for us, as they were for Ezekiel, besides the vision of dry bones. The name of a Father has not ceased to be a true name because baptized men do not own themselves as His children. The name of the Son has not ceased to be a true name, because men are setting up some earthly ruler in place of Him, or are thinking that they can realize a human fellowship without confessing a Man on the throne above the firmament. The name of the Spirit has not ceased to be a true name because we are thinking that we can form combinations and sects and churches without His quickening presence, because we deny that He is really in the midst of us. It is this; that when all earthly priests have been banished or have lost their faith, tho there should be none to mourn over the ruins of Jerusalem, or to feel its sin as his own, yet there is a High Priest, the great Sin-Bearer, ever presenting His perfect and accepted sacrifice within the veil, a High Priest not of a nation, but of humanity. It is this; that tho all earthly temples, in which God has been pleased to dwell, should become desecrated and abominable, tho all foul worship should go on in the midst of them, and tho what is portrayed on their walls should too faithfully represent what is passing in the more secret chambers of imagery, tho at last the shrines that have been supposed to contain the mystery which they set forth should be utterly[44] destroyed, and a voice should be heard out of the midst of them, saying, "Let us depart,"—yet that this will not be the sign that the Church of God has perished, only the sign that the temple of God has been opened in Heaven, and that from thence must come forth the glory that is to fill the whole earth.

**÷**05-03 MARTINEAU

PARTING WORDS

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

James Martineau, an English Unitarian divine, was born at Norwich in 1805. He was educated for the Unitarian ministry at Manchester College, and in 1828 ordained to the Presbyterian ministry in Dublin. Resigning his pastorate in Ireland, he took charge of the Paradise Street Chapel in Liverpool, but on being elected to the chair of mental and moral philosophy in Manchester New College followed it to London 1853, succeeding J. J. Taylor as principal of the institution in 1868.

His sermons, delivered in the course of four years in the chapel of Manchester New College are specimens of combined eloquence and philosophical profundity, yet are, perhaps, most valuable for their ethical quality. He preached in Dublin, Liverpool, and London. He was a lofty and earnest soul, given to mysticism, a master of English style, and has been widely read. He died in 1900.

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MARTINEAU

1805-1900

PARTING WORDS

Peace I leave with you: My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.—Joh 14:27.

This is a strange benediction to proceed from the Man of Sorrows, at the dreariest moment of His life; strange at least to those who look only to His outward career, His incessant contact with misery and sin, His absolute solitude of purpose, His lot stricken with sadness ever new from temptation to the cross; but not strange perhaps to those who heard the deep and quiet tones in which this oracle of promise went forth—the divinest music from the center of the darkest fate. He was on the bosom of the beloved disciple and in the midst of those who should have cheered Him in that hour with such comfort as fidelity can always offer; but who, failing in their duty to His griefs, found the sadness creep upon themselves; while He, seeking to give peace to them, found it Himself profusely in the gift. It was not till He had finished this interview and effort of affection, and from the warmth of that evening meal and the flush of its deep converse they had[48] issued into the chill and silent midnight air, nor till the sanctity of moonlight (never to be seen by Him again) had invested Him, and coarse fatigue had sunk His disciples into sleep upon the grass, that having none to comfort, He found anguish fall upon Himself. Deprived of the embrace of John, He flew to the bosom of the Father; and after a momentary strife, recovered in trust the serenity He had found in toil; and while His followers lie stretched in earthly slumber, He reaches a divine repose; while they, yielding to nature, gain neither strength nor courage for the morrow, He, through the vigils of agony, rises to that godlike power, on which mockery and insult beat in vain, and which has made the cross, then the emblem of abjectness and guilt, the everlasting symbol of whatever is holy and sublime.

The peace of Christ, then, was the fruit of combined toil and trust; in the one case diffusing itself from the center of His active life, in the other from that of His passive emotions; enabling Him in the one case to do things tranquilly; in the other, to see things tranquilly. Two things only can make life go wrong and painfully with us; when we suffer or suspect misdirection and feebleness in the energies of love and duty within us, or in the providence of the world without us: bringing, in the one case, the lassitude of an unsatisfied and discordant nature; in the other,[49] the melancholy of hopeless views. From these Christ delivers us by a summons to mingled toil and trust. And herein does His peace differ from that which "the world giveth"—that its prime essential is not ease, but strife; not self-indulgence, but self-sacrifice; not acquiescence in evil for the sake of quiet, but conflict with it for the sake of God; not, in short, a prudent accommodation of the mind to the world, but a resolute subjugation of the world to the best conceptions of the mind. Amply has the promise to leave behind Him such a peace been since fulfilled. It was fulfilled to the apostles who first received it; and has been realized again by a succession of faithful men to whom they have delivered it.

The word "peace" denotes the absence of jar and conflict; a condition free from the restlessness of fruitless desire, the forebodings of anxiety, the stings of enmity. It may be destroyed by discordance between the lot without and the mind within, where the human being is in an obviously false position—an evil rare and usually self-curative; or by a discordance wholly internal, among the desires and affections themselves. The first impulse of "the natural man" is to seek peace by mending his external condition; to quiet desire by increase of ease; to banish anxiety by increase of wealth; to guard against hostility by making himself too strong for it; to build up his[50] life into a fortress of security and a palace of comfort, where he may softly lie, tho tempests beat and rain descends. The spirit of Christianity casts away at once this whole theory of peace; declares it the most chimerical of dreams; and proclaims it impossible even to make this kind of reconciliation between the soul and the life wherein it acts. As well might the athlete demand a victory without a foe. To the noblest faculties of soul rest is disease and torture. The understanding is commissioned to grapple with ignorance, the conscience to confront the powers of moral evil, the affections to labor for the wretched and opprest; nor shall any peace be found, till these, which reproach and fret us in our most elaborate ease, put forth an incessant and satisfying energy; till, instead of conciliating the world, we vanquish it; and rather than sit still, in the sickness of luxury, for it to amuse our perceptions, we precipitate ourselves upon it to mold it into a new creation. Attempt to make all smooth and pleasant without, and you thereby create the most corroding of anxieties, and stimulate the most insatiable of appetites within. But let there be harmony within, let no clamors of self drown the voice which is entitled to authority there; let us set forth on the mission of duty, resolved to live for it alone, to close with every resistance that obstructs it, and march through every peril that awaits it; and[51] in the consciousness of immortal power, the sense of mortal ill will vanish; and the peace of God well nigh extinguish the sufferings of the man. "In the world we may have tribulation; in Christ we shall have peace."

This peace, so remote from torpor, arising, indeed, from the intense action of the greatest of all ideas, those of duty, of immortality, of God, fell, according to the promise, on the first disciples. Not in vain did Jesus tell them in their sorrows that the Comforter would come; nor falsely did He define the blessed visitant, as "the spirit of truth"—the soul reverentially faithful to its convictions, and expressing clearly in action its highest aspirings. Such peace had Stephen, when before the Sanhedrim that was striving to hush up the recent story of the cross, he proclaimed aloud the sequel of the ascension; and priests and elders arose and stopped their ears, and thrust him out to death; he had his peace; else how, if heaven of divinest tranquility had not opened to him and revealed to him the proximity of Christ to God, how as the stone struck his uncovered and uplifted head, could he have so calmly said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"? Such peace had Paul—at least when he ceased to rebel against his noble nature, and became, instead of the emissary of persecution, the ambassador of God. Was there ever a life of less ease and security, yet of more buoyant and rejoicing spirit than[52] his? What weight did he not cast aside, to run the race that was set before him? What tie of home or nation did he not break, that he might join in one of the whole family of God? For forty years the scoff of synagogues and the outcast of his people, he forgot the privations of the exile in the labors of the missionary; flying from charges of sedition he disseminated the principles of peace; persecuted from city to city, yet he created in each a center of pure worship and Christian civilization, and along the coasts of Asia, and colonies of Macedonia, and citadels of Greece, dropped link after link of the great chain of truth that shall yet embrace the world. Amid the joy of making converts, he had also the affliction of making martyrs; to witness the sufferings, perhaps to bear the reproaches, of survivors; with weeping heart to rebuke the fears, and sustain the faith of many a doubter; and in solitude and bonds to send forth the effusions of his earnest spirit to quicken the life, and renovate the gladness, of the confederate churches. Yet when did speculation at its ease ever speak with vigor so noble and cheerfulness so fresh as his glorious letters; which recount his perils by land and sea, his sorrows with friend and foe, and declare that "none of these things move" him; which show him projecting incessant work, yet ready for instant rest; conscious that already he has fought the good[53] fight, and willing to finish his course and resign the field; but prepared, if needs be, to grasp again the sword of the Spirit, and go forth in quest of wider victories. Does any one suppose that it would have been more peaceful to look back on a life less exposed and adventurous, on a lot sheltered and secure, on soft-bedded comfort, and unbroken plenty, and conventional compliance? No! it is only beforehand that we mistake these things for peace; in the retrospect we know them better, and would exchange them all for one vanquished temptation in the desert, for one patient bearing of the cross! What—when all is over, and we lie upon the last bed—what is the worth to us of all our guilty compromises, of all the moments stolen from duty to be given to ease? If Paul had cowered before the tribunal of Nero, and trembled at his comrade's blood, and, instead of baring his neck to the imperial sword, had purchased by poor evasions another year of life—where would that year have been now—a lost drop in the deep waters of time—yet not lost, but rather mingled as a poison in the refreshing stream of good men's goodness by which Providence fertilizes the ages.

The peace of Christ, thus inherited by His disciples, and growing out a living spirit of duty and of love, contrasts not merely with guilty ease, but with that mere mechanical facility in blameless action which habit gives.[54] There is something faithless and ignoble in the very reasonings sometimes employed to recommend virtuous habits. They are urged upon us, because they smooth the way of right; we are invited to them for the sake of ease. Adopted in such a temper, duty after all makes its bargain with indulgence, and is not yet pursued for its own sake and with the allegiance of a loving heart. Moreover, whoever has true conscience sees that there is a fallacy in this persuasion; for whenever habits become mechanical, they cease to satisfy the requirements of duty; the obligations of which enlarge definitely with our powers, demanding an undiminished tension of the will, and an ever-constant life of the affections. It can never be, that a soul which has a heaven open to its view, which is stationed here, not simply to accommodate itself to the arrangement of this world, but also to school itself for the spirit of another, is intended to rest in mere automatic regularities. When the mind is thrown into other scenes, and finds itself in the society of the world invisible, suddenly introduced to the heavenly wise and the sainted good—what peace can it expect from mere dry tendencies to acts no longer practicable and blameless things now left behind? No; it must have that pure love which is nowhere a stranger, in earth or heaven; that vital goodness of the affections, that adjusts itself at once to every scene where[55] there is truth and holiness to venerate; that conscience, wakeful and devout, which enters with instant joy on any career of duty and progress opened to its aspirations. And even in "the life that now is," the mere mechanist of virtue, who copies precepts with mimetic accuracy, is too frequently at fault, to have even the poor peace which custom promises. He is at home only on his own beat. An emergency perplexes him, and too often tempts him disgracefully to fly. He wants the inventiveness by which a living heart of duty seizes the resources of good, and uses them to the last; and the courage by which love, like honor, starts to the post of noble danger, and maintains it till, by such fidelity, it becomes a place of danger no more. It is a vain attempt to comprize in rules and aphorisms all the various moral exigencies of life. Hardly does such legality suffice to define the small portion of right and wrong contemplated in human jurisprudence. But the true instincts of a pure mind, like the creative genius of art, frames rules most perfect in the act of obeying them, and throws the materials of life into the fairest attitudes and the justest proportions. He whose allegiance is paid to the mere perceptive system, shapes and carves his duty into the homeliest of wooden idols; he who has the spirit of Christ turns it into an image breathing and divine. Children of God in the noblest sense, we are[56] not without something of His creative spirit in our hearts. The power is there to separate the light from the darkness within us, and set in the firmament of the soul luminaries to guide and gladden us, for seasons and for years; power to make the herbage green beneath our feet, and beckon happy creatures into existence around our path; power to mold the clay of our earthly nature into the likeness of God most high; and thus only have we power to look back in peace upon our work, and find a Sabbath rest upon the thought that, morning and evening, all is good.

But the peace which Christ left and bequeathed was the result of trust, no less than toil. However immersed in action, and engaged in enterprises of conscience, every life has its passive moments, when the operation is reversed, and power, instead of going from us, returns upon us; and the scenes of our existence present themselves to us as objects of speculation and emotion. Sometimes we are forced into quietude in pauses of exhaustion or of grief; stretched upon the bed of pain, to hear the great world murmuring and rolling by; or lifted into the watch-tower of solitude, to look over the vast plain of humanity, and from a height that covers it with silence observe its groups shifting and traversing like spirits in a city of the dead. At such times our peace must depend on the view[57] under which our faith or our fears may exhibit this mighty "field of the world"; on the forces of evil, of fortuity, or of God, which we suppose to be secretly directing the changes on the scene, and calling up the brief apparition of generation after generation. And so great and terrible is the amount of evil, physical and moral, in the great community of men; so vast the numbers sunk in barbarism, compared with the few who more nobly represent our nature; so many and piercing (could we but hear them) the cries of unpitied wretchedness, that with every beat of the pendulum wander unnoticed into the air; so dense the crowds that are thrust together in the deepest recesses of want, and that crawl through the loathsome hives of sin; that only two men can look through the world without dismay; he, on the one hand, who suffering himself to be bewildered with momentary horror, and in the confusion of his emotions, to mistake what he sees for the moral chaos, turns his back in the despair of fatalism, crying, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die"; and he, on the other, who, with the discernment of a deeper wisdom, penetrates through the shell of evil to the kernel and the seed of good; who perceives in suffering and temptation the resistance which alone can render virtue manifest, and conscience great, and existence venerable; who recognizes, even in the gigantic growth[58] of guilt, the grasp of infinite desires, and the perseverance of godlike capacities; who sees how soon, were God to take up His omnipotence, and snatch from His creature "man" the care of the world and the work of self-perfection, all that deforms might be swept away, and the meanest lifted through the interval that separates them from the noblest; and who therefore holds fast to the theory of hope and the kindred duty of effort; takes shelter beneath the universal Providence of God; and seeing time enough in His vast cycles for the growth and consummation of every blessing can be patient as well as trust; can resign the selfish vanity of doing all things himself, and making a finish before he dies; and cheerfully give up his life to build up the mighty temple of human improvement, tho no inscription mark it for glory, and it be as one of the hidden stones of the sanctuary, visible only to the eye of God. Such was the spirit and the faith which Jesus left, and in which His first disciples found their rest. Within the infinitude of the divine mercy trouble did but fold them closer; the perversity of man did but provide them to put forth a more conquering love; and tho none were ever more the sport of the selfish interests and prejudices of mankind, or came into contact with a more desolate portion of the great wastes of humanity, they constructed no melancholy theories; but having planted many[59] a rose of Sharon, and made their little portion of the desert smile, departed in the faith that the green margin would spread as the seasons of God came round, till the mantle of heaven covered the earth, and it ended with Eden as it had begun.

Between these two sources of Christian peace, virtuous toil, and holy trust, there is an intimate connection. The desponding are generally the indolent and useless; not the tried and struggling, but speculators at a distance from the scene of things, and far from destitute of comforts themselves. Barren of the most blest of human sympathies, strangers to the light that best gladdens the heart of man, they are without the materials of a bright and hopeful faith. But he who consecrates himself sees at once how God may sanctify the world; he whose mind is rich in the memory of moral victories will not easily believe the world a scene of moral defeats; nor was it ever known that one who, like Paul, labored for the good of man, despaired of the benevolence of God.

Whoever then would have the peace of Christ, let him seek first the spirit of Christ. Let him not fret against the conditions which God assigns to his being, but reverently conform himself to them, and do and enjoy the good which they allow. Let him cast himself freely on the career to which the secret persuasion of duty points, without reservation of[60] happiness or self; and in the exercise which its difficulties give to his understanding, its conflicts to his will, its humanities to his affections, he shall find that united action of his whole and best nature, that inward harmony, that moral order, which emancipates from the anxieties of self, and unconsciously yields the divinest repose. The shadows of darkest affliction cannot blot out the inner radiance of such a mind; the most tedious years move lightly and with briefest step across its history; for it is conscious of its immortality, and hastening to its heavens. And there shall its peace be consummated at length; its griefs transmuted into delicious retrospects; its affections fresh and ready for a new and nobler career; and its praise confessing that this final "peace of God" doth indeed surpass its understanding.

**÷**05-04 MANNING

THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Henry Edward Manning, Roman Catholic prelate, was born 1808 at Totteridge in Hertfordshire and educated at Harrow and Oxford. After graduation in 1830, he studied for holy orders in the Church of England and was ordained in 1833. The Tractarian Movement was then at its height and Manning took a leading part in it. Appointed Archdeacon of Chichester in 1840 he took a commanding place as a preacher and leader. Newman's recession did not shake his allegiance, but the decision in the Gorham case, which gave the Crown the power of deciding doctrinal questions, drove him to seek refuge in the Roman Catholic fold in 1851.

He was ordained priest by Cardinal Wiseman and to the end of his life devoted himself to religious and philanthropic work in London. He was appointed to succeed Wiseman as Archbishop of Westminster in 1865. He was made cardinal in 1875. As a preacher he was logical and dogmatic, but his style is imaginative and his flights of eloquence tinged with poetic coloring and passion. He died in 1892.

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MANNING

1808-1892

THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH

We give thanks unto God, who maketh us always to triumph in Christ Jesus, and manifesteth the odor of the knowledge of Him by us in every place. For we are a good odor of Christ unto God, both in them that are saved and in them that perish; in the one indeed an odor of life, in the other an odor of death unto death.—2Co 2:14-16. (Douay Version.)

Such was the confidence of the Apostle in the face of all that was most hostile, mighty, and triumphant in the judgment of this world. He was confident that through God his mission in the world was being accomplished, that the Word of God was triumphing over all the power of man. They may well have said to him, "What is this triumph you speak of? If this be triumph, what is defeat? You were stoned the other day in Lystra; you were imprisoned at Philippi; you were scourged at Jerusalem; you were saved out of the hands of the people only by Roman soldiers; you were confounded by the philosophers at Athens; and you were refuted out of the holy Scriptures by the Jews of Berea. If this is triumph, you are welcome to it." Such, no[64] doubt, was the lordly and confident language of men in the face of the apostles of Jesus Christ then, and such is the language of confidence with which the world looks on the Catholic Church at this hour. It counts it to be a comedy played out, a stale medieval superstition, and a name that is trampled in the earth. In every age the Church has been militant and in warfare. It is under the same law of suffering which crucified its divine Head. His throne was a cross, and His crown was of thorns. Nevertheless He triumphed, and He triumphs still, and shall triumph to the end. And so at this moment, in this nineteenth century, in the century of modern civilization, of light, of progress, of scientific affectation, the Catholic Church is derided. They say to us, "Look at the Catholic Church in Germany; look at it in Italy; the head of the Church dethroned; and not a spot on earth for the incarnation to set its foot upon. If this be triumph you are welcome to it." Our answer is: "Yes, even now we triumph always and in every place. The Catholic Church is triumphing now in America, and in Ireland, and in the colonies of the British empire; aye, and in the midst of the confusions in Spain, and in France through revolution after revolution, and in the furnace of infidelity; aye, and in Germany, in the midst of all that the might of man can do against it; and in Italy too, where the head of the Church is[65] morally a prisoner, it is triumphing even now."

But how can I verify this assertion? It would be enough indeed to quote the words of the apostle, but I hope to do more. The world esteems the triumph of the Church to be in wealth, power, glory, honor, public sway over empires and nations. There was a time indeed when the world laid these things at the feet of the apostles of Jesus Christ. There was a time when the Catholic Church and the Christian world knew how to sanctify the society of men; but there is this difference—the world then believed, and the world now is apostate. Nevertheless, there is a triumph in the Christian world and there is a triumph in the anti-Christian world; and what is it? It is that the Church in every age and in every condition, and in the midst of all antagonists, fulfils its mission and accomplishes its work, and no power of man can hinder it. Men may, as we shall see hereafter, to their own destruction, resist the mission of the Church, but its work will be accomplished nevertheless, and accomplished even in them; and its work will be a good odor of Christ unto God both in those that are saved and in those that perish. The world has neither tests nor measures by which to understand what the mission and the work of the Church are; but they who see by the light of faith have both. Let us examine, then, what[66] is its mission, what is its work, and how it is fulfilled.

First of all, the mission of the Church among men is this—to be a witness for God, and for the incarnation of God in the face of the world. Our Divine Lord said of Himself: "For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony unto the truth." As it was with Him, so it is with His Church; and therefore He said to His apostles: "You shall be witnesses unto me," and St. John said: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands handled, of the word of life; for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and do bear witness, and declare unto you, the life eternal which was with the Father, and hath appeared unto us; that is to say, the manifestation of God in the flesh, the incarnation of the Son of God." The Church was the witness of this divine fact to the world, and it is witness to this hour. I may say it is an eye-witness. It was eye-witness of what it declares. It was an ear-witness of what it affirms. I may say in truth that the Church of God, which testifies at this hour, saw the Son of God, and heard His words, and was witness of His miracles. So St. Peter expressly declares, speaking of His transfiguration: "We have not, by artificial fables, made known to you the power and[67] presence of our Lord Jesus Christ; but we were eye-witnesses of his greatness. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, this voice coming down to him from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And his voice we heard brought from heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount." More than this: it was a witness of the day of Pentecost, and upon it the Holy Ghost descended. It heard the sound of the mighty wind and it saw the tongues of fire. The Church therefore testifies at this day as an ear-witness and an eye-witness of the divine facts which it declares. And how can this be said? Because that which the apostles saw and heard they delivered to others who believed in them upon a full test and knowledge of their truth, and those who received their testimony held it as a sacred trust and declared it to those who came after. From age to age the testimony of the apostles has descended unbroken. The intrinsic certainty of their witness, resting on their own eye-witness and ear-witness of the facts, has not diminished by a shade, jot, or tittle in the lapse of time, and the external evidence of that fact has multiplied and extended throughout all time and throughout the world. Therefore the testimony of the apostles to these divine realities and truths is as living and fresh at this day as it was in the beginning.[68] Then twelve men testified; now the nations of the world, united in one body by faith and by baptism, take up and perpetuate that testimony. And part of that testimony is this—that when the Son of God ascended into heaven, as they saw Him ascend, He fulfilled His promise that He would send the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Ghost, to abide with them forever; that when one divine Teacher had gone up to His Father's throne, another should come in His stead; that the world should never be without a divine Person and a divine Teacher in the midst of it; and that the Spirit of Truth by which they were united to their divine Head in heaven should unite them also to each other as His members in one mystical body, and should form to Himself a dwelling-place in which to abide forever. As the soul abides in the body of the man, so the Holy Ghost abides in the body of the Church. It is the sanctuary in which He dwells; the organ by which He speaks, so that the words of our Divine Lord are fulfilled to the very letter—"He that heareth you heareth me;" for the voice of the head and that of the body, as St. Augustine says, are one and the same voice. As they make one moral person, so their voice is identical, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit keeps the voice of the Church always in perfect harmony with the voice of its divine Head, fulfilling the promise of the[69] Lord by His prophet: "My spirit which is upon thee and my word which I put in thy mouth, shall never depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed from this time and forever." Thus, then, the mission of the Church is fulfilled always; whether the world believe or disbelieve, whether it gainsay or assent, it matters not; the testimony of the Church forever triumphs in every place.

Another part of the mission of the Church is this—to teach the doctrines of Jesus Christ in the midst of all the controversies and contradictions of men. In the face of all the errors and heresies of men there is one divine Teacher perpetually declaring the same immutable truth. In the clamor and confusion of the human voices of philosophers and human guides, of the scribes and Pharisees of the new laws, there is one divine voice—articulate, clear, and piercing—which cleaves through all the confusion, and is to be heard above the clamor of men and of nations—the voice of that one holy, Catholic, and Roman Church, spreading from the sunrise to the sunset, immutable in its doctrine, teaching the same truths identically in every place, and abiding always the same unchanging teacher in every age. This is a fact legible in human history. I need not offer proof of it from histories written by ourselves; it is proved by[70] histories and controversies of those who are most opposed to us. There is an accusation which is repeated from age to age against the Catholic and Roman Church; and what is it? That it always persists in its old errors. I accept the accusation. Its persistence proves its immutability, and that which they account error we know to be the doctrine of Jesus Christ; because, as I have already shown from the Word of God, neither can the Catholic Church ever err in believing, nor can the Catholic Church err in teaching. These are two impossibilities, and they descend from one and the same divine truth. God, the Holy Ghost, abiding forever in the mystical body of Christ, illuminates the whole body of the faithful from the time of their baptism. From the time that the graces of faith, hope, and charity are infused into their souls, they are illuminated with the light of faith as the world is illuminated by the splendor of the sun at noonday; and the faithful throughout the world continue passively in their persistence in that one baptismal faith wherewith they were enlightened from their earliest consciousness. And further, they can never err in believing, because the Church which teaches them can never err in teaching. The episcopate throughout the world, which is the college of the apostles multiplied and expanded among all nations, has always the assistance of the Spirit of Truth to guide[71] and preserve it, so that the errors of men and infirmities of our intellect never prevail over the light of faith by which the whole Episcopate and the Church is sustained in the revelation of the day of Pentecost. And more than this: nineteen general councils, from the first which declared the coequality and consubstantiality of the Son with the Father and the Holy Ghost, down to the last which declared the infallibility of the vicar of Jesus Christ,—those nineteen councils have been the organ of the Holy Ghost, preserving the truth in all ages; and the pontiffs, two hundred and fifty-seven in number, have also been guided and assisted by the same Spirit of Truth; so that no doctrine of faith and morals from their hand and from their lips has been out of harmony with the revelation of Jesus Christ. For these reasons the Church is fulfilling its mission, always and in every place, and it can say in every age, with a divine certainty of knowledge and with a divine authority of teaching: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."

Once more, and lastly: there is another part of the mission of the Church which never fails, and is never baffled—and that is, that the Church judges between the truth of God and the errors of men, and gives decision with divine certainty what is truth, what is falsehood, what is light and what is darkness. Here again the world, in the confusion of its[72] discordant witnesses, bears testimony to our truth. The world disclaims altogether the presence of any divine teacher in the midst of us. It derides the very notion. There is not a sect or a communion, or a so-called church, which lays claim to this divine guidance. They say infallibility exists nowhere but in God. As the Pharisees said: "Who can forgive sins but God only?" thereby acknowledging the divinity of Him who forgave the palsied man. And while they say: "We have no infallibility in us; we do not claim it; we deny its existence on the face of the earth," the one Teacher, who never varies in His voice, says: "He that heareth me heareth him that sent me." It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and unto us that we should claim that infallibility, and we cite you before the tribunal of God to answer for your denial of that truth. We say further that no man knows that any revelation was ever made to man except through our testimony. You never saw the Word made flesh, you nor your forefathers; and you have no unbroken succession of witnesses who trace upward these eighteen hundred years to the day when the Holy Ghost descended with wind and fire; you are not in contact with the original revelation of God. How can you rise up and say: "This was revealed upwards of eighteen hundred years ago," when you have no proof to give, except[73] that which you borrow from me, that the Son of God ever came into the world? You take my witness for the fact of Christianity, and you then contradict me when I teach you what the doctrines of Christianity are. And if men appeal to the Scriptures, our answer is the same. How do you know the Scriptures were ever written? How can you prove that there ever was a book called the Word of God? You had it from me; you snatched it out of my hand, and you then read it and interpret it in contradiction to my teaching. How do you know that there were four greater prophets and twelve lesser in the Old Testament; that there were four evangelists and fourteen epistles of St. Paul in the New? Who told you all these things? You had them all from me—from me alone, to whom these Scriptures were committed in custody and in guardianship; from me, who preserved and handed them on to this day. You, who are denying the inspiration of this book and of that, of this text and of that text, and who are gnawing away, as a moth fretteth a garment, the whole written word of God, you rise up and tell us: "This is the meaning of the holy Scriptures," and you reject the holy Catholic faith.

Dear brethren, it needs great patience to hear these things; nevertheless, the judge is always calm and patient while he is fulfilling his work among men, and that because it is a[74] grave thing to be the odor of life unto life and of death unto death to the eternal souls of men. And when men appeal to antiquity and tell us that "this is not the primitive tradition," the Church answers: Were you ever in antiquity, or anyone that belongs to you? I was there, and as a perpetual witness antiquity is to me nothing but my early days. Antiquity exists in my consciousness to this hour, as men grown to riper years remember their childhood. Men of the world know that the contemporaneous interpretation of a law is the most authentic and certain interpretation. But I have the contemporaneous interpretation of holy Scripture; and more than this, men who practise before human tribunals know that the continuous usage of a country is the interpretation of its laws written and unwritten. But I have the contemporaneous and the continuous usage of the Church of God. The seven sacraments are institutions of Jesus Christ and every one of them interprets a cluster of truths. The existence of the Church itself is an interpretation of the words: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The jurisdiction that I have over the world, which the hearts of men recognize and to which their consciences respond, is the interpretation of the words: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto[75] them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

But lastly there is another appeal which men make in this day. We are now told that scientific history is the test of truth; and I saw the other day in a document having great pretension from a certain body of men who are troubling Germany and attempting to trouble even England with the name of Old Catholics, that the way to know the pure faith of Jesus Christ is to interpret history by science. Alas, as I said before, the world is full of pretensions to science; but those who claim to be Catholics, and who yet appeal from the living voice of the Catholic Church to any other tribunal whatsoever, are all of them identical in their principle, and that principle is heresy. Luther appealed from the voice of the Catholic Church to Scripture, and thereby became a heretic. There are others who appeal to antiquity, and the appeal is the same—it is an appeal from the living voice, from the divine authority of the Church, to something of their own choice and creation. It matters not to what the appeal is made. That which constitutes both the treason of the act and the heresy of the principle is that they appeal from the living voice, that is from the divine voice. This it is that is being done at this moment by a body of men who profess to be and to intend to live and die Catholics; and what is more, to purify[76] and reform the Church by staying in it. What is their appeal? Their appeal is to history, to scientific history; that is, to history interpreted by themselves. Luther was much more direct and much wiser. He appealed to a book which is certainly written by the Holy Ghost; they appeal to I know not what books, but to books certainly written only by men, and not by the Spirit of God; to human history, the authenticity of which and the purity of the text of which no one can guarantee; and even this they interpret for themselves.

Now bear with me further if I dwell a few moments longer upon this. At the time I speak, in the old Catholic city of Cologne there is assembled together a number of these men—some four or five hundred—with a handful of unhappy priests, perhaps six or eight, of whom the greater part had already the note of unsoundness upon them before they took their deadly step. And what are they? What are these men who are rising up to purify the Church? What do they believe? Some believe all the Council of Trent, but not the Council of the Vatican. Some believe the Church to be infallible, but not its Head; others propose to reject the invocation of saints, and purgatory, and compulsory confession, and I know not what. Others ask for either half or altogether rationalism. And who have they to assist them? Excommunicated Jansenists from Holland, and members, I grieve to say, of the[77] Established Church from England; and those chosen, as it were, by a happy fatality, one the most extreme of old-fashioned high-church orthodoxy—an estimable and excellent man, whose person I both respect and love; and another whose advanced rationalism is such that even his own brethren can hardly forbear protesting against him. So that we have assembled in this congress, which is to reform and purify the Catholic and Roman Church of all ages, men so irreconcilably in contradiction with themselves that they cannot touch a religious doctrine without discord, and they cannot find anything on which to unite except in opposition to the one immutable truth. There was a day when all the Scribes, and all the Pharisees, and all the Herodians, and all the hypocrites, and all the men who could agree in anything else or at any other time, were united together in one conspiracy, and tho their witnesses did not agree together and their discordant voices could not be combined they all had one will and one purpose against the Son of God and against His truth. These men, I bear witness—many of them at least—have no such intention; but we know from the Word of God that neither had they who crucified our divine Master a knowledge of what they did: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." "Which none of the princes of this world knew; for if they had known it they would never have crucified[78] the Lord of glory." But they are at this moment fulfilling the very words of the apostles: "And to some the testimony of the Church is life unto life, to others death unto death."

Such then, is the mission and the work of the Church—to bear its witness, to teach and to judge; and in doing this, whether men will believe or whether men will not believe, it is accomplishing its triumph in the world. The world forgets that there is not only salvation, but there is also judgment; and God, the just judge of all, is putting men on their trial. The Church is fulfilling its office by proposing the way of salvation to men, visibly to the eye by its own presence, audibly to the ear by its own teachings, clearly to the intellect by the evident truth of its doctrines. It is putting men upon trial and applying the test to their hearts. It tests their faith to see whether men will believe; it tests their candor to see whether they will choose God above all things; it tests their courage to know whether they are ready to take up their cross and follow their divine Master. The Church says to the men of this day: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel shall save it." And in saying this God is separating between nation and nation and between man and man. His "fan is in his hand and he will thoroughly purge his floor and gather his wheat into the[79] garner, but the chaff will be burnt with unquenchable fire." "He that believeth and is baptized will be saved; but he that believeth not is condemned." "We thank God, who always maketh us to triumph in Christ Jesus and manifesteth the odor of him by us in every place;" for we now, at this hour, in the midst of the nineteenth century, in the midst of science and progress, are the odor of life unto life and the odor of death unto death. For the purpose of God in the world is this—to gather out, as He did of old, a people for His name. Among the Gentiles of the old world He chose Israel; so now amongst the nations of the new world He chooses those that believe. He knows the number of His elect and He calls them by their name. He proposes to them the way of salvation and puts all things necessary—truth and grace—within their reach. God is putting them on trial, and the Church in this is fulfilling its mission and accomplishing its work.

The world is on its probation now. It has been for generations and generations driving God and Christianity out of its public life. Christianity is cancelled from its public law; Christianity is silent in the legislature; Christianity at this moment lingers in education, but men are endeavoring to close the doors of the schools against it and so to shut Christianity out of the knowledge of the rising generation. Wo to the people the tradition[80] of whose Christian education is cut asunder! Wo to your children and to your posterity, if they are brought up without the knowledge of Christianity! The world is laboring with all its might, and all its fraud, and all its riches, and all its public authority, to accomplish this end. I do not say that the men who are doing it know what they do; but I affirm that they are doing what I say. Unbelievers like those who created the infidel revolution of France in the last century knew well what they were doing. "Let us destroy the accurst one," was the language in which they frankly spoke of Jesus Christ. Men are more refined in the present day. They talk only of the religious difficulty. "Let us evade or get around the religious difficulty;" and, under this plea of evading the religious difficulty, Christianity is to be excluded from our schools; that is to say, because grown men choose to controvert and contradict each other as to what is the truth of God, the little ones of Jesus Christ are to be robbed of their faith. Again, the world is separating its civil powers, its public authority from the unity of the faith and of the Church everywhere. It is making it a part of high and perfect legislation, of what we hear called in these days "progress and modern civilization," to separate the Church from the State, and the school from the Church. Progress has deposed the Head of[81] the Church; it has put in derision a crown of thorns upon his head; and it believes that at last it has the whole world to itself.

This indeed is the triumph of the world. But meanwhile the Church is triumphing, tho men know it not. The Church was never more widespread than at this moment; never more luminous in the eyes of men, never more explicitly known in its faith; never more united, vigorous, pure, and confident in its work. Its kingdom is not of this world: that is, it is not derived from it; the foundation of its jurisdiction is in eternity; the source of its truth is in the Holy Ghost, and its imperishable Head is the Son of God at the right hand of the Father. His kingdom is in the world, but not of it. The world may prosper and go its way; it may stop its ears against the voice of the divine witness to the truth; nevertheless that witness will be the odor of death unto death.

And England also is on its probation. I bear witness that in England errors are vanishing away, as the snow melts before the sun—passing away, as the hard frosts before the coming of the spring. The errors which were once dominant, lordly, confident, and persecuting—where are they now? At this day men are proclaiming that they are not certain of what their forefathers bequeathed to them; that they cannot precisely tell what was the doctrine which was intended in the Thirty-nine[82] Articles, and was incorporated in statute laws. They are no longer certain of these things; and I bear them witness that a gentler spirit and a kindlier disposition is working in the hearts of many. In the midst of this darkness, truth is rising again, and the old Catholic Church and faith, for which Ireland has stood inflexible as a martyr, with the aureola upon her head, at this day is multiplying the children of faith here and throughout the world. Here too in Lancashire, where the faith of England has never been extinct—where to this day the little children of our flock are the descendants of those who were martyrs and confessors some three hundred years ago—the lingering tradition of faith once more is embodied in the perfect hierarchy of the Church of God, in its perfect order, perfect unity, perfect jurisdiction, perfect authority. And, what is more, the men of England have learned to know it better. They have heard it speak; they have seen it worship; they have even knelt together with us before the same altar, perhaps hardly knowing what they did; and that because the Spirit of God is working for His truth, and multitudes will be saved. We are only in the twilight of the morning; but we can see Jesus standing on the shore, and there is a net in the hands of His apostles let down in the water. But when we are long gone to our rest, who can say what shall be the great draft of souls[83] which shall be miraculously taken in England?

I must bear witness that in England there are tokens full of hope. England never rejected the holy Catholic faith. A tyrannous and guilty king, a corrupt and covetous court, men full of the conceit of false learning, schemers and intriguers, men that hungered to spoil the Church for their own enrichment—these tyrannized over the people of England. The people of England held to their faith and died for it. The people of England never rejected it. They were robbed of it; they were deprived of their inheritance, and their children were born disinherited of their faith; every century from that hour to this they have gone farther and farther from the light of the one truth. Poor English people! Bear with them—I speak as an Englishman—bear with them; they know not what they do in believing that we worship images, that we imbrued our hands in the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Let the men who write these things look at their own hands; there is blood enough upon them. But the English people do not believe these things now; they are passed away. And there has come in the place of these impostures a desire after truth—"Only let me find it;" a craving after unity—"Can we never make an end of these divisions?" a thirsting for the presence of Jesus Christ upon the altar—"Where can I[84] find Him?" And what are all these aspirations? They are the evidences of the good odor of life unto life.

And if so, then, dear brethren, you that have the inheritance of faith are on your probation too. You are called to let the light of your faith shine like the day. The silent, penetrating, convincing light of a man who, knowing the faith, speaks it calmly, without controversy, without bickering, without contention, sheds a grace around him. As men that possess the greatest gift of God, and who desire to make everybody else share it to the full, so let your faith shine. And next, as you have faith, so you ought to have the warmth of charity. Where there is light, there is warmth; and where there is greater light there is greater warmth. Where there is perfect truth, there ought to be perfect charity. You who have the whole revelation of God ought to have the whole charity of God in you. Let your neighbors who are round about, even those who are not of the faith, feel that there is something in you—a warmth, a kindness, a sympathy and generosity which they find in no other man. And, lastly, let there be the fragrance of a holy life. This is the good odor of Christ unto God, and this diffuses life unto life wherever you go. You are upon this probation. Be worthy of the great gift which has been given to you. You have it in its fulness. Be[85] then, worthy of its fulness, in faith and in charity.

And now, dear brethren, in the midst of all the lordly triumph of the world, of all that which no doubt we shall hear to-morrow, be of good heart. As they said to the apostles so they will say to us: "If this be triumph, what can be defeat? We do not quarrel if you are content with these victories." Overhead there is a throne, and round about it are those whom no man can number; the powers and prerogatives of Him who sits upon that throne are working mightily in the world. There is one who sits above the water-flood, with all its confusions, whose voice penetrates through all the jangling contradictions of men. He is bringing to its fulfilment the purpose which from all eternity He has predestined. He knows His own by number and by name, and He will gather them out as the shepherd gathers his flock, and He will separate the goats from the sheep. He will reign until the whole of that work is accomplished. When it is done, and when the last of His elect has been gathered in, and the last of His redeemed has been made perfect, then He will manifest Himself to all men, and the world shall then know that He has triumphed always and in every place.

**÷**05-05 PARK

THE PROMINENCE OF THE ATONEMENT

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Edwards Amasa Park was born at Providence, R. I., in 1808. After a short pastorate of two years he became professor at Amherst, and subsequently at Andover Theological Seminary. He was one of the well-known exponents of the New England Calvinism, and his teachings had a wide influence over the ministers of his generation. His sermons, frequently rewritten, were marked by elegance of style and great moral force. Both as a preacher and teacher he showed largeness of view, depth of thought, and a rare facility of clear and powerful expression. He wrote a number of biographies and other works. He died in 1900.

[89]

PARK

1808-1900

THE PROMINENCE OF THE ATONEMENT[1]

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.—1Co 2:2.

Should the apostle who penned this eloquent expression resume his ministry on earth, and should he deign to hold converse with us on the principles of his high calling, and should he repeat his strong words, I am now, as of old, determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, some of us would feel an impulse to ask him:

"Can your words mean what they appear to imply? You are learned in Rabbinical literature; you have read the Grecian poets, and even quoted from Aratus; you have examined the statuary of Greece, and have made a permanent record of an inscription upon an altar in ancient Athens; you have reasoned on the principles of Aristotle from effect to cause, and have taken rank with the philosophers, as well as orators of the world; and now, you[90] seem to utter your determination to abandon all knowledge save that which concerns the Jew who was crucified. You once said that you had rather speak five words with the understanding, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue; and here, lest the pithy language of this text should fail of being truly apprehended, we desire to learn its precise meaning in three particulars:

"In the first place, do you intend to assert that our knowledge is controlled by our will? You determined not to know anything save one. Can you by mere choice expel all but one of your old ideas, and make your mind like a chart of white paper in reference to the vast majority of your familiar objects of thought?"

"I am ready to concede," is the reply, "that much of our knowledge is involuntary; still a part of it is dependent on our will. In some degree, at some times, we may attend to a theme or not attend to it, as we choose, and thus our choice may influence our belief, and thus are we responsible, in a certain measure, for our knowledge. Besides, the word 'know' is used by us Hebraistic writers to include not only a mental apprehension, but also a moral feeling. When we know Christ, we feel a hearty complacence in Him. Again, to 'know' often signifies to manifest, as well as to possess, both knowledge and love. We do not know an old acquaintance when[91] we of set purpose withhold all public recognition of him, and act outwardly as if we were inwardly ignorant of his being. But I, Paul, say to you, as I said to the Corinthians, that I shall make the atonement of Christ, and nothing but the atonement of Christ, the main theme of my regard, of my loving regard, and such loving regard as is openly avowed."

Thus our first query is answered; but there is a second inquiry which some of us would propose to the apostle, were he uttering to us personally the words which he wrote to the Corinthians. It is this:

"Should a Christian minister out of the pulpit, as well as in the pulpit, know nothing save the Crucified One? Did you not know how to sustain yourself by the manufacture of tents; and did you not say to the circle of elders at Ephesus, 'These hands have ministered to my necessities'? Did you not dispute with the Roman sergeants, plead your cause before the Roman courts? Must not every minister cease for a time to converse on the word of Jesus; and must he not think of providing for his own household, lest he become worse than an infidel?"

"I am willing to admit," is the reply, "that the pulpit is the place where the minister should speak of Christ with more uniform distinctness than in other places; but there are no places, and no times, in which he should fail to manifest, more or less obviously, his[92] interest in his Redeemer. Wherever he goes he has a pulpit. Whether he eat, or drink, or whatever he do, he must do all for the glory of God, and the highest glory of God is Christ, and the highest honor of Christ is in Him crucified. A minister must always respect the proprieties of life; in honoring them he knows that appropriate model Man who, rising from the tomb, wrapped up the napkin that was about His head, and laid it in a place by itself. Now the proprieties of life do require a minister to speak in the pulpit on themes more plainly and more easily connected with the atonement, than are various themes on which he must speak in the market-place or in the schools. But all subjects on which he may discourse do lead, sooner or later, more or less obviously and easily, to the great work of Jesus; and he should converse on them with the intent of seizing every hint they give him, following out every line to which they point him, in the direction of the cross. I have been in many synagogues, and in the temple, and on Mars' Hill, and on a Mediterranean ship-deck; and once I was hurried along in a night ride from Jerusalem to Cæsarea with four hundred and seventy soldiers, horsemen and spearmen. I have resided at leisure with my arm chained to a Roman guard in a prison at the capital of the Roman Empire; but in all such places I have felt, and everywhere I do feel, bound to[93] speak out, and to act out, all the interest which the fitness of the occasion admits, in the atonement of Jesus; and not to manifest, and not to feel, any interest in any theme which may lessen my regard for this, the chiefest among ten thousand!"

But there is a third question which some of us would propose to the apostle, were he to speak in our hearing the words of the text:

"Should every man, as well as every minister, cherish and exhibit no interest in anything but Christ? Should a sailor at the masthead, a surgeon in the extirpation of the clavicle, a warrior in the critical moment of the last charge, look at nothing, and hear of nothing, but the cross? Must not everyone conduct business, and sustain cares, which draw his mind away from the atonement?"

"I am ready to grant," is the reply, "that some duties are less plainly and less intimately connected than others with the work of Jesus; but all of them are connected with it in some degree, and this connection may be seen by all who choose to gain the fitting insight. The great principle of duty belonging to the minister in the pulpit, belongs to him everywhere; and the great principle of duty belonging to the minister, belongs to every man, woman, and child. There is not one religion for the man when he is in the temple, and another religion for the man when he is in the parlor or in the street. There is not one law for ordained[94] pastor, and another law for the tradesman or the mechanic. The same law and no different one, the same religion and no different one, are the law and religion for the apostles, and publicans, and prophets, and tax gatherers, and patriarchs, and children, and nobles, and beggars. Every man is bidden to refuse everything, if it be the nearest friend, who interferes with the claims of the Messiah; and therefore every man, layman as well as clergyman, must keep his eye fixed primarily upon the cross. He may see other things within the range of that cross, but he must keep the cross directly at the angle of his vision, and allow nothing else, when placed side by side with the tree of Calvary, to allure his eye away from that central, engrossing object."

Here, then, is our third question answered; and in these three replies to these three queries, we perceive the meaning of our text to be: that not on the first day only, but on every day likewise, not in the religious assembly only, but in all assemblies, and in all solitudes likewise, not the preacher only, but the hearer likewise, every man must adopt the rule, to give his voluntary, his loving, his secret and open regard to nothing so much as to the character and work of his Redeemer.

Having inquired into the meaning of the apostle's words, let us proceed, in the next place, to inquire into the importance of making[95] the atonement of Christ the only great object of our thought, speech and action.

And here, did we hold a personal interview with the author of our text, we should be prompted to put three additional queries before him. Our first inquiry would be:

"Is not your theme too contracted? It is well to know Christ, but in all the varying scenes of life is it well not to know anything else? Will not the pulpit become wearisome if, spring and autumn, summer and winter, it confine itself to a single topic? We have known men preach themselves out by incessant repetitions of the scene at Calvary,—a scene thrilling in itself, and on that very account not bearing to be presented in its details, every Sabbath day. How much less will the varying sensibilities of the soul endure the reiteration of this tragic tale every day and at every interview! Such extreme familiarity induces irreverence. The Bible is not confined to this theme. It is rich in ecclesiastical history, political history, ethical rules, metaphysical discussion, comprehensive theology. It contains one book of ten chapters which has not a single allusion to God, and several books which do not mention Christ; why then do you shut us up to a doctrine which will circumscribe the minds of good men, and result in making their conversation insipid?"

"Contracted!"—this is the reply—"and[96] you consider this topic a limited one, whose height, depth, length, breadth, no finite mind can measure? Of what would you speak?"

"We would speak of the divine existence."

"But Christ is the 'I am.'"

"We would speak of the divine attributes."

"But Christ is the Alpha and Omega; He searcheth the reins and trieth the hearts of men; He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; full of grace and truth; to Him belong wisdom and power and glory and honor; of His dominion is no end. Of what, then, would you speak?"

"We would speak of the divine sovereignty."

"But Christ taught us to say: Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight—and He and His Father are one."

"We would converse on the divine decrees."

"But all things are planned for His praise who was in Christ, and in whom Christ was at the beginning."

"We would discourse on electing love."

"But the saints are elect in Christ Jesus."

"We would utter many words on the creation of men and angels."

"Now by our Redeemer were all things created that are in heaven and that are in the earth, visible and invisible."

"We would converse on the preservation of what has been created."

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"Now Christ upholdeth all things by the word of His power. What would you have, then, for your theme?"

"We would take the flowers of the field for our theme."

"But they are the delight, as well as the contrivance of the Redeemer."

"We would take for our theme the globes in space."

"But they are the work of His fingers."

"Then we would take the very winds of heaven for our theme, lawless and erratic as they are."

"But Jesus taught us to comment upon these as an illustration of His truth. His poetic mind gave us the conception that the wind bloweth where it chooseth to blow; and we look on, wondering whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, knowing only that it is the breath of the wonderful, the counselor, who arouseth it as He listeth, or saith, Peace, be still. What else, then, do you prefer for your topic of conversation?"

"We prefer the laws of nature for our topic."

"But in them the Father worketh and Christ worketh equally."

"If it be so, we will select the fine and useful arts for our subject."

"But all the materials of these arts and all the laws which compact them, and all the ingenuity which arranges them are of His[98] architectonic plan. He is the guide of the sculptor, painter, musician, poet. He is the contriver of all the graces which we in our idolatry ascribe to the human discoverer, as if man had originally invented them. The history of the arts is the history of Christ's government on earth. Will you propose, then, some other theme for your remark?"

"Do let us converse on the moral law."

"You may; but Christ gave this law and came to magnify it."

"Then let us comment on the ceremonial law."

"You may; but all its types are prophecies of Jesus."

"Then we will expatiate on virtue in the general."

"Do so; but Christ is the first exemplar, the brightest representative of all abstract goodness, of all your virtue in the general."

"Then we will take up the ethical maxims."

"Take them up; but they are embodied in Him who is the way, the truth, the life."

"We will resort, then, to human responsibility for our subject of discourse."

"But we must all appear before the judgment seat of that fair-minded arbiter who is man as well as God."

"May we not speak of eternal blessedness?"

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"Yes; but it is Christ who welcomes His chosen into life."

"Shall we not converse, then, on endless misery?"

"Yes; but it is Christ who will proclaim: Depart, ye cursed."

"The human body; we would utter some words on that."

"But your present body is the image of what your Lord wore once, and the body that you will have, if you die in the faith, is the image of what your Lord wears now; the image of the body slain for our offenses and raised again for our justification. And have you still a favorite theme which you have not suggested?"

"The pleasures of life are our favorite theme."

"Yes, and Jesus provided them and graced them at Cana."

"The duties of the household are our favorite theme."

"Yes, and Jesus has prescribed them and disciplines you by them, and will judge you for your manner of regarding them. What would you have, then, what can you think of for your choice topic of discourse?"

"We love to talk of our brethren in the faith."

"But they are the indices of Christ, and He is represented by them."

"We choose to converse on our Redeemer's[100] indigent, imprisoned, diseased, agonized followers."

"And He is anhungered, athirst, penniless, afflicted in them, and whatsoever we do to one of them we do to Him, and what we say of one of them we say of Him."

"May we speak in the pulpit of slaves?"

"Of slaves! Can you not speak of Medes and Parthians, Indians and Arabians? Why not then of Africans? Have they, or have they not, immortal souls? Was Jesus, or was He not, crucified for them? Was He ashamed of the lowly and the down-trodden, and those who have become the reproach of men and the despised of the people? You may speak of all for whom Christ died; as all men, bond or free, and all things, globes or atoms, suggest thoughts leading in a right line or in a curved line to the cross of Christ. All things, being thus nearly or remotely suggestive of the atonement, are for your sakes; whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come,—all are yours, for your thoughts, for your words. If things pertain to the divine essence, the whole of that is the essence of Jesus; if they pertain to the divine relations, all of them are the relations of Jesus; if they pertain to the noblest and brightest features of seraphs, all the angels of God bow down before Jesus; if they pertain to the minutest changes of human life, in all our vicissitudes[101] Jesus keeps up His brotherhood with us; if they pertain to the vilest and darkest spot of our depravity, they pertain to Jesus,—for to speak aright of sin is to be determined to speak of Christ and of Him crucified for sin.

"And is this the doctrine which men call a contracted one? Narrow! The very suspicion of its being narrow has now suggested the first reason why you should place it and keep it as the crown of all your words and deeds—it is so large, so rich, so boundless, that you need nothing which excludes it. And therefore," continues the apostle, "I mean to know and to love nothing, and to make it manifest that I care for nothing, in comparison with, and disconnected from, the God-man, as He develops all His attributes and all His relations on the cross."

But were the author of these laconic words in a familiar conference with us, we might be tempted to address to him a second inquiry:

"Is not your theme too large? At first we deemed it too small, but now it swells out before us into such colossal dimensions that we change our ground, and ask: Can the narrow mind of man take in this multiplicity of relations, comprehended in both the natures, and in the redemptive, as well as all the other works of Christ? Do not frail powers need one day as a day of rest, and one place as a[102] sanctuary of repose, from every thought less tender than that of the atoning death itself? Must we not call in our minds from Christ and Him crucified, so as to concentrate all our emotions on the simple fact of Christ crucified?"

"Too large a theme!" this is the reply, "it is a large theme, too large to be fully comprehended by finite intelligences. Men have dreamed of exhausting the atonement by defining it to be a plan for removing the obstacles which stand in the way of our pardon. It is too large for that definition, as the atonement also persuades the Most High to forgive us. Then men have thought to mark it round about by saying that it is a scheme for inducing God to interpose in our aid. But the atonement is too large for that defining clause, as it also presents motives to man for accepting the interposition of God. Then some have thought to define it exactly, by saying that the atonement is both an appeal to the Lawgiver and also an appeal to the sinner. Too large still is the atonement for that explanation. It is an appeal to both God and man, but it is more. It is an appeal to the universe, and is as many-sided as the universe itself is to be variously affected. Can we by searching find out the whole of atoning love? It is the love of Him who stretched out His arms on the fatal wood, and pointed to the right hand and to the left hand, and raised[103] His eyes upward, and cast them downward; and thus all things above and below, and on either side, He embraced in His comprehensive love. It is a large theme, but not too large to operate as a motive upon us. The immeasurable reach of a motive is the hiding of its power. The mind of man is itself expansive, and requires and will have something immense and infinite of truth or error, either overpowering it for good or overmastering it for evil. The atonement is a great theme, but not too great; and for the additional reason, its greatness lies, in part, in its reducing all other doctrines to a unity, its arranging them around itself in an order which makes them all easily understood. We know in other things the power of unity amid variety. We know how simple the geography of a land becomes by remembering that its rivers, altho meandering in unnumbered circuits around the hills and through the vales, yet pursue one main direction from one mountain to one sea. Now all the truths of God flow into the atonement. They are understood by means of it, because their tendencies are toward it; and it is understood by means of them, because it receives and comprehends them.

"Consider more fully the first part of this sentence; all other truths are understood by means of the atonement. It gives to them all a unity by illustrating them all. Other truths are not so much independent themes, as they[104] are branches growing up or sidewise out of this one root, and they need this single theme in order that their relations may be rightly understood. What, for example, can we know in its most important bearings, unless we know the history and office of our Redeemer? Begin from whatever point we may examine the uses of things, we can never measure their full utility until we view them from the cross. The trees bud and blossom. Why? To bear fruit for the sustenance of the human body. But is this an ultimate object? The nourishment of the body favors the growth of the mind. But is the human mind an end worthy of all the contrivances in nature? Does the sun, with all its retinue of stars, pursue its daily course with no aim ulterior to man's welfare? Do we adopt a Ptolemaic theory in morals, that man is the center of the system, and other worlds revolve round him? All things were made of God, as the Being in whom they all terminate. Do they exist for elucidating His power? This is not his chief attribute. His knowledge? There is a nobler perfection than omniscience. His love? But there is one virtue imbedded as a gem in His love, and His love is but a shining casket for this pearl of infinite price. This pearl is grace. This is the central ornament of the character of Jehovah. But there is no grace in Jehovah save as it beams forth in Christ; not in Christ as a mere Divinity, nor in Christ[105] as a mere spotless humanity, but in the two united, and in that God-man crucified. All things were made by Him and for Him, rising from the cross to the throne. Without reference to Him in His atoning love has nothing been made that was made in this world. The star in the East led wise men once to the manger where the Redeemer lay; and all the stars of heaven lead wise men now to Him who had risen above the stars, and whose glory illumines them all. He is termed the Sun of righteousness; and, as the material sun binds all the planets around it in an intelligible order, so does Christ shine over, and under, and into, and through all other objects, attract them all to Himself, marshal them all into one clear and grand array, showing them all to be His works, all suggestive of our duty, our sin, our need of atonement, our dependence on the one God, and the one Mediator between God and man.

"The first part of my sentence was, All other truths are understood by means of the atonement. Consider next the second part: The atonement is understood by means of other truths. It crystallizes them around itself, and reduces them into a system, not only because it explains them, but also because it makes them explain it. It is not too large a theme, for all the sciences and the arts bring their contributions to make it orderly and plain. Our text is a simple one, because its[106] words are interpreted by a thousand facts shining upon it, and making themselves and it luminous in their radiations around and over it. Listen again to its suggestive words:

"'For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.'

"Now, what is the meaning of this plain term 'Christ'? It means a 'King.' But how can we appreciate the King, unless we learn the nature of the beings over whom He rules? He reigns over the heavens; therefore we investigate the heavens. The whole earth is full of His glory; therefore we study the earth. He is the Lord over the angels; when we reflect on them, we catch a glimpse of Him in His regal state. He is the King of the Jews and the Gentiles. When we meditate on men, we enjoy a glance at Him who was born for this end, that He might have dominion over our race. When we contemplate the material worlds, all the vastness and the grandeur included in them—the sphere of mind, all the refinement and energy involved in it—we are overpowered by the reality, surpassing fable, that He who superintends all the movements of matter and first spake it into being and once framed, as He now governs, the souls of His creatures—He is the King who atoned for us; and the more we know of the stars in their courses, and of the spirit in its mysteries, so much the deeper is our awe in view of the[107] condescending pity which moved their Creator to become one with a lowly creature acquainted with grief for you and me. So much is involved in the word 'Christ.'

"But our text speaks of Jesus Christ. That word 'Jesus!' What is the meaning of it? It means a 'deliverer,' and in the view of some interpreters it means 'God, the deliverer.' Deliverer? From what? We do not understand the power of His great office, unless we learn the nature and the vileness of sin; and we have no conception how mean, how detestable, sin is, unless we know the needlessness of it, the nobleness of the will which degrades itself into it, the excellence of the law which is dishonored by it. All our studies, then, in regard to the nature of the will, the unforced voluntariness of depravity, the extent of it through our race, the depth of it, the purity of the commands aiming to prevent it, the attractions of virtue, the strangeness of their not prevailing over the temptations of vice—they are not mere metaphysics; they are studies concerning the truth and the grace of Immanuel, who is God with us, and whose name is 'Deliverer' because He delivers His people from their sins; sins involving the power and the penalty of free wrong choice; a penalty including the everlasting punishment of the soul; a punishment suggesting the nature and the character of the divine law, and the divine Lawgiver, in[108] their relation to the conscience and all the sensibilities of the mind; and that mind, as undying as its Maker. All these things are comprehended in the word 'Jesus.'

"But our text speaks of Jesus Christ and Him crucified: and this third term, 'crucified,' adds an emphasis to the two preceding terms, and stirs us up to examine our own capabilities—to learn the skill pervading our physical organism, so exquisitely qualified for pain as well as pleasure; the wisdom apparent in our mental structure, so keenly sensitive to all that can annoy as well as gratify; and thus we catch a glimpse of the truth, that He who combines all of our dignity with none of our guilt, and with all of the divine glory, and who thus develops all that is fit to be explained in man, and all that can be explained in God—He it is who chose to hang and linger with aching nerve and bleeding heart upon the cross for you and me. This cross makes out an atonement of the sciences and the arts and brings them also, as well as devout men, at one with God; all of them tributary to the doctrine that we are bought with a price—that we are redeemed, not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of a man, who was God manifest in the flesh. Too large a theme is the atonement? But it breaks down the middle wall of partition that has kept apart the different studies of men; and it brings them[109] together as illustrations of the truth, which in their light becomes as simple as it is great.

"The very objection, then, that the redemptive work is too extensive for our familiar converse, has suggested the second reason why it should be the main thing for us to think upon, and speak upon, and act upon: It systematizes all other themes, and gains from them a unity which becomes the plainer because it is set off by a luminous variety; and for this cause," continues the apostle, "I intend to know nothing with supreme love, except this centralizing doctrine which combines all other truths into a constellation of glories."

There is still a third inquiry which we might present to the author of our text, could we meet him in a personal colloquy:

"Your words all converge toward one point; will they not then become monotonous, and inapposite to the varying wants of various, or even the same, individuals?"

"A monotonous theme!" this is the reply: "What can be more diversified than the character and work of Him who is at one time designated as the omniscient God, and at another time as a Mechanic; at one time as a Judge, and at another time as an Intercessor; now a Lion, and then a Lamb; here a Vine, a Tree, there a Way, a Door; again a Stone, a Rock, still again a Star, a Sun; here without sin, and there He was made sin for us.

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"Monotonous is this theme? Then it is sadly wronged, and the mind of man is sadly harmed; for this mind shoots out its tendrils to grasp all the branches of the tree of life, and the tree in its healthy growth has branches to which every sensibility of the human mind may cling. The judgment is addrest by the atonement, concerning the nature of law of distributive justice, the mode of expressing this justice either by punishing the guilty or by inflicting pain as a substitute for punishment, the influence of this substitution on the transgressor, on the surety, on the created universe, on God Himself. There is more of profound and even abstruse philosophy involved in the specific doctrine of the atonement, than in any other branch of knowledge; and there has been or will be more of discussion upon it, than upon all other branches of knowledge; for sacred science is the most fruitful of all sciences in logical deduction, and this specific part of the science is the richest of all its parts.

"Here, then, is the first method in which you may keep up the habit of making 'Jesus and Him crucified' the soul of your activity: Bring to your help the force of a resolute determination. There is a tendency in this resolute spirit to divert your thoughts from other themes, to turn the current of your sensibilities into the right channel, to invigorate your choice, to exert a direct and reflex[111] influence in confirming the whole soul in Jesus. God is in that determination. He inspires it. He invigorates it. He works with it and by it. There is a power in it, but the power is not yours; it is the power of God. God is in every holy resolve of man."

In our interview with the apostle we should address to him a second inquiry:

"In what method can we avoid both the fact and the appearance of being slavishly coerced into the habit of conversing on Christ and on Christ alone? You speak of taking your stand, adhering to your decision; but this dry, stiff resolve-comes any genial spirit from it? Will you not be a slave to your unswerving purpose? Your inflexible rule, will it not be a hard one, wearisome to yourself, disagreeable to others? You hold up a weighty theme by a dead lift."

"I am determined"—this is the reply—"and it is not only a strong but it is a loving resolve. For the love of Christ constraineth me; whom having not seen in the flesh I love; in whom, though now I see him not, yet believing, I rejoice with the joy unspeakable and full of glory. It is not a business-like resolution. It is not a diplomatic purpose. It is not a mechanical force. It is an affectionate decision. It is a joyous rule. It is the effluence of a supreme attachment to the Redeemer.

"And this is the second method in which[112] you may retain Jesus Christ as the jewel of your speech and life: Cherish a loving purpose to do so. A man has strength to accomplish what with a full soul he longs to accomplish. Your Christian toil will be irksome to you, if it be not your cordial preference; but if your undeviating resolve spring out of a hearty choice of your Savior, then will it be ever refreshed and enlivened by your outflowing, genial preference; then will your pious work be the repose of your soul. There is a power in your love to your work. It is a power to make your labor easy for yourself and attractive to others. This is not your power; it is the power of God. He enkindles the love within you. He enlivens it. He gives it warmth. He makes it instinct with energy. God is in all the holy joy of man."

In our conference with the author of our text we might suggest to him our third and last inquiry:

"In what method can we feel sure of persevering in this habitual exaltation of Christ? You speak of your stern purpose, but can you depend upon the continuance of it? You speak of your cordial as well as set resolve. But who are you? (forgive our pertinacious query). Jesus we know. But His disciples, His chief apostles—is not every one of them a reed shaken with the wind, tossed hither and thither, unstable as a wave upon the sea?"

"I know it is so"—this is the reply. "Often[113] am I afraid lest, having preached the gospel to others, I should be a castaway. And after all I am persuaded that nothing—height depth, life, death, nothing—shall be able to separate me from the love of Christ; for I put my confidence in Him, and while my purpose is inflexible and affectionate, it is also inwrought with trust in the atonement and the intercession. I do pursue my Christian life in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. For all the piety of the best of men is in itself as grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field. Therefore serve I the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears and temptations. Yet I am determined with a confiding love. I am troubled on every side; my flesh has no rest; without are fightings, within are fears; in presence I am base among you, my bodily presence is weak and my speech contemptible; and if I must needs glory, I will glory in the things which concern my infirmities. Still, after all, I am determined, my right hand being enfolded in the hand of my Redeemer. I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. For my conversation is in heaven, from whence I am to look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He[114] is able to subdue all things unto Himself. I say the truth in Christ; I lie not; I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I injured the Church of God; I am less than the least of all saints. Still I am determined; for by the grace of God I am what I am; and this grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I but the grace of God which was with me; for I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me, and therefore I am determined.

"Borne onward, therefore, by your fixed plan, and no one can succeed in anything without a plan, yet you must never rely ultimately upon your determined spirit. Allured further and further onward by your delight in your plan, and no one can work as a master in anything without enthusiasm in his prescribed course, still you must not place your final dependence upon your affectionate spirit; for if you take, for your last prop, either the sternness or the cheerfulness of your own determination, then you will know your determination, and you are not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Here, then, is the third method in which you may give the fitting prominence to the best of themes: You must rest for your chief and final support on Him and only on Him, from whom all wise plans start, by whom they hold[115] out, and to whom they all tend, who is all and in all, Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

My Christian brethren, you are all apostles. Every man, every woman, every child, the richest and the poorest, the most learned and the most ignorant of you—who have come up hither to dedicate yourselves and this sanctuary to your Lord, all being sent of Him to serve Him, have in fact and in essence the same responsibility resting on you as weighed on the author of our text. And he was burdened by the same kind of temptations and fears which oppress your spirit. But he was held up from failing in his work by a threefold cord; and that was his resolute determination, as loving as it was resolute, and as trustful as it was loving, to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The last that you hear of him as an impenitent man is in the words: "And Saul, yet breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." It was Christ whom the proud Jew last opposed. The first that you hear of him as a convicted man is in the words: "Who art thou, Lord?" It was Christ whom the inquiring Jew first studied. And the first that you hear of him as a penitent man is: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It was Christ to whom the humble disciple first surrendered his will. And the first that you hear of him as a Christian minister is: "And straightway he[116] preached Christ in the synagogs that he is the Son of God." And the last that you hear of him as a Christian hero is: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." And the secret of this victorious career is in words like those of our text: "I adhered to my plan (when among the fickle Corinthians), I was decided (when among the vacillating Galatians) to know nothing (when among the learned at Athens and them of C�sar's household at Rome) save Jesus Christ (when I was among my own kinsmen who scorned Him), and Him crucified (when I was among the pupils of Gamaliel, all of whom despised my chosen theme); still I was determined to cling to that theme among the Greeks and the Barbarians, before Onesimus the slave and Philemon the proud master; for I loved my theme, and, suffering according to the will of God, I committed the keeping of my soul to Him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator."

And herein is it to be your plan, my brethren, and your joy, not to make this sanctuary the resort of wealth and of fashion, but rather of humble suppliants, who by their prayers may divert all the wealth and fashion of the world into the service of your Lord; not to make this temple the resting-place of hearers who shall idly listen to the words of an orator,[117] but a temple of earnest coworkers with Christ—thinking of Him, speaking of Him, loving Him first, and last, and midst, and without end. As you come to this house of God on the Sabbath, as you go from it, as your week-day recollections gather around it, may you renew and confirm your plan to know your Redeemer, and not only to shut yourselves up to the supreme love of nothing except Christ, but also—His grace will be sufficient for you—to worship and serve Christ in the central relation of Him crucified. Knowing Him alone, He will sustain you as fully as if He knew you alone. He will come to you in this temple as frequently as if He had no other servants to befriend. He will listen to your prayers as intently as if no supplications came up to Him from other altars, and He will intercede for you as entirely as if He interceded in behalf of no one else; for remember, that when He hung upon the cross, He thought of you, and died for you, just as fully as if He had been determined to think of no one, and to die for no one, save you, whom He now calls to the solemn service of consecrating your own souls, and your "holy and beautiful house" to the glory of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

**÷**05-06 SIMPSON

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Matthew Simpson, Methodist Episcopal Bishop, was born at Cadiz, Ohio, in 1810. He early distinguished himself as an orator, his style being that of spontaneous unpremeditated eloquence, in which he carried his congregation to heights of spiritual fervor and enthusiasm. He visited Europe in 1878 as delegate to the World's Evangelical Alliance in Berlin, which served to widen his reputation as a public speaker. He officiated at the funeral of Abraham Lincoln at Springfield, Illinois. His "Lectures on Preaching" delivered before the divinity students at Yale have been widely read. He died in 1884.

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SIMPSON

1810-1884

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.—1Co 15:20.

A little more than eighteen hundred years ago, as the light of the morning was breaking around the walls of Jerusalem, there was a guard placed about a sepulcher in a small garden near the walls of the city. They were guarding a grave. Some strange scenes had occurred on the Friday before. While a man whom they had taken from the hills of Galilee and around the little lake of Capernaum had been hanging on the cross crucified as a malefactor, strange signs appeared in the heavens, and on the earth and in the temple.

It was rumored that he had said he would rise the third morning. The third morning was coming, and as the light began to break in the East, there came two women silently and sadly wending their way among the tents that were pitched all around the city of Jerusalem; they had sojourned all night in the tents, for as yet the gates of the city had not been opened. They came to see the[122] sepulcher and were bringing spices in their hands. They loved the man who had been crucified as a malefactor, because of his goodness, his purity, and his compassion. They seemed to be almost the only hearts on earth that did love him deeply, save the small circle of friends who had gathered around him. There had been curses upon his head as he hung on the cross—curses from the by-standers, curses from the soldiers, curses from the people. They cried: "Away with him; his blood be on us and on our children!" and on that morning there were none but a few feeble, obscure, heart-broken friends that dared to come near his grave.

A little more than eighteen hundred years have passed and on the anniversary of that day, the morning of the first day of the week, the first Sabbath after the full moon and the vernal equinox, at the same season, the whole world comes to visit that grave. The eyes of princes and of statesmen, the eyes of the poor and the humble in all parts of the earth are turned toward that sepulcher.

All through Europe men and women are thinking of that grave and of Him who lay in it. All over western lands, from ocean to ocean, on mountain top and in valley, over broad prairies and deep ravines, the eyes and hearts of the people are gathered round that grave. In the darkness of Africa, here and there, we see them stretching out their hands[123] toward it. Along the coasts of India and the heights of the Himalayas they have heard of that grave and are bending toward it. The Chinese, laying aside their prejudices, have turned their eyes westward and are looking toward that sepulcher. Along the shores of the seas, over the mountain tops and in the valleys, the hearts of the people have not only been gathering around that grave, but they have caught a glimpse of the rising inmate who ascended in His glory toward heaven.

The song of jubilee has gone forth, and the old men are saying, "The Lord is risen from the dead." The young men and matrons catch up the glowing theme, and the little children around our festive boards, scarcely comprehending the source of their joy, with glad hearts are now joyful, because Jesus has risen from the dead. All over the earth tidings of joy have gone forth, and as the valleys have been ringing out their praises on this bright Sabbath morning how many hearts have been singing—

"Our Jesus is going up on high!"

Why this change? What hath produced such a wonderful difference in public feeling? The malefactor once curst, now honored; the obscure and despised, now sought for; the rising Redeemer, not then regarded by men, now universally worshiped. What is the[124] cause of this great change?—how brought about? The subject of this morning, taken from the associations of this day, call us to consider as briefly as we may the fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead and some of the consequences which flow to us from that resurrection.

It is important for us to fix clearly in our minds the fact that this is one reason why such days are remembered in the annals of the Church as well as in the annals of nations; for our faith rests on facts, and the mind should clearly embrace the facts that we may feel that we are standing on firm ground. This fact of the resurrection of Christ is the foundation of the Christian system; for the apostle says: "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins; then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ will perish." If Christ be not risen, we shall never see the fathers and the mothers who have fallen asleep in Jesus; we shall never see the little ones who have gone up to be, as we believe, angels before the throne of God. If Christ be not raised, we are of all men the most miserable, because we are fancying future enjoyment, which never can be realized; but if Christ be raised, then shall we also rise, and them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. And that our minds may rest as to the fact of Christ's resurrection, let us notice how God hath[125] arranged the evidences to secure the knowledge of this fact clearly to man.

The first point to which our attention is invited is the fact of Christ's death. Were not this fact clearly established it would be in vain to try to prove His resurrection from the dead. Christ might have suffered for man in some obscure place; He might have laid down His life as a ransom, and yet there would have been no legal evidence of it. God allowed the wrath of man to become the instrument of praising Him, in that He suffered Christ to be taken under what was then the legal process—arrested first by the great council of the Jews, and then by the authority of the Roman governor, so that the matter became of public record—a legal transaction. The highest power, both of the Jewish and Roman governments, united in this fact of His arrest, His trial, and His condemnation to death.

Not only was this permitted, but the time of the occurrence was wisely arranged. It was at the feast of the Jews, the Passover, when all the Jews came up to keep the Passover. They came not only from Egypt but from all the country through which they were scattered. Jerusalem could not hold the people that came together; they pitched their tents all around the city, on the hills and in the valleys. It was the time of full moon, when there was brightness all night, and they came together with safety and security. The multitude,[126] then, was there to witness the scene, so that it might be attested by people from all parts of Judea and from all countries round about Judea.

Then, again, the form of the death was such as to be not a sudden one, but one of torture, passing through many hours. Had the execution been a very sudden one, as it might have been, the death would have been equally efficacious, yet it would not have been witnessed by so many; but as He hung those dreadful hours, from nine until three, the sun being darkened, what an opportunity was given to the people passing by to be imprest with the scene! The crucifixion was near the city; the crowd was there; the temple worship was in process; the strangers were there; and as one great stream passes on some festive day through the great thoroughfare of your city, so passed the stream of men, women, and children by that cross on which the Savior hung. They wagged their heads and reviled as they passed by. The very ones whom Jesus had healed, whose fathers had been cured of leprosy or fever, whose mothers' eyes had been opened; the ones who had been raised up from beds of sickness by the touch of that Savior, passed by and reviled, and said: "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." The multitude saw Him as He hung suffering on the cross.

Then, again, the circumstances attending[127] His death were such as to invite universal attention. It was not designed that the death should be a private one; not merely a legal transaction, a matter soon over, but a protracted and agonizing spectacle—one to be seen and known by the multitude; but, in addition, that man's attention should be drawn to something to be connected with that wonderful scene; hence God called upon the heavens and the earth, the air and the graves, and the temple itself for testimony. It is said that before the coronation of a prince in olden time in Europe—and in some kingdoms the custom is still observed—there is sent forth a herald, sometimes three days in advance, at different periods according to the custom, to issue a challenge to anyone that dares to claim the kingdom to come and prove his right, and to announce that the coronation of this prince is to take place.

Methinks it was such a challenge God gave to all the powers of humanity and to all the powers of darkness. There hung suffering on the cross He who died for human wo, and as He hung God was about to crown Him King of Kings and Lord of Lords on the morning of the third day. He sends forth His voice of challenge, and as He speaks the earth rocks to its center; that ground, shaking and convulsing, was a call to man to witness what was about to occur.

Not only is there a voice of earth. Yonder[128] the sun clothed himself in sackcloth for three hours, as much as to say: "There may be gloom for three days; the great Source of light hath veiled Himself, as in a mantle of night, for three days. As for three hours this darkness hangs, but as out of the darkness the light shines forth, so at the end of the three days shall the Sun of Righteousness shine out again, the great center of glory, with that glory which He had with the Father from the foundation of the world." It was the herald's voice that passed through the heavens, and that spoke through all the orbs of light, "Give attention, ye created beings, to what is to happen!" But it was not alone in the earth, which is the great center, nor in the heavens, which is the great source of light, that the tidings were proclaimed.

Look in yonder valley. The tombs are there; the prophets have been buried there. Yon hillside is full of the resting-places of the dead; generations on generations have been buried there; friends are walking in it, and they are saying, "Yonder is a mighty judge in Israel; there is the tomb of a prophet." They were passing to and fro through that valley of death when the earthquake's tread was heard, and behold! the tombs were opened, the graves displayed the dead within, and there was a voice that seemed to call from the very depths of the graves, "Hear, O sons of men!"

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What feelings must have thrilled through the hearts of those who stood by those monuments and bended over those graves, when, thrown wide open, the doors bursting, and the rocks giving way, they saw the forms of death come forth and recognized friends that once they had known. What was to occur? What could all this mean? Then the great sacrifice was offered. It was three o'clock in the afternoon when Christ was to give up the ghost. Yonder the multitude of pious people were gathered toward the temple. The outer court was full; the doors and gates which lead into the sanctuary were crowded; the lamb was before the altar; the priest in his vestments had taken the sacrificial knife; the blood was to be shed at the hour of three; the multitude were looking.

Yonder hangs a veil; it hides that inner sanctuary; there are cherubim in yonder with their wings spread over the mercy-seat; the shekinah once dwelt there; God Himself in His glory was there and the people are bending to look in. No one enters into that veil save the high priest, and he, with blood and in the midst of incense, but once a year; but it was the mercy-seat and the eye of every pious Jew was directed toward that veil, thinking of the greater glory which lay beyond it.

As the hour of three came and as the priest was taking the sacrificial knife from the altar and was about to slay the lamb, behold! an[130] unseen hand takes hold of that veil and tears it apart from top to bottom, and has thrown open the mercy-seat, not before seen by men. The cherubim are there; the altar with its covering of blood is there; the resting-place of the ark is there; it is the holiest of holies. Methinks the priest drops the knife, the lamb goes free, for the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world is suffering for man. The way to the holy of holies is open,—a new and living way, which men may not close, which priest alone can not enter; but a way is open whereby humanity, opprest and downtrodden, from all parts of the earth, may find its way to the mercy-seat of God. There was a call to the pious worshiper by voices which seemed to say: "An end to all the sacrifices, an end to all the suffering victims, an end to all the sprinkled hyssop that is used in purification, for One has come to do the will of God on whom the burden of man had been laid."

Now here were all these calls to humanity from all parts, as if to announce the great transaction. While all this was occurring Christ was on the cross, suffering the agony of crucifixion. How deep that agony we need not attempt to tell you; it was fearful; and yet no complaint escaped His lips, no murmuring was there. He bore the sins of many in His own flesh on the tree. He heard the multitudes revile Him; He saw them wag[131] their heads; He remembered that the disciples had fled from Him—one followed afar off, but the rest had gone; and yet He complained not. Friends and kindred had all left Him and He trod the wine-press alone. He drank the cup in all its bitterness and no complaint escaped from Him. One left Him that had never forsaken Him before. "The world is gone, the disciples I have fed and taught have all fled and passed away,—all have forsaken Me."

But there was no time until that moment of fearful darkness came, when all the load of guilt was upon Him and for our sins He was smitten, that His spirit was crusht, and He called out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" All else might go—it were little; "Why hast thou forsaken me?" But it is over; the darkness is past; the load is borne; and I hear Him say, "It is finished"; He bows His head and dies.

Now there is publicity for the transaction. It demanded public investigation, it received it. There was not only the mental agony united with the agony of crucifixion, but there was the voluntary giving up of His life; yet, lest there might be some suspicion, to all this was added the proof of the fact of His death. When the limbs of the others were broken and He was perceived to be dead, the soldier thrust the spear into His side and there came out of that side both water and blood.

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There is a peculiarity in the sacred writings. A little incident that seems to be mentioned without care becomes the strongest possible proof, not only of the fact of Christ's death, but of the nature of His death. When that sentence was written the human frame was not understood, the circulation of the blood was not understood. Anatomists had not then, as they have now, unveiled the human system; the great science of pathology had not yet been clearly taught to man; and yet in that sentence we have almost a world of meaning. For it is well attested now that where persons die from violent mental emotion, by what is termed a broken heart, a crusht spirit, there is always formed a watery secretion around the heart. It was not known then to the soldier who lifted up the spear and pierced the body; but so much of that water had secreted around the heart that he saw it issuing forth from the pierced side, unstained by blood, which showed that the great heart had been crusht by agony within.

When taken from the cross He was put in the sepulcher. His friends had given Him up, His disciples had forsaken Him; some of them saw Him die; they knew that He was crucified and they abandoned Him. They were returning to their former employments; but His enemies remembered He had said He would rise the third day, and they put a guard around Him. The Roman soldiers were there;[133] the king's seal was on the stone rolled over the mouth of the sepulcher; they made everything secure. Here again God ordered that we should have abundant proof of Christ's crucifixion.

He was crucified on Friday, which was to them the last day of the week, resting in the grave on our Saturday, which is their Sabbath, and then comes the first day of the week, our Sabbath morning, made our Sabbath because of Christ's resurrection from the dead. There came an humble visitant to the tomb, Mary Magdalene; she had been healed of much, forgiven much and she loved Him. Mary, the mother of James, came also and beheld the scenes that occurred; but there had been strange commotions elsewhere.

Heaven had been gathering around that grave. Angels had been watching there; they had seen the Roman guard; they had seen the shining spear and polished shield; they had seen that Christ was held as a prisoner by the greatest powers on earth. Methinks I see the angelic host as they gathered round the throne of God and looked up into the face of Omnipotence, and if ever there was a time when there was silence in heaven for half an hour, it was before the morning light of the third day dawned. I hear them say "How long shall man triumph? How long shall human power exalt itself? How long shall the powers of darkness hold jubilee? Let us[134] away and roll away the stone; let us away and frighten yonder Roman guard and drive them from the sepulcher."

They waited until permission was given. I see the angel coming down from the opening doors of glory; he hastens outside the walls of Jerusalem and down to the sepulcher; when they saw him coming the keepers shook, they became like dead men; he rolls away the stone and sets himself by the mouth of the sepulcher. Christ, girding Himself with all the power of His divinity, rises from the grave. He leads captivity captive, tears the crown from the head of death, and makes light the darkness of the grave. Behold Him as He rises just preparatory to His rising up to glory. Oh, what a moment was that! Hell was preparing for its jubilee; the powers of earth were preparing for a triumph; but as the grave yields its prey, Christ, charged with being an impostor, is proved to be the Son of God with power; it is the power of His resurrection from the dead.

There was Christ's resurrection from the dead. He became the first fruits of them that slept. But to give the amplest proofs of His resurrection He lingered on earth to be seen of men, and to be seen in such a manner as to show that He was still the Savior Christ. In my younger days I used to often wonder why was it that Mary Magdalene came first to the sepulcher, and the mother of James that[135] stood there—why He should appear to them; but in later days I have said it was to show that He was the Savior still; that the same nature was there which had made Him stoop to the lowliest of the low—the power that enabled Him to heal the guiltiest of the guilty; that that power, that compassion, were with Him still.

Tho now raised beyond death and triumphing over hell, He still had within Him the Savior's heart. Methinks I see, when Peter had run in anxiety to tell the news, Mary remained there; she could not fully comprehend it; the grave was open, the napkins were there; it was said He was not there, but He was risen. And yet, there was a darkness upon her; she could not fully conceive, it seems to me, the resurrection of the dead. She stood wondering, when she heard a voice behind her which said, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Bathed in tears as she was, she turned round and saw the man standing, and taking him to be the gardener, and supposing that he had taken the body and carried it away as not fit to lie in that tomb or be in that garden, she said: "If thou hast taken, him away, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." If He must not lie in this tomb, if He can not lie in the garden, if as a malefactor He must be cast out from man, tell me where the body is and I will take it away. It was a proof of her affection.

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A voice said, "Mary, Mary." Oh, she recognized it, and her heart cried out: "Rabboni, my Lord and my God!" and then she would have thrown herself at His feet and bathed those feet again with her tears, but He said, "Touch me not, I am not ascended to my Father; go and tell the disciples and Peter that I am risen from the dead." See the compassion of the Savior! and then that message! "Tell the disciples and Peter." Why send a message to him? Because he curst and swore and denied the Master. The other disciples might have said, "If Christ is risen, He may receive and bless us all; but Peter is gone, hopelessly and irretrievably gone; he that forsook his Master and denied Him, there is no hope for him." And yet said Jesus, "Go and tell the disciples and Peter"—poor backslidden Peter.

Jesus knew his sorrow and anguish and almost felt the throbbings of his broken heart, and He sent a message to Peter. He may be a disciple still—may come back and be saved through the boundless love of Christ. Oh, the compassion of the Son of God! Thank God that Peter's Savior is on the throne this morning!

Not only was He seen by these, but He met with the disciples journeying by the way and explained the Scriptures to them; and as they met in the upper room He was there. When the doors were unopened He came in their[137] midst and said, "Peace!" breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Thus He met with them and said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy fingers, and be not faithless but believing."

Then afterward He was seen by five hundred, and from the Mount of Olives, while the disciples were gathered around Him, He was received up into glory. They saw Him and as He went He blest them. The last vision that ever humanity had of the Son of God ere he ascended to heaven was that of spreading out His hands in blessing. Oh, my Savior hath thus gone up, and He dropt from those outstretched hands a blessing which falls to-day like the gentle dew all over the earth; it reaches heart after heart. It hath reached patriarchs, apostles, martyrs, fathers, and mothers and little children, and, thank God, the heavenly dew, as from those outstretched hands, is coming down on our assembly this very morning. On this glad day blessings are dropping from the throne of God upon us from this risen Savior. He hath ascended up on high, the gates have opened for Him, and He hath gone to His throne in glory.

Let us look at a few of the results that flow to us from these facts thus sustained of His death and resurrection from the dead!

In the first place it established all Bible declarations. It had been predicted that He should not stay in the grave, and when He[138] arose it put the seal to the Old Testament as the Word of God. The prophecy in Him fulfilled gave glorious proof that the other parts of it should be also fulfilled as the word of an unchanging God.

Again, in His resurrection we see a proof of His divine power. No man hath been raised from the dead by his own power. All died, from Adam to Moses, with the exception of Enoch and Elijah, who, because of their devotion and acknowledgment of the divine head, themselves became prophets of a coming Savior. He rose by His own power. He conquered death itself, the grave, and the whole powers of humanity.

Jupiter is represented by an old classic writer as saying to the lesser gods that if all of them combined together and should endeavor to throw down his throne—if all power was arrayed against him—he, by his own might, would be able to overcome them all. What was fiction with the ancients becomes gloriously realized in Christ. Take all the powers of humanity—the Jewish power, the Roman power; the power of learning, of art, of public opinion; take all the powers of earth and hell, death and the grave, and combine them all against the Savior and, without one effort, without one single apparent movement—the Sleeper lies in death, His eyes are sealed, and, as if all unconscious, for the warning had not been given before—in an instant those[139] eyes were opened, that frame rises, the grave yields up its prey, death retires conquered, and Christ demonstrates Himself to be the ruler of the whole universe. He made the earth to tremble, the sun to put on sackcloth, the very air to grow dark, the graves to open, the dead to come forth, and proclaimed Himself to be the conqueror of death and hell. So we have proof of His being the Son of God with power.

In that resurrection from the dead we have a pledge of our own resurrection. Christ has become the first-fruits of them that slept. You know the figure of the first-fruits as understood by the Jews. Their religion was connected with the seasons of the year—with the harvest crops; one of their feasts was called the feast of the first-fruits, and was on this wise: When the first heads of grain began to ripen in the field, and there was thus a pledge of harvest, they cut off those first ripened heads and went up to Jerusalem.

Before that the grain was not crusht, no bread was baked out of it, and nothing was done to appropriate that crop to man's use until those ripened heads of grain were brought up to Jerusalem and presented to the Lord as a thank-offering. He was acknowledged as Lord of the harvest and they were laid up as a kind of thank-offering before God. They were the first-fruits. Then they went away to the fields and all through Judea the[140] sickle was thrust in, the grain was reaped and gathered into sheaves, and when the harvest was secured they baked the bread for their children out of this first grain. They came up to the temple, where the first-fruits had been laid, and they held a feast of thanksgiving and shouted harvest home. The old harvest feast seems to be descended from this ancient custom.

Christ rose as the first-fruits, and there is to be a glorious resurrection. Christ came, the first man to rise in this respect, by His own power, from the grave, having snatched the crown from death, having thrown light into the grave, having Himself ascended up toward glory. He goes up in the midst of the shouts of angels; the heavens open before Him; yonder is the altar; there is the throne, and around it stand the seraphim and the cherubim; and Christ enters, the victor, and sits down upon the throne, from henceforth expecting until His enemies be made His footstool. He is the first-fruits of the harvest, but the angels are to be sent out like the reapers, and by and by humanity is coming.

As Christ, the first-fruits, passed through the grave and went up to glory, so there shall come forth from their sleeping dust in Asia, in Africa, in Europe, and in America, from every mountain top, from the depths of the sea, from deep ravines, and from plains outspread—oh, there shall come in the time of the[141] glorious harvest—the uprising of humanity, when all the nations, waking from their long sleep, shall rise and shall shout the harvest home! Thank God! At that time none shall be wanting.

Oh, they come, they come, from the nations of the past and from the generations yet unborn! I see the crowd gathering there. Behold the angels are waiting, and as the hosts rise from the dead they gather round the throne. Christ invites His followers to overcome and sit down with Him on His throne, as He overcame and sat down with the Father on His throne. In that is the pledge of our resurrection from the dead. Can I not suffer, since Christ suffered? Can I not die, since Christ died? Let the grave be my resting-place, for Christ rested there. Is it cold? The warmth of His animation is in it. He shall be beside me in all His spirit's power. Does the load of earth above me and beneath which I am placed press upon me? Christ hath power to burst the tomb, tho deep it be, and I shall rise through His almighty power.

Yet, let the malice of men be directed against me; let me be taken, if it must be, as a martyr and be bound to the stake; let the fagots be kindled, let the flame ascend, let my body be burned; gather my ashes, grind my bones to powder, scatter them on the ocean's surface; or carry those ashes to the top of yonder volcano and throw them within its[142] consuming fire—let them be given to the dust—and yet I can sing:

"God my Redeemer lives,  
And ever from the skies  
Looks down and watches all my dust,  
Till He shall bid it rise."

Thank God! it may be scattered on the wings of the wind—Christ is everywhere present; He has marked every particle and it shall rise again by His own almighty power. And what is it to sleep awhile if I am Christ's? To die, if I am like Christ in dying? and be buried, if I am like Christ in being buried? I trust I shall be like Him when He comes forth in His glory. I shall be like Him, for the apostle says, "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is"; "We shall be changed from glory into glory, into the same image as by the Spirit of God."

It would be a great change to be changed from glory to glory, from saints to angels, from angels to cherubim, from cherubim to seraphim, from glory to glory; but, thank God! we shall not stop being changed; for the change shall go on from glory to glory until we shall be transformed into the likeness of the Son of God, brighter than angels ever shone, more glorious than were ever cherubim.

We shall be near the throne; we shall sit beside Him, for He hath made room for us[143] there. Then, if we can calmly look at death and face him, because his strength has been overcome, it reconciles us to parting a little while with friends. A father or a mother may be taken from us, but we shall see them again; they shall not sleep forever. The little ones that drop from our arms, we can almost see them this morning; some of us can almost feel them in our arms—can see the glance of that beautiful eye and hear the sound of that little prattling lip; they seem to be with us now, as a little while ago they dropt from out of our arms. We followed them to the grave and left them there, where the winter's storm has been howling around them.

Sometimes loneliness like that terrible storm has swept over our hearts and left them almost in despair; but through Christ's resurrection we see our children yonder in glory, safe in the Savior's arms. Their little forms shall rise all-glorious from the tomb in the morning of the resurrection; we shall find them, for Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

All this comes to us from the resurrection of Christ from the dead. He died once; He dies no more; the condemnation of death is forever gone; He sits on the throne of everlasting dominion; His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; and as He died once and has risen to die no more, so when we have died once and gone to the grave and entered the dark valley and shadow of death, and we come up safely[144] on the other side, thank God! death is passed forever; we shall then put our feet on the neck of the monster and shall be able to say:

"Oh death, where is thy sting?  
Oh grave, where is thy victory?"

Looking at the resurrection of Christ we exclaim, Thanks be unto God who hath given us the victory! Such is the eternity and blessedness that awaits us. Thank God for a spiritual body! Here some of us long to triumph over nature. We would grasp, if we could, angelic wisdom; but our brows will ache with pain, our frames decay, our eyes grow dim, our hearing fail. This flesh of ours will not stand hours of painful study and seasons of protracted labor; but, thank God! when the body that now oppresses us is laid in the grave a spiritual body will be given to us, pure, ethereal, and holy. Oh, what an extent of knowledge shall flash upon us; what light and glory; what spirituality and power! Then we shall not need to ask an angel anything. We shall know as we are known. Jesus will be our teacher; the Everlasting God, the Man whose name is Wonderful, the Counselor, the Prince of Peace. He Himself shall be our Leader. We shall know then as also we are known.

Then rejoice in God. Dry up those tears. Cast away that downcast look. Child of the dust, you are an heir of glory. There is a[145] crown all burnished for you; there is a mansion all ready for you; there is a white robe prepared for you; there is eternal glory for you; angels are to be your servants and you are to reign with the King of Kings forever. But while you wait on earth, be witnesses for God; attest the glory of your Master; rise in the greatness of His strength; bind sin captive to your chariot wheels; go onward in your heavenly career, and be as pure as your ascended Head is pure. Be active in works of mercy; be angels of light; be names of fire; go on your mission of mercy and convert the world unto God before you go up higher. When you go, not only go forward to present yourself, but may every one of you be able to say: "Here am I and those which Thou hast given me."

**÷**05-07 THEODORE PARKER

THE TRANSIENT AND PERMANENT IN CHRISTIANITY

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Theodore Parker, American divine and reformer, was born at Lexington, Mass., in 1810. He was educated at Harvard and graduated from the Divinity School of that University in 1836. The following year he was ordained pastor of Roxbury Christian Church, and first attracted attention by his sermon on the "Transient and Permanent in Christianity," preached in 1841. This sermon was ultimately the cause of his practical exclusion from the Unitarian body, and in 1846 he became minister to the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society in Boston.

In this pastorate he became well known to all denominations from the remarkable sermons he preached for seven years in Music Hall. He died of consumption at Florence, Italy, in 1860. His powerful intellect and vigorous eloquence were exhibited in the many controversial sermons he preached, both as a believer in the nonsupernaturalism of present Christianity and as a practical humanitarian. He figured as one of the leading abolitionists of New England.

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THEODORE PARKER

1810-1860

THE TRANSIENT AND PERMANENT IN CHRISTIANITY

Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.—Luk 21:33.

In this sentence we have a very clear indication that Jesus of Nazareth believed the religion He taught would be eternal, that the substance of it would last forever. Yet there are some who are affrighted by the faintest rustle which a heretic makes among the dry leaves of theology; they tremble lest Christianity itself should perish without hope. Ever and anon the cry is raised, "The Philistines be upon us, and Christianity is in danger." The least doubt respecting the popular theology, or the existing machinery of the Church; the least sign of distrust in the religion of the pulpit, or the religion of the street, is by some good men supposed to be at enmity with faith in Christ, and capable of shaking Christianity itself. On the other hand, a few bad men, and a few pious men, it is said, on both sides of the water, tell us the day of Christianity is past. The latter, it is alleged, would persuade us that hereafter piety must take a new form; the teachings of Jesus are[150] to be passed by; that religion is to wing her way sublime, above the flight of Christianity, far away, toward heaven, as the fledged eaglet leaves forever the nest which sheltered his callow youth. Let us therefore devote a few moments to this subject, and consider what is transient in Christianity, and what is permanent therein.

In actual Christianity,—that is, in that portion of Christianity which is preached and believed,—there seems to have been, ever since the time of its earthly Founder, two elements, the one transient, the other permanent. The one is the thought, the folly, the uncertain wisdom, the theological notions, the impiety of man; the other, the eternal truth of God. These two bear, perhaps, the same relation to each other that the phenomena of outward nature, such as sunshine and cloud, growth, decay and reproduction, bear to the great law of nature, which underlies and supports them all. As in that case more attention is commonly paid to the particular phenomena than to the general law, so in this case more is generally given to the transient in Christianity than to the permanent therein.

It must be confest, tho with sorrow, that transient things form a great part of what is commonly taught as religion. An undue place has often been assigned to forms and doctrines, while too little stress has been laid[151] on the divine life of the soul, love to God, and love to man. Religious forms may be useful and beautiful. They are so, whenever they speak to the soul, and answer a want thereof. In our present state some forms are perhaps necessary. But they are only the accident of Christianity, not its substance. They are the robe, not the angel, who may take another robe quite as becoming and useful. One sect has many forms; another, none. Yet both may be equally Christian, in spite of the redundance or the deficiency. They are a part of the language in which religion speaks, and exist, with few exceptions, wherever man is found. In our calculating nation, in our rationalizing sect, we have retained but two of the rites so numerous in the early Christian Church, and even these we have attenuated to the last degree, leaving them little more than a specter of the ancient form. Another age may continue or forsake both; may revive old forms, or invent new ones to suit the altered circumstances of the times, and yet be Christians quite as good as we, or our fathers of the dark ages. Whether the apostles designed these rites to be perpetual seems a question which belongs to scholars and antiquarians,—not to us, as Christian men and women. So long as they satisfy or help the pious heart, so long they are good. Looking behind or around us, we see that the forms and rites of the Christians are quite as fluctuating[152] as those of the heathens, from whom some of them have been, not unwisely, adopted by the earlier Church.

Any one, who traces the history of what is called Christianity, will see that nothing changes more from age to age than the doctrines taught as Christian, and insisted on as essential to Christianity and personal salvation. What is falsehood in one province passes for truth in another. The heresy of one age is the orthodox belief and "only infallible rule" of the next. Now Arius, and now Athanasius, is lord of the ascendant. Both were excommunicated in their turn, each for affirming what the other denied. Men are burned for professing what men are burned for denying. For centuries the doctrines of the Christians were no better, to say the least, than those of their contemporary pagans. The theological doctrines derived from our fathers seem to have come from Judaism, heathenism, and the caprice of philosophers, far more than they have come from the principle and sentiment of Christianity. The doctrine of the Trinity, the very Achilles of theological dogmas, belongs to philosophy and not religion; its subtleties cannot even be expressed in our tongue. As old religions became superannuated, and died out, they left to the rising faith, as to a residuary legatee, their forms and their doctrines; or rather, as the giant in the fable left his poisoned garment[153] to work the overthrow of his conqueror. Many tenets that pass current in our theology seem to be the refuse of idol temples, the offscourings of Jewish and heathen cities rather than the sands of virgin gold which the stream of Christianity has worn off from the rock of ages, and brought in its bosom for us. It is wood, hay, and stubble, wherewith men have built on the corner-stone Christ laid. What wonder the fabric is in peril when tried by fire? The stream of Christianity, as men receive it, has caught a stain from every soil it has filtered through, so that now it is not the pure water from the well of life which is offered to our lips, but streams troubled and polluted by man with mire and dirt. If Paul and Jesus could read our books of theological doctrines, would they accept as their teaching what men have vented in their name? Never, till the letters of Paul had faded out of his memory, never, till the words of Jesus had been torn out from the book of life. It is their notions about Christianity men have taught as the only living word of God. They have piled their own rubbish against the temple of truth where piety comes up to worship; what wonder the pile seems unshapely and like to fall? But these theological doctrines are fleeting as the leaves on the trees. They—

"Are found  
Now green in youth, now withered on the ground;  
Another race the following spring supplies;  
They fall successive, and successive rise."

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Like the clouds of the sky, they are here to-day; to-morrow, all swept off and vanished; while Christianity itself, like the heaven above, with its sun, and moon, and uncounted stars, is always over our head, tho the cloud sometimes debars us of the needed light. It must of necessity be the case that our reasonings, and therefore our theological doctrines, are imperfect, and so perishing. It is only gradually that we approach to the true system of nature by observation and reasoning, and work out our philosophy and theology by the toil of the brain. But meantime, if we are faithful, the great truths of mortality and religion, the deep sentiment of love to man and love to God, are perceived intuitively, and by instinct, as it were, tho our theology be imperfect and miserable. The theological notions of Abraham, to take the story as it stands, were exceedingly gross, yet a greater than Abraham has told us, "Abraham desired to see my day, saw it, and was glad." Since these notions are so fleeting, why need we accept the commandment of men as the doctrine of God?

This transitoriness of doctrines appears in many instances, of which two may be selected for a more attentive consideration. First, the doctrine respecting the origin and authority of the Old and New Testaments. There has been a time when men were burned for asserting doctrines of natural philosophy which[155] rested on evidence the most incontestable, because those doctrines conflicted with sentences in the Old Testament. Every word of that Jewish record was regarded as miraculously inspired, and therefore as infallibly true. It was believed that the Christian religion itself rested thereon, and must stand or fall with the immaculate Hebrew text. He was deemed no small sinner who found mistakes in the manuscripts. On the authority of the written word man was taught to believe impossible legends, conflicting assertions; to take fiction for fact, a dream for a miraculous revelation of God, an Oriental poem for a grave history of miraculous events, a collection of amatory idyls for a serious discourse "touching the mutual love of Christ and the Church"; they have been taught to accept a picture sketched by some glowing Eastern imagination, never intended to be taken for a reality, as a proof that the infinite God spoke in human words, appeared in the shape of a cloud, a flaming bush, or a man who ate, and drank, and vanished into smoke; that He gave counsels to-day, and the opposite to-morrow; that He violated His own laws, was angry, and was only dissuaded by a mortal man from destroying at once a whole nation,—millions of men who rebelled against their leader in a moment of anguish. Questions in philosophy, questions in the Christian religion, have been settled by an appeal to that book. The inspiration of its[156] authors has been assumed as infallible. Every fact in the early Jewish history has been taken as a type of some analogous fact in Christian history. The most distant events, even such as are still in the arms of time, were supposed to be clearly foreseen and foretold by pious Hebrews several centuries before Christ. It has been assumed at the outset, with no shadow of evidence, that those writers held a miraculous communication with God, such as He has granted to no other man. What was originally a presumption of bigoted Jews became an article of faith, which Christians were burned for not believing. This has been for centuries the general opinion of the Christian Church, both Catholic and Protestant, tho the former never accepted the Bible as the only source of religious truth. It has been so. Still worse, it is now the general opinion of religious sects at this day. Hence the attempt, which always fails, to reconcile the philosophy of our times with the poems in Genesis writ a thousand years before Christ. Hence the attempt to conceal the contradictions in the record itself. Matters have come to such a pass that even now he is deemed an infidel, if not by implication an atheist, whose reverence for the Most High forbids him to believe that God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son,—a thought at which the flesh creeps with horror; to believe it solely on the authority of an Oriental story, written down nobody[157] knows when or by whom, or for what purpose; which may be a poem, but can not be the record of a fact, unless God is the author of confusion and a lie.

Now, this idolatry of the Old Testament has not always existed. Jesus says that none born of a woman is greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John. Paul tells us the law—the very crown of the old Hebrew revelation—is a shadow of good things which have now come; only a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; and when faith has come, that we are no longer under the schoolmaster; that it was a law of sin and death, from which we are made free by the law of the spirit of life. Christian teachers themselves have differed so widely in their notion of the doctrines and meaning of those books that it makes one weep to think of the follies deduced therefrom. But modern criticism is fast breaking to pieces this idol which men have made out of the Scriptures. It has shown that here are the most different works thrown together; that their authors, wise as they sometimes were, pious as we feel often their spirit to have been, had only that inspiration which is common to other men equally pious and wise; that they were by no means infallible, but were mistaken in facts or in reasoning,—uttered predictions which time has not fulfilled; men who in some measure partook of the darkness[158] and limited notions of their age, and were not always above its mistakes or its corruptions.

The history of opinions on the New Testament is quite similar. It has been assumed at the outset, it would seem with no sufficient reason, without the smallest pretense on its writers' part, that all of its authors were infallibly and miraculously inspired, so that they could commit no error of doctrine or fact. Men have been bid to close their eyes at the obvious difference between Luke and John, the serious disagreement between Paul and Peter; to believe, on the smallest evidence, accounts which shock the moral sense and revolt the reason, and tend to place Jesus in the same series with the Hercules and Appollonius of Tyana; accounts which Paul in the Epistles never mentions, tho he also had a vein of the miraculous running quite through him. Men have been told that all these things must be taken as part of Christianity, and if they accepted the religion, they must take all these accessories along with it; that the living spirit could not be had without the killing letter. All the books which caprice or accident had brought together between the lids of the Bible were declared to be the infallible Word of God, the only certain rule of religious faith and practise. Thus the Bible was made not a single channel, but the only certain rule of religious faith and practise. To disbelieve any of its statements, or even the common interpretation[159] put upon those statements by the particular age or church in which the man belonged, was held to be infidelity, if not atheism. In the name of Him who forbids us to judge our brother, good men and pious men have applied these terms to others, good and pious as themselves. That state of things has by no means passed away. Men who cry down the absurdities of paganism in the worst spirit of the French "free thinkers" call others infidels and atheists, who point out, tho reverently, other absurdities which men have piled upon Christianity. So the world goes. An idolatrous regard for the imperfect scripture of God's word is the apple of Atalanta, which defeats theologians running for the hand of divine truth.

But the current notions respecting the infallible inspiration of the Bible have no foundation in the Bible itself. Which evangelist, which apostle of the New Testament, what prophet or psalmist of the Old Testament, ever claims infallible authority for himself or for others? Which of them does not in his own writings show that he was finite, and, with all his zeal and piety, possest but a limited inspiration, the bound whereof we can sometimes discover? Did Christ ever demand that men should assent to the doctrines of the Old Testament, credit its stories, and take its poems for histories, and believe equally two accounts that contradict one another? Has[160] He ever told you that all the truths of His religion, all the beauty of a Christian life should be contained in the writings of those men who, even after His resurrection, expected Him to be a Jewish king; of men who were sometimes at variance with one another, and misunderstood His divine teachings? Would not those modest writers themselves be confounded at the idolatry we pay them? Opinions may change on these points, as they have often changed—changed greatly and for the worse since the days of Paul. They are changing now, and we may hope for the better; for God makes man's folly as well his wrath to praise Him, and continually brings good out of evil.

Another instance of the transitoriness of doctrines taught as Christian is found in those which relate to the nature and authority of Christ. One ancient party has told us that He is the infinite God; another, that He is both God and man; a third, that He was a man, the son of Joseph and Mary, born as we are; tempted like ourselves; inspired as we may be, if we will pay the price. Each of the former parties believed its doctrine on this head was infallibly true, and formed the very substance of Christianity, and was one of the essential conditions of salvation, tho scarce any two distinguished teachers, of ancient or modern times, agree in their expression of this truth.

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Almost every sect that has ever been, makes Christianity rest on the personal authority of Jesus, and not the immutable truth of the doctrines themselves, or the authority of God, who sent Him into the world. Yet it seems difficult to conceive any reason why moral and religious truths should rest for their support on the personal authority of their revealer, any more than the truths of science on that of him who makes them known first or most clearly. It is hard to see why the great truths of Christianity rest on the personal authority of Jesus, more than the axioms of geometry rest on the personal authority of Euclid or Archimedes. The authority of Jesus as of all teachers, one would naturally think, must rest on the truth of His words, and not their truth on His authority.

Opinions respecting the nature of Christ seem to be constantly changing. In the three first centuries after Christ, it appears, great latitude of speculation prevailed. Some said He was God, with nothing of human nature, His body only an illusion; others that He was man, with nothing of the divine nature, His miraculous birth having no foundation in fact. In a few centuries it was decreed by councils that He was God, thus honoring the divine element; next, that He was man also, thus admitting the human side. For some ages the Catholic Church seems to have dwelt chiefly on the divine nature that was in Him, leaving[162] the human element to mystics and other heretical persons, whose bodies served to flesh the swords of orthodox believers. The stream of Christianity has come to us in two channels,—one within the Church, the other without the Church,—and it is not hazarding too much to say that since the fourth century the true Christian life has been out of the established Church, and not in it, but rather in the ranks of dissenters. From the Reformation till the latter part of the last century, we are told, the Protestant Church dwelt chiefly on the human side of Christ, and since that time many works have been written to show how the two—perfect Deity and perfect manhood—were united in His character. But, all this time, scarce any two eminent teachers agree on these points, however orthodox they may be called. What a difference between the Christ of John Gerson and John Calvin,—yet were both accepted teachers and pious men. What a difference between the Christ of the Unitarians and the Methodists,—yet may men of both sects be true Christians and acceptable with God. What a difference between the Christ of Matthew and John,—yet both were disciples, and their influence is wide as Christendom and deep as the heart of man. But on this there is not time to enlarge.

Now, it seems clear that the notions men form about the origin and nature of the Scriptures,[163] respecting the nature and authority of Christ, have nothing to do with Christianity except as its aids or its adversaries; they are not the foundation of its truths. These are theological questions, not religious questions. Their connection with Christianity appears accidental; for if Jesus had taught at Athens, and not at Jerusalem; if He had wrought no miracle, and none but the human nature had ever been ascribed to them; if the Old Testament had forever perished at His birth,—Christianity would still have been the word of God; it would have lost none of its truths. It would be just as true, just as beautiful, just as lasting, as now it is; tho we should have lost so many a blessed word, and the work of Christianity itself would have been, perhaps, a long time retarded.

To judge the future by the past, the former authority of the Old Testament can never return. Its present authority can not stand. It must be taken for what it is worth. The occasional folly and impiety of its authors must pass for no more than their value; while the religion, the wisdom, the love, which make fragrant its leaves, will still speak to the best hearts as hitherto, and in accents even more divine when reason is allowed her rights. The ancient belief in the infallible inspiration of each sentence of the New Testament is fast changing, very fast. One writer, not a skeptic, but a Christian of unquestioned piety, sweeps[164] off the beginning of Matthew; another, of a different church and equally religious, the end of John. Numerous critics strike off several epistles. The Apocalypse itself is not spared, notwithstanding its concluding curse. Who shall tell us the work of retrenchment is to stop here; that others will not demonstrate what some pious hearts have long felt, that errors of doctrine and errors of fact may be found in many parts of the record, here and there, from the beginning of Matthew to the end of Acts? We see how opinions have changed ever since the apostles' time; and who shall assure us that they were not sometimes mistaken in historical as well as doctrinal matters; did not sometimes confound the actual with the imaginary; and that the fancy of these pious writers never stood in the place of their recollection?

But what if this should take place? Is Christianity then to perish out of the heart of the nations, and vanish from the memory of the world, like the religions that were before Abraham? It must be so, if it rest on a foundation which a scoffer may shake, and a score of pious critics shake down. But this is the foundation of a theology, not of Christianity. That does not rest on the decision of councils. It is not to stand or fall with the infallible inspiration of a few Jewish fishermen, who have writ their names in characters of light all over the world. It does not[165] continue to stand through the forbearance of some critic, who can cut when he will the thread on which its life depends. Christianity does not rest on the infallible authority of the New Testament. It depends on this collection of books for the historical statement of its facts. In this we do not require infallible inspiration on the part of the writers, more than in the record of other historical facts. To me it seems as presumptuous, on the one hand, for the believer to claim this evidence for the truth of Christianity, as it is absurd, on the other hand, for the skeptic to demand such evidence to support these historical statements. I can not see that it depends on the personal authority of Jesus. He was the organ through which the Infinite spoke. It is God that was manifested in the flesh by Him, on whom rests the truth which Jesus brought to light, and made clear and beautiful in His life; and if Christianity be true, it seems useless to look for any other authority to uphold it, as for some one to support Almighty God. So if it could be proved—as it can not—in opposition to the greatest amount of historical evidence ever collected on any similar point, that the Gospels were the fabrication of designing and artful men, that Jesus of Nazareth had never lived, still Christianity would stand firm, and fear no evil. None of the doctrines of that religion would fall to the ground; for, if true, they stand by themselves. But we[166] should lose—oh, irreparable loss!—the example of that character, so beautiful, so divine, that no human genius could have conceived it, as none, after all the progress and refinement of eighteen centuries, seems fully to have comprehended its lustrous life. If Christianity were true, we should still think it was so, not because its record was written by infallible pens, nor because it was lived out by an infallible teacher; but that it is true, like the axioms of geometry, because it is true and is to be tried, by the oracle God places in the breast. If it rest on the personal authority of Jesus alone, then there is no certainty of its truth if He were ever mistaken in the smallest matter,—as some Christians have thought He was in predicting His second coming.

These doctrines respecting the Scriptures have often changed, and are but fleeting. Yet men lay much stress on them. Some cling to these notions as if they were Christianity itself. It is about these and similar points that theological battles are fought from age to age. Men sometimes use worst the choicest treasure which God bestows. This is especially true of the use men make of the Bible. Some men have regarded it as the heathen their idol, or the savage his fetish. They have subordinated reason, conscience, and religion to this. Thus have they lost half the treasure it bears in its bosom. No doubt the time will come when its[167] true character shall be felt. Then it will be seen that, amid all the contradictions of the Old Testament,—its legends, so beautiful as fictions, so appalling as facts; amid its predictions that have never been fulfilled; amid the puerile conceptions of God which sometimes occur, and the cruel denunciations that disfigure both psalm and prophecy,—there is a reverence for man's nature, a sublime trust in God, and a depth of piety, rarely felt in these cold northern hearts of ours. Then the devotion of its authors, the loftiness of their aim, and the majesty of their life, will appear doubly fair, and prophet and psalmist will warm our hearts as never before. Their voice will cheer the young, and sanctify the gray-headed; will charm us in the toil of life, and sweeten the cup death gives us when he comes to shake off this mantle of flesh. Then will it be seen that the words of Jesus are the music of heaven sung in an earthly voice, and that the echo of these words in John and Paul owe their efficacy to their truth and their depth, and to no accidental matter connected therewith. Then can the Word, which was in the beginning and now is, find access to the innermost heart of man, and speak there as now it seldom speaks. Then shall the Bible—which is a whole library of the deepest and most earnest thoughts and feelings, and piety, and love, ever recorded in human speech—be read oftener than ever before,—not with superstition,[168] but with reason, conscience, and faith, fully active. Then shall it sustain men bowed down with many sorrows; rebuke sin, encourage virtue, sow the world broadcast and quick with the seed of love, that man may reap a harvest for life everlasting.

With all the obstacles men have thrown in its path, how much has the Bible done for mankind! No abuse has deprived us of all its blessings. You trace its path across the world from the day of Pentecost to this day. As a river springs up in the heart of a sandy continent, having its father in the skies, and its birthplace in distant unknown mountains; as the stream rolls on, enlarging itself, making in that arid waste a belt of verdure wherever it turns its way; creating palm groves and fertile plains, where the smoke of the cottager curls up at eventide, and marble cities send the gleam of their splendor far into the sky,—such has been the course of the Bible on the earth. Despite of idolaters bowing to the dust before it, it has made a deeper mark on the world than the rich and beautiful literature of all the heathen. The first book of the Old Testament tells man he is made in the image of God; the first of the New Testament gives us the motto, Be perfect as your Father in heaven. Higher words were never spoken. How the truths of the Bible have blest us! There is not a boy on all the hills of New England; not a girl born in the filthiest cellar[169] which disgraces a capital in Europe, and cries to God against the barbarism of modern civilization; not a boy nor a girl all Christendom through, but their lot is made better by that great book.

Doubtless the time will come when men shall see Christ also as He is. Well might He still say, "Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" No! we have made Him an idol, have bowed the knee before Him, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" called Him "Lord, Lord!" but done not the things which He said. The history of the Christian world might well be summed up in one word of the evangelist—"and there they crucified him"; for there has never been an age when the men did not crucify the Son of God afresh. But if error prevail for a time and grow old in the world, truth will triumph at the last, and then we shall see the Son of God as He is. Lifted up, He shall draw all nations unto Him. Then will men understand the word of Jesus, which shall not pass away. Then shall we see and love the divine life that He lived. How vast has His influence been! How His spirit wrought in the hearts of His disciples, rude, selfish, bigoted, as at first they were! How it has wrought in the world! His words judge the nations. The wisest son of man has not measured their height. They speak to what is deepest in profound men, what is holiest in good men, what is divinest in religious men.[170] They kindle anew the flame of devotion in hearts long cold. They are spirit and life. His truth was not derived from Moses and Solomon; but the light of God shone through Him, not colored, not bent aside. His life is the perpetual rebuke of all time since. It condemns ancient civilization; it condemns modern civilization. Wise men we have since had, and good men; but this Galilean youth strode before the whole world thousands of years, so much of divinity was in Him. His words solve the question of this present age. In Him the Godlike and the human met and embraced, and a divine life was born. Measure Him by the world's greatest sons—how poor they are! Try Him by the best of men—how little and low they appear! Exalt Him as much as we may, we shall yet perhaps come short of the mark. But still was He not our brother; the son of man, as we are; the son of God, like ourselves? His excellence—was it not human excellence? His wisdom, love, piety,—sweet and celestial as they were,—are they not what we also may attain? In Him, as in a mirror, we may see the image of God, and go on from glory to glory, till we are changed into the same image, led by the spirit which enlightens the humble. Viewed in this way, how beautiful is the life of Jesus! Heaven has come down to earth, or rather, earth has become heaven. The Son of God, come of age, has taken possession of His birthright.[171] The brightest revelation is this of what is possible for all men,—if not now, at least hereafter. How pure is His spirit, and how encouraging its words! "Lowly sufferer," he seems to say, "see how I bore the cross. Patient laborer, be strong; see how I toiled for the unthankful and the merciless. Mistaken sinner, see of what thou art capable. Rise up, and be blest."

But if, as some early Christians began to do, you take a heathen view, and make Him a God, the Son of God in a peculiar and exclusive sense, much of the significance of His character is gone. His virtue has no merit, His love no feeling, His cross no burthen, His agony no pain. His death is an illusion, His resurrection but a show. For if He were not a man, but a god, what are all these things? What His words, His life, His excellence of achievement? It is all nothing, weighed against the illimitable greatness of Him who created the worlds and fills up all time and space! Then His resignation is no lesson, His life no model, His death no triumph to you or me, who are not gods, but mortal men, that know not what a day shall bring forth, and walk by faith "dim sounding on our perilous way." Alas! we have despaired of man, and so cut off his brightest hope.

In respect of doctrines as well as forms, we see all is transitory. "Everywhere is instability and insecurity." Opinions have[172] changed most on points deemed most vital. Could we bring up a Christian teacher of any age, from the sixth to the fourteenth century, for example, tho a teacher of undoubted soundness of faith, whose word filled the churches of Christendom, clergymen would scarce allow him to kneel at their altar, or sit down with them at the Lord's table. His notions of Christianity could not be exprest in our forms, nor could our notions be made intelligible to his ears. The questions of his age, those on which Christianity was thought to depend,—questions which perplexed and divided the subtle doctors,—are no questions to us. The quarrels which then drove wise men mad now only excite a smile or a tear, as we are disposed to laugh or weep at the frailty of man. We have other straws of our own to quarrel for. Their ancient books of devotion do not speak to us; their theology is a vain word. To look back but a short period,—the theological speculations of our fathers during the last two centuries, their "practical divinity," even the sermons written by genius and piety are, with rare exceptions, found unreadable; such a change is there in the doctrines.

Now who shall tell us that the change is to stop here; that this sect or that, or even all sects united, have exhausted the river of life, and received it all in their canonized urns, so that we need draw no more out of the eternal well, but get refreshment nearer at hand?[173] Who shall tell us that another age will not smile at our doctrines, disputes, and unchristian quarrels about Christianity, and make wide the mouth at men who walked brave in orthodox raiment, delighting to blacken the names of heretics, and repeat again the old charge, "He hath blasphemed"? Who shall tell us they will not weep at the folly of all such as fancied truth shone only into the contracted nook of their school, or sect, or coterie? Men of other times may look down equally on the heresy-hunters, and men hunted for heresy, and wonder at both. The men of all ages before us were quite as confident as we, that their opinion was truth, that their notion was Christianity and the whole thereof. The men who lit the fires of persecution, from the first martyr to Christian bigotry down to the last murder of the innocents, had no doubt their opinion was divine. The contest about transubstantiation and the immaculate purity of the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Scriptures was waged with bitterness unequaled in these days. The Protestant smiles at one, the Catholic at the other, and men of sense wonder at both. It might teach us all a lesson, at least of forbearance. No doubt an age will come in which ours shall be reckoned a period of darkness, like the sixth century,—when men groped for the wall, but stumbled and fell, because they trusted a transient notion, not an eternal truth; an age when temples were full[174] of idols, set up by human folly; an age in which Christian light had scarce begun to shine into men's hearts. But while this change goes on, while one generation of opinions passes away, and another rises up, Christianity itself, that pure religion, which exists eternal in the constitution of the soul and the mind of God, is always the same. The Word that was before Abraham, in the very beginning, will not change, for that Word is truth. From this Jesus subtracted nothing; to this He added nothing. But He came to reveal it as the secret of God, that cunning men could not understand, but which filled the souls of men meek and lowly of heart. This truth we owe to God; the revelation thereof to Jesus, our elder brother, God's chosen son.

To turn away from the disputes of the Catholics and the Protestants, of the Unitarian and the Trinitarian, of old school and new school, and come to the plain words of Jesus of Nazareth,—Christianity is a simple thing, very simple. It is absolute, pure morality; absolute, pure religion,—the love of man; the love of God acting without let or hindrance. The only creed it lays down is the great truth which springs up spontaneous in the holy heart,—there is a God. Its watchword is, Be perfect as your Father in heaven. The only form it demands is a divine life,—doing the best thing in the best way, from the highest motives; perfect obedience to the great law[175] of God. Its sanction is the voice of God in your heart; the perpetual presence of Him who made us and the stars over our head; Christ and the Father abiding within us. All this is very simple—a little child can understand it; very beautiful—the loftiest mind can find nothing so lovely. Try it by reason, conscience, and faith,—things highest in man's nature,—we see no redundance, we feel no deficiency. Examine the particular duties it enjoins,—humility, reverence, sobriety, gentleness, charity, forgiveness, fortitude, resignation, faith, and active love; try the whole extent of Christianity, so well summed up in the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"; and is there anything therein that can perish? No, the very opponents of Christianity have rarely found fault with the teachings of Jesus. The end of Christianity seems to be to make all men one with God as Christ was one with Him; to bring them to such a state of obedience and goodness that we shall think divine thoughts and feel divine sentiments, and so keep the law of God by living a life of truth and love. Its means are purity and prayer; getting strength from God, and using it for our fellow-men as well as ourselves. It allows perfect freedom. It does not demand all men to think alike, but to think uprightly, and get[176] as near as possible at truth; not all men to live alike, but to live holy, and get as near as possible to a life perfectly divine. Christ set up no Pillars of Hercules, beyond which men must not sail the sea in quest of truth. He says, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.... Greater works than these shall ye do." Christianity lays no rude hand on the sacred peculiarity of individual genius and character. But there is no Christian sect which does not fetter a man. It would make all men think alike, or smother their conviction in silence. Were all men Quakers or Catholics, Unitarians or Baptists, there would be much less diversity of thought, character, and life, less of truth active in the world, than now. But Christianity gives us the largest liberty of the sons of God; and were all men Christians after the fashion of Jesus, this variety would be a thousand times greater than now; for Christianity is not a system of doctrines, but rather a method of attaining oneness with God. It demands, therefore, a good life of piety within, of purity without, and gives the promise that whoso does God's will shall know of God's doctrine.

**÷**05-08 MACLEOD

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Norman Macleod, the eminent Scotch preacher, was born at Campbeltown, in Argyleshire, in 1812. In his preaching he departed from the rigid conventionality of the Scottish Church. His large vision and broad culture gave unusual distinction both to his writings and to his pulpit oratory. He was conspicuous for philanthropic efforts, and frequently held evening services for workingmen. He distinguished himself by his popular Christian writing and by his pulpit oratory. He was practical and manly, of godly nature, with extreme adaptability, and greatly esteemed by Queen Victoria, who made him her chaplain in 1857. He died in 1872.

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MACLEOD

1812-1872

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY[2]

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.—Joh 17:20-21.

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come!" The hour was indeed come for which the whole world had been in travail since creation, and which was for ever to mark a new era in the history of the universe. The hour was come when, having finished the work given Him to do, He was to return to His Father, but only after ending His earthly journey along the awful path on which He was now entering, and which led through Gethsemane, the cross, and the grave. At such a moment in His life He lifted up His eyes in perfect peace, from the sinful and sorrowful world, to the heavens glorious in their harmony and soothing in their silence, and said, "Father!" One feels a solemn awe, as if entering the holy of holies,[180] in seeking to enter into the mind of Christ as exprest in this prayer. Never were such words spoken on earth, never were such words heard in heaven. I ask no other evidence to satisfy my spirit that they are the truth of God than the evidence of their own light, revealing as it does the speaker as being Himself light and life, who verily came from God and went to God.

But let me in all reverence endeavor to express a few thoughts, as to the general meaning of this prayer, with reference more especially to that portion of it which I have selected as the subject of my discourse.

The one all-absorbing desire of our Lord, as here exprest—the ultimate end sought to be realized by Him—is that God might be glorified as a Father, and that by the world seeing His love revealed in sending His Son into the world to save sinners. "God is love," but "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through him"—a love which, when spiritually seen and possest by us, is itself life eternal; for "This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent;" but "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love."

All "religion" accordingly, all good, all righteousness, peace, joy, glory, to man and to[181] the universe, are bound up in this one thing, knowing God as a Father. Out of this right condition of love to God, must necessarily come our right condition towards man, that of love to man as a brother with special love, the love of character, to Christian brethren. Such a religion as this was never possest as an idea even by the greatest thinkers among the civilized heathen nations; far less was it realized by any. Whatever knowledge many had about God, they knew Him not as a Father to be loved and trusted, and therefore obeyed. When St. Paul addrest the Athenians, he could find such a thought exprest by a poet only, who had said, "We are also His offspring." It is only in the line of supernatural revelation of God to man, as given to and received by Abraham, "the friend," and perfected by Christ the Son, that this knowledge of God has been possest by man. But even among those to whom this true revelation was given about God, how few truly knew Him!

The want of this religion, whatever else might exist that was called by that name, was the complaint made by God against His people of old, "They do not know me!" "They proceed from evil to evil," He cries, for "they know not me, saith the Lord." "Through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the Lord;" and again: "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,[182] neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." (Jer. ix., 23, 24.)

This was the sorrowing cry of Christ, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee!" This was His joy, "I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me!"

But if Christ desired that His Father's name should be glorified, how was this to be accomplished? By what medium, or means? Now I would here observe that God's method of revealing Himself to man has ever been to do so by living men; and the Bible is a true record of such revelations in the past. Christianity is not the philosophy of life, but life itself; and is a revelation, not of abstract truth, but of the living personal God to living persons as His children, whom He hath created to glorify and enjoy Him for ever. The first grand medium of this revelation is the eternal Son of God. The very essence of God's character being love, He did not exist from all eternity with a mere capacity of loving, but without an object to love; like an eye capable of seeing light, but with no light to see. The object of His love was His Son,[183] who from all eternity responded to that love and rejoiced in His Father. This eternal Son, when manifested in the flesh, revealed His Father directly, so that He could say, in all He was, and in all He did, and, in a true sense, in all He suffered, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;" and men could say of Him, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" "The glory of God" was "in the face of Jesus Christ." Again, He had also, as the Son of Man, glorified His Father; and, by His reverence for, confidence in, and obedience to, Him, and by His joy in Him, had indirectly revealed what he knew God to be to Him and to all as a Father. "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." Such was His finished work. But something more was yet to be accomplished. Ere He descends to Gethsemane, He desires anew to have the joy of revealing a Father's heart by revealing to the world His own heart of love as a Son to that Father. Hence His prayer, "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." He does not prescribe the new circumstances in which His long-tried and perfect filial confidence and love as a Son were to be manifested. With the absolute consecration of true sonship He leaves these circumstances to be determined by His Father. Now, as on the cross, He commits His spirit,[184] as a little child, into His Father's hands. He desires only that in any way, by any means, He may have the joy of showing forth the reality, the endurance, and the triumph of His Sonship. His Father may fill His cup according to His own will, the Son will drink it. The Father may permit a crown of thorns to be placed on His brow, and every conceivable horror of great darkness from the hate of men and devils to be cast over Him like a funeral-pall; He may be rejected by all His brethren and by the Church and by the State—"Amen!" He cries. Let His body be broken and His blood shed, He will give thanks! One thing only He prays for, "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee!" As a further end to be accomplished, He prays that He may have the joy of making others share the same divine love and joy, and therefore adds, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

But while He as the Son was to be the first revealer of God the Father, He was not, therefore, to be the only revealer. He was the firstborn of many brethren in whom the same love was to be reproduced, and by whom the same high duty was to be performed. If the light of the glory of God shone directly in the face[185] of Jesus Christ, that light was to be transmitted to those who were to shine as lights in the world, that others seeing them might glorify the same God. For now, as ever, God in a real sense manifests Himself in the flesh. Hence our Lord's desire that His brethren should, as sons, reveal the Father, like Himself the Son. He says accordingly, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." Sent whom? Not apostles only, but those also who should believe through their word; not ministers of the Church only, but members also; all, in short, who were qualified to convince the world that God was a Father, by convincing it of this truth, that God had sent His Son to save sinners—the "faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation."

But the question is further suggested, What is this qualification? What is this which men must possess in order to accomplish Christ's purpose of inducing the world to believe? What is this evidence of Christianity which they are to present to the eyes of unbelieving men, by seeing which these are to know and glorify God as their Father in Christ? We reply, it is the oneness of those who are to be ambassadors from God and fellow-workers with Christ. "I pray for them," He says, and not for them only, but "for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me,[186] and I in thee, that they may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

Now this leads me to consider more particularly the nature of this oneness which is essential for such a successful mission as will convince the world of the truth of Christ's mission from the Father. What is meant by this oneness, or this union?

We are guided in our inquiry by three features which characterize it. First, It is a oneness such as subsists between Christ and God; secondly, It is a oneness which can be seen or appreciated; thirdly, It is a oneness which is calculated from its nature to convince the world of the truth of Christ's mission.

Now there are many kinds of union among men, which, however wonderful or excellent, may be set aside as obviously not fulfilling these conditions, and not such, therefore, as Christ prayed for. There is, e. g., the unity of an army which marches as one man, implicitly obeying its commander even unto death and without a question. Yet, however grand this is, and however illustrative of the character of good soldiers of Jesus Christ, it does not fulfil the conditions specified. Nor does the wonderful unity of a State, which makes and imposes laws, proclaims war or peace, administers justice, and executes its judgments. In neither case is there any union[187] such as subsists betwixt God and Christ; nor such as is in any sense adapted to convince the world that God has sent His Son to save sinners. The same may be alleged of any outward and visible unity of a body of men which might be called a Church. Its organization might be as wonderful, and its members as disciplined, and its power as remarkable, as those of an army; it might be held together like a state by its laws and its enactments, its rewards and punishments, and might energetically advance until it possest the dominion of the world, and attracted such attention as that all men might marvel at it; its members might assent to all the details of a creed however large; the same rights and ceremonies and modes of worship might be repeated throughout all its parts; and it might be able to continue its organized existence from age to age,—yet it would by no means follow that any such system, however remarkable, possest that inward spiritual unity desired in Christ's prayer, no more than the compact unity of Brahminism does, nor the still more extraordinary unity of Buddhism, with its temples, its priesthood, its creed, its rites and ceremonies, continuing unchanged during teeming centuries, and dominating over hundreds of millions of the human race. May not all these and many similar unities be fully and satisfactorily accounted for by principles in human nature, altogether irrespective[188] of the fact of a supernatural power having come into the world to which their origin or continuance is owing? For there is a oneness in the churchyard as well as in the church. There might be a oneness of assent amongst a deaf multitude with regard to the beauty of music, because determined by the fiat of authority, but not as the result of hearing and of taste; and the same kind of oneness of judgment as to the beauty of pictures, on the part of those who were blind. Unity alone proves nothing, apart from its nature and its origin.

There is but one kind of unity or oneness which fulfils the specified conditions, and that is, oneness of character or of spiritual life—in one word, the oneness of love;—for this is the highest condition of a personal spirit. It is such love as God had and has to Christ; "That the love wherewith thou has loved me may be in them;" such love as the Son has to the Father, and such as He manifested to His disciples that very evening when, conscious of His divine glory, and "knowing that he was come from God, and went to God," He girded Himself with a towel and washed His disciples' feet. Hence the declaration, "The glory," that is, of character, "which thou gavest me I have given them, that they," through its possession, "may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me." Hence again His saying, "They are[189] not of the world, even as I am not of the world;" and His prayer, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil." Such love as this, when in the soul of ordinary men, does not originate in their own hearts, however naturally benevolent or affectionate these may be. Our Lord in this prayer recognizes it as inseparable from faith in His own teaching, and from personal conviction of the truth which they themselves were to preach; for they had received His words, and had "known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me"; and so He prays, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."

Now, if we would divide, as with a prism, this pure light of love, we might discern it as being composed, as it were, of at least two colors, or features—first, love to God, exprest in the desire that He should be known; secondly, love to man, exprest in self-sacrifice that all should share this true love. But these very features we discern as first existing in God the Father and in Christ the Son; for God desires, from the necessity of His own nature, that He should be known, and that all His rational creatures should see the glory of His character, and, in seeing it, should live. God has also manifested His love, according to the law of love, by giving and by self-sacrifice,[190] inasmuch as He "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." In like manner, the Son desired that His Father might be known, and to accomplish this He became incarnate. He has manifested His love also in the form of self-sacrifice, in that His whole life and death were an offering up of Himself as a sacrifice unto God, and as an atonement for the sins of the world, in order that all men might be made partakers of His own eternal life in God. This, too, is the "mind" of the Holy Spirit, for He glorifies the Son, that the Son may glorify the Father, and glorifies Him in and by His true Church. Hence, wherever true love exists in man, it will manifest itself in these two forms; it will ever desire that God may be known, and will never "seek its own," but sacrifice itself that this end may be attained. In such oneness as this of mind, spirit, character—in one word, love—there is realized the first condition of that oneness for which our Lord prayed.

Secondly, This unity of character fulfils the second condition in its being such as the world can in some degree see and appreciate. Blind as the world is, it can see love in the form of self-sacrifice at least, seeking its good, even tho it may not at once see in this a revelation of such love as has its origin in the love of God to man. The world's heart can perceive more things and greater things than can its intellect. The child of the statesman or[191] man of science may not be able to comprehend the world-politics of the one or the scientific discoveries of the other; but it can see and feel the love revealed in the glance of the eye, in the smile on the lips, or in the arms that clasp it to the bosom; and in seeing this, it sees an infinitely greater thing than the politics of the one or the scientific discoveries of the other. It sees, too, in this, tho unconsciously, the love of the Father's heart which fills the universe with glory, even as its eye, when opened to a little light, sees the same light which illumines a thousand worlds. And thus can the world see the light of love. Those who are in prison, in nakedness, or in thirst, are quite able to see and to appreciate the love that, for Christ's sake, visits them, clothes them, and gives them drink. The wretched lepers in the lazar-house, into which no one could enter and ever return to the world, could see and appreciate the love of the Moravian missionary who visited them, and who shut the door for ever between him and all he knew and loved, that he might share and alleviate the horrors of his wretched brethren whom he loved more than all. Blind as the world is, it can see this or nothing; bad as it is, it can appreciate this goodness or none.

Thirdly, Such a character is calculated also to convince the world that God has sent Christ to save sinners. Observe again what is our[192] Lord's idea of the mission which was to convert the world; it is this, that those whom He sends, even as God had sent Himself, whether as apostles or as disciples, should give to their fellow men what they have first received from their living Head, Jesus Christ. They were to give "the words" which they received from Him, and which He had received from God—they were to give "the truth" which they received from Him, and which He Himself had glorified in His life and death, that God had sent Him to be the Savior of the world. They were also to manifest that life which they had received from Him, and which He had received from God, and which in them was the necessary result of their faith. Now, it is in the seeing of this life in those who proclaim the truth that the truth itself appears worthy of all acceptation, and that God verily, who has sent His Son to save sinners, is love. It is thus, you perceive, that the mission of the Church, whether of its ministers or its members, is not only to preach glad tidings, but to show their reality in their actual results; not only to preach salvation, but to preach it by saved men; not only to preach eternal life, but to preach it by those who possess it; not only to preach about a Father, but to reveal also that Father through His regenerated sons, who themselves know and love Him. Further, the idea of a Church is that of a society whose members are united through faith in the same[193] truth, and are in possession of the same life. Such a society necessarily springs out of faith and love, and its members cannot choose but unite outwardly because united inwardly. Our Lord assumes its future existence and provides for its continuance. A Church realizing Christ's ideal would, therefore, possess, as its creed this, at least, of believing Christ's words, and the truth that "God had sent his Son to be the Savior of the world." For "every spirit that confesseth not that Christ hath come in the flesh is not of God." "And whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Its initiatory sacrament, that of baptism, does but express the nature of this society—viz., that its members are the children of God the Father through Christ the Son, and by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit—their character being a spiritual baptism into the possession of "God's name," which is "love."

Another characteristic of it is their possession of that eternal life which is exprest as well as maintained by the "communion" in which its members meet together as brethren, their bond of union being a common union with God in Christ and one another, through the constant partaking of Him, the living bread; eating His flesh and drinking His blood—that is, His whole life of self-sacrifice and love becoming a part of their very being. Worship in spirit and in truth is also necessarily[194] involved in the idea of such a society; and I might add, worship, not from a command merely, but as a necessary result of spiritual character, becoming in a true sense "infallible" as to religion; but religion in this sense,—that of knowing God because of its members being able to say, "We know that he dwelleth in us, and we in him, because he hath given us his Spirit, and we know and testify that he sent his Son to be the Savior of the world." Such a Church would likewise, in a true sense, have an apostolical succession—that is, a succession of teachers and members who had the apostolic spirit, or the oneness as described by our Lord; for it would be able, from its possessing the Spirit of God, to discern those who were like-minded, and to select such as were specially fitted for the work of the ministry. This is the ideal of the Church.

But has such a Church been realized? Has there ever been a visible organized body of men who carried out this sublime purpose? Once, indeed, there was. For we perceive, more or less clearly, all these features in the early Church when it had received the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and when its members met together and "had all things in common," and manifested such sonship towards God, and brotherhood towards each other; and sent forth everywhere its public minister and its members also to bring men into the same blessed unity. But supposing the ideal had no[195] more been realized since that time than God's ideal as described by Moses had been fully realized in the Jewish Church;—yet must the ideal, nevertheless, be ever kept before the spiritual eye. For we do not produce high art by keeping a low rather than a high standard before the artist; neither can we reach to great things in the Church unless we keep a high standard before its members. It is unnecessary here to inquire how it came to pass that the Church, to such a great extent, lost this ideal as one visible society, and became so corrupt as to substitute innumerable vain appearances of spiritual realities for that which alone could satisfy a true and righteous God. But as things now are, the "Church" is broken up into various "churches" or societies, striving more or less to realize the ideal. Each society does so just in proportion as it is able to carry out our Lord's purpose as to its ministry being one in faith, believing Christ's words, in its knowing truly that He came from God to save sinners, and in its seeking, from love to God and man, to make all men know their Father, in the knowledge of whom is salvation.

But to confine myself to our own particular duties, let me remind you, fathers and brethren, of our high calling as profest ministers of Christ's Church. The cry of earnest souls, weary of their many burthens, unsatisfied with their husks, conscious of being in a distant[196] land, and finding nothing which men can give to allay their hungering and thirsting, is this: "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us!" Now supposing an earnest spirit, seeking after the Father, comes to us as His profest ministers in order to discover the truth of what we preach, he might very naturally say, "You preach to me a Savior who came a long time ago into the world professing to save sinners, and you tell me that He is coming again at some future period to judge the world and to bestow salvation upon many; but I want to know whether there is a Savior now; or is it all empty space between that past and that future? You tell me about salvation from the suffering of sin; I ask, 'Is there salvation from sin itself, without which I feel there can be no deliverance from suffering'? You tell me about a medicine that is an infallible cure for 'this ineradicable taint of sin,' and describe the terrible consequences of the disease to me if I be not cured, and the blessed results of joyous spiritual health and peace; but 'Can you show me any person who has actually been restored from disease to health by this divine medicine'? Is all this preaching a mere idle theory of life? Or if not, where is the life itself? Art thou thyself saved? If not—'physician, heal thyself'; for until then thou canst not cure me." But suppose, further, that this same person comes into close contact with the mind of the preacher, and that the[197] more he sees and knows it the more he discerns in the man such thoughts regarding God, such a knowledge of Him, such a love to Him, as convince him that here at least is a reality and not a pretense; suppose that the more he discerns his whole inner life, the things which give him pain and joy, the things which he desires and loves, with his whole feelings towards his fellow-men—feelings expressed in a life of action, which, in spite of infirmities and shortcomings belonging to all human beings, the questioner cannot but recognize as a kind of life he never saw before—a life, too, which commends itself, from what it is, as being the most real and the most satisfactory to reason, conscience, and heart: can anything, I ask, be more calculated to convince him of the account which its possessor gives him as to its origin, when he says, "The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief." What then? What else must be the result of such a vision of true life than the conviction that God is our Father and that God is love, because it is evident from observation as well as from testimony that He hath sent His Son to save men, not in the past only, but to save them now—not to save only those who are called "good," but to save those[198] who are the chief of sinners? If a man truly believes all this, then does he know God, and in so doing possesses eternal life. But more than this, how will his convictions be deepened if, in searching for others who may have the same life, and if, tho failing to discover any one visible body of Christians that show it forth in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace, he is yet able to satisfy himself that there have been, during the last eighteen centuries, and that there are now, in every church, in every land, among all races of men, among those of different temperaments, different culture, and amidst a variety of all possible outward circumstances, men with like passions as himself, who have faith in the same Lord, and are thereby possest of a true love of God and of one another—how will this, I say, deepen in him the conviction that God is a Father, because a Savior, who "gave his Son, not that any should perish, but that all should possess everlasting life?" Will he not be thus led to "believe the record that God has given us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son?" I am persuaded that a man of the highest intellectual culture and the greatest learning, earnestly searching after God and Christ, and the truth of Christianity, would be more convinced of the love of the one as manifested in the truth of the other, by coming into contact with one true soul which, without perhaps intellectual culture or[199] learning, yet truly loved God and man, than he would be by all the volumes on the evidence of Christianity ever written, without such a spiritual vision of a holy life.

On the other hand, supposing that no such evidence of the truth of Christianity could be discovered in the preacher of Christianity; nay, if his character contradicted his preaching; if, while he preached love to God and man, he manifested neither, but indifference, to say the least of it, to both; if, while he preached the necessity and the excellence of the Christian life, he himself revealed its very opposite—what effect would this have upon an earnest spirit, but that Christianity was a mere ideal system unsuited to the world, a philosophy of life that might be believed in, but not a life itself that might be possest?

This want of personal character, however imperfect, yet real, may account for the want of success in the mission of the Church to convince the world, whether at home or abroad. We may give religion but not godliness; the means of grace, as they are called, but not the grace seen and exprest in the living man. We would thus hear of Christianity without seeing it; hear about the love of God, and the love of Christ as a Savior, without being convinced even by those who send missionaries to India, who, altho they may individually reveal this life, yet how often are looked upon as mere[200] official teachers; while the "Christians" from "Christendom" may, in coming into contact with the heathen, show by their denial of Christianity that it is a matter for the priesthood, not for all men; a book theology, but not an actual power working in humanity: and of such persons it may be said that they have profaned God's great name among the heathen.

And this, too, may also account for the secret of success by many a minister of whom the world knows nothing: "For greatest minds are those of whom the noisy world hears least." They may not be great in the ordinary sense of the word—great as thinkers, great as orators, or great in the possession of any remarkable gifts; but they are nevertheless great in the kingdom of heaven; great because little children—great in meekness, in patience, in humility, in love of God and man, and who carry this music in their heart, "through dusky land and wrangling mart." What is the secret of their power? What but an eternal reality! the reality of a godly, godlike life obtained from God, and sustained by God, and seen in the eye, felt in the hand, heard in the words—a light of life which shines beside many a dying bed in many a home of sorrow, as well as in the pulpit. This is a kind of life whose biography will be written with the tears of the grateful orphan and widow, and of many a saved soul which[201] remembers its possessor as its spiritual father. Such a ministry as this can no more fail than the love of God which gives it birth. Let us thank God, therefore, that such a secret power as this is within the reach of us all. We may not be men of talent, and for that we are not responsible; but we may be good men because little children towards God, and for that we are responsible: "I thank thee, heavenly Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes."

And now, fathers and brethren, such is our high calling, to proclaim the glad tidings that God has sent Christ into the world to save sinners. Our chief authority for doing this is that we know it to be true; and if so, no one can deprive us of the high privilege and joy of proclaiming it. A glorious work is thus given us to do; we are ambassadors for God, beseeching men to be reconciled to Him, and we are fellow-workers with our Lord Himself. But this involves a great responsibility, corresponding to the greatness of our calling. For it is at once a glorious and a tremendous thought that Christ perils the chief evidence of the truth of Christianity, not upon what we say, but more upon what we are; and what we are is neither more nor less than what God knows us to be. Our preaching may, nevertheless, fail in some cases to convince the world, as it has done before; for the glory of[202] Christ Himself was not seen by Judas. Indeed the light of life, when it shines, requires the single eye to see it. But in so far as the ministry of men, as an instrumentality, can convince the world, let our ministry be such as is calculated according to Christ's purpose to produce this result. Let it consist of those who can say, "We know whom we have believed." "We know and believe the love that God hath to us." "We testify that he sent his Son to be the Savior of the world."

But I must bring my sermon to a close.

Pardon me, my brethren, if I have appeared to address you in any other spirit than that of one who would with you confess his sins and shortcomings, and lament with shame and sorrow how much time and power have been lost never to be regained; how many gifts and noble opportunities have been neglected and perverted through unbelief and sloth, which might have been used for our own good and that of our fellow-men. Verily the day is far spent with many of us, and the night is near in which no man can work. Whatever our hands find to do must be done now or never. Let us pray that the living Spirit of God, given to all who seek Him, and whose work it is to glorify the Son, may take of His things and show them to our souls, and open our spiritual eye to see the glory of God in the face of Christ, so that we may be changed into the same glory. May we strive to keep the[203] unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and be enabled so to preach and so to live that the world may be convinced, by what it sees and hears, of the reality of the love of God the Father in giving us and all men eternal life through Jesus Christ His Son! May He who makes us sons of God enable us, as sons, to be glorified in the perfection and revelation of our characters, so that with our elder Brother we may glorify His Father and our Father!

And now, to Father, Son and Holy Ghost, one God, be glory, dominion, and praise for evermore. Amen!

**÷**05-09 MOZLEY

THE REVERSAL OF HUMAN JUDGMENT

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

James B. Mozley, English divine and philosopher, was born at Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, in 1813. He was educated at Oxford, and is particularly known for his discourses on Baptism and Predestination. Gladstone appointed him as professor of divinity at Oxford. His Bampton Lectures on Miracles (1863) are still considered of classical authority. Dr. Brastow, in speaking of his clear and well-ordered thought, says: "He was intent upon getting at the heart of all subjects investigated, and his slowness in clearing up a subject and his deliberation and fastidiousness with respect to his diction embarrassed him. The result was a mastery of thought and an exactness and clearness and strength of speech that are more than an offset for the difficulties he encountered; and one can hardly fail to see that this patient, self-poised mental habit saved him from one-sidedness and kept the balance of his judgement and made him the safer guide. We see here the immense value of thorough mental training." He died in 1878.

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MOZLEY

1813-1878

THE REVERSAL OF HUMAN JUDGMENT[3]

Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.—Mat 19:30.

Perhaps there is hardly any person of reflection to whom the thought has not occurred at times, of the final judgment turning out to be a great subversion of human estimates of men. Society forms its opinions of men, and places some on a high pinnacle; they are favorites with it, religious and moral favorites. Such judgments are a necessary and proper part of the present state of things; they are so, quite independently of the question whether they are true or not; it is proper that there should be this sort of expression of the voice of the day; the world is not nothing, because it is transient; it must judge and speak upon such evidence as it has, and is capable of seeing. Therefore those characters of men are by all means to be respected by us, as members of this world; they have their place, they are a part of the system. But does the idea strike us of some enormous subversion of human judgments in the next world, some vast rectification, to realize which[208] now, even if we could, would not be good for us? Such an idea would not be without support from some of those characteristic prophetic sayings of our Lord, which, like the slanting strokes of the sun's rays across the clouds, throw forward a tract of mysterious light athwart the darkness of the future. Such is that saying in which a shadow of the Eternal Judgment seems to come over us—"Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." It is impossible to read this saying without an understanding that it was intended to throw an element of wholesome scepticism into the present estimate of human character, and to check the idolatry of the human heart which lifts up its favorites with as much of self-complacency as of enthusiasm, and in its worship of others flatters itself.

Indeed, this language of Scripture, which speaks of the subversion of human judgments in another world, comes in connection with another language with which it most remarkably fits in, language which speaks very decidedly of a great deception of human judgments in this world. It is observable that the gospel prophecy of the earthly future of Christianity is hardly what we should have expected it beforehand to be; there is a great absence of brightness in it; the sky is overcast with clouds, and birds of evil omen fly to and fro; there is an agitation of the air, as if dark elements were at work in it; or it is as if a[209] fog rose up before our eyes, and treacherous lights were moving to and fro in it, which we could not trust. Prophecy would fain presage auspiciously, but as soon as she casts her eye forward, her note saddens, and the chords issue in melancholy and sinister cadences which depress the hearer's mind. And what is the burden of her strain? It is this. As soon as ever Christianity is cast into the world to begin its history, that moment there begins a great deception. It is a pervading thought in gospel prophecy—the extraordinary capacity for deceiving and being deceived that would arise under the gospel; it is spoken of as something peculiar in the world. There are to be false Christs and false prophets, false signs and wonders; many that will come in Christ's name, saying, I am Christ, and deceive many; so that it is the parting admonition of Christ to His disciples—"Take heed, lest any man deceive you"—as if that would be the greater danger. And this great quantity of deception was to culminate in that one in whom all power of signs and lying wonders should reside, even that Antichrist, who as God should sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Thus before the true Christ was known to the world, the prophecy of the false one was implanted deep in the heart of Christianity.

When we come to the explanation of this mass of deception as it applies to the Christian[210] society, and the conduct of Christians, we find that it consists of a great growth of specious and showy effects, which will in fact issue out of Christianity, not implying sterling goodness. Christianity will act as a great excitement to human nature, it will communicate a great impulse, it will move and stir man's feelings and intellect; this impulse will issue in a great variety of high gifts and activities, much zeal and ardor. But this brilliant manifestation will be to a large extent lacking in the substance of the Christian character. It will be a great show. That is to say, there will be underneath it the deceitful human heart—the natura callida, as Thomas � Kempis calls it, qu� se semper pro fine habet. We have even in the early Christian Church that specious display of gifts which put aside as secondary the more solid part of religion, and which St. Paul had so strongly to check. Gospel prophecy goes remarkably in this direction, as to what Christianity would do in the world; that it would not only bring out the truth of human nature, but would, like some powerful alchemy, elicit and extract the falsehood of it; that it would not only develop what was sincere and sterling in man, but what was counterfeit in him too. Not that Christianity favors falsehood, any more than the law favored sin because it brought out sin. The law, as St. Paul says, brought out sin because it was spiritual, and forced sin to[211] be sin against light. So in the case of Christianity. If a very high, pure, and heart-searching religion is brought into contact with a corrupt nature, the nature grasps at the greatness of the religion, but will not give up itself; yet to unite the two requires a self-deception the more subtle and potent in proportion to the purity of the religion. And certainly, comparing the hypocrisy of the Christian with that of the old world, we see that the one was a weak production in comparison with the other, which is indeed a very powerful creation; throwing itself into feeling and language with an astonishing freedom and elasticity, and possessing wonderful spring and largeness.

There is, however, one very remarkable utterance of our Lord Himself upon this subject, which deserves special attention. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you." Now this is a very remarkable prophecy, for one reason, that in the very first start of Christianity, upon the very threshold of its entrance into the world, it looks through its success and universal reception, into an ulterior result of that victory—a counterfeit profession of it. It sees, before the first nakedness of its birth is over, a prosperous and flourishing religion,[212] which it is worth while for others to pay homage to, because it reflects credit on its champions. Our Lord anticipates the time when active zeal for Himself will be no guaranty. And we may observe the difference between Christ and human founders. The latter are too glad of any zeal in their favor, to examine very strictly the tone and quality of it. They grasp at it at once; not so our Lord. He does not want it even for Himself, unless it is pure in the individual. But this statement of our Lord's is principally important, as being a prophecy relating to the earthly future of Christianity. It places before us public religious leaders, men of influence in the religious world, who spread and push forward by gifts of eloquence and powers of mind, the truths of His religion, whom yet He will not accept, because of a secret corruptness in the aim and spirit with which they did their work. The prophecy puts forth before us the fact of a great deal of work being done in the Church, and outwardly good zealous work, upon the same motive in substance, upon which worldly men do their work in the world, and stamps it as the activity of corrupt nature. The rejection of this class of religious workers is complete, altho they have been, as the language itself declares, forward and active for spiritual objects, and not only had them on their lips.

Here then we have a remarkable subversion[213] of human judgments in the next world foretold by our Lord Himself; for those men certainly come forward with established religious characters to which they appeal; they have no doubt of their position in God's kingdom, and they speak with the air of men whose claims have been acquiesced in by others, and by numbers. And thus a false Christian growth is looked to in gospel prophecy, which will be able to meet even the religious tests of the current day, and sustain its pretensions, but which will not satisfy the tests of the last day.

We are then perhaps at first surprized at the sternness of their sentence, and are ready to say with the trembling disciple, "Who then shall be saved?" But when we reflect upon it, we shall see that it is not more than what meets the case; i. e., that we know of sources of error in the estimate of human character which will account for great mistakes being made; which mistakes will have to be rectified.

One source of mistakes then is, that while the gospel keeps to one point of its classification of men,—viz., the motive, by which alone it decides their character, the mass of men in fact find it difficult to do so. They have not that firm hold of the moral idea which prevents them from wandering from it, and being diverted by irrelevant considerations, they think of the spirituality of a man as belonging[214] to the department to which he is attached, the profession he makes, the subject matter he works upon, the habitual language he has to use. The sphere of these men, of whom the estimate was to be finally reversed, was a religious one,—viz., the Church, and this was a remarkable prop to them. Now, with respect to this, it must be observed that the Church is undoubtedly in its design a spiritual society, but it is also a society of this world as well; and it depends upon the inward motive of a man whether it is to him a spiritual society or a worldly one. The Church, as soon as ever it is embodied in a visible collection or society of men, who bring into it human nature, with human influences, regards, points of view, estimates, aims, and objects—I say the Church, from the moment it thus embodies itself in a human society, is the world. Individual souls in it convert into reality the high profest principles of the body, but the active stock of motives in it are the motives of human nature. Can the visible Church indeed afford to do without these motives? Of course it cannot. It must do its work by means of these to a great extent, just as the world does its work. Religion itself is beautiful and heavenly, but the machinery for it is very like the machinery for anything else. I speak of the apparatus for conducting and administering the visible system of it. Is not the machinery for all causes and objects[215] much the same, communication with others, management, contrivance, combination, adaptation of means to end? Religion then is itself a painful struggle, but religious machinery provides as pleasant a form of activity as any other machinery possesses; and it counts for and exercises much the same kind of talents and gifts that the machinery of any other department does, that of a government office, or a public institution, or a large business. The Church, as a part of the work, must have active-minded persons to conduct its policy and affairs; which persons must, by their very situation, connect themselves with spiritual subjects, as being the subjects of the society; they must express spiritual joys, hopes, and fears, apprehensions, troubles, trials, aims, and wishes. These are topics which belong to the Church as a department. A religious society, then, or religious sphere of action, or religious sphere of subjects, is irrelevant as regards the spirituality of the individual person, which is a matter of inward motive.

One would not of course exclude from the sphere of religion the motive of esprit de corps: it is undoubtedly a great stimulus, and in its measure is consistent with all simplicity and singleness of heart; but in an intense form, when the individual is absorbed in a blind obedience to a body, it corrupts the quality of religion; it ensnares the man in a[216] kind of self-interest; and he sees in the success of the body the reflection of himself. It becomes an egotistic motive. There has been certainly an immense produce from it; but the type of religion it has produced is a deflection from simplicity; it may possess striking and powerful qualities, but it is not like the free religion of the heart; and there is that difference between the two, which there is between what comes from a second-hand source and from the fountain head. It has not that naturalness (in the highest sense) which alone gives beauty to religion.

Again, those who feel that they have a mission may convert it into a snare to themselves. Doubtless, if, according to St. Paul, "he who desireth the office of a bishop desireth a good work," so one who has a mission to do some particular work has a good office given him. Still, where life is too prominently regarded in this light, the view of life as a mission tends to supersede the view of it as trial and probation. The mission becomes the final cause of life. The generality may be born to do their duty in that station of life in which it has pleased God to call them; but in their own case the mission overtops and puts into the shade the general purpose of life as probation; the generality are sent into the world for their own moral benefit, but they are rather sent into the world for the benefit of that world[217] itself. The outward object with its display and machinery is apt to reduce to a kind of insignificance the inward individual end of life. It appears small and commonplace. The success of their own individual probation is assumed in embarking upon the larger work, as the less is included in the greater; it figures as a preliminary in their eyes, which may be taken for granted; it appears an easy thing to them to save their own souls, a thing, so to speak, for anybody to do.

What has been dwelt upon hitherto as a source of false magnifying and exaltation of human character, has been the invisibility of men's motives. But let us take another source of mistake in human judgment.

Nothing is easier, when we take gifts of the intellect and imagination in the abstract, than to see that these do not constitute moral goodness. This is indeed a mere truism; and yet, in the concrete, it is impossible not to see how nearly they border upon counting as such; to what advantage they set off any moral good there may be in a man; sometimes even supplying the absence of real good with what looks extremely like it. On paper these mental gifts are a mere string of terms; we see exactly what these terms denote, and we cannot mistake it for something else. It is plain that eloquence, imagination, poetical talent, are no more moral goodness than riches are, or than health and strength are, or than noble[218] birth is. We know that bad men have possest them just as much as good men. Nevertheless, take them in actual life, in the actual effect and impression they make, as they express a man's best moods and highest perceptions and feelings, and what a wonderful likeness and image of what is moral do they produce. Think of the effect of refined power of expression, of a keen and vivid imagination as applied to the illustration and enrichment of moral subjects,—to bringing out, e. g., with the whole force of intellectual sympathy, the delicate and high regions of character,—does not one who can do this seem to have all the goodness which he expresses? And it is quite possible he may have; but this does not prove it. There is nothing more in this than the faculty of imagination and intelligent appreciation of moral things. There enters thus unavoidably often into a great religious reputation a good deal which is not religion, but power.

Let us take the character which St. Paul draws. It is difficult to believe that one who had the tongue of men and of angels would not be able to persuade the world that he himself was extraordinarily good. Rather it is part of the fascination of the gift, that the grace of it is reflected in the possessor. But St. Paul gives him, besides thrilling speech which masters men's spirits and carries them away, those profound depths of imagination which[219] still and solemnize them; which lead them to the edge of the unseen world, and excite the sense of the awful and supernatural; he has the understanding of all mysteries. And again, knowledge unfolds all its stores to him with which to illustrate and enrich spiritual truths. Let one then, so wonderful in mental gifts, combine them with the utmost fervor, with boundless faith, before which everything gives way; boundless zeal, ready to make even splendid sacrifices; has there been any age in which such a man would have been set down as sounding and empty? St. Paul could see that such a man might yet be without the true substance—goodness; and that all his gifts could not guarantee it to him; but to the mass his own eloquence would interpret him, the gifts would carry the day, and the brilliant partial virtues would disguise the absence of the general grace of love.

Gifts of intellect and imagination, poetical power, and the like, are indeed in themselves a department of worldly prosperity. It is a very narrow view of prosperity that it consists only in having property; a certain kind of gifts are just as much worldly prosperity as riches; nor are they less so if they belong to a religious man, any more than riches are less prosperity because a religious man is rich. We call these gifts worldly prosperity, because they are in themselves a great advantage, and create success, influence,[220] credit, and all which man so much values; and at the same time they are not moral goodness, because the most corrupt men may have them.

But even the gifts of outward fortune themselves have much of the effect of gifts of mind in having the semblance of something moral. They set off what goodness a man has to such immense advantage, and heighten the effect of it. Take some well-disposed person, and suppose him suddenly to be left an enormous fortune, he would feel himself immediately so much better a man. He would seem to himself to become suddenly endowed with a new large-heartedness and benevolence. He would picture himself the generous patron, the large dispenser of charity, the promoter of all good in the world. The power to become such would look like a new disposition. And in the eyes of the others, too, his goodness would appear to have taken a fresh start. Even serious piety is recognized more as such; it is brought out and placed in high relief, when connected with outward advantages; and so the gifts of fortune become a kind of moral addition to a man.

Action, then, on a large scale, and the overpowering effect of great gifts, are what produce, in a great degree, what we call the canonization of men—the popular judgment which sets them up morally and spiritually upon the pinnacle of the temple, and which[221] professes to be a forestalment, through the mouth of the Church or of religious society, of the final judgment. How decisive is the world's, and, not less confident, the visible Church's note of praise. It is just that trumpet note which does not bear a doubt. How it is trusted! With what certainty it speaks! How large a part of the world's and Church's voice is praise! It is an immense and ceaseless volume of utterance. And by all means let man praise man, and not do it grudgingly either; let there be an echo of that vast action which goes on in the world, provided we only speak of what we know. But if we begin to speak of what we do not know, and which only a higher judgment can decide, we are going beyond our province. On this question we are like men who are deciding irreversibly on some matter in which everything depends upon one element in the case, which element they cannot get at. We appear to know a great deal of one another, and yet, if we reflect, what a vast system of secrecy the moral world is. How low down in a man sometimes (not always) lies the fundamental motive which sways his life? But this is what everything depends on. Is it an unspiritual motive? Is there some keen passion connected with this world at the bottom? Then it corrupts the whole body of action. There is a good deal of prominent religion then, which keeps up its character, even when[222] this motive betrays itself; great gifts fortify it, and people do not see because they will not. But at any rate there is a vast quantity of religious position which has this one great point undecided beneath it; and we know of tremendous dangers to which it is exposed. Action upon a theater may doubtless be as simple-minded action as any other; it has often been; it has been often even childlike action; the apostles acted on a theater; they were a spectacle to men and to angels. Still, what dangers in a spiritual point of view does it ordinarily include—dangers to simplicity, inward probity, sincerity! How does action on this scale and of this kind seem, notwithstanding its religious object, to pass over people, not touching one of their faults, leaving—more than their infirmities—the dark veins of evil in their character as fixed as ever. How will persons sacrifice themselves to their objects? They would benefit the world, it would appear, at their own moral expense; but this is a kind of generosity which is perilous policy for the soul, and is indeed the very mint in which the great mass of false spiritual coinage is made.

On the other hand, while the open theater of spiritual power and energy is so accessible to corrupt motives, which, tho undermining its truthfulness, leave standing all the brilliance of the outer manifestation; let it be considered what a strength and power of[223] goodness may be accumulating in unseen quarters. The way in which man bears temptation is what decides his character; yet how secret is the system of temptation? Who knows what is going on? What the real ordeal has been? What its issue was? So with respect to the trial of griefs and sorrows, the world is again a system of secrecy. There is something particularly penetrating, and which strikes home, in those disappointments which are especially not extraordinary, and make no show. What comes naturally and as a part of our situation has a probing force grander strokes have not; there is a solemnity and stateliness in these, but the blow which is nearest to common life gets the stronger hold. Is there any particular event which seems to have, if we may say so, a kind of malice in it which provokes the Manichean feeling in our nature, it is something which we should have a difficulty in making appear to any one else any special trial. Compared with this inner grasp of some stroke of providence, voluntary sacrifice stands outside of us. After all, the self-made trial is a poor disciplinarian weapon; there is a subtle masterly irritant and provoking point in the genuine natural trial, and in the natural crossness of events, which the artificial thing cannot manage; we can no more make our trials than we can make our feelings. In this way moderate deprivations are in some cases more difficult to bear[224] than extreme ones. "I can bear total obscurity," says Pascal, "well enough; what disgusts me is semi-obscurity; I can make an idol of the whole, but no great merit of the half." And so it is often the case that what we must do as simply right, and which would not strike even ourselves, and still less anybody else, is just the hardest thing to do. A work of supererogation would be much easier. All this points in the direction of great work going on under common outsides where it is not noticed; it hints at a secret sphere of growth and progress; and as such it is an augury and presage of a harvest which may come some day suddenly to light, which human judgments had not counted on.

It is upon such a train of thought as this which has been passing through our minds that we raise ourselves to the reception of that solemn sentence which Scripture has inscribed on the curtain which hangs down before the judgment-seat—"The first shall be last, and the last shall be first." The secrets of the tribunal are guarded, and yet a finger points which seems to say—"Beyond, in this direction, behind this veil, things are different from what you will have looked for."

Suppose, e. g., any supernatural judge should appear in the world now, and it is evident that the scene he would create would be one to startle us; we should not soon be used to it; it would look strange; it would[225] shock and appal; and that from no other cause than simply its reductions; that it presented characters stripped bare, denuded of what was irrelevant to goodness, and only with their moral substance left. The judge would take no cognizance of a rich imagination, power of language, poetical gifts and the like, in themselves, as parts of goodness, any more than he would of riches and prosperity; and the moral residuum would appear perhaps a bare result. The first look of divine justice would strike us as injustice; it would be too pure a justice for us; we should be long in reconciling ourselves to it. Justice would appear, like the painter's gaunt skeleton of emblematic meaning, to be stalking through the world, smiting with attenuation luxuriating forms of virtue. Forms, changed from what we knew, would meet us, strange unaccustomed forms, and we should have to ask them who they are—"You were flourishing but a short while ago, what has happened to you now?" And the answer, if it spoke the truth, would be—"Nothing, except that now, much which lately counted as goodness, counts as such no longer; we are tried by a new moral measure, out of which we issue different men; gifts which have figured as goodness remain as gifts, but cease to be goodness." Thus would the large sweep made of human canonizations act like blight or volcanic fire upon some rich landscape, converting the luxury[226] of nature into a dried-up scene of bare stems and scorched vegetation.

So may the scrutiny of the last day, by discovering the irrelevant material in men's goodness, reduce to a shadow much exalted earthly character. Men are made up of professions, gifts, and talents, and also of themselves, but all so mixed together that we cannot separate one element from another; but another day must show what the moral substance is, and what is only the brightness and setting off of gifts. On the other hand, the same day may show where, tho the setting off of gifts is less, the substance is more. If there will be reversal of human judgment for evil, there will be reversal of it for good too. The solid work which has gone on in secret, under common exteriors, will then spring into light, and come out in a glorious aspect. Do we not meet with surprizes of this kind here, which look like auguries of a greater surprize in the next world, a surprize on a vast scale. Those who have lived under an exterior of rule, when they come to a trying moment sometimes disappoint us; they are not equal to the act required from them; because their forms of duty, whatever they are, have not touched in reality their deeper fault of character, meanness, or jealousy, or the like, but have left them where they were; they have gone on thinking themselves good because they did particular things, and used certain[227] language, and adopted certain ways of thought, and have been utterly unconscious all the time of a corroding sin within them. On the other hand, some one who did not promise much, comes out at a moment of trial strikingly and favorably. This is a surprize, then, which sometimes happens, nay, and sometimes a greater surprize still, when out of the eater comes forth meat, and out of a state of sin there springs the soul of virtue. The act of the thief on the cross is a surprize. Up to the time when he was judged he was a thief, and from a thief he became a saint. For even in the dark labyrinth of evil there are unexpected outlets; sin is established by the habit in the man, but the good principle which is in him also, but kept down and supprest, may be secretly growing too; it may be undermining it, and extracting the life and force from it. In this man, then, sin becomes more and more, tho holding its place by custom, an outside and a coating, just as virtue does in the deteriorating man, till at last, by a sudden effort and the inspiration of an opportunity, the strong good casts off the weak crust of evil and comes out free. We witness a conversion.

But this is a large and mysterious subject—the foundation for high virtue to become apparent in a future world, which hardly rises up above the ground here. We cannot think of the enormous trial which is undergone in[228] this world by vast masses without the thought also of some sublime fruit to come of it some day. True, it may not emerge from the struggle of bare endurance here, but has not the seed been sown? Think of the burden of toil and sorrow borne by the crowds of poor: we know that pain does not of itself make people good; but what we observe is, that even in those in whom the trial seems to do something, it yet seems such a failure. What inconstancy, violence, untruths! The pathos in it all moves you. What a tempest of character it is! And yet when such trial has been passed we involuntarily say—has not a foundation been laid? And so in the life of a soldier, what agonies must nature pass through in it! While the present result of such a trial is so disappointing, so little seems to come of it! Yet we cannot think of what has been gone through by countless multitudes in war, of the dreadful altar of sacrifice, and the lingering victims, without the involuntary idea arising that in some, even of the irregular and undisciplined, the foundation of some great purification has been laid. We hear sometimes of single remarkable acts of virtue, which spring from minds in which there is not the habit of virtue. Such acts point to a foundation, a root of virtue in man, deeper than habit; they are sudden leaps which show an unseen spring, which are able to compress in a moment the growth of years.

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To conclude. The gospel language throws doubt upon the final stability of much that passes current here with respect to character, upon established judgments, and the elevations of the outward sanctuary. It lays down a wholesome scepticism. We do not do justice to the spirit of the gospel by making it enthusiastic simply, or even benevolent simply. It is sagacious, too. It is a book of judgment. Man is judged in it. Our Lord is Judge. We cannot separate our Lord's divinity from His humanity; and yet we must be blind if we do not see a great judicial side of our Lord's human character;—that severe type of understanding, in relation to the worldly man, which has had its imperfect representation in great human minds. He was unspeakably benevolent, kind, compassionate; true, but He was a Judge. It was indeed of His very completeness as man that He should know man; and to know is to judge. He must be blind who, in the significant acts and sayings of our Lord as they unroll themselves in the pregnant page of the gospel, does not thus read His character; he sees it in that insight into pretensions, exposure of motives, laying bare of disguises; in the sayings—"Believe it not"; "Take heed that no man deceive you"; "Behold, I have told you"; in all that profoundness of reflection in regard to man, which great observing minds among mankind have shown, tho accompanied by much of[230] frailty, anger, impatience, or melancholy. His human character is not benevolence only; there is in it wise distrust—that moral sagacity which belongs to the perfection of man.

Now then, as has been said, this scepticism with regard to human character has had, as a line of thought, certain well-known representatives in great minds, who have discovered a root of selfishness in men's actions, have probed motives, extracted aims, and placed man before himself denuded and exposed; they judged him, and in the frigid sententiousness or the wild force of their utterances, we hear that of which we cannot but say, how true! But knowledge is a goad to those who have it; a disturbing power; a keenness which distorts; and in the sight it gives it partly blinds also. The fault of these minds was that in exposing evil they did not really believe in goodness; goodness was to them but an airy ideal, the dispirited echo of perplexed hearts,—returned to them from the rocks of the desert, without bearing hope with it. They had no genuine belief in any world which was different from theirs; they availed themselves of an ideal indeed to judge this world, and they could not have judged it without; for anything, whatever it is, is good, if we have no idea of anything better; and therefore the conception of a good world was necessary to judge the bad one. But the ideal held loose to their minds—not anything to be substantiated,[231] not as a type in which a real world was to be cast, not as anything of structural power, able to gather into it, form round it, and build up upon itself; not, in short, as anything of power at all, able to make anything, or do anything, but only like some fragrant scent in the air, which comes and goes, loses itself, returns again in faint breaths, and rises and falls in imperceptive waves. Such was goodness to these minds; it was a dream. But the gospel distrust is not disbelief in goodness. It raises a great suspense, indeed, it shows a curtain not yet drawn up, it checks weak enthusiasm, it appends a warning note to the pomp and flattery of human judgments, to the erection of idols; and points to a day of great reversal; a day of the Lord of Hosts; the day of pulling down and plucking up, of planting and building. But, together with the law of sin, the root of evil in the world, and the false goodness in it, it announces a fount of true natures; it tells us of a breath of Heaven of which we know not whence it cometh and whither it goeth; which inspires single individual hearts, that spring up here and there, and everywhere, like broken gleams of the supreme goodness. And it recognizes in the renewed heart of man an instinct which can discern true goodness and distinguish it from false; a secret discrimination in the good by which they know the good. It does not therefore stand in the[232] way of that natural and quiet reliance which we are designed by God to have in one another, and that trust in those whose hearts we know. "Wisdom is justified of her children"; "My sheep hear my voice, but a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers."

÷06-00 **The World's Great Sermons**  
  
VOLUME VI  
  
H. W. BEECHER TO PUNSHON

THE  
World's  
Great  
Sermons

COMPILED BY  
GRENVILLE KLEISER

Formerly of Yale Divinity School Faculty;  
Author of "How to Speak  
in Public," Etc.

With Assistance from Many of the Foremost  
Living Preachers and Other Theologians

INTRODUCTION BY  
LEWIS O. BRASTOW, D.D.  
Professor Emeritus of Practical Theology  
in Yale University

IN TEN VOLUMES

VOLUME VI—H. W. BEECHER TO PUNCHON

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**÷**06-01 HENRY WARD BEECHER

IMMORTALITY

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Henry Ward Beecher, preacher, orator, lecturer, writer, editor, and reformer, was born at Litchfield, Connecticut, in 1813. He was by nature and training a great pulpit orator. Mr. Beecher kept himself in perfect physical condition for his work. He has described a course of vocal exercises which he pursued in the open air for a period of three years. "The drill I underwent," he says, "produced, not a rhetorical manner, but a flexible instrument, that accommodated itself readily to every kind of thought and every shape of feeling."

He had deep sympathy for all men, and this with his intense dramatic power often carried him into the wildest and most exalted flights of oratory. Phillips Brooks styled him the greatest preacher in America, and he is generally regarded as the most highly gifted of modern preachers. He was fearless, patriotic, clear-headed, witty, and self-sacrificing. Dr. Wilkinson calls him "the greatest pulpit orator the world ever saw." He died in 1887.

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H. W. BEECHER

1813-1887

IMMORTALITY[1]

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.—1Co 15:19.

This is not the declaration of a universal principle: it is biographical and personal. And yet, there is in it a principle of prime importance. It is true that Paul and his compeers had sacrificed everything that was dear to man for the sake of Christ. Paul had given up the place that he held among his countrymen, and the things which surely awaited him. He had consented to be an exile. Loving Palestine and the memory of his fathers, as only a Jew could love, he found himself an outcast, and despised everywhere by his own people. And the catalog that he gives of the sufferings which he felt keenly; which perhaps would not have been felt by a man less susceptible than he, but which were no less keen in his case—that catalog shows how much he had given up for Christ. And if it should turn[4] out that after all he had followed a mere fable, a myth; that Christ was but a man; that, dying, He had come to an end; that He stayed dead, and that there was no resurrection, no future, but only that past through which he waded, and that present in which he was suffering, then, surely, it would be true that of all men he was most miserable.

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

It is not necessarily true that men without a hope of Christianity would have no incitement to virtue—certainly not in the ordinary way in which it is put to us. Abstractly, it is said that virtue is its own reward—and it is. If there was enough of it to amount to anything, it would be a great, an exceeding great, reward; but where it is a spark; a[5] germ; where it is struggling for its own existence; where it bears but a few ripe fruits, the reward is hardly worth the culture. If all that we get is what we have in this life, it is but little.

Many men are favorably organized and favorably situated; they have an unyearning content; things seem good enough for them; and they do not understand why it is that persons should desire immortality and glory—that is, at first. In general, I think there are few persons that live long in life who do not, sooner or later, come to a point in which they wake up to the consciousness of a need of this kind. It is not always true in the case of persons of refined moral and intellectual culture that they are conscious of needing a belief in immortality; but a belief in immortality is the unavoidable result and the indispensable requirement of all true manhood. When you look at growth, not in each particular case, but largely, as it develops itself in communities; when you consider it, not only in a single individual, but in whole communities, as they develop from childhood to manhood, or from barbarism through semi-civilization to civilization and refinement, the law of development is always away from animal life and its sustaining appetites and passions toward the moral and the intellectual. That is the direction in which unfolding takes place.

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

Men come into life perfect animals. There is very little that culture does in that direction, giving them a little more or a little less use of themselves, as the case may be. That which we mean when we speak of developing manhood in a child, is something more than the development of symmetry of form and power of physical organization. When we speak of the civilization and refinement of the race at large, development does not mean bodily power or bodily skill: it means reason; moral sense; imagination; profounder affection; subtler, purer, sweeter domestic relations. Manhood grows away from bodily conditions, without ever leaving them. The body becomes a socket, and the soul is a lamp in it. And if you look narrowly at what we mean by growth in mankind, whether it be applied to the individual or to the race, you will find that we mean an unfolding which takes a man[7] away from the material toward that which is subtler, more spiritual, existing outside of the ordinary senses, tho acting from them, as something better than bone and muscle, nerve and tissue.

All development, then, is from the animal toward the spiritual and the invisible. This is the public sentiment of mankind even in the lower forms of society. What are considered heroic traits, the things which bring admiration to men, if narrowly examined will be found to be not the things which belong to men as brutes—tho these things may be employed by them as instruments. Even in the cases of such men as Samson and Hercules, who were rude, brute men, it was not their strength that drew admiration to them: it was their heroism; it was their patriotism; it was that which they did by their strength for their kind, and not for themselves. And in lower societies it is courage, it is self-devotion, it is the want of fear, it is the higher form of animal life, that attracts admiration. But as we develop out of barbarous into civilized conditions, we admire men, not because they can lift so much, or throw such heavy weights, or endure such hardships of body. Admiration on these accounts has its place; but higher than these is the power of thought, the power of planning, the power of executing, the power of living at one point so as to comprehend in the effects produced all circuits[8] of time in the future. Thought-power; emotion; moral sense; justice; equity in all its forms; higher manhood, and its branches, which stretch up into the atmosphere and reach nearest to the sun—these are something other than those qualities which develop earliest, and are lowest—nearest to the ground.

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

When reason and moral sense are developed, there will inevitably spring up within a man an element the value of which consists in perpetuating things—in their continuance. It is spontaneous and universal for one to seek to perpetuate, to extend life. I do not mean by this that one wants to live a great while; but men are perpetually under the unconscious influence of this in their nature: the attempt to give form and permanence to that which is best in their manhood. We build, to be sure, primarily, to cover ourselves from the elements; but we very soon cease to build for that only: we not merely build for protection from cold and from wet, but we build for gratification. We build to gratify the sense[9] of beauty, the sense of convenience, and the sense of love. And we go on beyond that: we build in order that we may send down to those who are to come after us a memorial of our embodied, incarnated thoughts. In other words, when men build, they seek, by incarnation, to render things permanent which have existed only as thoughts or transient emotions. There is a tendency to incarnate the fugitive elements in men, and give them permanence. And the element of continuing is one of the elements which belong to the higher manhood.

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

We admire the pyramids, not because they have been associated with so many histories, but because they have stood so many ages. We admire old trees, not because so many tribes have sat under them, nor because so many events have taken place beneath them, but simply because they have age with them. For there are mute, inexplicable feelings connected with the mere extension of time which belong to the higher development of manhood[10] in us. Frangible things are of less value than things that are infrangible. Things that last are of more value, on the same plane, than their congeners are that do not last.

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

I never saw a diamond that was so beautiful as are the dew-drops which I see on my lawn in summer. What is the difference between a dew-drop and a diamond? One goes in a moment; it flashes and dies; but the other endures; and its value consists in its[11] endurance. There are hundreds of things which are as beautiful as a diamond in their moment; but the endurance of the diamond is measured by ages, and not by moments, and so carries on the value.

I do not draw these reasonings very close as yet—I do not desire to put too much emphasis upon them; but I think you will see that there is a drift in them, and that they will bear, at last, an important relation to this question of immortality. The element of manhood carries with it a very powerful sense of the value of existence. The desire to live is a blind instinct. A happy experience brings to this instinct many auxiliaries—the expectation of pleasure; the wish to complete unfinished things; the clinging affection to those that have excited love; and habits of enterprise.

Besides all these, is a development of the sense of value in simply being. We have said that in external matters the continuity of being is an element of value in the judgment which mankind at large have put upon things. We say that the same is true in respect to the inward existence—to manhood itself. The savage cares very little for life. He lives for to-day; and in every to-day he lives for the hour. Time is of the least importance to him. The barbarian differs from the savage in this: that he lives to-day for to-morrow, perhaps, but not for next year. The semi-civilized man[12] lives for next year; but only for the year, or for years. The civilized man begins to live in the present for the future. And the Christian civilized man begins to live with a sense of the forever.

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

A man who takes in his hands a lump of mud and molds it to some pleasing form, cares but little when, dropping it, he sees it flatten on the ground. The man that grinds a crystal, and sees it broken, thinks of it for a moment, perhaps, with regret, but soon forgets it. No one, however, can see an organized thing, having its uses, and indicating exquisite skill and long experience, dashed to pieces without pain. But what is anything that is organized in life worth in comparison with the soul of a man? And if that soul be pure,[13] and sweet, and deep, and noble, and active, and fruitful, who can, without a pang, look at it, and think that it must in an instant go to nothing, dissolving again as an icicle from a roof in the spring?

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

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

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

We are building a crystal character with[14] much pain and self-denial; and it is to be built as bubbles are blown? What is finer in line than the bubble? What is more airy? Where are pictures more exquisite, where are colors more tender and rich and beautiful—and where is there anything that is born so near to its end as a bubble? Is the character which we are building with so much pain and suffering and patience, with so much burden of conscience, and with so much aspiration; is the character which we are forming in the invisible realm of the soul—is that but a bubble? Is that only a thin film which reflects the transient experiences of a life of joy or sadness, and goes out? Then, what is life worth? If I had no function but that of a pismire; if I were a beetle that rolled in the dirt, and yet were clothed with a power of reflection, and knew what the depths of feeling were, what intense emotions were, and what struggling and yearning were; if, being a mere insect, I had all the works in the intellect of man, and all the aspiration that goes with spiritual elements; if I were but a leaf-cutter, a bug in the soil, or about the same thing on a little larger pattern, and were to be blotted out at death, what would be the use of my trying to grow? If by refining and whetting our faculties they become more susceptible to pleasure, they become equally susceptible to pain. And in this great, grinding, groaning world, pain is altogether out of proportion[15] to pleasure, in an exquisite temperament. The finer men are the better they are, if they are forever; but the finer men are the worse they are if they are only for a day; for they have a disproportion of sensibility to suffering over and above present remuneration and conscious enjoyment.

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

Nor do I think that there can be found, to any considerable extent, or developed, friendships which shall not, with all their strength and with all their depth, resist the conception of dissolution or of fading. For friendships are not casual likings. Friendships are not merely the interchange of good nature, and the ordinary friendly offices of good neighborhood.[16] These things are friendly, but they do not comprise friendship. Two trees may grow contiguous, and throw their shade one over upon the other; but they never touch nor help each other; and their roots quarrel for the food that is in the ground. But two vines, growing over a porch, meet each other, and twine together, and twist fiber into fiber and stem into stem, and take shape from each other, and are substantially one. And such are friendships. Now, one cannot have his life divided as two trees are. He cannot enter into partnership with others, and be conscious that that partnership shall be but for an hour or for a moment. The sanctity, the honor, the exaltation, the exhilaration of a true and manly friendship lies in the thought of its continuance. There can be no deep friendship which does not sign for endlessness.

Still more is this true of love: not that rudimentary form which seeks lower fruitions, and which is often but little more than passion done up in friendship; but that higher love which manifests itself chiefly in the spiritual realm; that love which is not forever asking, but forever giving; that love which is not centripetal, but centrifugal; that love which, like a mother's, gives for the pleasure of giving; that love which reveres; that love which looks up; that love which seeks to exalt its object by doing what is pleasant and noble; that love which demands continuance, elevation,[17] yea, grandeur, it may be, in the thing beloved. How little will such a love tolerate the idea of evanescence, the dread of discontinuing! Can such a love do other than yearn for immortality?

So then, if you take the thought, it is this: that if men develop, they come under the dominion of higher faculties; and that it is then their nature to stamp on all their occupations, on their self-consciousness, on the whole development of their affections, the need of continuance, of immortality. There are, therefore, in the growth of the mind itself, as a department of nature, these elements of conviction. The mind cannot do other than develop in itself a faith in immortality.

It may be said, and it sometimes is said, that the origin of the belief of existence out of the body, of spiritual existence, may be traced directly back to the dreams of the barbarous ages, to a period when men were so low that they did not recognize the difference between a dream and a waking reality—to a time when persons dreamed that their friends came back to them, and waked up and believed that they had been back. Thus, it is said, began the thought of continuity of life after death. For my part, I do not care how it began. The question is not how it started; the question is, What becomes of it now that it has begun? No matter how it was born, what purpose is it to serve? What is it[18] adapted to do? How is it calculated to influence our manhood? In what way shall it be employed to lead man God-ward? How shall it be used to work most effectually in the direction of civilization and refinement? It so fits every human soul, that men will not let it go. They cling to it with their inward and best nature.

All experiences of human life fall in with this tendency of the mind. When men look out upon the incoherent and unmannerly course of things in time, I can understand how, believing in the future, they may live with patience; but in every age of the world where the clear light of immortality has not shone, men have mostly been discouraged, have been generally indifferent to public superiority, and have taken no interest in things done for the sake of humanity. Such is the worthlessness of time, to the thought of those that have no faith in the future, that they have cared for little except present physical enjoyment. And on the whole, when such men crowd together, and tribes take the place of individuals, or kingdoms take the place of tribes, with all their complications in the working out of their clashing results, they look upon human life, and feel that the world is not worth living for. Things are so uncertain, products are in such disproportion to their causes, or to the expectations of men, that if there is to be nothing but this life,[19] then, "Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die," is not only the philosophy of the epicurean, but the temptation of the most wise and frugal and self-restraining. The nature of life to a man who is highly educated requires that he should believe in the continuity and existence of the myriads that he sees in such a state of quarreling infelicity and wretchedness in this mortal condition. The utter futility of the best part of man's life here, the total bankruptcy of his best endeavors, the worthlessness of his career from the material standpoint, makes it imperative on him to believe that he shall have another chance in another sphere of being.

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

But if there is another life; if all our labor has this value in it, that while a man is building up his outward estate, if it is certain that[20] the man himself will live, no matter what becomes of his property and his reputation, then all his endeavors have endless scope, and his life becomes redeemable and radiant.

Nowhere else so much as in the realm of grief, I think, is the question of immortality interpreted. It is true that the first shock of overwhelming grief sometimes drives faith out of the mind; that it sometimes staggers the reason; that it sometimes dispossesses the moral sense of its accustomed health, and leaves the mind in weakness. As in a fever, the natural eye can see nothing aright, and things then seem to dance in the air, and take on grotesque forms, so persons who are bewildered with first sorrow oftentimes see things amiss. And there is no skepticism which is so deep and pulseless as that which often takes possession of people in the first great overmastering surprize and shock of grief. But after one had recovered a little, and the nerve has come to its wonted sensibility, the faith of immortality returns. There is that in every soul which knows what is the strength of life and noble deeds and aspirations; and therefore there is that in every soul which calls out for immortality.

I cannot believe, I will not believe, when I walk upon the clod, that it is my mother that I tread under foot. She that bore me, she that every year more than gave birth to me out of her own soul's aspiration—I will not[21] believe that she is dust. Everything within me revolts at the idea.

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

Can a parent go back from the grave where he has laid his children and say, "I shall never see them more?" Even as far back as the dim twilight in which David lived, he said, "Thou shalt not come to me, but I shall go to thee"; and is it possible for the parental[22] heart to stand in our day by the side of the grave, where the children have been put out of sight, and say, "They neither shall come to me, nor shall I go to them; they are blossoms that have fallen; they never shall bring forth fruit"? It is unnatural. It is hideous. Everything that is in man, every instinct that is best in human nature repels it.

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

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

I hold that even the materialist may believe in immortality. For, altho there is a gross kind of materialism, there may be a materialism which is consistent with a belief in immortality. Because, on the supposition that the mind is matter, it must be admitted that it is incomparably superior to any other matter that we are familiar with. Is there any matter outside of mind that produces thought and feeling such as we see evolved among men? If it be the theory that mind is matter, and if the matter of which the mind is composed be[23] so far above all other kinds of matter in its fruit and product, is it not on so high a plane as presumably not to be subject to the lower and coarser forms of examination and test? I know no reason why cerebral matter may not be eternal. I do not belong to those who take that material view of the mind; but I do not know that immortality is inconsistent even with materialism; and how much more easily may it be reconciled to the view of those who believe in the ineffable character, the imponderable, spiritual condition, of the soul!

In addition to these arguments, when we come to the Word of God, we hear the voices of those who sang and chanted in the past. We hear the disciple crying out, "Christ is risen!" and we hear the apostle preaching this new truth to mankind. So that now the heavens have been broken open. The secrets of the other life have been revealed. And is there not a presumption, following the line of a man's best manhood, that immortality is true? Does one need to go into a rigorous logical examination of this subject? Should one stand jealously at the side of the sepulcher of Christ, and examine this matter as a policeman examines the certificate of a suspected man, or as one takes money from the hand of a cheating usurer and goes out to see if it is gold? Shall one stand at the door from which issue all the hopes that belong to the best part of man; shall one look upon that which is demanded[24] by the very nature of his better manhood, and question it coldly, and tread it under foot?

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

The heart and flesh cry out for God. They cry out for immortality. Not only does the Spirit from the heavenly land say to every toiling, yearning, anxious soul, "Come up hither," but every soul that is striving upward has in it, if not a vocalized aspiration, yet a mute yearning—a voice of the soul—that cries out for heaven,

"As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God!"

On such a day as this, then, in a community of moral feeling, how blest is the truth which comes to us, that we are not as the[25] beasts that die; that we are as the gods that live! That for which we were made is immortality; and our journey is rough, straight, sharp, burdensome, with many tears. Our journey is not to the grave. I am not growing into old age to be blind, and to be deaf, and to be rheumatic, and to shrink a miserable cripple into the corner, shaking and tottering and forgetting all that I ever knew. The best part of me is untouched. The soul; the reason; the moral sense; the power to think; the power to will; the power to love; the power to admire purity, and to reach out after it—that is not touched by time, tho its instrument and means of outer demonstration be corroded and failing. No physical weakness touches the soul. Only the body is touched by sickness. And shake that down! Shake it down! Let it go! For, as the chrysalis bursts open, and the covering which confines the perfected insect is dropt, that he may come out into brightness of form and largeness of life, so this body is but a chrysalis; and when we break through it, we rise on wings by the attraction of God, and by the propulsion of our own inevitable desire and need, and are forever with the Lord.

**÷**06-02 CHAPIN

NICODEMUS: THE SEEKER AFTER RELIGION

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Edwin Hubbell Chapin, Universalist divine, was born in Union Village, Washington County, N. Y., in 1814. He began his very successful ministry 1837 in Richmond, Va., subsequently he preached in Charlestown, Mass., from which place he was called to the pastorate of the Fourth Universalist Church in New York City. His preaching attracted large congregations, and he was generally regarded as one of the greatest preachers of this country. He spoke from a manuscript, using no gesture, but his magnetic personality never failed to drive his message home. He published numerous volumes of sermons and lectures. He died in 1880.

[29]

CHAPIN

1814-1880

NICODEMUS: THE SEEKER AFTER RELIGION

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night.—Joh 3:1-2.

Altho we have but few glimpses of Nicodemus in the gospels, he is a personage of peculiar interest. A Pharisee, and a member of the great Jewish senate, or Sanhedrin, he shows us that the influence of Christ was not limited to the poor and the obscure; but that, while His words and works awoke enmity and fear among the higher classes, they struck, in the breasts of some of these, a holier chord.

It may not be certain that Nicodemus ever openly confest Christ; yet, in this chapter, he appears in the attitude of a disciple, and we find him defending Jesus before the Sanhedrin, and assisting at His burial. Still, unless the last-mentioned act be considered as such, we do not discover, in his conduct, that public and decisive acknowledgment which the Savior required; we do not behold the frank avowal of Peter, or the intrepidity of Paul.[30] There is an air of caution and of timidity about him. He carefully feels the ground of innovation, before he lets go the establishment; and, indeed, he appears to have taken no step by which he forfeited his caste or his office. It is difficult, too, to discover the precise purpose of this visit to Jesus. Perhaps he sought the interview from mixed motives. A religious earnestness, kindled by the teachings and the character of Christ, may have blended with speculative curiosity, and even with the throbbings of political ambition. His coming by night, too, may have indicated timidity, or he may have chosen that season as the best time for quiet and uninterrupted discourse. But, whatever may have been his motives, the position in which we find him shows, I repeat, that the power of Christ's ministry was felt, not only by the excitable multitude, but by the more thoughtful and devout of the Jewish people.

Nicodemus, however, presents a peculiar interest, not only because he exhibits the influence of Jesus upon the higher orders of his nation, but because he appears as a seeker after religion, and as one personally interested in its vital truths. His interview with the Savior gives occasion for one of the most important passages in the New Testament. The conversation of Christ, in this instance, is not uttered in general principles and accommodated to the multitude, but it is directed to[31] an intelligent and inquiring spirit, in the calm privacy of the night-time laying bare its very depths, and craving the application of religion to its own peculiar wants. To be sure, Nicodemus did not profess this want, but commenced the conversation with the language of respect, and with suggestion of more general inquiry. But He who "knew what was in man," had already penetrated the folds of the ruler's breast, and saw the real need that had sent him; so, putting by all compliments, and all secondary issues, He struck at once the conscious chord that throbbed there, and exclaimed: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God!" These words must have filled Nicodemus with surprize, both from their sudden heart-searchingness, and as addressing to him a term which was usually applied to men of very different condition. For the phrase, "new birth," was a customary one to express the change through which the Gentile passed in becoming a Jew. But it was indeed a strange doctrine that he, a son of Abraham, a Pharisee, a ruler, must be born again, before he could be fit for the Messiah's kingdom. Therefore, really or affectedly, he misunderstood the Savior's words, and gave to a phrase, plain enough when applied to a heathen, the most gross and literal interpretation. But Christ reiterated the solemn truth assuring him that an inward change, and an[32] outward profession, a regeneration of the affections and the will, and a renunciation of pride and fear, by the symbol of baptism—a new birth of water and of the Spirit—was essential to true discipleship. And thus, stripping away all the reliances of formal righteousness, and all the supports of birth and position, in reply to the earnest question of Nicodemus: "How can these things be?" the great Teacher proceeded to utter some of the sublimest doctrines of the gospel.

As I have already said, whether Nicodemus became an avowed follower of Jesus, or not, is uncertain; but we know that the truths which he then heard are of everlasting importance, have a personal application to every man, and appeal to wants in our own souls, which are as real and as deep as those of the ruler of old.

But while thus Nicodemus exhibits a need of our common humanity, he especially represents a class who may be called "seekers after religion," either as being unsettled and inquiring in their spirits, or as resting upon something which is not religion, but only, perhaps, a tendency toward it—they are seekers after it, as not having actually found it. In other words, for this class, religion has its meaning and its pressure; they think about it, and they feel its claims, yet they do not thoroughly and mentally know it; or, like Nicodemus, they rest upon some substitute.[33] Some of these positions I propose now to illustrate.

I observe, then, in the first place, that some seek religion in rituals and sacraments. The tendency of the human mind, as to matters of faith and devotion, has always been to complicate rather than to simplify, and to associate these with set forms and symbols. In all ages, men have shrunk from naked communion with God, from the solitude of an intense spirituality, and have conducted transactions with the Invisible, through the mediation of ceremony. But that which, at first, was an expression of the individual soul, has grown into a fixed and consecrated rite. Gestures and modes of worship, suggested by the occasion, have been repeated in usage, and grown venerable with age, until they have become identified with religion itself. They have been exalted into mystic vehicles of grace, have been considered as possessing virtue in themselves, and as constituting an awful paraphernalia, through which, alone, God will deign to communicate with man, and through which man may even propitiate and move God. Christianity has not escaped this tendency; and, even now, there are many with whom the sacraments are something more than expressive signs and holy suggestions, and with whom the position of an altar, the shape of a vestment, and the form of a church are among the essentials of religion. With[34] such, baptism speaks, not merely to the eye of an inward washing, but it is of itself a regenerative process. In their view, the communion bread is not simply a representation of the broken body of the Redeemer; but is itself so sacred, so identical with that body, that they must receive it by a special posture, and upon a particular part of the hand. As a matter of course, to such, religion must appear eminently conservative and retrospective; the genius of the established and the past, rather than of the reformatory and the future. Cherishing the minutest fibers of these ancient rites, they chiefly venerate the men who authenticate them, and the soil out of which they grow. With them, the fluent spirit of religion became organized, and fixt into a form, with fast-days and feast-days, with miter and cassock, and a lineal priesthood, ages ago.

It cannot be said that this method is entirely unfounded. It has its justification in human nature, if not elsewhere. There are those who can find peace only in the arms of an hereditary faith: who can feel the inspiration of worship only among forms that have kindled worship in others for a thousand years: with whose earliest thoughts and dearest memories is entwined a ritual and an established church, so that personal affection and household sanctity, as well as religious feeling, demand that every great act of life—of joy or sorrow—should be consecrated, by the familiar[35] sacrament. For that church, too, their fathers have died in darker times, and beneath its chancels, sainted mothers molder into dust. All, too, that can exalt the ideal, or wake the pulses of eloquent emotion, is connected with such a church. To them it opens a traditional perspective, the grandest in all history. Behind its altars, sweep the vestments of centuries of priests, and rises the incense of centuries of prayer. In its stony niches, stand rows of saints, who have made human life sublime, and who, through all the passing ages, look down upon the turmoil of that life with the calm beatitude of heaven; while its flushed windows still keep the blood-stain of its own martyrs, plashed against it ere yet it had become an anchored fact, and while it tossed upon the stormy waves of persecution. I can understand, then, how an imaginative and reverential mind can find the truest religious life only in connection with ritual and sacrament.

I can understand, moreover, the reaction in this direction, which is taking place at the present day.

It is the retreat of the religious sentiments from the despotism of an imperious reason. It is the counter-protest of loyal affections against what is deemed an anarchical tendency. It is the clinging of men's sympathies to the concrete, alarmed by the irreverent and analytic methods of science. It is the retirement[36] of faith and devotion to those cloistered sanctities that shut out the noise of the populace, and the diversions of the street. It is the reluctance of taste and imagination at our new and varnished Protestantism, with its bare walls, its cold services, and its angular churches, of which one wing, perchance, rests upon a market, and the other upon a dram-shop. Especially would I not deny the profound spiritual life, the self-sacrifice, and the beautiful charities which have consisted at all times, and which consist in the present time, with this ritual and sacramental form of religion.

But when men claim that this alone is the genuine form—that these are essentials of the only true Church—then I deny that claim. If it fills some wants of our nature, it repudiates others equally authentic. If one class of minds find peace only under its consecrated shadows, others find no satisfaction but in the discipline of a spontaneous devotion, and the exercise of an individual reason. If it suffices for men like Borromeo or Newman, it does not suffice for men like George Fox or Channing; and the religion of these is as evident, in their simple spirituality, as those in their mystic symbolism. When it sneers at the Puritan, then I must vindicate that rugged independence of soul, that faithfulness of the individual conscience, that sense of the divine sovereignty, which could kneel at no man's[37] altar, and to God alone; which sacrificed all things for the right, but yielded not a hair to the wrong; which could find no medicine for the spirit in sacraments, but only in the solitude of the inner life; and which has, under God, wrought out this noble consummation of modern times, whereby others may plant their vine of ritual under the broad heaven of toleration, and have liberty to sneer. When the ritualist deprecates the ultraism and irreverence of the anti-formalist, I must urge the tendency of his own principles to mummery and absolutism. And, finally, when he falls back upon tradition, I must fall back upon the Bible. The spirit of the New Testament is not that of rituals or sacraments; and the universal sentiments of the Old are not. The prophet Isaiah, who exclaims: "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; your new moons, and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth.... Wash you, make you clean ... cease to do evil, learn to do well!" joins with the apostle, who says that Christ "blotted out the handwriting of ordinances ... nailing it to his cross," and that no man should judge us in meat or drink, or times, or seasons. And surely, there is no argument for forms or places in those Divine Words, which declare that "God is a Spirit, and they who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth."

We cannot deny, then, that pure religion[38] may consist with rituals and sacraments; we cannot deny that it may exist without these. But I insist upon this point: that the sacrament, the ritual, is not, itself, religion. It may be a beautiful sign—it may be a quick suggestion—it may be a medium of spiritual influence; but, alone, it cannot take the place of inward, personal piety, of right affections and an obedient will. No punctilious form can stand substitute for a vigilant conscience; no posture of devotion can supply the place of living deeds; no ascetic mortification can atone for guilt; no auricular confession can speak, instead of the breathings of repentance, in the ear of God, and out from the depths of the solitary soul. He who relies upon these forms, and finds sanctity only in them, may be sincere, may be serious about religion, but as yet he is only a seeker; and, speaking to his heart with all-penetrating meaning, comes to him the decree: "Ye must be born again."

Again; there is a class who seek religion in philosophy. They believe in God by a course of reasoning. They believe in immortality, because it is a conclusion riveted in their minds by the iron links of induction. They pray, or not, according as it seems logical to do so. They would be good, because goodness is useful.

But every proposition upon which they act, must first be strained through the alembic of the intellect, and must stand out in the clear[39] definition of science. They verify and build up their religion with callipers and dissecting-knife. It is a system of digestion and pneumatology. They find an organ for veneration, and another for conscientiousness, and therefore conclude that religion has a legitimate place in the harmony of human character. But all must be calm and balanced. They dare not trust the feelings and give but little scope to enthusiasm. Sometimes, indeed, they rise to eloquence in expatiating upon the truths of natural theology, and of "the elder Scripture"; tho they believe in Christ also, because He seems well authenticated as an historical fact. In short, such men are religious like Cicero, or Seneca, with some modification from modern science and from the Sermon on the Mount.

Now there is a close alliance between true philosophy and true religion. That the New Testament is eminently free from fanaticism, and makes no appeal to mere credulity, any one will see who examines. That it is rational and sober, constitutes one of its great internal evidences. A Christian philosopher is no anomaly, but a beautiful expression of the essential harmony of all truth. Knowledge and piety burn and brighten with an undivided flame. Revelation and science are continually interpreting one another, while every day the material universe is unfolding a more spiritual significance, and indicating its subservience[40] to a spiritual end. But, after all, in order to be religious, it is not necessary that a man should be a philosopher, and it is certain that often he is a philosopher without being religious. Religion and philosophy may coalesce, but they are two different spheres. Philosophy is out-looking and speculative; religion is inner and vital. In the scheme of philosophy, religion is reasoned out as a consequence, and adopted as an appendage to character. In the true scheme, it is the central germ of our being, the controlling force of life. The religion of philosophy consists of right views of things, and a prudential schooling of the passions. True religion consists in a right state of the affections, and a renunciation of self. In the one case, religion may "play round the head, but come not near the heart"; in the other, it breaks up the great deep of conscience, and pours an intense light upon the springs of motive. Philosophy contains the idea of intellectual rectitude; religion, of moral obedience. Philosophy speaks of virtue; religion, of holiness. Philosophy rests upon development; religion requires regeneration. In short, we make an every-day distinction between the two which is far more significant than any verbal contrast. It is the one, rather than the other, that we apply, in the profounder experiences of our moral nature, in the consciousness of sin and in the overwhelming calamities of life. The one pours[41] a purifying, healing, uplifting power into the homes of human suffering, and into the hearts of the ignorant and the poor, that the other has not to bestow. Philosophy is well under all circumstances; but it is not the most inner element of our humanity. Religion, in its humility, penitence, and faith—at the foot of the cross, and by the open sepulcher—rejoices in a direct and practical vision, to which philosophy, with its encyclopedia and telescope, cannot attain.

Under this head, too, may be ranked a class of men who, tho they may not be exactly philosophers, fall into the same conception of religion, as a matter of the intellect—as the possession of correct views—rather than a profound moral life. They estimate men according to what they believe, and attribute the same sanctity to the creed that others attribute to the ritual. And as religion, in their conception of it, consists in a series of correct opinions, the great work should be an endeavor to make men think right. So the pulpit should be an arsenal of controversial forces, incessantly playing upon the ramparts of dogmatic error, with the artillery of dogmatic truth, and forever hammering the same doctrinal monotony upon the anvils of logic and of textual interpretation. They are satisfied if some favorite tenet is proved to a demonstration, and go forth rejoicing in the superiority of their "views," without asking[42] if saving love has melted and transfigured their own hearts, or whether personal sin may not canker in their souls, if hereditary guilt is not there. Now, it is true that great principles lie at the foundation of all practical life, and the more elevated and clear our views, the more effectual are the motives to holiness and love.

But it matters little to what pole of doctrine the intellect swings, if the heart hangs unpenetrated and untouched. It matters little to what opinions in theology the pulpit has made converts, if all its mighty truths have not heaved the moral nature of the hearer—if it has not shot into the individual soul, like an arrow, the keen conviction: "I must be born again!"

Once again: there are those who seek religion in a routine of outward and commendable deeds—in mere morality. With such, the great sum of life is to be sober, chaste, humane; laying particular stress upon the business virtues, honesty, industry, and prudence. In their idea, that man is a religious man who is an upright dealer, an orderly citizen, a good neighbor, and a charitable giver. To be religious, means to do good, to keep your promises, and mind your own business. They tell us that benevolence is the richest offering, and that the truest worship is in the workshop and the field—that a man prays when he drives a nail or plows a furrow,[43] and that he expresses the best thanksgiving when he enjoys what he has got, and is content if he gets no more.

Now, the world is not so bad that there is not a good deal of this kind of religion in it. It would be unjust to deny that many golden threads of integrity wind through the fabric of labor; that there is a strong nerve of rectitude holding together the transactions of daily life, and a wealth of spontaneous kindness enriching its darker and more terrible scenes.

But, after all, these easy sympathies, and these prudential virtues, lack the radicalness of true religion. Religion cannot exist without morality; but there is a formal morality which exists without religion. I say, a formal morality; for essential morality and essential religion are as inseparable as the sap and the fruit. Nor is morality a mere segment of religion. It is one-half of it. Nay, when we get at absolute definitions, the two terms may be used interchangeably; for then we consider religion presenting its earthly and social phase, and we consider morality with its axis turned heavenward. But, in the case of these outside virtues, which are so common, we behold only one-half of religion, and that is its earthly and social form; and even this lacks the root and sanction of true morality. For the difference between the morality of a religious man and that of another, consists in this: with the one, morality bears the sanction[44] of an absolute law, and God is at its center. It is wrought out by discipline, and maintained at all cost. With the other, it is an affair of temperament, and education, and social position. He has received it as a custom, and adopted it as a policy; or he acts upon it as an impulse. With the one, it is a matter of profit and loss, or a fitful whim of sentiment. With the other, it is the voice of a divine oracle within, that must be obeyed; it is the consecrated method of duty, and the inspiration of prayer. Now, to say that it makes no difference about the motive of an act, so long as the act itself is good, indicates that very lack of right feeling and right perception, which confounds the formal morality of the world with religion. For, in the distinctions of the Christian system, the motive makes the deed good or bad; makes the two mites richer than all the rest of the money in the treasury; makes the man who hates his brother a murderer. The good action may bless others, but if I do not perform it from a right motive, it does not bless me; and the essential peculiarity of religion is, that it regards inward development, individual purity, personal holiness—so that one essential excellence of the good deed consists in its effect upon the agent—consists in the sinews which it lends to his moral power, and the quantity it adds to his spiritual life. When, from a right motive, with effort and sacrifice,[45] I help a weak and poor man, I enrich my individual and spiritual being. If I bestow from a mere gush of feeling, I receive no permanent spiritual benefit; if from a bad motive, I impoverish my own heart. Acts, then, which appear the same thing in form, differ widely, considered in the religious bearings. There is the morality of impulse, the morality of selfishness, and the morality of principle, or religious morality. The motive of the first-named, we obey instantaneously, and it may do good, just as we draw our hands from the flame, and thereby obey a law of our physical nature, tho we act without any consideration of that law. A great deal of the morality in the world is of this kind.

It may do good, but has no reference to the law of rectitude. It is impulsive, and, therefore, does not indicate a steadfast virtue, or a deep religious life. For the very impulsiveness that leads to the gratification of the sympathies, leads to the gratification of the appetites, and thus we often find generous and benevolent characteristics mixed with vicious conduct. Then, as I have said, there is the morality of selfishness. In this instance, I may perform many good actions from sheer calculation of material profit. I may be benevolent, because it will increase my reputation for philanthropy. I may be honest, because "honesty is the best policy." But is this the highest, the religious sanction of morality?[46] No; the morality of the religious man is the morality of principle. The motive in his case is not "I will," or "I had better," but "I ought." He recognizes morality as a law, impersonal, overmastering the dictates of mere self, and holding all impulses in subservience to the highest good. The morality of impulse is uncertain. The morality of policy is mean and selfish. The morality of religion is loyal, disinterested, self-sacrificing. It acts from faith in God, and with reference to God.

But another trait separates the religious from the merely formal moralist. It consists in the fact that with him, "morality," as we commonly employ the term, is not all. Piety has its place. His affections not only flow earthward, but turn heavenward. He not only loves his neighbor as himself, but he loves the Lord, his God. He not only visits the widows and the fatherless in their affliction, but he keeps himself unspotted from the world. With him, toil is prayer, and contentment is thanksgiving, because he infuses into them a spirit of devotion, which he has cultivated by more solitary and special acts. With him it is a good thing to live honestly, industriously, soberly; but all life is not outward, is not in traffic and labor, and meat and drink. There is an inward world, to which his eyes are often introverted—a world of spiritual experience, of great realities, and everlasting[47] sanctions—a world behind the veil—a holy of holies in his soul, where rests the Shekinah of God's more immediate presence; yea, where he meets God face to face. And it is this that directs his public conduct. The orderly and beautiful method of his life is not the huddled chance-work of good impulses, is not the arithmetic of selfishness; but it is a serene and steady plan of being projected from the communion of the oratory, and the meditation of the closet.

Again, I say, let us not depreciate morality. Let us condemn that ostentatious piety which lifts up holy hands to God, but never stretches them out to help man; which anoints its head with the oil of sanctity, but will not defile its robes with the blood of the abused, or the contact of the guilty; which is loud in profession and poor in performance; which makes long prayers, but devours widow's houses. Let us condemn this, but remember that this is not real religion, only its form; as often, the kind deed, the honest method, is not true morality, only its form. Of both these departments of action let it be said: that these we have done, and not left the other undone. Let us recognize the perfect harmony, nay, the identity of religion and morality, in that One who came from the solitary conflict of the desert, to go about doing good, and who descended, from the night prayer on the mountain, to walk and calm the troubled waves of the sea.

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But those who rest in a mere routine of kind and prudential deeds need the deeper life and the inner perception which detects the meaning and gives the sanction to those deeds. Such need the vital germ of morality—the changed heart, the new birth.

And as I have spoken of a subordinate yet somewhat distinct class who may be ranked under the general head of seekers after religion in philosophy, let me here briefly allude to some with whom religion is a matter of mere sentiment and good feeling. Such are easily moved by the great doctrines of the New Testament. They are affected by the sermon; they have gushes of devout emotion during the prayer. But with them, religion is not a deep and steady pulse of divine life. Prayer is not a protracted aspiration—is not a habit. They feel well towards God, because they consider Him a good-natured, complacent being; but they do not meditate upon the majesty of His nature, upon His justice, and His holiness.

From the doctrine of immortality they draw consolation, but not sanctity. They regard it as a good time coming, but it furnishes them with no personal and stringent applications for the present. They need a more solemn and penetrating vision; a profounder experience in the soul. They need to be born again.

Then, again, there are those who may be called amateurs in religion. That is they are[49] curious about religious things. They like to speculate about it, to argue upon its doctrines and to broach or examine new theories. They go about from sect to sect, and from church to church, tasting what is novel in the reasoning, or pleasing in the manner of the preacher; in one place to-day to hear an orator; in another to-morrow to hear a latter-day saint; it is all the same thing to them. All they want with religion is entertainment and excitement. They are Athenians, ever seeking some new thing. They smack at a fresh heresy as if they were opening a box of figs, and are as delighted with a controversy, as a boy with a sham-fight. They have no fixt place in the Church universal. They are liberalists, without any serious convictions, and cosmopolites without any home affections. In fact, to them religion is a sham-fight—a matter of spectacle and zest—not a personal interest, or an inward life. They would seek Jesus by night, because they hope to learn something wonderful or new, and would be started to hear His solemn words tingling in their hearts: "Ye must be born again!"

Nay, my friends, would not these solemn words startle many of us? It may be, we have never made any inquiry concerning religion—have never even come to Jesus, as it were, by night. Such, with their barks of being drifting down the stream of time, have never guessed the meaning of their voyage, or[50] reckoned their course; nay, perhaps they live as tho religion were a fable, as tho earth were our permanent abiding-place, and heaven a dream. If such there are, they have not even listened to the Savior's words. But there are others among us perhaps, who are interested in the subject of religion, who are in some way or another engaged in it; but who are restless seekers after it, rather than actual possessors of it; who are resting upon insufficient substitutes for it. And I ask, would not these words breaking forth from the lips of Jesus, startle us in our ritualism, our philosophy, our outside morality, our sentimentalism, or our mere curiosity? And do they not speak to us? Are they not as true now as when they struck upon the shivering ear of Nicodemus? Do they not make us feel as intensely our obligation and our religious wants, as he might have felt there, with the wind flitting by him as tho the Holy Spirit were touching him with its appeal, and with the calm gaze of the Savior looking into his heart? Do they not demand of us, resting here awhile from the cares and labors of the world, something more than mere conformity, or intellectual belief, or formal deeds? Do they not demand a new and better spirit, a personal apprehension of the religious life, a breaking up and regeneration of our moral nature, a change of heart?

**÷**06-03 STANLEY

IN MEMORIAM—THOMAS CARLYLE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, the English scholar and divine, was born 1815 at Alderley, of which his father was rector. He was educated under Dr. Arnold at Rugby and in 1834 began a brilliant career at Oxford. Having been ordained priest in 1843 he was made Canon of Canterbury in 1851 and Dean of Westminster in 1864. At this date began his career as an ethical preacher. His pulpit became the means of reconciling many to the English Church because of its broad and sympathetic feeling of Christian brotherhood. All of his discourses are marked by a refined literary culture and a catholicity of spirit. Stanley's most famous sermons are those in which he celebrates the life and work of many illustrious men who had passed away during his lifetime. He died in 1881.

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STANLEY

1815-1881

IN MEMORIAM—THOMAS CARLYLE

The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field.—Mat 13:24.

The gospel of this day starts with a comparison of the kingdom of heaven to a sower. It is the same as that with which the more celebrated parable begins, "A sower went forth to sow." They both fix our minds on the manner in which God's kingdom—the kingdom of truth, beauty and goodness—is carried on in the world. The kingdom of all that is good is fostered, not so much by direct and immediate plantation or grafting or building or formations of any kind, but rather by the sowing of good seed, which, in time, shall grow up and furnish a rich harvest.

It is so with regard to the truths of the Bible. They are sown in the world; the good which grows up after them is never, in outward form, like the truth which came from the actual source. Institutions spring up. They may derive their vitality from the corn and wheat which sink into the ground; but they cannot be the very thing itself. There[54] is not a single form, or a single doctrine of Christendom, of which the outward shape is not different, in some way, from the principle of life which gave it birth.

There is only one instance of a ready-made scholastic doctrine in the whole Bible, and that has been long known to be spurious. It is not the verse of the three witnesses, but the parable of the Good Shepherd, the poetry of the Prodigal Son, the pathetic story of the Crucifixion, that have been the true seeds of the Christian life. In this way it is that the divine origin of these truths proves itself. The bright and tender words can never grow old, because they are not flowers cut and dried, but seeds and roots, which are capable of bearing a thousand applications.

Again, this is the ground of our looking forward with a hope, which nothing can extinguish, toward the transformation, the renewal of the human life, for a moment perishing, to reappear, we trust, in some future world, instinct with the capacities for good or evil with which it was endowed, or which it has acquired in the life that now is. The seminal form within the deeps of that little chaos sleeps, which will, we trust, in the almighty providence of God, restore that chaos of decayed and broken powers into conditions more elevated than now we can dream of.

Again, characters appear in the world which have a vivifying and regenerating effect,[55] not so much for the sake of what they teach us, as for the sake of showing us how to think and how to act. What Socrates taught, concerning man and the universe, has long since passed away; but what he taught of the method and process of pursuing truth—the inquiry, the cross-examination, the sifting of what we do know from what we do not know—this is the foundation of the good seed of European philosophy for all time. What St. Paul taught concerning circumcision and election or grace is among the things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and the unstable may wrest to their own destruction, or, having served their generation, may be laid asleep; but what he taught of the mode and manner of arriving at divine truth, when he showed how "the letter killeth and the spirit maketh alive"; when he set forth how charity is the bond of all perfectness; when he showed how all men are acceptable to God by fulfilling, each in his vocation, whether Jew or Gentile, whether slave or free, the commandments of God—he laid the true foundation of Christian faith; he planted in the heart of man the seed, the good seed, of Christian liberty and Christian duty, to bear fruit again and again amidst the many relapses and eclipses of Christendom. When Luther dinned into the ears of his generation the formula of transubstantiation and of justification by faith only, this was doomed to perish and[56] "wax old as doth a garment"; but his acts, his utterances of indignant conscience and of far-sighted genius, became the seed of the Reformation, the hope of the world. When John Wesley rang the changes of the well-known formula of assurance, it was the word of the ordinary preacher; but, in his whole career of fifty years of testifying for holiness and preaching against vice, this was the seed of more than Methodism—it was the seed of the revival of English religious zeal. Such seeds, such principles, such infusions, not of a mechanical system, but of a new light in the world, are not of every-day occurrence—they are the work of a few, of a gifted few, and, therefore, are so much the more to be observed when anyone, who has had it in his power to scatter such seeds right and left, passes away and leaves us to ask what we have gained, what we can assimilate, of the peculiar nourishment which his life and teachings may have left for our advantage. Few will doubt that such an one was he who yesterday was taken from us. It may be that he will not be laid, as might have been expected, among the poets and scholars and sages, whose dust rests within this Abbey; it may be that he was drawn by an irresistible longing toward the native hills of his own Dumfriesshire, and that there, beside the bones of his kindred, beside his father and his mother, and with the silent ministrations of the Church of Scotland, to[57] which he still clung amidst all the vicissitudes of his long existence, will repose all that is earthly of Thomas Carlyle. But he belonged to a wider sphere than Scotland; for, tho by nationality a Scotchman, he yet was loved and honored wherever the British language is spoken. Suffer me, then, to say a few words on the good seed which he has sown in our hearts.

In his teaching, as in all things human, there were, no doubt, tares, or what some would account tares, which must be left to after-times to adjust, as best they can, with the pure wheat which is gathered into the garner of God. There were imitators, parasites, exaggerators, of the genuine growth, which sometimes almost choked the original seed and disfigured its usefulness and its value; but of this we do not speak here. Gather them up into bundles and burn them. We speak only of him and of his best self. Nor would we now discourse at length on those brilliant gifts which gave such a charm to his writings, and such an unexampled splendor to his conversation. All the world knows how the words and the deeds of former times became, as Luther describes in the apostle's language, "not dead things, but living creatures with hands and feet." Every detail was presented before us, penetrated through and through with the fire of poetic imagination, which was the more powerful[58] because it derived its warmth from facts gathered together by the most untiring industry. Who can ever, from this time forward, picture the death of Louis XVI, or the flight of the king and queen, without remembering the thrill of emotion with which, through the "History of the French Revolution," they became acquainted with him for the first time? Who can wander among the ruins of St. Edmunds's at Bury without feeling that they are haunted in every corner by the lifelike figure of the Abbot Samson, as he is drawn from the musty chronicle of Jocelyn? Who can read the letters and the speeches of Cromwell, now made almost intelligible to modern years, without gratitude to the unwearied zeal which gathered together from every corner those relics of departed greatness? What German can fail to acknowledge that, not even in that much-enduring, all-exhausting, country of research and labor—not even there has there been raised such a monument to Frederick the Second, called the Great, as by the simple Scotchman who, for the sake of describing what he considered the last hero-king, almost made himself, for the time, a soldier and a statesman?

But, on these and many like topics, this is not the time or place to speak. It is for us to ask, as I have said, What was the good seed which he sowed in the field of our hearts, and in what respects we shall be, or ought to be,[59] the better for the sower having lived and died among us?

It was customary for those who honored him to speak of him as a prophet. And, if we take the word in its largest sense, he truly deserved the name. He was a prophet, in the midst of an untoward generation: his prophet's mantle was his rough Scotch dialect, and his own peculiar diction, and his own secluded manner of life. He was a prophet, most of all, in the emphatic utterance of truth which no one else, or hardly anyone else, ventured to deliver, and which, he felt, was a message of good to a world which sorely needed them. He stood almost alone, among the men of his time, in opposing a stern, inflexible resistance to the whole drift and pressure of modern days toward exalting popular opinion and popular movements as oracles to be valued above the judgment of the few, above the judgment of the wise, the strong, and the good. Statesmen, men of letters, preachers, have all bowed their heads under the yoke of this, as they believed, irresistible domination, under the impression that the first duty of the chiefest man is, not to lead, but to be led—the necessary conditions of success, to ascertain which way the current flows, and to swim with it as far as it will bear us. To his mind all this proved an insane delusion. That expression of his, which has become, like many of his expressions, almost[60] proverbial in the minds of those who like them least, will express the attitude of his mind, his answer to the question, "What are the people of England?" "Thirty millions—mostly fools." The whole framework and fabric of his mind was built up on the belief that there are not many wise, not many noble minds, not many destined by the supreme Ruler of the universe to rule their fellows; that few are chosen; that "strait is the gate and narrow is the way, and few there be that find it." But, when the few appear, when the great and good present themselves it is the duty and the wisdom of the multitude to seek their guidance. A Luther, a Cromwell, a Goethe, were to him the born kings of men. This was his doctrine of the work of heroes; this, right or wrong, was the mission of his life. It is, all things considered, a fact much to be meditated upon; it is, all things considered, a seed which is worthy of all cultivation.

There is another feeling of the age to which he also stood resolutely opposed, or, rather, a feeling of the age which was resolutely opposed to him, the tendency to divide men into two hostile camps, parted from each other by watchwords and flags, and banners and tokens, which we commonly designate by the name of party. He, perchance, disparaged unduly the usefulness, the necessity, of party organization or party spirit as a mode of the secondary machinery[61] by which the great affairs of the world are carried on; but he was a signal example of a man who not only could be measured by no party standard, but who absolutely disregarded it. He never, during the whole course of his long life, took any active part, never, I believe, voted in those elections which, to most of us, are the very breath of our nostrils. For its own sake he cherished whatever was worth preserving; for its own sake he hailed whatever improvement was worth effecting. He cared not under what name or by what man the preservation or the improvement was achieved. This, too, is an ideal which few can attain, which still fewer attempt; but it is something to have had one man who was possest by it as a vital and saving truth. And such a man was the Prophet of Chelsea. But there was that in him which, in spite of his own contemptuous description of the people, in spite of his scorn for the struggles of party, endeared him, in no common degree, even to those who most disagreed with him—even to the humblest classes of our great community. He was an eminent instance of how a man can trample on the most cherished idols of the market-place, if yet he shows that he has in his heart of hearts the joys, the sorrows, the needs of his toiling, suffering fellow creatures. In this way they insensibly felt drawn toward that tender, fervid nature which was weak when they were weak, which[62] burned with indignation when they suffered wrong. They felt that, if he despised them, it was in love; if he refused to follow their bidding, it was because he believed that their bidding was an illusion.

And for that independence of party of which I spoke, there was also the countervailing source, that no man could for a moment dream that it arose from indifference to his country. He was no monk; he was no hermit dwelling apart from the passions which sway the destinies of a great nation. There is no man living to whom the thrift, the industry, the valor of his countrymen were so deeply precious. There is no man living, to whom, had it been possible for him to have been aroused from the torpor of approaching death, the news would have been more welcome that the Parliament of England had been in the last week saved from becoming a byword and reproach and shame among the nations of the earth. And all this arose out of a frame of mind which others have shared with him, but which, perhaps, few have been able to share to the same extent. The earnestness, almost the very word is his own, the earnestness, the seriousness, with which he approached the great problems of all human life, have made us feel them also. The tides of fashion have swept over the minds of many who once were swayed by his peculiar tones; but there must be many a young man whose first feelings of[63] generosity and public spirit were roused within him by the cry as if from the very depths of his heart, "Where, now, are your Hengists and your Horsas? Where are those leaders who should be leading their people to useful employments, to distant countries, where are they? Preserving their game!" Before his withering indignation all false pretensions, all excuses for worthless idleness and selfish luxury, fell away. The word which he invented to describe them has sunk, perhaps, into cant and hollowness; but it had a truth when first he uttered it. Those falsities were shams, and they who practised them were guilty of the sin which the Bible, in scathing scorn, calls hypocrisy.

And whence came this earnestness? Deep down in the bottom of his soul it springs from his firm conviction that there was a higher, a better world than that visible to our outward senses. All, whether called saints, in the middle ages, or Puritans, in the seventeenth century, or what you like in our own day, he revered them, with all their eccentricities, as bright and learned examples of those who "sacrificed their lives to their higher natures, their worser to their better parts." In addressing the students of Edinburgh, he bade them remember that the deep recognition of the eternal justice of heaven, and the unfailing punishment of crimes against the law of God, is at the origin and foundation of all[64] the histories of nations. No nation which did not contemplate this wonderful universe with an awe-stricken and reverential belief that there was a great unknown, omnipotent, all-wise, and all-just Being superintending all men and all interests in it, no nation ever came to very much, nor did any man either, who forgot that. If a man forgot that, he forgot the most important part of his mission in the world. So he spoke, and the ground of his hope for Europe—of his hope, we may say, against hope—was that, after all, in any commonwealth where the Christian religion exists, nay, in any commonwealth where it has once existed, public or private virtue, the basis of all good, never can become extinct; but in every new age, and even from the deepest decline, there is a chance, and, in the course of ages, the certainty, of renovation. The divine depths of sorrow, the sanctuary of sorrow, the life and death of the divine Man, were, to him, Christianity. We stand, as it were, beside him whilst the grave has not yet closed over those flashing eyes, over those granite features, over that weird form on which we have so often looked, whilst the silence of death has fallen on that house which was once so frequented and so honored. We call up memories which occurred to ourselves. One such, in the far past, may, perchance, come with peculiar force to those whose work is appointed in this place. Many years ago,[65] whilst I belonged to another cathedral, I met him in St. James' Park, and walked with him to his own house. It was during the Crimean war; and after hearing him denounce, with his vigorous and, perhaps, exaggerated earnestness, the chaos and confusion into which our administration had fallen, and the doubt and distrust which pervaded all classes at the time, I ventured to ask him, "What, under the circumstances, is your advice to a canon of an English cathedral?" He grimly laughed at my question. He paused for a moment and then answered, in homely and well-known words; but which were, as it happened, especially fitted to situations like that in which he was asked to give his counsel—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." That is, no doubt, the lesson he leaves to each one of us in this place, and also to this weary world—the world of which he felt the weariness as age and infirmity grew upon him—the lesson which, in his more active days, he practised to the very letter. He is at rest, he is at rest; delivered from that burden of the flesh against which he chafed and fretted: he is at rest! In his own words, "Babylon, with its deathening inanity, rages on to the dim innocuous and unheeded forever." From the "silence of the eternities," of which he so often spoke, there still sound, and will long sound, the tones of that marvelous voice.

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Let us take one tender expression, written three or four years ago—one plaintive yet manful thought, which has never yet reached the public eye: "Three nights ago, stepping out after midnight and looking up at the stars, which were clear and numerous, it struck me with a strong, new kind of feeling: 'In a little while I shall have seen you also for the last time. God Almighty's own theater of immensity—the infinite made palpable and visible to me—that also will be closed—flung too in my face—and I shall never behold death any more.' The thought of the eternal deprivation even of this, tho this is such a nothing in comparison, was sad and painful to me. And then a second feeling rose upon me: 'What if Omnipotence that has developed in me these appetites, these reverences, these infinite affections, should actually have said, Yes, poor mortal, such as you who have gone so far, shall be permitted to go further. Hope! despair not!' God's will, not ours, be done."

Yes, God's will be done for us and for him. The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away.

**÷**06-04 VAUGHAN

GOD CALLING TO MAN

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Charles John Vaughan, Church of England divine and educator, was born at Leicester in 1816, and educated at Rugby under Dr. Arnold. He was ordained in 1841 and in 1844 elected headmaster of Harrow. But the post which gave him the best opportunity as a preacher, was that of Master of the Temple which he occupied from 1869 to 1894. He was a leader in the Broad Church party and his sermons are marked by simplicity of diction, deep sincerity, and rare spiritual insight. He died at Llandoff, of which he had been dean since 1879, in 1897.

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VAUGHAN

1816-1897

GOD CALLING TO MAN

And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?—Gen 3:9.

"I wish," said a great man of our day, "that some one would preach under the dome of St. Paul's, on the text, 'Where art thou, Adam?'" A noble subject, my brethren, when we think of it! But who is equal to the task of handling it? The work of God is quick and powerful—may it be so now, He Himself using it, and prospering it in the thing whereto He sent it.

I shall ask you to look very closely into the text itself. I need not tell anyone whence it comes; from the midst of that awful story which tells us of the first sin, and of its immediate consequences. That same story is in substance acted over and over again in every marked sin that is ever done by any man: the same mode of temptation; first inward question, "Yea, hath God said? is this thing which I wish to do really forbidden?" and then the thought of the hardship; "God doth know that this which He has forbidden is something desirable, something delightful; it is hard that it should be denied me;" and then[70] the growing confidence, "I shall not surely die for it;" and then the last review of all the advantages, "good for food—pleasant to the eyes—to be desired to make me wise, or to make me happy, or to make me independent;" and then the act itself—the taking and eating; and then the sense of leanness entering into the very soul. But that is not all which sin brings after it. The next tells us of a summons, and after the context of an arraigning, and an examination, and at first a self-excusing, and then of a conviction, and a silencing, and a judgment: only one little word of comfort, one little streak of light, amidst all the sorrow, and all the curse, and all the gloom.

But I intend to sever the text now somewhat from its context, and to look into it, with you, by itself alone. "The Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" There is the speaker—God, the Lord God. There is the person spoken to—Adam, the first man; Adam, from whom we all sprang; the father, and the likeness, and the representative of us all. There is the nature of the address—a call, a summons, decisive, authoritative, majestic. There are, at last, the words uttered—few and plain, yet, when looked into, big with meaning—"Where art thou?" And we shall not end without appealing to all of you, to each of you separately, to answer that question; to answer it[71] truly, as we shall all have to answer it one day.

Now I shall not occupy your time, or use many words, about the speaker. There are those who profess to doubt the being of God; and there are those, on the other hand, who profess to prove it. I shall not suspect you of the one, and I shall not endeavor to do the other. I am quite sure that in your inmost hearts you do not doubt His being; and I am quite certain that, if you do, I cannot prove it to you. The being of God is not a matter of argument, it is a matter of instinct. The doubt or denial of it may pass muster with scoffing men in robust health and prosperous circumstances; but nine out of ten of those same men, finding themselves in sudden danger, by land or sea, from accident or disease, will be heard praying: they may conceal it, they may disown it, they may be ashamed of it afterwards—but they did it: and that prayer was a witness, an unimpeachable witness, that down in the depths of their heart there was a belief in God all the time; in their works alike and in their words they deny Him, but in their inmost souls, like the very spirits of evil, they believe and tremble. God, then, speaks here. I tell you not who He is: you know it; you know that there is such a person, your creator, your ruler, your judge: happy if you know also that He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

[72]

Now, to whom does He here speak? I will say two things of His call as here described: First, that it is an individual call; and, secondly, that it is a universal call. We try to make God's call a vague one. It is for some one, no doubt; but every natural man tries to put it away from himself. In hearing a sermon, everyone thinks how suitable this reproof or that warning is to his neighbor; he goes away to wish that such a person had heard it, to hope that such a person listened to it; but the person who thus hopes, and probably, too, the person thus hoped about, never thought of taking it home—never said to himself, tho he was but too ready to say to another, "Thou art the man." Nevertheless, God's call is an individual one. The only use of it is to be so. O that we could hear it in that spirit! O that we could practise ourselves in so hearing it! Where art thou? not, where is he? still less, generally, where are they? Read the Bible thus, my brethren, as written for you, for your learning, for your reproof, for your comfort—yours individually and personally—and you will never need it in vain.

But this individual call is also universal. Let us not flatter ourselves that we are more to God than others are: it is a very common, tho a well-disguised notion. We think that our souls are more important than any others; and that is the least form of the error:[73] but we go on to think our faults are more excusable, our sins more venial, than those of others; we go on to think that God will spare us when He does not spare others; we go on to think that our virtues are greater, our self-denials more meritorious, than those of others; and by this time we have got farther away from the truth and the gospel, than the poor self-condemning sinner who feels, and denies it not, that he is yet in the gall of bitterness, in the very bond of iniquity.

The call of God, like the care of God, is universal. It is to the race. It is to His creatures. Hear the word—"The Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him." If it had been, God called to Abraham, or to Moses, or to David, there would have been some particularity, perhaps some limitation, in the summons; but none of us can say he is not included when Adam is spoken to; he is, indeed, the father of us all: of him we all come. What God says to him, He certainly says to us—to us all, as to each of us.

But we ask, perhaps, thirdly: How does God call to us? I will say, in three ways. He calls within—in conscience. Can you tell me what that thing is in each of us which seems at once so intimate with us, yet so independent of us, that it knows everything we do, or say, or even think, and yet sits in judgment upon us for everything? Is it not a strange thing? We should expect that the[74] whole man would move together; that, if we did a thing, if we said a thing, if we thought a thing, we should go along with it, we should approve that thing: but is it so? No; we carry about within us a whole machinery of judicature; a witness, a jury, a judge, yes, an executioner, too; and, strange to say, it is in early life that the process is most perceptible, just while we are most ignorant, least reflecting, least logical in our judgments. It is the work of many men through life to stifle the voice within, and at last they almost succeed: but do not tell me that you have no such voice within—certainly you will not say that you never had it; and I will tell you what that voice is, or was. It was the voice of the Lord God within, calling to Adam, and saying, "Where art thou?"

He calls also without—in providence. I really know not whether this be not the most persuasive of all His modes of calling to us; certainly it is the most authoritative of all. Conscience may be stifled, but providence grasps us very tightly—we cannot escape from it. Tell me, who caused you to be born where and what you were? Who settled that you should be born in this country and not in that? Who decided that you were to have poor parents or rich, Christian parents or un-Christian? Who has managed your circumstances for you since you had a being? Who gave you, who has continued to give you, your[75] vigor of mind and body, your power of enjoyment, or your experience of kindness, or your principles of judgment, or your instincts of affection? Who took away from you that friend for whom you are now mourning—that parent, that brother, that sister, that wife, that child? Yes, we may forget it, or we may fret under it, but in the hands of a providence we all are; we are utterly powerless in that grasp: and whether we will believe it or no, that power is a voice too—a call from God without, even as conscience is His voice and His call within.

Once more, God calls from above also—in revelation. My friend, believest thou the Scriptures? I know that thou believest. Your presence here seems to say that you do. And yet in this multitude how many must there be who do not in their hearts believe! Let me rather say, who do not in their lives believe; for in your hearts I think you do: sure I am that there are some parts of the Bible which you cannot read and disbelieve; of course you may leave them unread, that is always possible—easier than to read them—but I do not think you can read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, for example, in the Old Testament, and I do not think you can read one chapter of St. John's Gospel in the New Testament, and shut the book, saying, "There is nothing in it." I suspect that is why we so often leave the Bible[76] unread—just because we believe it; we feel, when we do read it, that it is God's voice, and we do not want to hear that voice. The Bible is more its own witness than we like oftentimes to admit.

"Who that has felt its glance of dread  
Thrill through his heart's remotest cells,  
About his path, about his bed,  
Can doubt what spirit in it dwells?"

God speaks; and speaks to us—to each of us and to all of us; and speaks, chiefly in three ways—in conscience, in providence, in revelation: and now, fourthly, what is His call? How is it here briefly exprest? It might have been put, it is put in the Bible, in different forms—but how is it here exprest? "The Lord called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" This is a call, first, to attention. As tho God had said, Listen to Me. That is the first step in all religion. What we want first is a spirit of attention. It is the great art of our enemy to keep our thoughts off religion. That is the meaning of the overwhelming cares of life. The devil would occupy our whole time and thoughts with something which is not, and has nothing (as he persuades us) to do with God. That is the meaning of the excessive amusements of life. The cares of life are not enough to engross the attention of all men always; and therefore the enemy provides something which shall alternate[77] with them for some men, and take the place of them for others. It is this art which God, in His mercy, in His long-suffering, in His desire that we should not perish, has to counteract by His divine skill. He takes a man aside now and then, from time to time—blest be His name for it!—and makes him listen. He interposes by some chastisement, some sickness, some bereavement, and constrains him to hearken to what He, the Lord God, has to say concerning him and to him. This is the first point gained. Behold, he listens! better still, Behold, he prayeth! It is a call, next, to the recognition of God's being, and of our responsibility to Him. "Where art thou?" It is as if He had said, I am, and thou art Mine. As if He has said, I have a right to know about thee, and thou canst not evade Me. As if He had said, I am about, now, to enter into judgment with thee: give an account of thy stewardship. Yes, my brethren, it is an awful moment, when a man first becomes distinctly conscious that God is, and is something to him. He may have talked of God before: he may have fancied that he knew all about Him: he may even have prayed before, and confest himself before, and asked grace and help before: but now, for the first time, he sees how much more there is in all this than he has yet dreamed of; and the only words which he can find at all to express his new feeling, are those of the patriarch of old—"I[78] have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

It is a call, once more, and yet more particularly, to reflect upon our place or our position. I know not how else to express the force of the inquiry, "Where art thou?" It may be read literally—of place. May not some one of those here assembled have been, ere now, perhaps often, perhaps quite recently, in some place in which the question, "Where art thou?" would have had a startling and condemning sound?—some place where he was sinning? some place where he had gone to sin? some place where he would not for the world have been seen by any human eye, and where he gladly forgot that there was yet one eye which did see him? Oh, if God stood this night upon earth, and called aloud to the "Adam" of this generation—to the men and women who form now the sum of the living human creation; if He should call them suddenly from the east and from the west to avow exactly where they were, and to come forth from that place as they were, without an instant allowed them to cover up and disguise themselves; oh, what a revelation would it be of action and of character! Oh, who might abide the scrutiny of that question? Oh, who could stand when that inquirer appeared? But, even if the literal local question[79] could be well answered, there would remain yet another behind applicable to all men. "Where art thou?" is an inquiry as to position no less than place. It says, "What is thy present place as a man with a soul, as an immortal being? What is thy present standing, thy present state? Art thou safe? Art thou happy? Art thou useful? Art thou doing the work I gave thee to do? Is it well with thee in the present? Is it well with thee in the future? Say not, I can not answer, I know not. I have taught thee how to judge of thyself; now therefore advise, and see what answer thou wilt return to Him that made thee."

My brethren, I propose, in the last place, that we all answer this question. It is a very serious thing to do; and it is what no man can do for his brother. Each one of us has one secret place, one sanctuary within the veil, into which, not even once a year, not even in the character of a high priest, can earthly foot ever enter. Yet in that secret place shines forth the light of God's presence; a light never put out altogether in any man, so far at least as its disclosing and revealing character is concerned, until sin and perverseness have done their perfect work, and the awful words are at length fulfilled, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" At present, we will humbly hope, that this last ruin has not been wrought in any[80] one who hears me. And if not, I repeat it, we can all, if we will, answer God's question, when He calls to each of us, as He does this night, and says, "Where art thou?"

One of us, perhaps, answers, if he speaks truly, I am wandering. I have left my Father's home; I took my portion of His goods, and carried them away into a far country. Yes, He was very generous to me; He grudged me nothing; life and health, food and clothing, even success in the world, even human friendship and human love, He gave me all these, and upbraided not: He warned me that I should be sorry one day if I left Him; He cautioned me against the perils of my way; He told me that I should not find happiness; He bade me, if I wished for that, to stay; He bade me, if I should ever be sorry that I had gone, to arise instantly and return. My heart was young then, and I thought I knew best; I left Him, with little feeling, with much expectation; His last look was one of regretful love that I left Him and I am a wanderer still. Sometimes I have arisen to go to my Father, but I went not: I was ashamed, I was afraid, I thought I was too sinful, I felt myself unstable, I feared that I might relapse, I dreaded reproach, I dreaded ridicule, I dreaded, above all, the sight of that face:—and thus stayed where I was, in the far country—I am a wanderer, an outcast still. And another answers, like him to whom the question[81] in the text was first put, I am hiding. I have sinned and I have not repented. I have eaten of the tree of which God said to me, "Thou shalt not eat of it, neither shalt thou touch it, lest thou die." I believed the creature more than the Creator—the tempter more than the Savior. I went to the edge of temptation; I desired forbidden knowledge first, and then I could not rest until I knew by experience also; and now my heart is defiled, my conscience is defiled, my life is defiled; I have lost all right to the beatific vision, for I am no longer pure in heart; now, when I hear the voice of the Lord God, I hide myself, because I know myself sinful, and because I know that He is of purer eyes than to look upon or tolerate iniquity. And another answers, I am resting. Earth is very pleasant to me; I have toiled and I have reaped; I have gathered myself a competence; I have found the happiness of lawful love; I have built myself a nest here, I have fenced it against the blasts of fortune, I am warm and tranquil within: let me alone a little while; it is not long that I can enjoy it; soon calamity may come, loss, sickness, death, into my peaceful home; then I will turn and seek Thee—not yet, O not just yet! And another says, I am working. Am I not doing Thy work? Am I not discharging the duties of my station? Am I not setting an example of diligence and sobriety? Am I not availing myself of the[82] faculties which Thou has given to make myself respectable, and useful, and exemplary in my generation? How can I do all this, and yet be religious? How can I find time for both worlds at once? But yet, indeed, am I not providing for that other world in making a proper use of this? Let me alone a little while; when I have a convenient season, I will call for Thee. And another says, honestly, I am trifling. The world is so gay, so amusing, so exciting: hast Thou not made it so for our enjoyment? Oh, grudge me not my brief time of mirth and forgetfulness; I shall be serious enough one day. And another says, I am coming. Yes, I am on my way. This is no world, I see it, of rest for me. There is no peace but in God: I sought it once elsewhere, and found it not: now I know my error; yes, I am coming, I am coming, I am on my way: but give me time: so great a change cannot be wrought all at once: heaven cannot be won in a day: give me time, and I will reach Thee. I am now using the means: I pray, I read the Bible, I go to Thy House, I partake in Christ's supper: surely this is the way to Thee!

Yes, my brother, but why this delay? Why this postponement of the desired result? Wilt thou be any fitter to-morrow than to-day for that step across the barrier which now seems so premature, so presumptuous? The word is very nigh thee: it is in thy mouth, it is in[83] thy heart—thou knowest it well, even the word of faith—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," at once, "and thou shalt be saved. Come unto me"—not to-morrow, but to-day—"all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Are there any here present—God grant that they be many!—who have yet one other answer to return to the question on which we have dwelt? Thou sayest to me, O Lord, "Where art thou?" Lord, I am a sinner in a world of danger; and I have learned that danger in myself; for I have fallen, and I have sinned against Thee, times without number; yet by Thy grace I have risen, and I have returned to Thee, and Thou hast accepted me in Thy Son, and hast endued me, according to my need, with Thy Holy Spirit. And now, Lord, my life is hid with Christ in Thee: He is my trust, He is my life, He is my hope, and the life that I now live upon earth, I live by faith in Him. Under Thy care, doing Thy work, thankful for Thy mercies, trusting in Thy strength, even now I am Thine, and hereafter I shall see Thee. Guide Thou my steps, make Thy way plain before me, in the days that remain to me, and at last receive me to Thyself, disciplined, humbled, sanctified, that I may rest in Thee forever, and forever see Thy glory!

My brethren, the work of God in each of us would be almost accomplished if this one call were heard within. Once let us know that[84] God is speaking to us, and that He waits an answer; once let us feel that He is, and that He will have us to be saved, and all the rest will follow. May it be so now! May some wanderer this night return to his Father; some hiding soul this night come forth from its lurking place; some builder upon the sand lay this night his foundations upon the rock; some trifler be made serious; some worldly man turned heavenward—so that all may have cause to bless God for His word here spoken, and ascribe to Him, through eternal ages, thanksgiving, and blessing, and praise!

**÷**06-05 NEWMAN HALL

CHRISTIAN VICTORY

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Christopher Newman Hall, Congregational divine, was born at Maidstone, Kent, in 1816. He was widely known as a writer, lecturer, and preacher of great eloquence. During the Civil War he was enthusiastic in advocating the cause of the North, and subsequently two extended tours in the United States brought him international fame. His tract, "Come to Jesus," published in 1846, has been translated into over twenty languages. He died in 1902.

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NEWMAN HALL

1816-1902

CHRISTIAN VICTORY

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.—Rev 2:17.

The Christian life is often compared in Scripture to a warfare. Followers of Jesus are "soldiers." They are exhorted to put on "the whole armor of God." They "fight the good fight of faith." Some of you have been engaged in the conflict: others have more recently entered upon it. But, whether young or old in the Christian career, all find it necessary to be constantly stirred up to watchfulness against the never-ceasing assaults of the foe. It is not enough to put on the armor and to commence the battle. He that overcometh, and he alone, will receive the salutation, "Well done, good and faithful servant,"—he alone shall "lay hold upon eternal life."

But we are not left to fight without encouragement. As generals before a battle go in front of their troops to stimulate them to valor, so Christ, the Captain of our Salvation,[88] leads on the consecrated hosts of His elect; and having himself set us a glorious example of valor and victory, animates us to follow in His footsteps by the "exceeding great and precious promises" of His word. Christian warrior! let your eye be lifted up to Him. Behold Him beckoning you onward. Listen to Him, as from His throne of glory He exhorts you to persevering valor against the foe; and pray earnestly that His promise may be fulfilled in your case: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

Let us consider first, the promise; then, the condition attached to it.

I. The promise. This is twofold,—the hidden manna and the white stone.

1. The hidden manna.—God fed the Israelites in the wilderness with manna. A portion of this was laid by in the ark, and thus was hidden from public view. It is here referred to as a figurative representation of the spiritual blessings bestowed upon the victor in the heavenly fight. Christ, speaking of the manna as a type of Himself, said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." The manna in the wilderness sustained the life of the Israelites.

But there is another life more important than that of the body. By sin the soul is[89] dead, dead toward God. By the Holy Spirit, the "dead in trespasses and sins" are "quickened," or made alive. As the life of the new-born infant cannot be preserved without food, so the new spiritual life which God imparts needs continual support. Both the life, and the nourishing of it, come from Christ, and Christ alone. By His sacrifice that life becomes possible; and by His spirit working within our hearts that life becomes actual. He sustains as well as imparts spiritual vitality. He is the food of our faith: "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." He is the food of our love: "we love him because he first loved us." He is the food of our obedience: "the love of Christ constraineth us." He is the food of our peace: for when "justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He is the food of our joy: for if "we joy in God" it is "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The manna which sustained the Israelites was evidently the gift of God. And so this "hidden manna" is from heaven. It is no contrivance of man—no philosophy of human invention. It is a divine plan for the salvation of our ruined race. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but should have everlasting life." That manna in the wilderness was sweet to the[90] taste; yet they who fed on it grew weary of it. But the more we eat of the bread of life, the more we relish it—the greater is our appetite for it. That manna in the wilderness was needed daily. And so with this heavenly bread. Yesterday's supply will not suffice for to-day. The prayer is as needful for the soul as for the body: "Give us this day our daily bread." But if that manna was needed daily, so it was supplied; none went in vain at the appointed season—and no soul that "hungers and thirsts after righteousness" is sent empty away. The manna was supplied to the Israelites till they came to the promised land—so God has promised that His grace shall not fail His people through their wanderings.

It is spoken of as the "hidden manna." Such is the Christian's life. "Our life is hid with Christ in God." The outward effects of it may be seen, but the inner life is invisible. So is the nourishing of the life. You may see the Christian on his knees, you may hear the words which he utters, but you cannot see the streams of divine influence which are poured into his spirit; nor hear the sweet whispers of divine love which fill him with joy; nor comprehend the peace passing all understanding which he is permitted to experience. Unbelievers are often amazed at what they see in the Christian. He is troubled on every side, yet not in despair. Waves of sorrow beat[91] upon his frail vessel, yet it does not sink. Men now threaten, now allure, but he holds on his way. What to others is an irresistible charm, is no attraction to him. What is a terror to others, deters not him. Why does he not faint beneath the burden? why does he not sink in the storm? Because he eats of the "hidden manna." "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." "He hath taken him into his banqueting-room, and the banner over him is love."

Were this promise merely the reward of final victory, that victory itself would never be gained. We need to eat this manna during our pilgrimage. We cannot live without it. Every act of overcoming will be followed by a verification of the promise, "I will give him to eat of the hidden manna." Yet we must look beyond the present life for its full accomplishment. "To him that overcometh" at the last "shall be given the hidden manna," in a sense of which at present we have but a very faint conception.

As the manna was hidden in the ark, and that ark was hidden behind the curtain of the Holy of Holies, so the Christian's hope, "as an anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast, enters into that which is within the veil." Those joys we cannot yet conjecture; their splendor is too intense; we should be blinded by excessive light; we should be overpowered by the excellent glory.

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One look of heaven would unfit us for earth. It is wisely appointed that at present this manna should in one sense be hidden, even from ourselves. We are as yet but babes—such strong meat would not suit us now; we must be content with simpler fare. But oh! if the manna, tho at present so partially and imperfectly appreciated, can produce such peace and joy, what must be the bliss of entering into the holiest of all, and there, in the presence of God Himself, feasting on it eternally! Unceasing, unlimited reception of divine influences into the soul!

Uninterrupted fellowship with Him who is the only fountain of life, and purity, and happiness! Perfect love! But at present such full fruition is "hidden." "Now we see through a glass darkly"; "now we know but in part"; "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." But how unspeakably blest are they to whom, partially in this world and perfectly in the next, the promise shall be verified: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna"!

2. The white stone.—Reference is made to the tessera hospitalis, the tally or token of hospitality employed by the ancients. At a time when houses of public entertainment were less common, private hospitality was the more necessary. When one person was received kindly by another, or a contract of[93] friendship was entered into, the tessera was given. It was so named from its shape, being four-sided; it was sometimes of wood; sometimes of stone; it was divided into two by the contracting parties; each wrote his own name on half of the tessera; then they exchanged pieces, and therefore the name or device on the piece of tessera which each received, was the name the other person had written upon it, and which no one else knew but him who received it. It was carefully prized, and entitled the bearer to protection and hospitality.

Plautus, in one of his playes, refers to this custom. Hanno inquires of a stranger where he may find Agorastocles, and discovers to his surprize that he is addressing the object of his search.

"If so," he says, "compare, if you please, this hospitable tessera; here it is; I have it with me."

Agorastocles replies, "It is the exact counterpart; I have the other part at home."

Hanno responds, "O my friend! I rejoice to meet thee; thy father was my friend, my guest; I divided with him this hospitable tessera." "Therefore," said Agorastocles, "thou shalt have a home with me, for I reverence hospitality."

Beautiful illustration of gospel truth! The Savior visits the sinner's heart, and being received as a guest, bestows the white stone, the[94] token of His unchanging love. It is not we who in the first instance desire this compact. Far from it.

But Jesus, anxious to bless us, kindly forces Himself on our regard. By His spirit, he persuades us to give Him admission to our hearts. "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." We often disregarded His appeal. Yet, with what condescending kindness did he persevere! And when at length we opened the door, we saw Him laden with blessings which He had been long waiting to bestow. The feast which was then spread was all of His providing. He who went to be "the guest of one that was a sinner," inverts the usual course. He invites Himself and brings the feast. What have we fit to set before so august and holy a visitant? But He who chooses the sinner's heart as His banqueting-chamber, spreads there His choicest gifts, His exceeding great and precious promises, His finished sacrifice, His human sympathy, His perfect example, His pure precepts, His all-prevailing intercession, the various developments of His infinite love.

He "sups with us," and makes us "sup with Him." He enrolls our name among His friends. "He makes an everlasting covenant with us, ordered in all things and sure." He promises never to leave nor forsake us. He[95] tells us we "shall never perish." He gives us the tessera, the white stone!

Is not this "the witness of the Spirit," the "earnest of the promised possession"? Does not "the Spirit witness with our spirit that we are born of God"? Does not our experience of the friendship of Jesus correspond with what we are taught of it in the Scriptures? "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day." The "love of God is shed abroad" in the heart of the believer. He says, with humble confidence, "My Lord, and my God!"

On this white stone is inscribed a "new name." The part of the tessera which each of the contracting parties received contained the name of the other. And, therefore, "the new name" on the "white stone," which he that overcometh receives, is that of Him who gives. By the unbeliever, God is known as Power, as Majesty, as Justice. He is dreaded. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." The Christian alone knows Him as "Love!" Jehovah has now "a new name." He was once a ruler—now He is Friend; He was once judge—now He is Father.

Do you know God by His "new name"? Do you so know Him as to wish no longer to hide from Him, but to hide in Him, as the only home the universe can furnish in which[96] you can be safe and happy? Have you learned to say, "Our Father which art in heaven"? If we have, indeed, received this "white stone," let us continually be reading the "new name" engraven on it. Here I am assured that the Holy Ghost is my teacher, my guide, my comforter; that the eternal Word, the only begotten Son, is my Savior, my Friend, my Brother; that the infinite Jehovah is my Father, and that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

We are told that no man knoweth this new name, "saving he that receiveth it." He knows it for himself, but no one else can read it for him. Thus it resembles the "hidden manna." The frivolous may deride, fools may mock, the unbeliever may deny, the sceptic may bring forth his objections in all the pride of a false philosophy, but the Christian, even if unable to reply to the caviller, or to make intelligible to any other mind his own strong assurance, has an evidence within him which nothing can shake, for God has written on his heart "His new best name of Love."

Fellow pilgrims to the heavenly Canaan, how precious is this token! We are travelers through the desert; for tho the enjoyments of earth are many, yet this life, compared with what is to come, is a wilderness. We are away from home; we are exposed to privations,[97] tempests, foes; we constantly need a refuge. But we are never far from the house of a friend. Everywhere, in every city and in every village, on the desert and on the ocean, in the solitude of secrecy, and in the solitude of a crowd, in the bustle of business, and in the sick chamber, a Friend is at hand, who will always recognize the white stone He gave us, a token of His love. We have only to present it to claim the fulfilment of His promise.

How wide will the door be thrown open for our reception! What divine entertainment we shall receive! what safety from peril! what succor in difficulty! what comfort in trouble! what white raiment! what heavenly food! O that we valued the tessera more, that we sought more frequent interviews with our heavenly Friend, that we more habitually resorted as invited guests to Jesus, and dwelt in Him as the home of our souls! We shall never find the door closed against us; we shall never be received reluctantly; He will never allow us to think that we are intruders. Jesus is never ashamed of His poor relations, nor treats them coldly because they need His help. The greater our distress, the more shall we prove His liberality and tender sympathy.

And as regards this stone, as well as the hidden manna, we can look beyond the present life. A day is coming when we shall be compelled to leave the homes of earth, however endeared. We must embrace for the last time[98] the friends united to us as our own souls. Tho we have traveled along the road many a year together, we must now separate, and go alone. They may accompany us to the river side, but we must cross it by ourselves. What cheering voice will greet us then? What kind roof will receive us then? What loving friend will welcome us then?

But we shall not have left our best treasure behind us! No! we shall carry the white stone with us; and with this we shall look for no inferior abode, but with unhesitating step shall advance at once right up to the palace of the Great King. We present the tessera; the "new name" is legible upon it; the angelic guards recognize the symbol; the everlasting gates lift up their heads; and the voice of Jesus Himself invites us to enter, saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom!"

Such is the welcome that every soul shall experience to whom the promise is fulfilled: "I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it."

II. The condition annexed to the promise, "To him that overcometh!"

A great war is going on between the Church and the powers of darkness. It is not an affair of strategy between two vast armies, wherein skilful maneuvers determine the issue, many on either side never coming into actual[99] combat; but every Christian has to fight hand to hand with the enemy. We cannot be lost in the crowd. We may not stand in the middle of the hollow square, without sharing the perils of the outer rank. Every Christian must not only occupy his post in the grand army, but must personally grapple with the foe.

Before conversion there was no fighting. The devil's suggestions and the heart's inclination were allied. Then we did the enemy's bidding, or were lulled to sleep by his intoxicating cup. But when light shone into the soul, and we strove to escape, the struggle began. God, as our Creator and Redeemer, justly demands our obedience and love. Whatever interferes with these claims, is an enemy summoning us to battle. The world of frivolity is our foe. How numerous and insinuating are its temptations—the more perilous because of the difficulty of defining them!

Moreover, lawful pleasures and necessary cares become dangerous when they cease to be subordinate to the love of God. The enjoyments He bestows and the labors He appoints are calculated to minister to godliness,—and yet they may be perverted to idolatry by our forgetting Him on whom our highest thoughts should be fixt. What danger is there that things in themselves holy and beautiful may thus become pernicious and destructive!

The flesh, too, furnished its contingent to[100] the army of our foes. Not that any of our natural appetites, being divinely bestowed, can have in them the nature of sin. No! the flesh, as God made it, is pure and holy. But those instincts, which, regulated by the revealed will of their Author, are "holiness to the Lord," may, by unhallowed gratification, become those "fleshly lusts which war against the soul." As we carry about with us these animal propensities, there is necessity for constant vigilence lest our own nature, being abused, should become our destroyer.

Inbred depravity lurks in the heart of even the true believer. Tho dethroned, it is not completely expelled. With what selfishness, covetousness, vanity, hastiness of temper, uncharitableness, have we not to contend! Who has not some sin which most easily besets him? How varied are the forms of unbelief! Spiritual pride, too, corrupts our very graces, piety itself furnishing an occasion of evil, so that when we have conquered some temptation or performed some duty, our victory is often tarnished, our holy things corrupted, by our falling into the snare of self-complacency.

Above all, there is that great adversary who "goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." He avails himself of the world, and the flesh, and the infirmities of the spirit, to tempt the soul of sin. This is no fable, altho one of Satan's most skilful stratagems is to make men disbelieve in his existence.[101] Overlooked or despised, a foe is already half victorious. But the Captain of our Salvation, in His word, often warns us both of the craft and of the violence of our adversary. We sometimes read of "the wiles of the devil"; and sometimes of "the fiery darts of the wicked one." They who fail to watch and pray, are sure to be vanquished by such a foe.

These are our enemies! And if we would possess the promise we must "overcome." A mere profession of religion is of no avail. It is not enough for our name to appear on the muster-roll of the camp. Many wear the soldier's dress who know nothing of the soldier's heart. Many are glad to glitter on the grand parade who fall off from the hard-fought, blood-stained battle-field. It is not enough to buckle on our armor; many do this, and lay it aside again. We must devote ourselves to this great daily battle of life.

There is no exemption of persons. Women must fight, as well as men; the tender and timid must be as Amazons in the conflict. Children must carry the shield, and wield the sword. The aged and infirm must keep the ranks. The sick and wounded must not be carried to the rear. No substitute can be provided, and there is no discharge in this war.

There is no exemption on account of circumstances. The rich and poor, the learned and[102] the unlearned, the cheerful and the sad, all must fight. No accumulation of trouble, no unexpected death of friends, can be an excuse for laying down our arms. We must go to the marriage feast, and we must attend the funeral procession, as warriors, wearing our armor and grasping our weapons. We must be like those spoken of by Nehemiah, "every man with one hand wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon."

There is no exemption of place. Foes lie in wait for the Christian wherever he goes—in the mart of commerce, in the busy workshop, when he returns to his home, when he rests on his bed, in the bustle of the day, in the silence of the night, in the circle of his friends, in the bosom of his family, in society, alone, in the city, in the fields, in his walks of benevolence, in his private meditations, in the church, in his secret retirement, when he worships with the great congregation, and when he enters his closet and shuts the door. He can never elude the enemy; he carries the foe in his own breast; the conflict ceases not!

There is no exemption of time, no season of rest. No truce is sounded. Satan never beats a retreat, except to lead us into an ambuscade. No white flag comes out that can be trusted. If we parley it is at our peril; if we pause, we are wounded or taken captive. Wars on earth may often terminate by mutual agreement. It is a war of extermination; no quarter is[103] given; either we must trample Satan under foot, or Satan will drag us down to hell!

It is a warfare until death. While we are in the body it will be always true—"We wrestle." The oldest Christian cannot lay aside his weapons. "Having done all, stand." A great word that! "Having done all!" "What!" you may say, "after a long life of conflict, surely I may put aside my armor, and sheathe my sword, and recline on some sunny bank, and enjoy myself after my victory!"

No; you must not expect it; "having done all" it is enough if you stand at bay on the battle-ground; all you can hope for in this world is to maintain your post, still defying the foe, who will be still meditating fresh attacks. You will never be able to say with St. Paul, "I have finished my course."

It is not the appearance of fighting. It is not a few faint, irresolute strokes. "So fight I," said the Apostle, "not as one that beateth the air." We must be resolute, determined, in earnest, giving our enemy no advantage. We must "not give place to the devil." We must watch against the smallest beginnings of sin. By "keeping the heart with all diligence," by putting on "the whole armor of God," by having faith as our shield, righteousness as our breastplate, the hope of salvation as our helmet, by keeping "the sword of the Spirit" bright with exercise, "praying[104] with all prayer," standing near our Captain, looking to Him, relying upon Him, knowing that "without Him we can do nothing,"—so must we fight! All this is necessary, if we would overcome.

It is not so easy to fight this fight as some suppose. It is not a true faith merely, an evangelical creed, a scriptural church, a comfortable sermon once or twice a week, a little Sabbath-keeping, an agreeable pause in your pleasures, giving to them a new relish—it is not this which constitutes Christianity. You that think religion so very easy a thing, have a care at least, lest when too late, you find that you know not what true religion meant.

Easy? A depraved being to trample upon his lusts—a proud being to lie prostrate with humility and self-reproach—they that are "slow of heart to believe," to receive the gospel as little children?

Easy? To "crucify the flesh," "to deny ungodliness," "to cut off a right hand, and to pluck out a right eye"?

Easy? To be in the world, and yet not of the world—to come out from it, not by the seclusion of the cloister, but by holiness of life—to be diligent in its duties, yet not absorbed by them; appreciating its innocent delights, and yet not ensnared by them; beholding its attractions and yet rising superior to them?

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Easy? To live surrounded by objects which appeal to the sight, and yet to endure as seeing what is invisible?

Easy? To pray and see no answer to prayer, and still pray on—to fight this battle, and find fresh foes ever rising up, yet still to fight on—to be harassed with doubts and fears, and yet walk on in darkness, tho we see no light, staying ourselves upon God?

Easy? To be preparing for a world we have never visited, in opposition to so much that is captivating in a world where we have always dwelt, whose beauties we have seen, whose music we have heard, whose pleasures we have experienced?

Easy? To resist that subtle foe who has cast down so many of the wise and the mighty?

Easy? When Jesus says it is a "strait gate," and that if we would enter we must "strive," bidding us "take up our cross daily, deny ourselves and follow him"? Ah! it is no soft flowery meadow, along which we may languidly stroll, but a rough, craggy cliff that we must climb. "To him that overcometh!" It is no smooth, placid stream, along which we may dreamily float, but a tempestuous ocean we must stem. "To him that overcometh!" It is no easy lolling in a cushioned chariot, that bears us on without fatigue and peril. The trumpet has sounded to arms; it is not peace, but war, war for liberty, war for life, on the issue of which[106] our everlasting destiny depends! If we are to be saved, we must "overcome."

But tho the conflict is arduous, the encouragements are great. We have armor of proof. We have a mighty Champion. Victory is ensured to the brave. Others who stood on the same battle-field and fought with the same enemies, are now enjoying an eternal triumph. Not one faithful warrior ever perished. Their foes were not fewer than ours, their strength was not greater. They overcame by the same "blood of the Lamb" on which we rely.

"Once they were mourning here below,  
And wet their couch with tears;  
They wrestled hard, as we do now,  
With sins, and doubts, and fears."

But they are wearing their crowns, they are enjoying their rest; and the feeblest and most unworthy of our own day, trusting in the same Savior, shall inherit the same promise. Then let us overcome. Sheathe not the sword, and it shall never be wrested from you; lay not down the shield, and no fiery dart shall ever penetrate it; face the foe, and he shall never trample you down, never drive you back.

Listen to your Captain; how He animates you onward! Look to the crown he is ready to bestow upon you; eat of the hidden manna which He gives; read the name in the "white[107] stone,"—the name of God,—His name of love, recorded for your encouragement; and thus be animated to walk worthy of this holy alliance, and not to allow the foe to wrench from you such an assurance of divine favor, such a passport to heavenly bliss.

A little more conflict, and that "white stone" shall introduce you to the inheritance above, where, in the everlasting repose of the inner sanctuary, you shall without intermission eat of the hidden manna.

"Then let my soul march boldly on,  
Press forward to the heavenly gate;  
There peace and joy eternal reign,  
And glittering robes for conquerors wait."

Some of you may consider this subject visionary and unreal. You say, "I know nothing of this warfare. I know what the conflict of business is, the race of fashion, the bustle of toil or pleasure; but to anxiety about spiritual things I am a stranger."

You are enjoying peace—but—what peace? There is a captive in a dungeon—his limbs are fast chained to the walls—yet he is singing songs. How is it? Satan has given him to drink of his drugged cup, and he does not know where he is. Look at that other. He says, "it is peace." There is truly no fighting, but he is groveling in the dust, and the heel of his foe is upon his neck. Such is the peace of every one going on in his wickedness,[108] unpardoned and unsaved. "Taken captive by the devil at his will."

Chained in Satan's boat, you are swiftly gliding down the stream to ruin, and because it is smooth, you dream that it is safe! What is the difference between the saint and the sinner? Not that in the saint there is no sin. Not that in the sinner there is never a thought about God. The difference is this—that the saint is overcoming his sin; but the sin is overcoming the sinner. Oh, what a terrible thing if sin have the upper hand! No "hidden manna" is yours. The symbols of religion you may look at, but real religion must be a stranger to you. You know not its enjoyment. You do not taste it. It is a hidden thing. Heaven too will be hidden. You hear of its gates of pearl—but they will never open to you. You may catch the distant accents of its songs—but in those songs you will never join. And that "white stone" cannot be yours. You have no joyful anticipation of heaven—but a fearful looking-for of fiery indignation—or else the insensate resolve not to think at all. And the "new name"—no! you cannot read it! You know God by no such name as makes you seek His company. The thought of Him renders you unhappy, and therefore you banish it from your mind. You are not now alarmed, but soon the spell may be broken, and you may find the chains riveted upon your soul forever.

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I fancy I hear you say, "I wish that before it is too late, I could escape! But mine is a hopeless case. My heart is hardened against the gospel, and evil habit has so got the mastery over me, that I have no power to begin this conflict!"

No, you have no power; but One has visited this world, and taken our nature, who can help you. The mighty Son of God became the suffering Son of Man that He might be the liberator of our enslaved race. He burst open the prison doors, that captive souls might escape. He stands near you, ready to break off your fetters and strengthen you to fight the enemy who has so long opprest you. Tell Him your simple but sad tale; how helpless, how miserable, how ruined you are! Tell Him you want to be saved, but know not how to begin the work, and ask Him both to begin and complete it for you! Let your prayer be this: "Be merciful to me, a sinner"; and He who "came to destroy the works of the devil," He "whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive," will receive your "humble petitions; and tho you be tied and bound with the chain of your sins, He, in the pitifulness of His great mercy, will loose you."

He will pardon your past shameful concessions to the foe, and, arraying you in "the whole armor of God," and animating you with His Holy Spirit, He will enable you so to[110] fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil, that you also shall share in the prize of them that overcome; you also shall eat of the "hidden manna," and receive the "white stone."

**÷**06-06 ROBERTSON

THE LONELINESS OF CHRIST

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Frederick William Robertson, was born in London in 1816, educated at Edinburgh University and took his degree at Oxford in 1841. From a law office he passed into the ministry, where his career, tho brief, was exceptionally brilliant. His English style commends itself to the preacher's study for its naturalness, poetic beauty, lucidity, and strength. It is the style of a man of unique genius. In Aug., 1847, he began his remarkable ministry at Trinity Chapel, Brighton. He died of consumption at Brighton in 1853, little more than thirty-six years of age.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature in the career of Robertson was the influence he exercised over the workingmen. This class had in his day become estranged from the Church of England, few of whose clergy had any power to attract their attention and adherence. He was denounced as a socialist because of his foundation of a workingmen's institute, and the opposition and vilification which he thus met with no doubt helped to shorten his life.

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ROBERTSON

1816-1853

THE LONELINESS OF CHRIST

Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.—Joh 16:31-32.

There are two kinds of solitude: the first, consisting of isolation in space; the other, of isolation of the spirit. The first is simply separation by distance. When we are seen, touched, heard by none, we are said to be alone. And all hearts respond to the truth of that saying, This is not solitude; for sympathy can people our solitude with a crowd. The fisherman on the ocean alone at night is not alone, when he remembers the earnest longings which are rising up to heaven at home for his safety. The traveler is not alone, when the faces which will greet him on his arrival seem to beam upon him as he trudges on. The solitary student is not alone, when he feels that human hearts will respond to the truths which he is preparing to address to them.

The other is loneliness of soul. There are times when hands touch ours, but only send[114] an icy chill of unsympathizing indifference to the heart; when eyes gaze into ours, but with a glazed look which can not read into the bottom of our souls; when words pass from our lips, but only come back as an echo reverberated without reply through a dreary solitude; when the multitude throng and press us, and we can not say, as Christ said, "Somebody hath touched me"; for the contact has been not between soul and soul, but only between form and form.

And there are two kinds of men, who feel this last solitude in different ways. The first are the men of self-reliance—self-dependent—who ask no counsel, and crave no sympathy; who act and resolve alone, who can go sternly through duty, and scarcely shrink, let what will be crushed in them. Such men command respect: for whoever respects himself constrains the respect of others. They are invaluable in all those professions of life in which sensitive feeling would be a superfluity; they make iron commanders, surgeons who do not shrink, and statesmen who do not flinch from their purpose for the dread of unpopularity. But mere self-dependence is weakness; and the conflict is terrible when a human sense of weakness is felt by such men. Jacob was alone when he slept on his way to Padan Aram, the first night that he was away from his father's roof, with the world before him, and all the old broken up; and Elijah was[115] alone in the wilderness when the court had deserted him, and he said, "They have digged down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I, only am left, and they seek my life to take it away." But the loneliness of the tender Jacob was very different from that of the stern Elijah. To Jacob the sympathy he yearned for was realized in the form of a gentle dream. A ladder raised from earth to heaven figured the possibility of communion between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. In Elijah's case, the storm, and the earthquake, and the fire did their convulsing work in the soul, before a still, small voice told him that he was not alone. In such a spirit the sense of weakness comes with a burst of agony, and the dreadful conviction of being alone manifests itself with a rending of the heart of rock. It is only so that such souls can be taught that the Father is with them, and that they are not alone.

There is another class of men, who live in sympathy. These are affectionate minds, which tremble at the thought of being alone; not from want of courage nor from weakness of intellect comes their dependence upon others, but from the intensity of their affections. It is the trembling spirit of humanity in them. They want not aid, not even countenance, but only sympathy. And then trial comes to them not in the shape of fierce struggle,[116] but of chill and utter loneliness, when they are called upon to perform a duty on which the world looks coldly, or to embrace a truth which has not found lodgment yet in the breasts of others.

It is to this latter and not to the former class that we must look, if we could understand the spirit in which the words of the text were pronounced. The deep humanity of the soul of Christ was gifted with those finer sensibilities of affectionate nature which stand in need of sympathy. He not only gave sympathy, but wanted it, too, from others. He who selected the gentle John to be His friend, who found solace in female sympathy, attended by the women who ministered to Him out of their substance—who in the trial hour could not bear even to pray without the human presence, which is the pledge and reminder of God's presence, had nothing in Him of the hard, merely self-dependent character. Even this verse testifies to the same fact. A stern spirit never could have said, "I am not alone: the Father is with me"; never would have felt the loneliness which needed the balancing truth. These words tell of a struggle, an inward reasoning, a difficulty and a reply, a sense of solitude—"I shall be alone"; and an immediate correction of that: "Not alone: the Father is with me."

There is no thought connected with the life of Christ more touching, none that seems[117] so peculiarly to characterize His spirit, as the solitariness in which He lived. Those who understood Him best only understood Him half. Those who knew Him best scarcely could be said to know Him. On this occasion the disciples thought, Now we do understand, now we do believe. The lonely spirit answered, "Do ye now believe? Behold the hour cometh that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone."

Very impressive is that trait in His history. He was in this world alone.

I. First, then, we meditate on the loneliness of Christ.

The loneliness of Christ was caused by the divine elevation of His character. His infinite superiority severed Him from sympathy; His exquisite affectionateness made that want of sympathy a keen trial.

There is a second-rate greatness which the world can comprehend. If we take two who are brought into direct contrast by Christ Himself, the one the type of human, the other that of divine excellence, the Son of Man and John the Baptist, this becomes clearly manifest. John's life had a certain rude, rugged goodness, on which was written, in characters which required no magnifying-glass to read, spiritual excellence. The world, on the whole, accepted him. Pharisees and Sadducees went to his baptism. The people idolized him as a prophet; and, if he had not chanced to cross[118] the path of a weak prince and a revengeful woman, we can see no reason why John might not have finished his course with joy, recognized as irreproachable. If we inquire why it was that the world accepted John and rejected Christ, one reply appears to be, that the life of the one was infinitely simple and one-sided, that of the other divinely complex. In physical nature, the naturalist finds no difficulty in comprehending the simple structure of the lowest organizations of animal life, where one uniform texture, and one organ performing the office of brain and heart and lungs, at once, leave little to perplex. But when he comes to study the complex anatomy of men, he has the labor of a lifetime before him. It is not difficult to master the constitution of a single country; but when you try to understand the universe, you find infinite appearances of contradiction: law opposed by law; motion balanced by motion; happiness blended with misery; and the power to elicit a divine order and unity out of this complex variety is given to only a few of the gifted of the race. That which the structure of man is to the structure of the limpet, that which the universe is to a single country, the complex and boundless soul of Christ was to the souls of other men. Therefore, to the superficial observer, His life was a mass of inconsistencies and contradictions. All thought themselves qualified to point out the discrepancies. The Pharisees[119] could not comprehend how a holy Teacher could eat with publicans and sinners. His own brethren could not reconcile His assumption of a public office with the privacy which He aimed at keeping. "If thou doest these things, show thyself to the world." Some thought He was "a good man"; others said, "Nay, but he deceiveth the people." And hence it was that He lived to see all that acceptance which had marked the earlier stage of His career—as, for instance, at Capernaum—melt away. First, the Pharisees took the alarm; then the Sadducees; then the political party of the Herodians; then the people. That was the most terrible of all: for the enmity of the upper classes is impotent; but when that cry of brute force is stirred from the deeps of society, as deaf to the voice of reason as the ocean in its strength churned into raving foam by the winds, the heart of mere earthly oak quails before that. The apostles, at all events, did quail. One denied; another betrayed; all deserted. They "were scattered, each to his own": and the Truth Himself was left alone in Pilate's judgment hall.

Now learn from this a very important distinction. To feel solitary is no uncommon thing. To complain of being alone, without sympathy, and misunderstood, is general enough. In every place, in many a family, these victims of diseased sensibility are to be found, and they might find a weakening satisfaction[120] in observing a parallel between their own feelings and those of Jesus. But before that parallel is assumed, be very sure that it is, as in His case, the elevation of your character which severs you from your species. The world has small sympathy for divine goodness; but it also has little for a great many other qualities which are disagreeable to it. You meet with no response; you are passed by; find yourself unpopular; meet with little communion. Well! Is that because you are above in the world—nobler, devising and executing grand plans, which they can not comprehend; vindicating the wronged; proclaiming and living on great principles; offending it by the saintliness of your purity, and the unworldliness of your aspirations? Then yours is the loneliness of Christ. Or is it that you are wrapped up in self, cold, disobliging, sentimental, indifferent about the welfare of others, and very much astonished that they are not deeply interested in you? You must not use these words of Christ. They have nothing to do with you.

Let us look at one or two of the occasions on which this loneliness was felt.

The first time was when He was but twelve years old, when His parents found Him in the temple, hearing the doctors and asking them questions. High thoughts were in the Child's soul: expanding views of life; larger views of duty, and His own destiny.

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There is a moment in every true life—to some it comes very early—when the old routine of duty is not large enough; when the parental roof seems too low, because the Infinite above is arching over the soul; when the old formulas, in creeds, catechisms, and articles, seem to be narrow, and they must either be thrown aside, or else transformed into living and breathing realities; when the earthly father's authority is being superseded by the claims of a Father in Heaven.

That is a lonely, lonely moment, when the young soul first feels God—when this earth is recognized as an "awful place, yea, the very gate of heaven"; when the dream-ladder is seen planted against the skies, and we wake, and the dream haunts us as a sublime reality.

You may detect the approach of that moment in the young man or the young woman by the awakened spirit of inquiry; by a certain restlessness of look, and an eager earnestness of tone; by the devouring study of all kinds of books; by the waning of your own influence, while the inquirer is asking the truth of the doctors and teachers in the vast temple of the world; by a certain opinionativeness, which is austere and disagreeable enough; but the austerest moment of the fruit's taste is that in which it is passing from greenness into ripeness. If you wait in patience, the sour will become sweet. Rightly looked at, that opinionativeness is more truly[122] anguish; the fearful solitude of feeling the insecurity of all that is human; the discovery that life is real, and forms of social and religious existence hollow. The old moorings are torn away, and the soul is drifting, drifting, drifting, very often without compass, except the guidance of an unseen hand, into the vast infinite of God. Then come the lonely words, and no wonder. "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

That solitude was felt by Christ in trial. In the desert, in Pilate's judgment hall, in the garden, He was alone; and alone must every son of man meet his trial-hour. The individuality of the soul necessitates that. Each man is a new soul in this world: untried, with a boundless "Possible" before him. No one can predict what he may become, prescribe his duties, or mark out his obligations. Each man's own nature has its own peculiar rules; and he must take up his life-plan alone, and persevere in it in a perfect privacy with which no stranger intermeddleth. Each man's temptations are made up of a host of peculiarities, internal and external, which no other mind can measure. You are tried alone; alone you pass into the desert; alone you must bear and conquer in the agony; alone you must be sifted by the world. There are moments known only to a man's own self, when he sits by the poisoned springs of existence, "yearning[123] for a morrow which shall free him from strife." And there are trials more terrible than that. Not when vicious inclinations are opposed to holy, but when virtue conflicts with virtue, is the real rending of the soul in twain. A temptation, in which the lower nature struggles for mastery, can be met by the whole united force of the spirit. But it is when obedience to a heavenly Father can be only paid by disobedience to an earthly one; or fidelity to duty can be only kept by infidelity to some entangling engagement; or the straight path must be taken over the misery of others; or the counsel of the affectionate friend must be met with a "Get thee behind me, Satan":—Oh! it is then, when human advice is unavailable, that the soul feels what it is to be alone.

Once more: the Redeemer's soul was alone in dying. The hour had come—they were all gone, and He was, as He predicted, left alone. All that is human drops from us in that hour. Human faces flit and fade, and the sounds of the world become confused. "I shall die alone"—yes, and alone you live. The philosopher tells us that no atom in creation touches another atom; they all approach within a certain distance; then the attraction ceases, and an invisible something repels—they only seem to touch. No soul touches another soul except at one or two points, and those chiefly external—a fearful and lonely thought, but[124] one of the truest of life. Death only realizes that which has been fact all along. In the central deeps of our being we are alone.

II. The spirit or temper of that solitude.

Observe its grandeur. I am alone, yet not alone. This is a feeble and sentimental way in which we speak of the Man of sorrows. We turn to the cross, and the agony, and the loneliness, to touch the softer feelings, to arouse compassion. You degrade that loneliness by your compassion. Compassion! compassion for Him! Adore if you will—respect and reverence that sublime solitariness with which none but the Father was—but no pity; let it draw out the firmer and manlier graces of the soul. Even tender sympathy seems out of place.

For even in human beings, the strength that is in a man can only be learnt when he is thrown upon his own resources and left alone. What a man can do in conjunction with others does not test the man. Tell us what he can do alone. It is one thing to defend the truth when you know that your audience are already prepossest, and that every argument will meet a willing response; and it is another thing to hold the truth when truth must be supported, if at all, alone—met by cold looks and unsympathizing suspicion. It is one thing to rush on to danger with the shouts and the sympathy of numbers; it is another thing when the lonely chieftain of the sinking[125] ship sees the last boat-full disengage itself, and folds his arms to go down into the majesty of darkness, crushed, but not subdued.

Such and greater far was the strength and majesty of the Savior's solitariness. It was not the trial of the lonely hermit. There is a certain gentle and pleasing melancholy in the life which is lived alone. But there are the forms of nature to speak to him; and he has not the positive opposition of mankind, if he has the absence of actual sympathy. It is a solemn thing, doubtless, to be apart from men, and to feel eternity rushing by like an arrowy river. But the solitude of Christ was the solitude of a crowd. In that single human bosom dwelt the thought which was to be the germ of the world's life, a thought unshared, misunderstood, or rejected. Can you not feel the grandeur of those words, when the Man, reposing on His solitary strength, felt the last shadow of perfect isolation pass across His soul:—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Next, learn from these words self-reliance. "Ye shall leave me alone." Alone, then, the Son of Man was content to be. He threw Himself on His own solitary thought: did not go down to meet the world; but waited, tho it might be for ages, till the world should come round to Him. He appealed to the future, did not aim at seeming consistent, left His contradictions unexplained: I came from the[126] Father: I leave the world, and go to the Father. "Now," said they, "Thou speakest no proverb"; that is enigma. But many a hard and enigmatical saying before He had spoken, and He left them all. A thread runs through all true acts, stringing them together into one harmonious chain: but it is not for the Son of God to be anxious to prove their consistency with each other.

This is self-reliance, to repose calmly on the thought which is deepest in our bosoms, and be unmoved if the world will not accept it yet. To live on your own convictions against the world, is to overcome the world—to believe that what is truest in you is true for all: to abide by that, and not be over-anxious to be heard or understood, or sympathized with, certain that at last all must acknowledge the same, and that, while you stand firm, the world will come round to you, that is independence. It is not difficult to get away into retirement, and there live upon your own convictions; nor is it difficult to mix with men, and follow their convictions; but to enter into the world, and there live out firmly and fearlessly according to your own conscience—that is Christian greatness.

There is a cowardice in this age which is not Christian. We shrink from the consequences of truth. We look round and cling dependently. We ask what men will think; what others will say; whether they will stare[127] in astonishment. Perhaps they will; but he who is calculating that will accomplish nothing in this life. The Father—the Father which is with us and in us—what does He think? God's work can not be done without a spirit of independence. A man has got some way in the Christian life when he has learned to say humbly, and yet majestically, "I dare to be alone."

Lastly, remark the humility of this loneliness. Had the Son of Man simply said, I can be alone, He would have said no more than any proud, self-relying man can say; but when He added, "because the Father is with me," that independence assumed another character, and self-reliance became only another form of reliance upon God. Distinguish between genuine and spurious humility. There is a false humility which says, "It is my own poor thought, and I must not trust it. I must distrust my own reason and judgment, because they are my own. I must not accept the dictates of my own conscience; for is it not my own, and is not trust in self the great fault of our fallen nature?"

Very well. Now, remember something else. There is a Spirit which beareth witness in our spirits; there is a God who "is not far from any one of us"; there is a "Light which lighteth every man which cometh into the world." Do not be unnaturally humble. The thought of your own mind perchance is the thought[128] of God. To refuse to follow that may be to disown God. To take the judgment and conscience of other men to live by, where is the humility of that? From whence did their conscience and judgment come? Was the fountain from which they drew exhausted for you? If they refused like you to rely on their own conscience, and you rely upon it, how are you sure that it is more the mind of God than your own which you have refused to hear?

Look at it in another way. The charm of the words of great men—those grand sayings which are recognized as true as soon as heard—is this, that you recognize them as wisdom which passed across your own mind. You feel that they are your own thoughts come back to you, else you would not at once admit them: "All that floated across me before, only I could not say it, and did not feel confident enough to assert it, or had not conviction enough to put into words." Yes, God spoke to you what He did to them: only they believed it, said it, trusted the Word within them, and you did not. Be sure that often when you say, "It is only my own poor thought, and I am alone," the real correcting thought is this, "Alone, but the Father is with me,"—therefore I can live by that lonely conviction.

There is no danger in this, whatever timid minds may think—no danger of mistake, if the character be a true one. For we are not[129] in uncertainty in this matter. It has been given us to know our base from our noble hours: to distinguish between the voice which is from above, and that which speaks from below, out of the abyss of our animal and selfish nature. Samuel could distinguish between the impulse—quite a human one—which would have made him select Eliab out of Jesse's sons, and the deeper judgment by which "the Lord said, Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature, for I have refused him." Doubtless deep truth of character is required for this: for the whispering voices get mixed together, and we dare not abide by our own thoughts, because we think them our own, and not God's: and this because we only now and then endeavor to know in earnest. It is only given to the habitually true to know the difference. He knew it, because all His blessed life long He could say, "My judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of him who sent me."

The practical result and inference of all this is a very simple, but a very deep one: the deepest of existence. Let life be a life of faith. Do not go timorously about, inquiring what others think, and what others believe, and what others say. It seems the easiest, it is the most difficult thing in life to do this. Believe in God. God is near you. Throw yourself fearlessly upon Him. Trembling mortal, there[130] is an unknown light within your soul, which will wake when you command it. The day may come when all that is human, man and woman, will fall off from you; as they did from Him. Let His strength be yours. Be independent of them all now. The Father is with you. Look to Him, and He will save you.

**÷**06-07 HITCHCOCK

ETERNAL ATONEMENT

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Roswell Dwight Hitchcock was born at East Machias, Maine, in 1817. To his pulpit delivery, which was direct, fluent and impressive, he brought the results of profound Bible research. He was an evangelical transcendentalist, and for many years addressed large and cultured congregations in New York City. As a teacher he was clear and inspiring, particularly in historical theology. In 1880 he was made president of the Union Theological Seminary. His best-known work is the "Complete Analysis of the Bible." He died in 1887.

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HITCHCOCK

1817-1887

ETERNAL ATONEMENT[2]

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.—Rev 13:8.

My subject is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. My text is Revelation xiii., 8, the precise import of which is disputed; and I will therefore give you the rival renderings. As we have been used to it in the Authorized Version, it reads: "Written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The Anglican revisers, following the lead of Alford, make no essential change: "Written in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world." The American revisers, following the lead of Bengel, De Wette, and many others, would have it: "Written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain." The American rendering makes[134] the election eternal. The Anglican rendering makes the atonement eternal.

The prevalent opinion no doubt has been that the atonement is simply an historic fact, dating back now some nineteen hundred years; and that only the purpose of it is eternal. But Johann Wessel, the great German theologian, who died only six years after Martin Luther was born, got hold of the idea that not election only, but atonement also, is an eternal act. And this, it seems to me, is both rational and scriptural. Eternal election, profoundly considered, requires eternal atonement for its support. Both are eternal, as all divine realities are eternal. If the passage in Revelation were given up, we should still have to deal with 1 Peter i., 19, 20, where the Lamb is spoken of as foreknown before the foundation of the world, but manifested at the end of the times; eternal reality becoming temporal fact. We should still have to deal with John xvii., 24, which also carries back into eternity the redeeming relationship between the Father and the Son. Even on Calvary, as temporal actuality, the Lamb slain is only a figure of speech, and, of course, it can be no more than a figure of speech as eternal reality in the bosom of God. But whether in time, or in eternity—whether on Calvary or in the bosom of God, the figure must stand for something. For us the meaning is, and must be, that not election only, but[135] atonement also, is eternal. And so the relationship of God to moral evil stands forth as an eternal relationship. Not that evil is itself eternal; but God always knew it and always felt it. It may help our thinking in this direction to remember that there is a sense in which creation itself is eternal; not independently eternal, but, of God's will, dependently eternal.

There must nothing be said, or thought, in mitigation of the ethical verdict against moral evil. The hatefulness of it, no matter what its chronology may be, is simply unspeakable. Violated law is monstrous. Unmindfulness of God, who has always been so mindful of us, is mean. Never to pray, either in one's closet or in one's family, is against all the proprieties. Idolatry is childish and contemptible. Profaneness of speech is scandalous. Neglect of holy time is robbery. Disobedience to parents is shameful. Murder is hideous. Unchastity murders the soul, is indeed both murder and suicide. And so of all the rest. Theft, falsehood, and even inordinate desire are abominable. Imagine a community, larger or smaller—a family, a township, a state, or a nation—where the Ten Commandments are persistently trampled under foot, and you will have imagined a community intolerable even to itself. And if this be our human judgment, what must the divine judgment be? The more pure and righteous a moral being is,[136] the more squarely he must antagonize, more intensely he must hate, the more surely he must punish impurity and unrighteousness. Volcanic fire inside the globe, forked lightning outside of it, are faint emblems of holy wrath. Wrong doing is the one thing nowhere, and never, to be either condoned or endured. Physical accident, bodily sickness, financial disaster, social bereavement, may all be pitied. But when a thoroughly bad man stands revealed, only lightning is logical. He that sows the wind ought to reap the whirlwind. It was a great philosopher who stood amazed at the starry sky, and at the moral sense in man. Well he might. There is no softness in the midnight sky; only cold blue marble, and a steady blaze that never relents, and is never tired. You can not endure that blaze, you dare not risk yourself out alone among those gleaming orbs with a guilty secret in your bosom. The universe is instinct with law that never abdicates. Remorse is not repentance; and even repentance washes out no stain. Self-forgiveness is impossible. The trumpet is always sounding; every day is a judgment-day; and every one of us goes to the left. Gehenna is the only logical goal of sin.

Nor should any attempt be made to get at the genesis of moral evil. The beginning of it is simply inconceivable. The whole thing is a mystery and must be let alone. Moral evil is not eternal; or there would be two infinities.[137] Nor is it a creature of God; or God would be divided against Himself. And yet it had the divine permission, whatever that may be imagined to have been. With every attribute roused and alert—infinity of power, infinity of wisdom, infinity of holiness—God stood by and let evil enter. Angels revolted first, somewhere among the stars. Mankind revolted. Was evil really unavoidable in a proper moral system? If so, immorality is not immoral. Evil that is really essential to good should not be considered evil. It would be only the bitter bud of the fragrant blossom and the luscious fruit. Or, putting it in another form, will you say that God could not have prevented evil? He certainly could have prevented it. In Heaven to-day, what is the security of saints and angels, of your own dear sainted mother, of Gabriel himself, but God's own grace constraining the will of every saint, constraining the will of every seraph? What is human sin but the abuse of human appetites, of human passions, of human faculties, in themselves all innocent? Study the lesson of our Lord's temptation in the desert. Certainly, He was not tempted as we are, by inflamed appetites and passions, by impaired and disordered faculties. But He possest all these natural appetites, passions, and faculties; and they were put to a real and a tremendous strain. That "great duel," as Milton calls it, was no sham fight; one or the[138] other had to go down. Christ was gnawed by hunger, but refused to eat. He saw what might be done by a brilliant miracle towards inaugurating His Jewish ministry, but refused to work it. He saw the short, Satanic path to Messianic dominion, but chose Gethsemane and Calvary. Now the first Adam was just as cool and just as innocent as the second Adam. And, with more of grace to strengthen him, he too might have stood. There was no real necessity for that first human disobedience. It was sheer, wanton, gratuitous, inexplicable apostasy. Somewhat more of divine constraint, and the catastrophe would certainly have been averted. Call it non-prevention, call it permission, call it anything you please, somehow sin entered in spite of God's hating it. It came knocking for admission, and God's shoulder was not against the gate. For some reason, or reasons, not revealed, perhaps not revealable, God thought it best not to put His shoulder against the gate. The hateful and hated thing pushed through. Ormuzd let in Ahriman. I thank the Persian for these two words. They embody and emphasize the historic dualism of good and evil. The historic dualism, you will observe I say; there is no other dualism. God is One; and Master of all. The divine permission of hateful and hated evil, when we fairly apprehend it, is a tremendous statement, which might well be challenged, were not the thing[139] itself so undeniably a fact. This is as far as we can go. Here we halt, with our bruised and throbbing foreheads hard up against the granite cliff.

Practically, historic sin finds relief in historic redemption. Apparently, there was little, if any, interval between the two. Sin came, perhaps, with the noontide rest. "In the cool of the day"—that same day, most likely—the offended Lord came walking in the garden. The colloquy had a sharp beginning, but a mellow ending. The bitten heel would finally crush the biting head. And the struggle at once began. The Lord came down very close to His erring, guilty, frightened children. And they clung very closely to Him. We are in great danger of underrating that primitive economy of grace. The record is very brief, and the Oriental genius of it seems strange to us. But we see an altar there; and it can have but one meaning. Ages after, in all the nobler ethnic religions—Egyptian, Indian, Persian, and Pelasgic—we encounter echoes and survivals of that first vouchsafement of revelation. In all the great religions, we find one God; in all of them, personal immortality, with retribution; in most of them, divine triads; in two of them at least, the resurrection of the body. If it be true, as we may well believe, that Socrates is now in Heaven, singing the new song, it is because he sacrificed; and he sacrificed,[140] whether he fully understood it or not, because of that colloquy in the garden. And if that sufficed for him, the Providence of God is justified. Historic sin is fairly matched, and overmatched, by historic redemption.

But the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, suggests a far sublimer theodicy. We are taken back behind the human ages, behind all time, into awful infinite depths, into the very bosom of the triune God. Theological science recognizes two trinities, which it calls economic and essential. The former began with historic redemption, and kept pace with it. Father, Son, and Spirit stood for law, redemption, and regeneration. It was economic trinity that suggested essential trinity. But for the historic process, the question might not have seemed worth asking, whether God is one only, or three also, and the three in one. The Hebrew mind, as represented by Philo, was only just beginning to be trinitarian, when Christ's life in the flesh compelled the Hebrew mind, as represented by Peter, Paul, and John, to a new theology. After Pentecost, bald Unitarianism was anachronous. Christian experience logically required three divine persons, of one and the same divine essence. Economic trinity required essential trinity.

Essential trinity is anything but an arbitrary conception of God. Wyclif taught it at[141] Oxford as a necessary doctrine of reason. Trinity is another name for the self-consciousness, and self-communion, of God. Father, Son, and Spirit are vastly more than the revelation of God to man; they are the revelation of God to Himself, and the intercourse of God with Himself. They suggest infinite fulness and richness of being. Our scientific definitions of God do not amount to much. At best, they formulate only very inadequate conceptions of Him. It is assumed that these scientific definitions of God take us farther than the Biblical descriptions of God. We had better not feel too sure of that. Attributes in action may impart a better knowledge than attributes abstractedly defined. Pictures for children may be better than creeds and catechisms. What we need is to see God in the life both of nature, and of man. This the Hebrew prophets enable us to do by their anthropomorphic and anthropopathic pictures of God. If you say the pictures are childish, then I must say that we are children, all of us, and had better be children. It is no real scandal to science to be told, that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good"; that "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry"; that the Lord "smelled a sweet savor" from Noah's altar; while wicked men are consumed by "the breath of his nostrils"; that "the voice of the Lord[142] breaketh the cedars of Lebanon"; and He "walketh upon the wings of the wind"; and that at last, in the Messianic time, "the Lord will make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations." God is not a mere aggregate of attributes. He has a personality as distinct and positive as yours and mine. But the personality is infinite in all its outgoings. God's being is a vast abyss which no plummet has ever sounded. Imagine all you can of boundless power, constantly at work; of boundless intelligence, constantly at work; of boundless passion, constantly at work: God is all that, and immeasurably more than that. What right has any one to say that God is passionless? God Himself has never said it. He is not passionless. Like the sun, He is all aflame; He rejoices in the truth; He hates a lie. He is pleased with what is right, and displeased with what is wrong. Good men are the apple of His eye; bad men His abomination and His scorn. Rendered literally, "God is a righteous Judge, and a God who is angry every day."

But God is love. So says John in that famous passage, over which the theologians are still disputing, whether the meaning be that love is only one of the divine attributes, or is that very essence of God, into which every other attribute may be resolved. Some of the profoundest thinkers of our day accept these three words of John, "God is love," as[143] the final definition of God. Sunshine striking a teardrop may give us the seven colors of the rainbow; but the seven colors are all one blessed light. God creates, governs, judges, punishes, pities, redeems, and saves; but love is the root of all. It was love that created this wonderous universe, to which science can set no bounds. It was love that created angels, tho some of them rebelled, and were "delivered into chains of darkness." It was love that created this human brotherhood, all of whom have rebelled and gone astray. This rebellion was permitted; but was rebellion all the same. God feels it; and has always felt it. Absalom has broken his father's heart; and we are Absalom. The grand old King goes up over Olivet weeping, with his head covered, and his feet bare; and that King is God. Only He is the King Eternal, and His agony over sin is also eternal. This agony of God over human sin is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. God Himself atones, to Himself atones; and so atonement is both eternal and divine.

In that matchless epitome of the gospel—that parable of the Prodigal Son, reported only by Luke—not a word is said, not a glimpse is given, of the father of the prodigal during all that interval between the departure and return. A veil is drawn over all those bitter, weary years. So has God yearned and suffered in the silent depths of His own eternity,[144] waiting and watching for the repentant prodigal. This yearning, grieved, and suffering God is the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; Son of God, Son of Mary. This sinless Child should have had no griefs of His own. His sorrows could have been only those old eternal shadows of permitted sin. The cross on which He died, flinging out its arms as if to embrace the world, lifted up its head toward the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Our hearts now go back to Calvary; and from Calvary they go up to God.

One word more. This stupendous idea of eternal atonement carries with it the idea of universal atonement. Whatever it was, and is, must needs have been infinite. No magnitude of sin, no multitude of sinners, can bankrupt its treasury of grace. "God so loved the world," is its everlasting refrain. "He that will, let him take of the water of life freely." "Take" is the word, my hearers. Let us remember this. There is something for us to do. God Himself can not pardon an impenitent offender. If pardon were offered, it could not be accepted. It is a law of our own being, that we must repent. O Lamb of God, slain so long ago, save us at last, when Thou comest in the clouds; and save us here to-day.

It is one of the revelations of Scripture that we are to judge the angels, sitting above them on the shining heights. It may well[145] be so. Those angels are the imperial guard, doing easy duty at home. We are the "tenth legion," marching in from the swamps and forests of the far-off frontier; scarred and battered, but victorious over death and sin.[3]

Ten thousand times ten thousand  
In sparkling raiment bright,  
The armies of the ransom'd saints  
Throng up the steps of light;  
'Tis finish'd, all is finish'd,  
Their fight with death and sin:  
Fling open wide the golden gates,  
And let the victors in.

**÷**06-08 KINGSLEY

THE SHAKING OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Charles Kingsley was born at Holne Vicarage, Devonshire, in 1819. He was by temperament enthusiastic, impetuous, and great-hearted. His utterances were notable for their unusual earnestness. "I go at what I am about," he said, "as if there were nothing else in the world for the time being." In this way he completely lost himself in the work in hand. His favorite motto was "Be strong!" He had a poetic spirit, and was both vigorous and brilliant. He is known not only for his sermons and addresses, but also for his novels and some verse. He died in 1875.

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KINGSLEY

1819-1875

THE SHAKING OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which can not be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which can not be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.—Heb 12:26-29.

This is one of the royal texts of Scripture. It is inexhaustible, like the God who inspired it. It has fulfilled itself again and again, at different epochs. It fulfilled itself specially and notoriously in the first century. But it fulfilled itself again in the fifth century; and again at the Crusades; and again at the Reformation in the sixteenth century. And it may be that it is fulfilling itself at this very day; that in this century, both in the time of our fathers and in our own, the Lord has been shaking the heavens and the earth, that those things which can be shaken may be removed, as things that are[150] made, while those things which can not be shaken remain.

All confess this to be true, each in his own words. They talk of this age as one of change; of rapid progress, for good or evil; of unexpected discoveries; of revolutions, intellectual, moral, social, as well as political. Our notions of the physical universe are rapidly altering, with the new discoveries of science; and our notions of ethics and theology are altering as rapidly. The era assumes a different aspect to different minds, just as it did the first century after Christ, according as men look forward to the future with hope, or back to the past with regret. Some glory in the nineteenth century as one of rapid progress for good; as the commencement of a new era for humanity; as the inauguration of a Reformation as grand as that of the sixteenth century. Others bewail it as an age of rapid decay; in which the old landmarks are being removed, the old paths lost; in which we are rushing headlong into skepticism and atheism; in which the world and the Church are both in danger, and the last day is at hand.

Both parties may be right; and yet both may be wrong. Men have always talked thus, at great crises in the world's life. They talked thus in the first century; and in the fifth, and in the eleventh; and again in the sixteenth; and then both parties were partially right and partially wrong; and so they may[151] be now. What they meant to say, what they wanted to say, what we mean and want to say, has been said already for us in far deeper, wider, and more accurate words, by him who wrote this wonderful Epistle to the Hebrews, when he told the Jews of his time that the Lord was shaking the heavens and the earth, that those things which were shaken might be removed, as things that are made—cosmogonies, systems, theories, prejudices, fashions, of man's invention: while those things which could not be shaken might remain, because they were according to the mind and will of God, eternal as that source from whence they came forth, even the bosom of God the Father.

"Yet once more I shake, not the earth only, but also heaven."

How has the earth been shaken in our days; and the heaven likewise. How rapidly have our conceptions of both altered. How easy, simple, certain, it all looked to our forefathers in the middle age. How difficult, complex, uncertain, it all looks to us. With increased knowledge has come—not increased doubt: that I deny utterly. I deny, once and for all, that this age is an irreverent age. I say that an irreverent age is one like the age of the Schoolmen; when men defined and explained all heaven and earth by à priori theories, and cosmogonies invented in the cloister; and dared, poor, simple, ignorant mortals, to fancy[152] that they could comprehend and gauge the ways of Him whom the heaven and the heaven of heavens could not contain. This, this is irreverence: but it is neither irreverence nor want of faith, if a man, awed by the mystery which encompasses him from the cradle to the grave, shall lay his hand upon his mouth, with Job, and obey the Voice which cries to him from earth and heaven—"Be still, and know that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than thy ways, and my thoughts higher than thine."

But it was all easy, and simple, and certain enough to our forefathers. The earth, according to the popular notion, was a flat plane; or, if it were, as the wiser held, a sphere, yet antipodes were an unscriptural heresy. Above it were the heavens, in which the stars were fixed, or wandered; and above them heaven after heaven, each tenanted by its own orders of beings, up to that heaven of heavens in which Deity—and by Him, be it always remembered, the mother of Deity—was enthroned.

And if above the earth was the kingdom of light, and purity, and holiness, what could be more plain, than that below it was the kingdom of darkness, and impurity, and sin? That was no theory to our forefathers: it was a physical fact. Had not even the heathens believed as much, and said so, by the[153] mouth of the poet Virgil? He had declared that the mouth of Tartarus lay in Italy, hard by the volcanic lake Avernus; and after the unexpected eruption of Vesuvius in the first century, nothing seemed more clear than that Virgil was right; and that men were justified in talking of Tartarus, Styx, and Phlegethon as indisputable Christian entities. Etna, Stromboli, Hecla, were (according to this cosmogony) likewise mouths of hell; and there were not wanting holy hermits, who had heard from within those craters, shrieks, and clanking chains, and the howls of demons tormenting the souls of the endlessly lost.

Our forefathers were not aware that, centuries before the incarnation of our Lord, the Buddhist priests had held exactly the same theory of moral retribution; and that painted on the walls of Buddhist temples might be seen horrors identical with those which adorned the walls of many a Christian church, in the days when men believed in this Tartarology as firmly as they now believe in the results of chemistry or of astronomy.

And now—How is the earth shaken, and the heavens likewise, in that very sense in which the expression is used by him who wrote to the Hebrews? Our conceptions of them are shaken. How much of that medieval cosmogony do educated men believe, in the sense in which they believe that the three[154] angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, or that if they steal their neighbor's goods they commit a sin?

The earth has been shaken for us, more and more violently, as the years have rolled on. It was shaken when astronomy told us that the earth was not the center of the universe, but a tiny planet revolving round a sun in a remote region thereof.

It was shaken, when geology told us that the earth had endured for countless ages, during which continents had become oceans, and oceans continents, again and again. And even now, it is being shaken by researches into the antiquity of man, into the origin and permanence of species, which, let the result be what it will, must in the meanwhile shake for us theories and dogmas which have been undisputed for 1500 years.

And with the rest of our cosmogony, that conception of a physical Tartarus below the earth has been shaken likewise, till good men have been fain to find a fresh place for it in the sun, or in a comet; or to patronize the probable, but as yet unproved theory of a central fire within the earth; not on any scientific grounds, but simply if by any means they can assign a region in space, wherein material torment can be inflicted on the spirits of the lost.

And meanwhile the heavens, the spiritual world, is being shaken no less. More and[155] more frequently, more and more loudly, men are asking, not skeptics merely, but pious men, men who wish to be, and who believe themselves to be, orthodox Christians, more and more loudly are such men asking questions which demand an answer, with a learning and an eloquence, as well as with a devoutness and a reverence for Scripture, which—whether rightly or wrongly employed—is certain to command attention.

Rightly or wrongly, these men are asking, whether the actual and literal words of Scripture really involve the medieval theory of an endless Tartarus.

They are saying, "It is not we who deny, but you who assert, endless torments, who are playing fast and loose with the letter of Scripture. You are reading into it conceptions borrowed from Virgil, Dante, Milton, when you translate into the formula 'endless torment' such phrases as 'the outer darkness,' 'the fire of Gehenna,' the 'worm that dieth not'; which, according to all just laws of interpretation, refer not to the next life, but to this life, and specially to the approaching catastrophe of the Jewish nation; or when you say that eternal death really means eternal life—only life in torture."

Rightly or wrongly, they are saying this; and then they add, "We do not yield to you in love and esteem for Scripture. We demand not a looser, but a stricter; not a more metaphoric,[156] but a more literal; not a more contemptuous, but a more reverent interpretation thereof."

So these men speak, rightly or wrongly. And for good or for evil, they will be heard.

And with these questions others have arisen, not new at all, say these men, but to be found amid many contradictions, in the writings of all the best divines, when they have given up for a moment systems and theories, and listened to the voice of their own hearts; questions natural enough to an age which abhors cruelty, has abolished torture, labors for the reformation of criminals, and debates, rightly or wrongly, about abolishing capital punishment. Men are asking questions about the heaven, the spiritual world, and saying, "The spiritual world? Is it only another material world which happens to be invisible now, but which may become visible hereafter: or is it not rather the moral world—the world of right and wrong? Heaven? Is not the true and real heaven the kingdom of love, justice, purity, beneficence? Is not that the eternal heaven wherein God abides for ever, and with Him those who are like God? And hell? Is it not rather the anarchy of hate, injustice, impurity, uselessness; wherein abides all that is opposed to God?"

And with these thoughts come others about moral retribution—"What is its purpose? Can it, can any punishment have any right[157] purpose save the correction, or the annihilation, of the criminal? Can God, in this respect, be at once less merciful and less powerful than men? Is He so controlled by necessity that He is forced to bring into the world beings whom he knows to be incorrigible, and doomed to endless misery? And if not so controlled, is not the alternative as to His character even more fearful? He bids us copy His justice, His love. Is that His justice, that His love, which if we copied, we should call each other, and deservedly, utterly unjust and unloving? Can there be one morality for God, and another for man, made in the image of God? Are these dark dogmas worthy of a Father who hateth nothing that He hath made, and is perfect in this, that He makes His sun shine on the evil and on the good, and His rain fall on the just and on the unjust, and is good to the unthankful and to the evil? Are they worthy of a Son who, in the fire of His divine charity, stooped from heaven to earth, to toil, to suffer, to die on the cross, that the world by Him might be saved? Are they worthy of that which proceeds from the Father and the Son, even that Spirit of boundless charity, and fervent love, by which the Son offered Himself to the Father, a sacrifice for the sins of the world—and surely not in vain?"

So men are asking, rightly or wrongly; and they are guarding themselves, at the same[158] time, from the imputation of disbelief in moral retribution; of fancying God to be a careless, epicurean deity, cruelly indulgent to sin, and therefore, in so far, immoral.

They say—"We believe firmly enough in moral retribution. How can we help believing in it, while we see it working around us, in many a fearful shape, here, now, in this life? And we believe that it may work on, in still more fearful shapes, in the life to come. We believe that as long as a sinner is impenitent, he must be miserable; that if he goes on impenitent for ever, he must go on making himself miserable, aye, it may be more and more miserable for ever. Only do not tell us that he must go on. That his impenitence, and therefore his punishment, is irremediable, necessary, endless; and thereby destroy the whole purpose, and we should say, the whole morality, of his punishment. If that punishment be corrective, our moral sense is not shocked by any severity, by any duration: but if it is irremediable, it can not be corrective; and then, what it is, or why it is, we can not—or rather dare not—say. We, too, believe in an eternal fire. But because we believe also the Athanasian Creed, which tells us that there is but one eternal, we believe that that fire must be the fire of God, and therefore, like all that is in God and of God, good and not evil, a blessing and not a curse. We believe that that fire is for ever burning, tho[159] men are for ever trying to quench it all day long; and that it has been and will be in every age burning up all the chaff and stubble of man's inventions; the folly, the falsehood, the ignorance, the vice of this sinful world; and we praise God for it; and give thanks to Him for His great glory, that He is the everlasting and triumphant foe of evil and misery, of whom it is written, that our God is a consuming fire."

Such words are being spoken, right or wrong. Such words will bear their fruit, for good or evil. I do not pronounce how much of them is true or false. It is not my place to dogmatize and define, where the Church of England, as by law established, has declined to do so. Neither is it for you to settle these questions. It is rather a matter for your children. A generation more, it may be, of earnest thought will be required, ere the true answer has been found. But it is your duty, if you be educated and thoughtful persons, to face these questions; to consider whether you are believing the exact words of the Bible, and the conclusions of your own reason and moral sense; or whether you are merely believing that cosmogony elaborated in the cloister, that theory of moral retribution pardonable in the middle age, which Dante and Milton sang.

But this I do not hesitate to say, That if we of the clergy can find no other answers to[160] these doubts than those which were reasonable and popular in an age when men racked women, burned heretics, and believed that every Mussulman killed in a crusade went straight to Tartarus, then very serious times are at hand, both for the Christian clergy and for Christianity itself.

What, then, are we to believe and do? Shall we degenerate into a lazy skepticism, which believes that everything is a little true, and everything a little false—in plain words, believes nothing at all? Or shall we degenerate into faithless fears, and unmanly wailings that the flood of infidelity is irresistible, and that Christ has left His Church?

We shall do neither, if we believe the text. That tells us of a firm standing ground amid the wreck of fashions and opinions; of a kingdom which can not be moved, tho the heavens pass away like a scroll, and the earth be burnt up with a fervent heat.

And it tells us that the King of that kingdom is He, who is called Jesus Christ—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

An eternal and changeless kingdom, and an eternal and changeless King—these the Epistle to the Hebrews preaches to all generations.

It does not say that we have an unchangeable cosmogony, an unchangeable eschatology, an unchangeable theory of moral retribution, an unchangeable dogmatic system; not to[161] these does it point the Jews, while their own nation and worship were in their very death-agony, and the world was rocking and reeling round them, decay and birth going on side by side, in a chaos such as man had never seen before. Not to these does the epistle point the Hebrews: but to the changeless kingdom and to the changeless King.

My friends, do you really believe in that kingdom, and in that King? Do you believe that you are now actually in a kingdom of heaven, which can not be moved; and that the living, acting, guiding, practical, real King thereof is Christ who died on the cross?

These are days in which a preacher is bound to ask his congregation—and still more to ask himself—whether he really believes in that kingdom, and in that King; and to bid himself and them, if they have not believed earnestly enough therein, to repent of having neglected that most cardinal doctrine of Scripture and of the Christian faith.

But if we really believe in that changeless kingdom and in that changeless King, shall we not—considering who Christ is, the coequal and coeternal Son of God—believe also, that if the heavens and the earth are being shaken, then Christ Himself may be shaking them? That if opinions be changing, then Christ Himself may be changing them? That if new truths are being discovered, Christ Himself may be revealing them? That if some of those[162] truths seem to contradict those which He has revealed already, they do not really contradict them? That, as in the sixteenth century, Christ is burning up the wood and stubble with which men have built on His foundation, that the pure gold of His truth may alone be left? It is at least possible; it is probable, if we believe that Christ is a living, acting King, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth, and who is actually exercising that power; and educating Christendom, and through Christendom the whole human race, to a knowledge of Himself, and through Himself of God their Father in heaven.

Should we not say—We know that Christ has been so doing, for centuries and for ages? Through Abraham, through Moses, through the prophets, through the Greeks, through the Romans, and at last through Himself, He gave men juster and wider views of themselves, of the universe, and of God. And even then He did not stop. How could He, who said of Himself, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"? How could He, if He be the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? Through the apostles, and especially through St. Paul, He enlarged, while He confirmed, His own teaching. And did He not do the same in the sixteenth century? Did He not then sweep from the minds and hearts of half Christendom beliefs which had been sacred and indubitable for a thousand years? Why should[163] He not be doing so now? If it be answered, that the Reformation of the sixteenth century was only a return to simpler and purer apostolic truth—why, again, should it not be so now? Why should He not be perfecting His work one step more, and sweeping away more of man's inventions, which are not integral and necessary elements of the one catholic faith, but have been left behind, in pardonable human weakness, by our great reformers? Great they were, and good: giants on the earth, while we are but as dwarfs beside them. But, as the hackneyed proverb says, the dwarf on the giant's shoulders may see further than the giant himself: and so may we.

Oh! that men would approach new truth in something of that spirit; in the spirit of reverence and godly fear, which springs from a living belief in Christ the living King, which is—as the text tells us—the spirit in which we can serve God acceptably. Oh! that they would serve God; waiting reverently and anxiously, as servants standing in the presence of their Lord, for the slightest sign or hint of His will. Then they would have grace by which they would receive new-thought with grace; gracefully, courteously, fairly, charitably, reverently; believing that, however strange or startling, it may come from Him whose ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts; and that he who fights against it, may haply be fighting against God.

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True, they would receive all new thought with caution, that conservative spirit, which is the duty of every Christian; which is the peculiar strength of the Englishman, because it enables him calmly and slowly to take in the new, without losing the old which his forefathers have already won for him. So they would be cautious, even anxious, lest in grasping too greedily at seeming improvements, they let go some precious knowledge which they had already attained: but they would be on the lookout for improvements; because they would consider themselves, and their generation, as under a divine education. They would prove all things fairly and boldly, and hold fast that which is good; all that which is beautiful, noble, improving and elevating to human souls, minds, or bodies; all that increases the amount of justice, mercy, knowledge, refinement; all that lessens the amount of vice, cruelty, ignorance, barbarism. That at least must come from Christ. That at least must be the inspiration of the Spirit of God: unless the Pharisees were right after all when they said, that evil spirits could be cast out by the prince of the devils.

Be these things as they may, one comfort it will give us, to believe firmly and actively in the changeless kingdom, and in the changeless King. It will give us calm, patience, faith and hope, tho the heavens and the earth be shaken around us. For then we shall see that[165] the kingdom, of which we are citizens, is a kingdom of light, and not of darkness; of truth, and not of falsehood; of freedom, and not of slavery; of bounty and mercy, and not of wrath and fear; that we live and move and have our being not in a "Deus quidam deceptor" who grudges his children wisdom, but in a Father of Light, from whom comes every good and perfect gift; who willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. In His kingdom we are; and in the King whom He has set over it we can have the most perfect trust. For us that King stooped from heaven to earth; for us He was born, for us He toiled, for us He suffered, for us He died, for us He rose, for us He sits for ever at God's right hand. And can we not trust Him? Let Him do what He will. Let Him lead us whither He will. Wheresoever He leads must be the way of truth and life. Whatsoever He does, must be in harmony with that infinite love which He displayed for us upon the cross. Whatsoever He does, must be in harmony with that eternal purpose by which He reveals to men God their Father. Therefore, tho the heaven and the earth be shaken around us, we will trust in Him. For we know that He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and that His will and promise is, to lead those who trust in Him into all truth.

**÷**06-09 CAIRD

RELIGION IN COMMON LIFE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Caird was born at Greenock, Scotland, in 1820. He attained great popularity as a preacher in Edinburgh. In 1862 he was called to Park Church, Glasgow, and in 1873 became Principal of Glasgow University. The sermon given here was preached before the Queen in 1855, and, printed by her command, attained an amazing circulation. Dr. Caird's deep and earnest thought was clothed almost invariably in clear and beautiful language. He had many gifts as a pulpit speaker. His voice was full and deep-toned, his manner gracious and sympathetic, and his gestures, tho infrequent, were always significant and graceful. He died in 1898.

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CAIRD

1820-1898

RELIGION IN COMMON LIFE[4]

Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.—Rom 12:11.

When a man is learning to be a Christian, it matters not what his particular work in life may be; the work he does is but the copy-line set to him; the main thing to be considered is that he learn to live well. The form is nothing, the execution is everything. It is true, indeed, that prayer, holy reading, meditation, the solemnities and services of the Church, are necessary to religion, and that these can be practised only apart from the work of secular life. But it is to be remembered that all such holy exercises do not terminate in themselves. They are but steps in the ladder to heaven, good only as they help us to climb. They are the irrigation and enriching of the spiritual soil—worse than useless if the crop become not more abundant. They are, in short, but means to an end—good, only in so far as they[170] help us to be good and to do good—to glorify God and do good to man; and that end can perhaps best be attained by him whose life is a busy one, whose avocations bear him daily into contact with his fellows, into the intercourse of society, into the heart of the world. No man can be a thorough proficient in navigation who has never been at sea, tho he may learn the theory of it at home. No man can become a soldier by studying books on military tactics in his closet: he must in actual service acquire those habits of coolness, courage, discipline, address, rapid combination, without which the most learned in the theory of strategy or engineering will be but a schoolboy soldier after all. And, in the same way, a man in solitude and study may become a most learned theologian, or may train himself into the timid, effeminate piety of what is technically called "the righteous life." But never, in the highest and holiest sense, can he become a religious man, until he has acquired those habits of daily self-denial, of resistance to temptation, of kindness, gentleness, humility, sympathy, active beneficence, which are to be acquired only in daily contact with mankind. Tell us not, then, that the man of business, the bustling tradesman, the toil-worn laborer, has little or no time to attend to religion. As well tell us that the pilot, amid the winds and storms, has no leisure to attend to navigation—or the general, on the field of[171] battle, to the art of war! Where will he attend to it? Religion is not a perpetual moping over good books—religion is not even prayer, praise, holy ordinances; these are necessary to religion—no man can be religious without them. But religion, I repeat, is, mainly and chiefly, the glorifying God amid the duties and trials of the world,—the guiding our course amid the adverse winds and currents of temptation, by the starlight of duty and the compass of divine truth,—the bearing us manfully, wisely, courageously, for the honor of Christ, our great Leader, in the conflict of life. Away then with the notion that ministers and devotees may be religious, but that a religious and holy life is impracticable in the rough and busy world! Nay rather, believe me, that is the proper scene, the peculiar and appropriate field for religion,—the place in which to prove that piety is not a dream of Sundays and solitary hours; that it can bear the light of day; that it can wear well amid the rough jostlings, the hard struggles, the coarse contacts of common life,—the place, in one word, to prove how possible it is for a man to be at once "not slothful in business," and "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

Another consideration, which I shall adduce in support of the assertion that it is not impossible to blend religion with the business of common life, is this: that religion consists, not so much in doing spiritual or sacred acts, as[172] in doing secular acts from a sacred or religious motive.

There is a very common tendency in our minds to classify actions according to their outward form, rather than according to the spirit or motive which pervades them. Literature is sometimes arbitrarily divided into "sacred" and "profane" literature, history into "sacred" and "profane" history,—in which classification the term "profane" is applied, not to what is bad or unholy, but to everything that is not technically sacred or religious—to all literature that does not treat of religious doctrines and duties, and to all history save church history. And we are very apt to apply the same principle to actions. Thus in many pious minds there is a tendency to regard all the actions of common life as so much, by an unfortunate necessity, lost to religion. Prayer, the reading of the Bible and devotional books, public worship—and buying, selling, digging, sowing, bartering, money-making, are separated into two distinct, and almost hostile, categories. The religious heart and sympathies are thrown entirely into the former, and the latter are barely tolerated as a bondage incident to our fallen state, but almost of necessity tending to turn aside the heart from God.

But what God has cleansed, why should we call common or unclean? The tendency in[173] question, tho founded on right feeling, is surely a mistaken one. For it is to be remembered that moral qualities reside not in actions, but in the agent who performs them, and that it is the spirit or motive from which we do any work that constitutes it base or noble, worldly or spiritual, secular or sacred. The actions of an automaton may be outwardly the same as those of a moral agent, but who attributes to them goodness or badness? A musical instrument may discourse sacred melodies better than the holiest lips can sing them, but who thinks of commending it for its piety? It is the same with actions as with places. Just as no spot or scene on earth is in itself more or less holy than another, but the presence of a holy heart may hallow—or a base one desecrate—any place where it dwells; so with actions. Many actions, materially great and noble, may yet, because of the spirit that prompts and pervades them, be really ignoble and mean; and, on the other hand, many actions externally mean and lowly, may, because of the state of his heart who does them, be truly exalted and honorable. It is possible to fill the highest station on earth, and go through the actions pertaining to it in a spirit that degrades all its dignities, and renders all its high and courtly doings essentially sordid and vulgar. And it is no mere sentimentality to say that there may dwell in a lowly mechanic's or household[174] servant's breast a spirit that dignifies the coarsest toils and "renders drudgery divine." Herod of old was a slave, tho he sat upon a throne; but who will say that the work of that carpenter's shop at Nazareth was not noble and kingly work indeed!

A life spent amidst holy things may be intensely secular; a life, the most of which is passed in the thick and throng of the world, may be holy and divine. A minister, for instance, preaching, praying, ever speaking holy words and performing sacred acts, may be all the while doing actions no more holy than those of the printer who prints Bibles, or of the bookseller who sells them; for, in both cases alike, the whole affair may be nothing more than a trade. Nay, the comparison tells worse for the former, for the secular trade is innocent and commendable, but the trade which traffics and tampers with holy things is, beneath all its mock solemnity, "earthly, sensual, devilish."

So, to adduce one other example, the public worship of God is holy work: no man can be living a holy life who neglects it. But the public worship of God may be—and with multitudes who frequent our churches is—degraded into work most worldly, most distasteful to the great Object of our homage. He "to whom all hearts be open, all desires known," discerns how many of you have come hither to-day from the earnest desire to hold[175] communion with the Father of Spirits, to open your hearts to Him, to unburden yourselves in His loving presence of the cares and crosses that have been pressing hard upon you through the past week, and by common prayer and praise, and the hearing of His holy Word, to gain fresh incentive and energy for the prosecution of His work in the world; and how many, on the other hand, from no better motive, perhaps, than curiosity or old habit, or regard to decency and respectability, or the mere desire to get rid of yourselves, and pass a vacant hour that would hang heavy on your hands. And who can doubt that, where such motives as these prevail, to the piercing, unerring inspection of Him whom outwardly we seem to reverence, not the market-place, the exchange, the counting-room appears a place more intensely secular—not the most reckless and riotous festivity, a scene of more unhallowed levity, than is presented by the house of prayer?

But, on the other hand, carry holy principles with you into the world, and the world will become hallowed by their presence. A Christ-like spirit will Christianize everything it touches. A meek heart, in which the altar-fire of love to God is burning, will lay hold of the commonest, rudest things in life, and transmute them, like coarse fuel at the touch of fire, into a pure and holy flame. Religion in the soul will make all the work and toil of[176] life—its gains and losses, friendships, rivalries, competitions—its manifold incidents and events—the means of religious advancement. Marble or coarse clay, it matters not much with which of these the artist works, the touch of genius transforms the coarser material into beauty, and lends to the finer a value it never had before. Lofty or lowly, rude or refined, as our earthly work may be, it will become to a holy mind only the material for something infinitely nobler than all the creations of genius—a pure and godlike life. To spiritualize what is material, to Christianize what is secular—this is the noble achievement of Christian principle. If you are a sincere Christian, it will be your great desire, by God's grace, to bring every gift, talent, occupation of life, every word you speak, every action you do, under the control of Christian motive. Your conversation may not always—nay, may seldom, save with intimate friends—consist of formally religious words; you may perhaps shrink from the introduction of religious topics in general society; but it demands a less amount of Christian effort occasionally to speak religious words, than to infuse the spirit of religion into all our words; and if the whole tenor of your common talk be pervaded by a spirit of piety, gentleness, earnestness, sincerity, it will be Christian conversation not the less. If God has endowed you with intellectual gifts, it may be well if you[177] directly devote them to His service in the religious instruction; but a man may be a Christian thinker and writer as much when giving to science, or history, or biography, or poetry, a Christian tone and spirit, as when composing sermons or writing hymns. To promote the cause of Christ directly, by furthering every religious and missionary enterprise at home and abroad, is undoubtedly your duty; but remember that your duty terminates not when you have done all this, for you may promote Christ's cause even still more effectually when in your daily demeanor—in the family, in society, in your business transactions, in all your common intercourse with the world—you are diffusing the influence of Christian principle around you by the silent eloquence of a holy life. Rise superior, in Christ's strength, to all equivocal practises and advantages in trade; shrink from every approach to meanness or dishonesty; let your eye, fixed on a reward before which earthly wealth grows dim, beam with honor; let the thought of God make you self-restrained, temperate, watchful over speech and conduct; let the abiding sense of Christ's redeeming love to you make you gentle, self-denying, kind, and loving to all around you;—then indeed will your secular life become spiritualized, whilst, at the same time, your spiritual life will grow more fervent; then not only will your prayers become more devout, but when[178] the knee bends not, and the lip is silent, the life in its heavenward tone will "pray without ceasing;" then from amidst the roar and din of earthly toil the ear of God will hear the sweetest anthems rising; then, finally, will your daily experience prove that it is no high and unattainable elevation of virtue, but a simple and natural thing, to which the text points, when it bids us to be both "diligent in business" and "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

As a last illustration of the possibility of blending religion with the business of common life, let me call your attention to what may be described as the mind's power of acting on latent principles.

In order to live a religious life in the world, every action must be governed by religious motives. But in making this assertion, it is not by any means implied that in all the familiar actions of our daily life religion must form a direct and conscious object of thought. To be always thinking of God, and Christ, and eternity amidst our worldly work, and, however busy, eager, interested we may be in the special business before us, to have religious ideas, doctrines, beliefs, present to the mind,—this is simply impossible. The mind can no more consciously think of heaven and earth at the same moment than the body can be in heaven and earth at the same moment. Moreover there are few kinds of work in the world[179] that, to be done well, must not be done heartily, many that require, in order to excellence, the whole condensed force and energy of the highest mind.

But tho it be true that we can not, in our worldly work, be always consciously thinking of religion, yet it is also true that unconsciously, we may be acting under its ever-present control. As there are laws and powers in the natural world of which, without thinking of them, we are ever availing ourselves,—as I do not think of gravitation when I move my limbs, or of atmospheric laws when, by means of them, I breathe, so in the routine of daily work, tho comparatively seldom do I think of them, I may yet be constantly swayed by the motives, sustained by the principles, living, breathing, acting in the invisible atmosphere of true religion. There are under-currents in the ocean which act independently of the movements of the waters on the surface; far down too in its hidden depths there is a region where, even tho the storm be raging on the upper waves, perpetual calmness and stillness reign. So there may be an under-current beneath the surface-movements of your life—there may dwell in the secret depths of your being the abiding peace of God, the repose of a holy mind, even tho, all the while, the restless stir and commotion of worldly business may mark your outer history.

And, in order to see this, it is to be remembered,[180] that many of the thoughts and motives that most powerfully impel and govern us in the common actions of life, are latent thoughts and motives. Have you not often experienced that curious law—a law, perhaps, contrived by God with an express view to this its highest application—by which a secret thought or feeling may lie brooding in your mind, quite apart from the particular work in which you happen to be employed? Have you never, for instance, while reading aloud, carried along with you in your reading the secret impression of the presence of the listener—an impression that kept pace with all the mind's activity in the special work of reading; nay, have you not sometimes felt the mind, while prosecuting without interruption the work of reading, yet at the same time carrying on some other train of reflection apart altogether from that suggested by the book? Here is obviously a particular "business" in which you were "diligent," yet another and different thought to which the "spirit" turned. Or, think of the work in which I am this moment occupied. Amidst all the mental exertions of the public speaker—underneath the outward workings of his mind, so to speak, there is the latent thought of the presence of auditory. Perhaps no species of exertion requires greater concentration of thought or undividedness of attention than this: and yet, amidst all the subtle processes of intellect,—the[181] excogitation or recollection of ideas,—the selection, right ordering and enunciation of words, there never quits his mind for one moment the idea of the presence of the listening throng. Like a secret atmosphere, it surrounds and bathes his spirit as he goes on with the external work. And have not you too, my friends, an Auditor—it may be a "great cloud of witnesses,"—but at least one all-glorious Witness and Listener ever present, ever watchful, as the discourse of life proceeds? Why then, in this case too, while the outward business is diligently prosecuted, may there not be on your spirit a latent and constant impression of that awful inspection? What worldly work so absorbing as to leave no room in a believer's spirit for the hallowing thought of that glorious Presence ever near? Do not say that you do not see God—that the presence of the divine Auditor is not forced upon your senses as that of the human auditory on the speaker. For the same process goes on in the secret meditations as in the public addresses of the preacher—the same latent reference to those who shall listen to his words dwells in his mind when in his solitary retirement he thinks and writes, as when he speaks in their immediate presence. And surely if the thought of an earthly auditory—of human minds and hearts that shall respond to his thoughts and words can intertwine itself with all the activities of a man's mind, and flash[182] back inspiration on his soul, at least as potent and as penetrating may the thought be, or Him, the great Lord of heaven and earth, who not only sees and knows us now, but before whose awful presence, in the last great congregation, we shall stand forth to recount and answer for our every thought and deed.

Or, to take but one other example, have we not all felt that the thought of anticipated happiness may blend itself with the work of our business hours? The laborer's evening release from toil, the schoolboy's coming holiday, or the hard-wrought business-man's approaching season of relaxation—the expected return of a long-absent and much-loved friend—is not the thought of these, or similar joyous events, one which often intermingles with, without interrupting, our common work? When a father goes forth to his "labor till the evening," perhaps often, very often, in the thick of his toils, the thought of home may start up to cheer him. The smile that is to welcome him, as he crosses his lowly threshold when the work of the day is over, the glad faces, and merry voices, and sweet caresses of little ones, as they shall gather round him in the quiet evening hours—the thought of all this may dwell, a latent joy, a hidden motive, deep down in his heart of hearts, may come rushing in a sweet solace at every pause of exertion, and act like a secret oil to smooth the[183] wheels of labor. And so, in the other cases I have named, even when our outward activities are the most strenuous, even when every energy of mind and body is full strung for work, the anticipation of coming happiness may never be absent from our minds. The heart has a secret treasury, where our hopes and joys are often garnered—too precious to be parted with even for a moment.

And why may not the highest of all hopes and joys possess the same all-pervading influence? Have we, if our religion be real, no anticipation of happiness in the glorious future? Is there no "rest that remaineth for the people of God," no home and loving heart awaiting us when the toils of our hurried day of life are ended? What is earthly rest or relaxation, what that release from toil after which we so often sigh, but the faint shadow of the saint's everlasting rest—the repose of eternal purity—the calm of a spirit in which, not the tension of labor only, but the strain of the moral strife with sin, has ceased—the rest of the soul in God! What visions of earthly bliss can ever—if our Christian faith be not a form—compare with "the glory soon to be revealed"—what joy of earthly reunion with the rapture of the hour when the heavens shall yield our absent Lord to our embrace, to be parted from us no more for ever! And if all this be not a dream and a fancy, but most sober truth, what is there to except this[184] joyful hope from that law to which, in all other deep joys, our minds are subject? Why may we not, in this case too, think often, amidst our worldly work, of the Home to which we are going, of the true and loving heart that beats for us, and of the sweet and joyous welcome that awaits us there? And even when we make them not, of set purpose, the subject of our thoughts, is there not enough of grandeur in the objects of a believer's hope to pervade his spirit at all times with a calm and reverential joy? Do not think all this strange, fanatical, impossible. If it do seem so, it can only be because your heart is in the earthly hopes, but not in the higher and holier hopes—because love to Christ is still to you but a name—because you can give more ardor of thought to the anticipation of a coming holiday than to the hope of heaven and glory everlasting. No, my friends! the strange thing is, not that amidst the world's work we should be able to think of our Home, but that we should ever be able to forget it; and the stranger, sadder still, that while the little day of life is passing,—morning—noontide—evening,—each stage more rapid than the last, while to many the shadows are already fast lengthening, and the declining sun warns them that "the night is at hand, wherein no man can work," there should be those amongst us whose whole thoughts are absorbed in the business of the world, and to whom the reflection[185] never occurs that soon they must go out into eternity—without a friend—without a home!

Such, then, is the true idea of the Christian life—a life not of periodic observances, or of occasional fervors, or even of splendid acts of heroism and self-devotion, but of quiet, constant, unobtrusive earnestness, amidst the commonplace work of the world. This is the life to which Christ calls us. Is it yours? Have you entered upon it, or are you now willing to enter upon it? It is not, I admit, an imposing or an easy one. There is nothing in it to dazzle, much in its hardness and plainness to deter the irresolute. The life of a follower of Christ demands not, indeed, in our day, the courage of the hero or the martyr, the fortitude that braves outward dangers and sufferings, and flinches not from persecution and death. But with the age of persecution the difficulties of the Christian life have not passed away. In maintaining, in the unambitious routine of humble duties, a spirit of Christian cheerfulness and contentment—in preserving the fervor of piety amidst unexciting cares and wearing anxieties—in the perpetual reference to lofty ends amidst lowly toils—there may be evinced a faith as strong as that of a man who dies with the song of martyrdom on his lips. It is a great thing to love Christ so dearly as to be "ready to be bound and to die" for Him;[186] but it is often a thing not less great to be ready to take up our daily cross, and to live for Him.

But be the difficulties of a Christian life in the world what they may, they need not discourage us. Whatever the work to which our Master calls us, He offers us a strength commensurate with our needs. No man who wishes to serve Christ will ever fail for lack of heavenly aid. And it will be no valid excuse for an ungodly life that it is difficult to keep alive the flame of piety in the world, if Christ be ready to supply the fuel.

To all, then, who really wish to lead such a life, let me suggest that the first thing to be done—that without which all other efforts are worse than vain—is heartily to devote themselves to God through Christ Jesus. Much as has been said of the infusion of religious principle and motive into our worldly work, there is a preliminary advice of greater importance still—that we be religious. Life comes before growth. The soldier must enlist before he can serve. In vain are directions how to keep the fire ever burning on the altar, if first it be not kindled. No religion can be genuine, no goodness can be constant or lasting, that springs not, as its primary source, from faith in Jesus Christ. To know Christ as my Savior—to come with all my guilt and weakness to Him in whom trembling penitence never fails to find a friend—to cast myself[187] at His feet in whom all that is sublime in divine holiness is softened, though not obscured, by all that is beautiful in human tenderness—and, believing in that love stronger than death which, for me, and such as me, drained the cup of untold sorrows, and bore without murmur the bitter curse of sin, to trust my soul for time and eternity into His hands—this is the beginning of true religion. And it is the reverential love with which the believer must ever look to Him to whom he owes so much, that constitutes the mainspring of the religion of daily life. Selfishness may prompt to a formal religion, natural susceptibility may give rise to a fitful one, but for a life of constant fervent piety, amidst the world's cares and toils, no motive is sufficient save one—self-devoted love to Christ.

But again, if you would lead a Christian life in the world, let me remind you that that life must be continued as well as begun with Christ. You must learn to look to Him not merely as your Savior from guilt, but as the Friend of your secret life, the chosen Companion of your solitary hours, the Depositary of all the deeper thoughts and feelings of your soul. You can not live for Him in the world unless you live much with Him, apart from the world. In spiritual as in secular things, the deepest and strongest characters need much solitude to form them. Even earthly greatness,[188] much more moral and spiritual greatness, is never attained but as the result of much that is concealed from the world—of many a lonely and meditative hour. Thoughtfulness, self-knowledge, self-control, a chastened wisdom and piety, are the fruit of habitual meditation and prayer. In these exercises heaven is brought near, and our exaggerated estimate of earthly things corrected. By these our spiritual energies, shattered and worn by the friction of worldly work, are repaired. In the recurring seasons of devotion the cares and anxieties of worldly business cease to vex us; exhausted with its toils, we have, in daily communion with God, "meat to eat which the world knoweth not of;" and even when its calamities and losses fall upon us, and our portion of worldly good may be withdrawn, we may be able to show, like those holy ones of old at the heathen court, by the fair serene countenance of the spirit, that we have something better than the world's pulse to feed upon.

But, further, in availing yourself of this divine resource amidst the daily exigencies of life, why should you wait always for the periodic season and the formal attitude of prayer? The heavens are not open to the believer's call only at intervals. The grace of God's Holy Spirit falls not like the fertilizing shower, only now and then; or like the dew on the earth's face, only at morning and night.[189] At all times on the uplifted face of the believer's spirit the gracious element is ready to descend. Pray always; pray without ceasing. When difficulties arise, delay not to seek and obtain at once the succor you need. Swifter than by the subtle electric agent is thought borne from earth to heaven. The Great Spirit on high is in constant sympathy with the believing spirit beneath, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the thrill of aspiration flashes from the heart of man to God. Whenever anything vexes you—whenever, from the rude and selfish ways of men, any trials of temper cross your path—when your spirits are ruffled, or your Christian forbearance put to the test, be this your instant resource! Haste away, if only for a moment, to the serene and peace-breathing presence of Jesus, and you will not fail to return with a spirit soothed and calmed. Or when the impure and low-minded surround you—when, in the path of duty, the high tone of your Christian purity is apt to suffer from baser contacts, oh, what a relief to lift the heart to Christ!—to rise on the wings of faith—even for one instant to breathe the air of that region where the Infinite Purity dwells, and then return with a mind steeled against temptation, ready to recoil, with the instinctive abhorrence of a spirit that has been beside the throne, from all that is impure and vile. Say not, then, with such aid at your command,[190] that religion can not be brought down to common life!

In conclusion, let me once more urge upon you the great lesson on which we have been insisting. Carry religious principle into everyday life. Principle elevates whatever it touches. Facts lose all their littleness to the mind which brings principle and law to bear upon them. The chemist's or geologist's soiled hands are no sign of base work; the coarsest operations of the laboratory, the breaking of stones with a hammer, cease to be mechanical when intellectual thought and principle govern the mind and guide the hands. And religious principle is the noblest of all. Bring it to bear on common actions and coarse cares, and infinitely nobler even than the philosophic or scientific, becomes the Christian life. Live for Christ in common things, and all your work will become priestly work. As in the temple of old, it was holy work to hew wood or mix oil, because it was done for the altar-sacrifice or the sacred lamps; so all your coarse and common work will receive a consecration when done for God's glory, by one who is a true priest to His temple.

Carry religion into common life, and your life will be rendered useful as well as noble. There are many men who listen incredulously to the high-toned exhortations of the pulpit; the religious life there depicted is much too seraphic, they think, for this plain and prosaic[191] world of ours. Show these men that the picture is not a fancy one. Make it a reality. Bring religion down from the clouds. Apply to it the infallible test of experiment; and, by suffusing your daily actions with holy principles, prove that love to God, superiority to worldly pleasure, spirituality, holiness, heavenly-mindedness, are something more than the stock ideas of sermons.

Carry religious principle into common life, and common life will lose its transitoriness. "The world passeth away!" "The things that are seen are temporal." Soon business with all its cares and anxieties—the whole "unprofitable stir and fever of the world"—will be to us a thing of the past. But religion does something better than sigh and muse over the perishableness of earthly things; it finds in them the seed of immortality. No work done for Christ perishes. No action that helps to mold the deathless mind of a saint of God is ever lost. Live for Christ in the world, and you carry with you into eternity all of the results of the world's business that are worth the keeping. The river of life sweeps on, but the gold grains it held in solution are left behind deposited in the holy heart. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Every other result of our "diligence in business" will soon be gone. You cannot invent any mode of exchange[192] between the visible and invisible worlds, so that the balance at your credit in the one can be transferred, when you migrate from it, to your account in the other. Worldly sharpness, acuteness, versatility, are not the qualities in request in the world to come. The capacious intellect, stored with knowledge, and disciplined into admirable perspicacity, tact, worldly wisdom, by a lifetime devoted to politics or business, is not, by such attainments, fitted to take a higher place among the sons of immortality. The honor, fame, respect, obsequious homage that attend worldly greatness up to the grave's brink, will not follow it one step beyond. These advantages are not to be despised; but if these be all that, by the toil of our hand, or the sweat of our brow, we have gained, the hour is fast coming when we shall discover that we have labored in vain and spent our strength for naught. But while these pass, there are other things that remain. The world's gains and losses may soon cease to affect us, but not the gratitude or the patience, the kindness or the resignation, they drew forth from our hearts. The world's scenes of business may fade on our sight, the noise of its restless pursuits may fall no more upon our ear, when we pass to meet our God; but not one unselfish thought, not one kind and gentle word, not one act of self-sacrificing love done for Jesus' sake, in the midst of our common work, but will have[193] left an indelible impress on the soul which will go out with it to its eternal destiny. So live, then, that this may be the result of your labors. So live that your work, whether in the Church or in the world, may become a discipline for that glorious state of being in which the Church and the world shall become one,—where work shall be worship, and labor shall be rest,—where the worker shall never quit the temple, nor the worshiper the place of work, because "there is no temple therein, but the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof."

**÷**06-10 STORRS

THE PERMANENT MOTIVE IN MISSIONARY WORK

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Richard S. Storrs was born at Braintree, Mass., in 1821. In his book "Preaching Without Notes," he tells of his early practise and experience in pulpit delivery. After fifteen years patient effort he became one of the most accomplished extemporaneous speakers in America. He wrote much at first, developing a fine rhetorical style and a rich vocabulary that subsequently served him well as an impromptu speaker. His advice to divinity students was: "Always be careful to keep up the habit of writing, with whatever of skill, elegance, and force, you can command." Because of this early training in writing he was able later in life to adopt the method of thoroughly preparing his thought for his sermons, and of leaving the choice of words and the framing of sentences to the moment of delivery. His greatest success was achieved after he became a purely extemporaneous preacher. He was for fifty-four years pastor of the Church of the Pilgrims, Brooklyn. During this time he produced a number of books, of which the most important is "The Divine Origin of Christianity, Indicated by its Historical Effects." He died in 1900.

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STORRS

1821-1900

THE PERMANENT MOTIVE IN MISSIONARY WORK

Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.—Mar 16:15.

The Permanent Motive in Missionary Work: it is a catholic and comprehensive, even a cosmopolitan theme. It does not concern itself simply with the interest of foreign missions, technically so called. But, if you think of it, it concerns those in every Christian communion who are trying to further the cause and kingdom of our Lord on the earth. It concerns not the missionary fields alone, as they are popularly called, in other lands, but every field in which Christian service is sought to be rendered, from the obscurest slum in this town of Boston to the ragged edges of the circumference, the outmost circumference, of the world of mankind.

We are familiar, of course, with the temporary, local, changing motives to missionary enterprise, which meet us at times, impress us forcibly for the moment, and pass away; the influence of great and signal occasions, when sympathies are almost tumultuously excited;[198] the impulse which comes with a sweeping eloquence, which lifts us from the common levels of earth, and bears us as on wings toward issues and actions which we had not anticipated; perhaps the impulse which comes with personal interest in missionaries whom we have known, or mission fields which we have traversed. Great successes on certain fields move our enthusiasm; or tragic and terrible experiences in others, as recently among the Armenians, stir the deep fountains of our feeling. No one of these impulses is to be disregarded. Each one in its place has a power of its own, and all are to be valued and welcomed for their effect. But what we are to look for is the motive more deep, permanent, governing, which will be beneath and behind all these; as the tide-motive is beneath and behind the advancing and retreating waves which rise and flash, and break upon the beach; and this will be a motive not simple and single, but no doubt combined of several, distinguishable from each other, as a powerful current is made up of different uniting affluents. We must separate them in thought, that we may afterward combine them.

I think first, then, we shall all recognize this as essential to the missionary motive: a clear and profound recognition of the evilness and misery of the actual condition of mankind, certainly as compared with the powers which are instinctive in every human soul. It[199] makes no difference really, or very little, at this point, whether we accept the Scriptural declaration that man has fallen from a higher estate to his present level, or conceive, with some modern theorizers, that man is just now partially emerging from the conditions of his brute ancestry, stumbling up, through sin and error and manifold tremendous mistakes, toward wisdom and virtue, and the blessedness which they bring. In either case, the present condition of mankind is one of imperfection, weakness, unsatisfied desire, unrealized promise, and manifold peril. It is not the missionary who tells us this, principally or alone. Every observant foreign traveler repeats the same. Everyone who has resided abroad, and then he comes back to testify with an unprejudiced mind to that which he has observed, relates the same. The supreme difficulty here is in the want of the recognition of God, and of the great immortality.

It used to be a reproach against Christian scholars, made by skeptics, that they investigated the ethnic religions in the spirit of suspicious hostility, by which their processes were diverted from true lines, by which their conclusions were colored. I am not concerned to argue the case of the Christian scholars of fifty years ago, or more, but I can certainly affirm that the Christian scholars of our own time investigate these religions carefully, patiently, sympathetically, with an eager desire[200] to find everything in them that is of beautiful worth; and they do find many things of truth and beauty, many things which excite their admiration, as illustrating the attainment of the higher aspiration of the human mind, reaching after the unseen if haply it might find it. But they find nowhere the discovery of one personal God, eternal in authority, immaculate in character, creating man in His own image, and opening before him the ageless immensities beyond the grave; and in the absence of such recognition of God, and such recognition of the immortality, man is left to grope where he can not fly, to clutch the earth where he misses heaven. So it is that industrially, politically, commercially, socially, intellectually, he is on the lower level, until some exterior power reaches and ennobles him. So it is that crime, such as is unknown in Christian communities, is familiar and tolerated in the world. In fact, we need not fix our thought, prominently, on the more devilish crimes which still exist in parts and portions of the earth,—cannibalism, infanticide, human sacrifices, self-torture, the slavery that would destroy body and soul together in its own hell. Commoner vices have told us the story sufficiently,—drunkenness, licentiousness, the gambling passion, the opium habit, the fierce self-will that rushes to its end, regardless of anything sacred, in order to attain its pleasure.

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All these we know. How familiar they are to the mind, and in the life, of the world at large! And there seems no power arising within the circle not reached by Christian influence to relieve the gloom, to elevate those who are opprest by these sore burdens. There is no power. Property asserts its right to oppress, and to enjoy; poverty accepts its function, however unwillingly, of suffering in silence; the degradation of woman strikes a vicious stab at the heart and conscience of immense communities, while the oppression of childhood blights life at its germ; and, with the prospect of nothing better to come, suicide becomes a common refuge from the unbearable misery. There is nothing overstated in this description of the world at large; and you know how it is in your city slums, even in this city of refinement and culture, I have no doubt; certainly in the city in which I live; in the London and Birmingham of the other side, where the little girl twelve years old had never heard the name of Christ, where the boy of about the same age only knew the nature of an oath by having been his lordship's caddy. These are what we are to reach and lift, if we can do it. These are they to whom we are to bring blessings from the Most High. Certainly, every heart in which there is a spark of Christian sympathy must feel the power of this motive, pressing to the utmost and instant exertion of every force[202] to relieve the suffering, to enlighten the darkened, and to lift the opprest.

No one need exaggerate, everyone should recognize, the weakness and wretchedness, the exposure and the peril of human society. When we remember that in this universe of ours destiny clings closely to character, has never anything mechanical or arbitrary about it, but follows the spirit which encounters it, then those tremendous words of our Lord in the twenty-fifth of Matthew have upon them an appalling sharpness and reach, as addrest to the great classes and companies of mankind; and we must recognize it, and hear the solemn bell of the universe ringing through His word, and telling us of what is to be looked for in the hereafter.

But then with this recognition of the exposure and peril of human society, of mankind at large, we must associate the recognition of the recoverableness to truth, to virtue and God, of persons and of peoples who are now involved in these calamities and pains; to whom, now, unrest and apprehension are as natural as speech or sight; the recoverableness of men as persons, and of communities as well as persons.

Here, of course, we come into direct antagonism with the pessimist, who says, "It is all nonsense! You can't possibly do the work; you can't take these ragged and soiled remnants of humanity in your city streets[203] and weave them into purple and golden garments for the Master; you can not accomplish the effect which you contemplate, in the cities, in your own land, along the frontier, or in other lands. It is as impossible to make the unchaste pure, to make the mean noble, as it is to make crystal lenses out of mud, or the delicate elastic watch-spring out of the iron slag!" That is the world's view, a common and a hateful view. Our answer to it is that the thing can be done, and has been done, and done in such multitudes of instances that there is no use whatever in arguing against the fact. Christ came from the heavens to the earth on an errand. He knew what was in man; and He did not come from the celestial seats on an errand known beforehand to be fruitless and futile. He came because He knew the interior, central, divine element in human nature, to which He could appeal and by which He could lift men toward things transcendent. We have seen the examples of success, how many times! Hundreds, yea even thousands of times, in our own communities, as missionaries have seen them in the lands abroad: where the woman intemperate, in harlotry, in despair, has been lifted to restored womanhood, as the pearl oyster is brought up with its precious contents from the slimy ooze; where the man whose lips had been charged with foulest blasphemies has become the preacher of the gospel of light and love,[204] of hope and peace, to others, his former comrades; where the feet that were swift to do evil have become beautiful on the mountains in publishing salvation. We have seen these things in individuals and in communities; in the roughest frontier mining-camp, where every door opened on a saloon or a brothel, or a gambling-table, and where, by the power coming from on high, it has been transformed into the peaceful Christian village, with the home, with the school, with the church, with the asylum, with the holy song, where the former customary music had been the crack of revolvers. We have seen the same thing on a larger scale in the coral islands, scenes of savage massacre and of cannibal riot and ferocity, where the Church has been planted, and Christian fellowships have been established and maintained. We have seen these things, and why argue against facts?

Arguing against fact, as men ultimately find out, is like trying to stop with articulate breath the march of the stately battleship as she sweeps onward to her anchorage. An argument may meet a contrary argument; no argument can overwhelm a fact. And these facts in experience are as sure, as difficult of belief perhaps, but as compulsive of belief, as are the scientific demonstrations of the liquid air, of the wireless telegraphy. We do not question the reality of what we see; and we know that these effects[205] have been produced, on the smaller scale and on the larger. I suppose that everyone who has ever stood on the heights above Naples, at the Church of San Martino, on the way to St. Elmo, has noticed, as I remember to have noticed, that all the sounds coming up from that gay, populous, brilliant, fascinating city, as they reached the upper air, met and mingled on the minor key. There were the voices of traffic and the voices of command, the voices of affection and the voices of rebuke, the shouts of sailors, and the cries of itinerant venders in the street, with the chatter and the laugh of childhood; but they all came up into this incessant moan in the air. That is the voice of the world in the upper air, where there are spirits to hear it. That is the cry of the world for help. And here is the answer to that cry: a song of triumph and glorious expectation, taking the place of the moan, in the village, in the city, in the great community; men and women out of whom multitudes of devils have been cast, as out of him of old, sitting clothed, and in their right minds, at the feet of Jesus.

You can not tell me that it is impossible to produce these effects, for mine own eyes have seen them, mine own hands have touched them. I know their reality, and that every human soul which has not committed the final sin and passed the judgment is recoverable to God, if the right remedy be definitely applied;[206] and that every people, however weak, however sinful, however wanting in hope and expectation, has within it the possibility, and above it the promise, of the millennium. God's power is adequate to all that. We want to associate this idea of the recoverableness of persons and of peoples to the highest ideal and to God Himself; we want to combine this with the idea of man's present misery and hopelessness in his condition, to constitute the true and powerful missionary motive; and then we want to recognize the fact that the gospel of Christ is the one force which, being used, secures this result in the most unpromising conditions.

Here, again, we encounter the opposition of multitudes. How often men have laughed, how loudly they have laughed, at the idea that the story of the crucified Nazarene could inspire a despondent soul to hope, could purify the vicious soul into virtue, could bring any soul nearer to God! Perhaps somewhere they are laughing at it now; possibly even in this city of Boston, the home of culture and refinement, of fine and wide thought—I don't know, I don't live here; but I know that in the country at large there are always those who are disposed to say, "It is perfectly puerile to try to reach human sorrow and human sin with the power of the gospel, lodged in the little book which the child may carry in her hand!" As if the inconspicuous[207] forces in the world's development were not always those deadliest on the one hand, or most benign on the other; as if wafts of air did not kill multitudes more than all the batteries of artillery; as if the unseen forces, hardly manifesting themselves at all, were not those which society seizes by which to advance itself most rapidly and grandly—that little spark, vanishing instantaneously, but revealing the unseen force which drives machineries, draws carriages, illuminates cities, and enables you and me to talk as if face to face with friends and correspondents at the distance of a thousand miles; that fleecy vapor, vanishing silently into the air but representing the gigantic servant of modern civilization, which tunnels mountains, scoops out mines, and links the continents together with iron bands. These unseen powers are the ones that man craves and uses, or that, on the other hand, he dreads and repels; and the power of the gospel, however men may smile at the idea of that power, has vindicated itself too many times to be assailed by argument, certainly too many times to be encountered with ridicule.

The gospel is able to reconstitute society by reconstructing the character of individuals. Through its effect on persons it opens the way for vast national advances. It touches not merely the higher themes, but all the themes that are associated with those, and immediately[208] pertinent to the interest of mankind. It teaches frugality and industry, and honesty, by express command, and by the divine example of Him who brought it to us. It turns men, as has been forcibly said, "out of the trails of blood and plunder into the path of honest toil." It is a gospel for every creature, that is, for every created thing; and gardens bloom in a lovelier beauty under its influence, and harvest festivals, of which the country is full to-day, are only its natural and beautiful fruit and trophy. It exalts womanhood; and by the honor it puts on womanhood, and by the honor it puts on childhood, it inaugurates the new family life in the world. It honors, as no other religion does or ever did, the essential worth of the immortal spirit in man; and it forces him, pushes him, crowds him, into thoughtfulness and educational discipline, since it will not allow him to be manipulated into paradise by any priestly hand, but comes to him in a Book, and sets him to work to investigate its contents, to inquire concerning it, to look out widely around it, and to inform himself by careful thought of what it is and what it means.

There is the basis of colleges and theological seminaries, and I hope there will be no quarrel between them! There is the basis of all the educational institutions and influences that are worthy in the world. Christianity[209] brings them. It generates by degrees a new social conscience. It unites communities, on which it has operated, in new relationships to each other. International alliances become possible, become vital. International law becomes a reality and a power; beneficence is stimulated, and law becomes ethical. As we have seen recently, in the prodigious excitement of feeling throughout civilized countries in consequence of the apparent gross injustice done to a single French officer by a military court, the time is coming, tho it has not yet fully come, when mankind shall be one in spirit, and an

"... instinct bear along,  
Round the earth's electric circle,  
One swift flash of right or wrong."

It is not commerce which does this, it is Christianity. We are witnesses to it. Our ancestors, not many centuries ago, were mere rapacious savages, robbers in the forests, pirates on the sea; it was Christianity, brought to them, that lifted them into gladness, serenity, great purpose, great expectation and hope; and the new civilization in which we rejoice on either side, I will not say of the separating, of the uniting ocean, was founded on that New Testament, the folios of which, I believe, are still preserved in Corpus Christi College in Cambridge, and in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Here is the basis of what[210] has been the grandest, most illustrious, and most prophetic, in the recent history of mankind. Give the gospel freedom and it will everywhere show this power. Among the children and youth to whom it goes, among the mature and the strong, wheresoever it goes, it grapples conscience, it stimulates the heart. That one sentence, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," is the profoundest truth, is the most persuasive and commanding appeal, ever addrest by an inspired apostle to the children of mankind; and wherever that is heard, sin is lost in penitence, and hope is lost in triumphant vision, and the glory of the world disappears before the glory immutable of the Son of God!

Then we are to remember, certainly never is this to be forgotten, that the great imperishable motive, surpassing and dominating every other in missionary effort, is adoring love toward Christ, as central in the Scripture, glorified in history. No student of history, no observer of human experience, can fail to see that there is the sovereign passion possible to human nature; beside which the passion of love for a friend, for a country, for a business, for studies, may be auxiliary, but must be subordinate. There is the passion which has done the grandest things the world has ever known. There is the passion the vision of which interprets to us the strangest, sublimest pages of history. We have all felt[211] it, I am sure, if we are Christian, in our measure, and at times; at the sacrament, perhaps; in those sabbaths of the soul of which Coleridge speaks, when the mind eddies instead of flowing onward; when we have been moved to a great effort for Him whom we love; most keenly, perhaps, when we have been in keenest sorrow, when the earth was as iron under our feet and the heavens as brass above our head, and we were all alone, yet not alone, for there stood beside us One in the form of the Son of Man, making luminous the dark! We have felt this love toward Christ; and when we have felt it we have known that no power could surpass or approach it in the intensity of its moving force, to every enterprise, great, difficult howsoever it might be by which He would be honored.

Love has been the sovereign power in all the Church. Judgment may be generous; love is lavish. Judgment may be stedfast in its conclusions; love is heroic in its affirmations. It was love that garnished the house, and poured out the spikenard, and spiced the sepulcher. It was love that faced the flames, as in Felicitas and Perpetua, fronting the dungeon and not shrinking, fronting the sword and not blanching. It was love that said, "The nearer the sword, the nearer to God." You can not conquer that power, indestructible, full of a divine energy.

And with the experience of this comes the[212] vivid vision of the divine Providence, working for the gospel in human history. How wonderful it is! Look at the progress of the last ninety years, since missionary work began in this country! The changes, except as they are matters of public record and of universal personal observation, would be simply unthinkable—the vast new machineries of travel and of commerce; the incalculable additions to the wealth of civilized lands; the ever-increasing prosperity and power of Protestant nations, in which the gospel is honored; the equally ever-reduced power and lessening fame of nations, ancient and famous, in which the gospel is refused free movement with a home among the people; the continually closer approaches of civilized and Protestant nations to each other, as of Great Britain and this country. Many years ago Lord Brougham said, you remember, "Not an ax falls in the American forest but it sets in motion a shuttle in Manchester." That has been true ever since, and is more true to-day than ever before. Not a mine is opened, not an industry established, not a mechanism invented in the one country, which is not recognized, and the power of which is not felt, in the other; and more and more their policies are weaving together, not necessarily in form, but in fundamental, underlying sympathy. All these things are going forward with the opening of regions and realms formerly inaccessible[213] to Christianity; so that now the Christianity which seemed buried in the catacombs, which seemed burned up in the martyr fires, has the freedom of the world, and may everywhere be preached in its purity and its power. Here are the plans of God going forward; and we ought to feel in ourselves that in every hardest work we do we are only keeping step with the march of omnipotence.

I know that there are many who fear that the prosperity of our times, the love of pleasure, the desire for ease and enjoyment, are to interfere with and stay these plans of the divine Providence for the furtherance of Christ's Church, and of His cause in the world. I do not wonder at the fear, though I do not share it. Unquestionably the secular spirit is more intense and widely distributed at this time than it ever was before, and the opportunities for its gratification, in the acquirement of wealth and in the enjoyment of every luxury, are greater than ever before. Undoubtedly it is true that Sunday observance is far less strict, and family discipline and training far less careful, than they were, perhaps, in the days of our own childhood. Sunday newspapers make almost all American ministers wish they were Englishmen; and Sunday observance among ourselves reminds one too often of that colloquy between Joshua and Moses as they were coming down from the mount during the idol-feast, when the[214] younger said, "There is a noise of war in the camp." "No," said the elder and more discerning, "it is not the voice of them that shout for the mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome, but it is the voice of them that sing, that I hear." Sometimes in our congregations I think it is not the shout for the mastery of the truth, pushing it upon men, it is not the voice of them that cry, in penitence and humble obedience, because they are overcome, but it is the voice of them that sing that we hear; and the singing is too often in operatic measures, and done by quartets, not by congregations! Talleyrand was right in saying years ago that Americans take their pleasures sadly. I think that we are right also, and more nearly right, when we say that Americans take their religion too lightly, too gaily, as if it were a varnish upon life instead of a fire and power within it.

But the human soul is still beating, and full of life, in the heart of everyone whom we address; and God's gospel has its grip on that human soul whenever it reaches it through our ministry, lifts it nearer the things supernal, and nearer God Himself. While I see many things to make us solicitous, I see nothing to make us timid, concerning these mighty advancing plans of God. If persecution could not stay them, if prelacy could not finally thwart them, I do not believe that bicycles are[215] going to override them, in the end, or that they are to find their grave in the fascinating golf links. No! there is One who sitteth above the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; and His plans go forth, soundless, silent, except as they come into operation. But they never are broken; they never are drawn back; and the world has to learn more and more clearly, every century, that the banners of God are those which never go down in any struggle, and that whoever walks and works with God is sure of the triumph.

Then do not let us forget that this is the sublime interval in history between the ascension of the Master and His second coming in power and glory, to judge the world! "In a grand and awful time" the hymn says—and I repeat it:

"We are living, we are dwelling,  
In a grand and awful time,"

when the heavens have been luminous with the splendor of the ascension, and are destined to be luminous again with the awful glory of the coming for judgment; and now is our time for work—for work with the energy of the divine Spirit whose dispensation this is. That Spirit wrote His gospel by the inspiration of human minds, and by the instruments of human hands, on leaves of parchment and papyrus. He is writing His[216] gospel now, at large, through His inspiration of human minds and guidance of human hands over the expanses of the continents. But it is the same gospel—the gospel of sin, the gospel of atonement, the gospel of regeneration, the gospel of future judgment, and of future glory for the believing. That is the gospel; and we are to go with Him in extending the knowledge of that and in writing it ourselves. Wheresoever we have the opportunity, that is our work; a work greater, more momentous, wider in its relations, than any other done upon the earth.

Let us not forget then the meanness, the misery and evilness, of human society, where the gospel does not enter and pervade it. Let us not forget the recoverableness to God of every person and every people, if the divine energies are rightly used. Let us not forget that the gospel of Christ is the power at which men laugh and say, "You are trying to quarry mountains with sunbeams; you are trying to lift masses of masonry with aerial or, at best, with silken threads." It is the gospel of Christ which is to be the power to lift mankind, and glorify God, on all the continents, in all the earth. The passion of love for Christ, stimulated by everything that we read or hear, quickened by the Spirit in our hearts, is the power that is to loosen amassed wealth and make it fluent, that is to vitalize dead wealth and make it active, that is to[217] enter into every languid heart and inspire it for service. And then the view of the divine Providence working in history toward one result, steadily steering toward one haven and port,—the earth renewed in righteousness and beautiful before God; and then this dispensation of the Spirit, in which we have our time! After the resurrection, a disciple said, "I go a-fishing." Likewise said they all. It seems strange that even after that miracle, which has shot its radiance everywhere upon the history of the world, any disciple should have yielded to such an impulse. But now shall we, after the ascension and when the skies are still glowing with it, after Pentecost has opened heavenly principalities and powers to our view and our experience, under the shadow of the great white throne that is to be set in heaven—shall we go to building and bargaining, to mining and merchandising, as our chief aim in life, and omit this sublimest service which angels, it seems to me, must bend above the battlements of heaven to see in its progress, and to make their hearts and harps jubilant in its vitality and success?

Oh, my friends, let us remember, wheresoever we labor, that our errand is to make this complex, complete, energetic missionary motive more clear to every mind, more thoroughly vigorous and energetic in every heart. Everything else must be postponed! Do not[218] let us spend our strength in picking the gospel to pieces, to see if we can't put it together again in a better fashion! Do not let us spend our strength in any denominational controversies or collisions. Let us give ourselves, with all our power, to making this immense missionary motive operative throughout all the churches, throughout and in all Christian hearts; till He shall come whose right it is to reign, and take unto Himself His great power, and rule, King of nations as well as King of saints. Let us recognize this as the one truly magnificent errand for man on the earth. Let us be filled with the Divine Spirit, that we may accomplish it the more perfectly. Let us never intermit the service. And if, as we grow older, we grow weary with cares and labors, and it may be with sorrows, and are disposed sometimes to think we may now rest, let us remember the word of Arnauld, the illustrious Port Royalist, whom even his passionate enemies, the Jesuits, admitted to be great, of whom it is recorded that when some one said to him, "You have labored long, now is your time to rest!" his reply was, "Rest? Why rest, here and now, when I have a whole eternity to rest in!" God in His grace open that tranquil and luminous eternity to each of us, where we may find rest in nobler praise and grander work, forevermore; and unto Him be all the praise!

**÷**06-11 PUNSHON

ZEAL IN THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Morley Punshon, English Methodist divine, was born at Doncaster, in Yorkshire, in 1824. His style was brilliant and elaborate, and while his sermons were written out in the minutest detail and carefully committed to memory, they were delivered with a freshness and vigor that rivaled the charm of extemporaneous eloquence. Every word he uttered was charged with the force and vitality of his great personality. At the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, Canada, he preached for many years, drawing thousands of people to Christ by the zeal, magnetism and power of his pulpit oratory. He died in 1881.

[221]

PUNSHON

1824-1881

ZEAL IN THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.—2Co 5:13-15.

It is always an advantage for the advocate of any particular cause to know the tactics of his adversary. He will be the better prepared for the onset, and repel the attack the more easily. Forewarned of danger, he will intrench himself in a position from which it will be impossible to dislodge him. The apostle Paul possest this advantage in a very eminent degree. In the earlier years of his apostleship, the Jew and the Greek were the antagonists with whom he had to contend. Having been himself a member of the straitest sect of the Jews, he knew full well the antipathy with which they regarded anything which set itself by its simplicity in contrast with their magnificent ritual; and he knew also the haughty scorn with[222] which they turned away from what they deemed the unworthy accessories of the Nazarene. And, well read as he was in classic literature, and acquainted with all the habits and tendencies of the Grecian mind, he could readily understand how the restraints of the gospel would be deemed impertinent by the voluptuous Corinthian, and how the philosophic Athenian would brand its teachers mad. And yet, rejoicing in the experimental acquaintance with the gospel, he says, for his standing-point of advantage: "We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to them that are called, the power of God and the wisdom of God." And in the words of the text, addressing some of those very Corinthians upon whom the gospel had exerted its power, he seems to accept the stigma and vindicate the glorious madness: "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again." The great purpose of the apostle in these words is to impress upon us the fact that the cause of Christ in the world, sanctioned by the weight of so many obligations, fraught with the destinies of so many[223] millions, should be furthered by every legitimate means; that for it, if necessary, should be employed the soberest wisdom; and for it, if necessary, the most impassioned zeal. He vindicates the use of zeal in the cause of Christ by the three following considerations: First, from the condition of the world; secondly, from the obligations of the Church; and, thirdly, from the master-motive of the Savior's constraining love. To illustrate and enforce this apostolic argument, as not inappropriate to the object which has called us together, will be our business for a few brief moments to-night.

I. The apostle argues and enforces the use of zeal in the cause of Christ, in the first place, from the condition of the world. The apostle speaks of the world as in a state of spiritual death. He argues the universality of this spiritual death from the universality of the atonement of Christ. "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead"—dead in sin, with every vice luxuriant and every virtue languishing; dead in law, judicially in the grasp of the avenger; nay, "condemned already," and hastening to the second death. We need not remind you that this is by no means the world's estimate of its own condition. It is short-sighted, and, therefore, self-complacent. There is a veil over its eye; there is a delusion at its heart.[224] In that delusion it fancies itself enthroned and stately, like some poor lunatic, an imaginary monarch under the inflictions of its keeper. The discovery of its true position comes only when the mind is enlightened from on high. "We thus judge," not because there is in us any intuitional sagacity, or any prophetical foresight, by which our judgment is made more accurate than the judgment of others; but the Holy Spirit has come down, has wrought upon us—has shown us the plague of our own hearts—and from the death within us we can the better argue the death which exists around. And that this is the actual condition of the world, Scripture and experience combine to testify. The Bible, with comprehensive impartiality, concludes all "under sin"; represents mankind as a seed of evil-doers—"children that are corrupters"—sheep that have wandered away from the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. In the adjudication of Scripture there is no exemption from this common character of evil, and from this common exposure to danger. The men of merciful charities, and the woman of abandoned life—the proudest peer, and the vilest serf in his barony—the moralist observer of the decalogue, and the man-slayer, red with blood, all are comprehended in the broad and large denunciation: "Ye were by nature children of wrath, even as others." And out in the broad world, wherever the[225] observant eye travels, you have abundant confirmation of the testimony of Scripture. You have it in your own history. The transgressions and sins which constitute this moral death abound in our age no less than in any former age of mankind. There are thousands around you who revel in undisguised corruption. There are thousands more externally reputable who have only a name to live. You have this confirmation in the nations of the Continent—some safely bound by the superstition of ages; others subsiding into a reactionary skepticism. You have this confirmation further away in the countries which own Mohammedan rule, and cherish the Mohammedan's dream—where you have unbridled lust, and a tiger's thirst for blood. You have this confirmation in the far-off regions of heathenism proper, where the nature, bad in itself, is made a thousand fold worse by its religion—where the man is the prey of every error, and the heart the slave of every cruelty—where men live in destruction, and where men die in despair. Travel where you will, visit the most distant regions, and search under the shadow of the highest civilization—penetrate into the depths of those primeval forests, into whose original darkness you might have imagined the curse would hardly penetrate, and the result is uniformly the same. Death is everywhere. You see it, indeed, in all its varieties now in the rare and[226] fading beauty which it wears just after the spirit has fled from the clay, when its repose seems the worn-out casket, which the soul has broken, and thrown away; now, when there is shed over it a hue of the sublime, and it is carried amid the tears to burial, and now, when corruption has begun its work, and its ill odor affects the neighborhood, and spreads the pestilence—you see it in all its varieties, but uniformly death is there. We gather from our melancholy pilgrimage no vestige of spiritual life. Mourners go about the streets, and there are mourners over many tombs.

Altho, as we have observed just now, a thorough and realizing estimate of the world's condition comes only when the judgment is enlightened from on high, the wise men of the world, the minds that have in all ages towered above their fellows, have felt an unsatisfactoriness for which they could hardly account; they have had a vague and morbid consciousness that all was not right somehow, either with themselves or with their race; they have met with disturbing forces, signs of irregularity, tokens of misery and of sin that have ruffled, somewhat, the philosophic evenness of their minds. Each in his own way, and from his own standpoint, has guessed at the solution of the problem, and has been ready with a suggested remedy. The peoples are imbruted; educate them. The nations are barbarous; civilize them. Men grovel in sensual[227] pleasure; cultivate the esthetic faculty; open to them galleries of pictures; bring them under the humanizing influences of art. Men groan in bondage; emancipate them, and bid them be free! Such are some of the tumultuous cries that have arisen from earnest but blind philanthropists, who have ignored the spiritual part of man's nature, and forgotten altogether the Godward relations of his soul. All these, as might have been expected, valuable enough as auxiliaries, worth something to promote the growth and comfort of a man when life has been once imparted, fail, absolutely fail to quicken the unconscious dead. In all cases the bed has been shorter than that a man could lie on it, and the covering narrower than that he could wrap himself in it. The inbred death lay too deep for such superficial alchemy; corpses can not by any possibility animate corpses; and the compassionate bystander from other worlds, sickened with the many inventions, might be constrained to cry, "Amid all this tumult of the human, O for something divine!" And the divine is given—Christ has died for all men. There is hope for the world's life. This is a death whereby we live; this is a remedy commensurate with existing need, and intended entirely to terminate and extinguish that need.

That squalid savage, whose creed is a perpetual terror, and whose life is a perpetual[228] war—Christ hath died for him. That fettered and despairing slave, into whose soul the iron has entered, valued by his base oppressor about on a par with the cattle he tends, or with the soil he digs—Christ hath died for him. That dark blasphemer, who lives in familiar crime, whose tongue is set on fire of hell, whose expatriation would be hailed by the neighborhood around him as a boon of chiefest value—Christ has died for him. That dark recluse, whom an awakened conscience harasses, and who, in the vain hope of achieving merit by suffering, wastes himself with vigilant penance well-nigh to the grave—Christ has died for him. Oh, tell these tidings to the world, and it will live. Prophesy of this name in the motionless valley, and the divine Spirit who always waits to do honor to Jesus will send the afflatus from the four winds of heaven, and they shall leap into life to His praise.

Now take these two points. Think in the first place, of the condition of the world—a condition so disastrous, that nothing but death can illustrate it—a condition which prostrates every faculty, which smites the body with unnumbered cruelties, which dwarfs the mind with prejudices or distorts it into unholy passion, which banishes the soul and mind within a man in hopeless estrangement from happiness and God; and then think of the death of Christ, providing for the furthest need,[229] overtaking the utmost exile, pouring its abundant life upon the sepulchered nations, diffusing light, liberty, hope, comfort, heaven: and I appeal to your enlightened judgment whether you are not bound, those of you who believe in Jesus, to labor for the world's conversion with intensest energy and zeal. Oh, if temporal miseries elicit sympathy, and prompt to help; if the anxieties of a neighborhood gather around a drowning child, or are fastened upon the rafters of a burning house, where, solitary and imploring, stands a single man, already charred by the flame, how much of sympathy, of effort, of liberality, of zeal, of prayer, are due to a world lying in the wicked one, and panting after the second death! You will agree with me, that there is more than license for the poet's words:

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

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

II. The apostle argues the necessity for zeal in the cause of Christ, secondly, from the obligations of the Church, in that He died for all, that they should live—should not henceforth live unto themselves, but for Him[230] who died for them and rose again. The apostle's argument is this—none of us has life in himself; if we live at all, we live by imparted life; we live because life has been drafted into our spirits from on high. Then it is not our own; it belongs to Him who has purchased it for us with His own blood, and we are bound to employ it in His service, and for His glory. This also is the conclusion of an enlightened judgment. We judge this as well as the other, and this is in accordance with the whole tenor of Scripture. Time would fail us to mention a tithe of the passages in which devotion—the devotion of the heart and of the service of God are made matter of constant and of prominent demand. I will just mention one passage that may serve as an illustration of all: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye give your bodies as a living sacrifice." Have you ever gaged the depth of consecration that slumbers in the heart of those words—"a living sacrifice"; to be absolutely and increasingly devoted to God, as if the knife were at the throat, and the life-blood streamed forth in votive offering? Nay, better than that; because the life-blood could stream out but once, but the living sacrifice may be a perpetual holocaust, repeated daily for a lifetime—a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. From the doctrine of this passage, and of[231] numberless others kindred to it, it would appear that the regenerate heart is not at liberty to live for itself, nor to aim supremely at its own gratification; it must live for Him who has died for it, and who has risen again. You can not fail, I think, to perceive that compliance with this exhortation is utterly antagonistic to the ordinary procedure of mankind.

In the age of organization against idolatry, there is one proud, rampant idolatry which retains its ascendency amongst us. Selfishness is the most patronized idolatry in the world. It is the great image whose brightness is exceeding terrible, and before which all men bow; it is a throne, and an empire, and the likeness of a kingly crown; it equips armies and mans armaments to gratify its lust of power. Fastnesses have been explored and caverns ransacked to appease its thirst for gold. It presides over the councils of kings and over the diplomacy of cabinets; for it the merchantman grindeth down his manhood, for it the treader-under-foot of nations marcheth in his might and in his shame; its votaries are of all handicrafts—of the learned professions, and of every walk in life. It hath sometimes climbed on to the judgment-seat, and perverted justice there. The cowled monk hath hidden it beneath his robe, and it hath become for him an engine of oppression, and it hath occasionally robed[232] itself in holy vestments, and entered the priest's office for a morsel of bread. No grace or virtue of humanity is free from its contamination. It has breathed, and patriotism has degenerated into partisanship; it has breathed, and friendship has been simulated for policy; it has breathed, and charity has been blemished by ostentation; it has breathed, and religion has been counterfeited for gold; its sway is a despotism—its territory wherever man hath trodden, and it is the undisputed anarch of the world. Now it is against this principle in human nature, throned within us all, doggedly contesting every inch of ground, that Christianity goes forth to combat. The gospel absolutely refuses to allow self to be the governing power, and assaults it in all its strongholds with precepts of sublime morality. To the selfishness of avarice it goes up boldly, even while the miser clutches his gold, and says: "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." To the selfishness of anger it addresses itself, even when the red spot is yet on the brow of the angry: "Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath"; "Bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." To the selfishness of pride, even in its haughtiness and arrogance, it says: "In honor preferring one another, be clothed with humility, let each esteem another better[233] than himself." To the selfishness of indifference to the concerns of others, "Look not on thine own things, but likewise upon the things of others"; and to the selfishness of souls and criminal neglect of the great salvation, it speaks in tones of pathos which that must be a callous heart that can withstand, "Ye know the graces of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, tho he was rich, yet for our sins he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich." Oh, how small, alongside of august and heavenly precepts like these, are the sublimest maxims of any merely ethical morality!

It is said that, once, during the performance of a comedy in the Roman theater, one of the actors gave utterance to the sentiment, "I am a man; nothing, therefore, that is human can be foreign to me," and the audience were so struck by the disinterestedness, or so charmed by the novelty, that they greeted it with thunders of applause. How much greater wealth of kindly wisdom and prompting to unselfish action lies hidden in the gospel of Christ, shrined there as every-day utterances passed by the most of us very slightingly by! Oh! let there be anything like the genial practise of this divine morality, and the world would soon lose its aspect of desolation and of blood; oppression and over-reaching, and fraud and cruelty, would be frowned out of the societies of men, and this earth would be[234] once more an ample and a peopled paradise. By selfishness, as we have thus endeavored to describe it, we mean that grasping, monopolizing spirit which gets all and gives nothing; heedful enough of its own fortunes, careless of the concerns and interests of others. This is the principle in our nature which Christianity opposes, and with which it ceaselessly wages war. But there is a sort of selfishness which, for the sake of distinction, we may call self-love, which is instinctive, and therefore innocent—that merciful provision by which we are prompted to the care of our own lives and to the avoidance of everything that would disquiet or abridge them. This principle in our nature Christianity encourages; to this principle Christianity addresses itself; and hence it has connected, married in indissoluble union, man's chiefest duty and man's highest pleasure. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is. What has the dark, morbid, unhappy sensualist to do with it? Godliness hath the promise of the life "that now is," as well as "that which is to come." In keeping Thy commandments there is a present reward. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." "In thy presence there is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."[235] Just as it is in man's physical organization, and its adaptation to the material world around him, when body and mind are alike in health, we can neither eat, nor drink, nor walk, nor sleep, nor sing, nor perform any of the commonest actions of life without a sensation of pleasure; so it is in the spiritual life: there is pleasure in its every motion. There is pleasure even in the sting of penitence; it is

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

There is pleasure in the performance of duty; there is pleasure in the enjoyment of privilege; there is pleasure in the overcoming of temptations, a grand thrill of happiness to see trampled under foot a vanquished lust or slain desire; there is pleasure in the exercise of benevolence; there is pleasure in the importunity of prayer. Hence it is that the apostle seeks to rivet the sense of personal obligation by the remembrance of personal benefit. "We thus judge, that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who"—owns them? No. Claims them? No. Will judge them? No; but—"to him who died for them and rose again." Gratitude is to be the best prompter to our devotion. Those who live to Christ, those who live by Christ, will not tamely see His altars forsaken, His[236] Sabbaths desecrated, His name blasphemed, the blood of the covenant wherewith He was sanctified accounted an unholy thing. Brethren, are you of that happy family? Have you obtained life from the dead through His name? Then you are bound to spend it for His honor, and, watching with godly jealousy for every possible opportunity of doing good, to spend and be spent for them who have not yet your Master known. I call on you to answer this invocation; it belongs to you. There is no neutrality, believe me, in this war—and if there be some of you that would like to be dastardly and half-hearted trimmers, you will find by and by that you have got the hottest place in the battle, exposed to the cross-fire from the artillery of both parties. I call on you decisively to-night to answer this invocation. Call up before your minds the benefits you have individually received; think of the blessings which the death of Christ has procured for you—the removal of the blighting curse which shadowed all your life, the present sense of pardon, mastery over self and over sin, light in the day of your activity, and songs in the night of your travail; the teaching Spirit to lead you into still loftier knowledge, and the sanctifying Spirit to impress upon you the image of the heavenly; that divine fellowship which lightens the present, and that majestic hope which makes the future brighter far. Think of the[237] benefits which the resurrection of Christ has conferred upon you; light in the shadowed valley, the last enemy destroyed, support amid the swellings of Jordan, a guide upon the hither side of the flood, angelic welcomes, the King in his beauty, and "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And then, as the sum of favor is presented, and gratitude arises and the fire burns, and the heart is full, and the frame quivers with the intensity of its emotions, just remember that there is a world lying in the wicked one, that there are multitudes, thousands upon thousands, in your own city, at your own doors, for whom the Savior died, who never heard His name; that there are multitudes for whom He has abolished death who have never felt His resurrection's power. Let your tears flow; better, far better a tear for God's sake and the world's sake than the hard-heartedness and darkness of sin. Lift up your voice in the midst of them; lift it up, be not afraid. Say unto the cities of Judah, "Behold your God." Men will call you mad, but you can give them the apostle's answer, "If we be beside ourselves, it is to God; if we be sober, it is for your cause."

III. The apostle argues the necessity of zeal in the cause of Christ, in the third place, from the master motive of the Savior's constraining love. "The love of Christ constraineth us"—forces us along, carries us away as with the[238] impetuosity of a torrent, or rather as when cool heavens and favoring air speed the vessel steadily to the haven. Love is at once man's most powerful motive and his highest inspiration, both in the life that now is and that which is to come. From love to Christ spring the most devoted obedience, the most untiring efforts in His service. There are other springs of action, I know, by which men are influenced to a profession of religion. Interest can occasionally affect godliness from sordid aims, and behave itself decorously amid the respectabilities of the temple-going and almsgiving religion; but it will give its arm to any man that goes down to the house of Rimmon; and if there is a decree that at the sound of all kinds of music they are to fall down before another image which has been erected in the plains of Dura, they will be the most obsequious benders of the knee. Men sometimes practise obedience under the influence of fear. A sudden visitation, a prevailing epidemic, an alarming appeal, will strike into momentary concern; but when the indignation is overpast, and the craven soul has recovered from its paroxysms of terror, there will often be a relapse into more than the former atrocities of evil. Convictions of duty may and sometimes will induce a man, like an honest Pharisee of the olden time, to observe rigidly the enactments of the law; but there will be no heart in his obedience, and no holy passion[239] in his soul; but let the love of God be shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him, let there be a perception of love in God, let there be sight of the Crucified as well as of the cross, and there will be disinterested, and cheerful, and hearty obedience. Zeal for God will become at once a passion and a principle, intensifying every purpose into ardor, and filling the whole soul with vehemence of absorbing desire. This is the emotion from whose natural and inevitable outflow the apostle vindicates impassioned zeal.

Opinions are divided as to whether the constraining love spoken of in the text refers to Christ's love to us or to our love to Him, which the sense of His love has enkindled in the soul. I do not think we can go far wrong if we take both meanings, inasmuch as no principle of exposition is violated, and as we need the pressure of a combination of motive, that we may be zealously affected always in this good thing. Ye, then, if there are any of you here who need rousing to energy in the service of Christ, think of His love to you; how rich its manifestations, and how unfeigned; how all other love of which it is possible for you to conceive shrinks in the comparison! There have been developments in the histories of years of self-sacrificing affection, which has clung to the loved object amid hazard and suffering, and which has been ready even to offer up life in its behalf.[240] Orestes and Pylades, Damon and Pythias, David and Jonathan, what lovely episodes their histories give us amid a history of selfishness and sin! Men have canonized them, partly because such instances are rare, and partly because they are like a dim hope of redemption looming from the ruins of the fall. We have it on inspired authority, indeed, "Greater love hath no man than this"—this is the highest point which man can compass, this is the culminating point of that affection which man can by possibility attain, the apex of his loftiest pyramid goes no higher than this—"greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend; but God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." A brother has sometimes made notable efforts to retrieve a brother's fortunes, or to blanch his sullied honor; but there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. A father has bared his breast to shield his offspring from danger, and a mother would gladly die for the offspring of her womb; but a father's affection may fail in its strength, and yet more rarely a mother's in its tenderness.

And "can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." O Jesus of Nazareth, who can declare Thee? "Herein is love, not[241] that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." Think of that love—love which desertion could not abate—love which ingratitude could not abate—which treachery could not abate—love which death could not destroy—love which, for creatures hateful and hating one another, stooped to incarnation, and suffered want, and embraced death, and shrank not even from the loathesomeness and from the humiliation of burial; and then, with brimming eye, and heart that is full of wonder: "Why such love to me?" you will indeed be ungrateful if you are not stirred by it to an energy of consecration and endeavor, which may well seem intemperate zeal to cool reckoners with worldly wisdom.

Then take the other side of the argument; take it as referring to your love to Christ, which the sense of His love has enkindled in the soul. The deepest affection in the believing heart will always be the love of Jesus. The love of home, the love of friends, the love of letters, the love of rest, the love of travel, and all else, are contracted by the side of this master passion. "A little deeper," said one of the veterans of the first Napoleon's old guard, when they were probing in his bosom for a bullet that had mortally wounded him, and he thought they were getting somewhere in the region of the heart—"a little deeper and you will find the Emperor."[242] Engraven on the Christian's heart deeper than all other love of home or friends, with an ineffaceable impression that nothing can erase, you find the loved name of Jesus. Oh! let this affection impel us, and who shall measure our diligence or repress our zeal? Love is not bound by rule; there is no law that can bind it; it is never below the precept, it is always up to the precept, but it always has a margin of its own. It does not calculate, with mathematical exactitude, with how little of obedience it can escape penalty and secure recompense; like its Master it gives in princely style; it is exuberant in its manifestations; there is always enough and to spare. And if meaner motive can prompt to heroic action—if from pure love of science astronomers can cross the ocean familiarly, and dare encounter dangers, just that they may watch in distant climes the transit of a planet across the disc of the sun—and if botanists can travel into inhospitable climes and sojourn among inhospitable men, only to gather specimens of their gorgeous flora—and if, with no motive but love of country, and no recompense save bootless tears and an undying name, a Willoughby could sacrifice himself to blow up a magazine, and a Sarkeld could fire the Cashmere Gate at Delhi, surely we, with obligations incomparably higher, with the vows of profession on our lips, with death busy in the midst of us, and souls going down[243] from our doors into a joyless and blasted immortality, ought to present our life-blood, if need be, for the cause of Christ, and for the good of souls. Let the scoffers spurn at us as they will; we are far superior to such poor contumely. Heaven applauds our enthusiasm, and we vindicate it in the apostle's words: "If we be beside ourselves, it is to God; and if we be sober, it is for your cause."

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The World's Great Sermons  
  
VOLUME VII  
  
HALE TO FARRAR

THE  
World's  
Great  
Sermons

COMPILED BY  
GRENVILLE KLEISER

Formerly of Yale Divinity School Faculty;  
Author of "How to Speak  
in Public," Etc.

With Assistance from Many of the Foremost  
Living Preachers and Other Theologians

INTRODUCTION BY  
LEWIS O. BRASTOW, D.D.  
Professor Emeritus of Practical Theology  
in Yale University

IN TEN VOLUMES

VOLUME VII—HALE TO FARRAR

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**÷**07-01 HALE

THE COLONIZATION OF THE DESERT

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Edward Everett Hale, Congregationalist divine and author, was born in Boston in 1822. He was graduated at Harvard in 1839 and became a Unitarian preacher in 1846 at Worcester. In 1850 he removed to Boston, where his most important life's work was accomplished as a preacher and writer. A collected edition of his writings, in ten volumes, was published in 1901. His varied literary enterprises and undertakings have been too many to be enumerated here. His most famous work is "The Man Without a Country." He is at present chaplain to the United States Senate.

[3]

HALE

Born in 1822

THE COLONIZATION OF THE DESERT

God saw everything that he had made. And behold, it was very good.—Gen 1:31.

This simplest expression of the earliest religion comes back to us with new force in the midst of all the wonderful revelations of our modern life.

In ten weeks' time I have crossed from one ocean to the other; I have crossed backward and forward over the Allegheny and the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, with the valleys between them, and the slopes which rise from the ocean on either side. This means a journey through twelve of the old thirteen States and fifteen of the new States and Territories. It means intercourse with people of the North and the South, the Gulf and the West, the Pacific coast and the mountains. It means intercourse with the white race, the black race, the red race, and the Chinaman. The variety of climate is such that I have welcomed the shade of palm-trees, and that I have walked over snow where it had drifted twenty feet beneath me. I have picked oranges from the tree, and camellias from the twig in the[4] open air, and within three hours of good-by to the camellia I was in a driving snow-storm, where the engine drivers were nervous because they had no snow plow. In all this variety I have a thousand times recalled the simplest expression of the oldest words of the Bible: "God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."

The solid recognition of this truth—not, indeed, in any small sense; but in that sense which is general and comprehensive—is at the bottom of all true religious philosophy. It is not true in any smaller sense. For I cannot say that it is good to be bitten by a mosquito or worried by a fly, if I can escape fly or mosquito. No, that is not true. And I do not suppose that the simple author of this text meant any such extravagance. But this is true, that the world is so made and ordered that man, who is himself a creator—man, who shares the wishes, instincts, and plans of the Power who directs the world—man can take the world in his hands and compel it to serve his nobler purposes.

God saw the world, and he said: "Yes, this is what I want for My home and the home of children who love Me. It is a world very good to them, and they shall subdue it to My purposes." To recognize this, to feel the fitness of the world for man and man's fitness for the world, this is the basis of consistent optimism. Nobody says that the top of the[5] Rocky Mountains is a good place for whales, or that the Ojai Valley is a good place for polar bears; but a consistent optimism says that the world is a good place for man; and it says that man is so closely allied to the God who is the life of the world that he can take the world for his own, and make it his home and his heaven. This consistent optimism is the basis of all sound theology.

It is to be observed, however, that man gains no such control of the world, and the world does not prove fit for man, unless he has found out that he is akin to God and can enter into His work. There is no such victory to the savage, who is afraid of God. So long as he thinks the powers of nature are his enemies, he makes them his enemies. I do not believe the old cave-dwellers, fighting hyenas with clubs, and often finding that they were second-best in the encounter, thought this world the best of worlds. I do not believe that the Digger Indian, who spent his tedious day in rummaging for ants and beetles to eat, and was very happy if he caught a lizard—I do not believe that he said that the world was very good. True, I think both of them had visions and hopes of a better time; but while they were in the abject misery of cold and starvation, that better time had not dawned. It did not dawn because they had not taken on them the dignity and duty of children of God. They were not about their Father's[6] business. They did not see Him nor hear Him, nor in any wise know Him. They did not conceive that they were on His side nor He on theirs. And it is not till man comes up to some comprehension that God has sent him here on an infinite business; that he and the Author of this world are at one in this affair of managing it; it is not till man knows God as his friend and not his enemy, that man with any courage and success takes the business of managing into his own hands. Then is it that he finds what pleasure, nay what dignity, there is in taming the lightning and riding on the storm. And then he knows enough of the divine Being, His purpose and His power, to see that the world is good, and that God should call it good in its creation.

All this forces itself on one's thought as he sees how it is that nature has been pursued and caught and tamed in these mountains and these valleys. For nature is the nymph so wittily described by Virgil. She

"Flies to her woods; but hopes her flight is seen."

Man, so long as he is savage, hates her and fears her. If he worships, it is the abject worship of those who bring sacrifices to buy her favor. And it may be said in passing that the last visible form of pure barbarism or savagery is any theology which supposes that God's favor must be bought by any price paid by man in exchange. When man finds, by any[7] revelation, the conditions of absolute religion, which are simply faith, hope and love, all this is changed. When he looks up to God gladly, looks forward to the future cheerfully, and looks round on the world kindly, he finds, possibly to his surprize, that he is working on the lines God works on, and means to have him work on. Now he is on "his Father's business." While he rows the boat, the tide sweeps the right way. While he stretches the wire, the lightning is waiting and eager to do his errand. And so soon as man the divine appears upon the scene—man the child of God, who knows he shares God's nature—why, easily and quickly the valleys are exalted and the mountains and the hills made low; the deserts blossom as the rose, and even the passing traveler sees that this world was made for man and man for this world. And he understands as he has never understood before what this is, that he himself is of the nature of the God at whose present will this world comes into order. He understands better what the old text means, which says that God is satisfied with the world which He has made.

I crossed the continent westward and eastward on this journey, fresh from recent reading of the history of the first Spanish occupation. What did the Spaniards find there? They found in what we call New Mexico the Zuni cities which, in a sad decline, exist to-day.[8] From those cities Casteneda led a party of Spanish horsemen eastward in search of a certain mythical king who was supposed to have much gold and many jewels. Those adventurous men rode for a whole summer across the prairies and plains which are now Colorado, and Kansas, and Missouri, and struck the Missouri, or perhaps the Mississippi. You know that much of the country is now fertile beyond praise. Mile after mile you can see corn, wheat; wheat, corn; corn, wheat; wheat, corn; and the production to the acre increases year by year. The States through which Casteneda's line of travel passed now number four or five millions of people; and they feed, from their agriculture, say twenty millions more. Now when Casteneda and his people passed and repassed over this region they did not meet a single man, woman or child. They were opprest by the horrible loneliness of their journey. They felt, as Magellan's people felt when they were crossing the Pacific Ocean, with that horrible east wind, with a calm sea before and never a sight of an island or a man. When Casteneda came at last to the Mississippi—or Missouri—they had no heart to build a raft to cross it and incur more such solitude; and they went back the way they came. And the fame of its loneliness was such that no man attempted the adventure for more than a hundred years.

[9]

When, in 1682—say a hundred and thirty years after—the great La Salle discovered the Mississippi River, and sailed south upon it, leaving Chicago, crossing Illinois, and so striking the Father of Waters, his experience of this utter loneliness was the same. He touched every night on one shore or the other. He is, therefore, the discoverer of seven of the Western States—States which now feed fifty million people and number seven or eight million of their own. Only twice, I think, did he meet any great body of men. Not five times did he find traces of the hand of man or the foot of man. Through the same solitude he returned; and his report was of a virgin world of elk, and deer, and buffalo; of shrubs and trees, of fish and fowl; but a world without men.

The inference was drawn, hastily, but not unnaturally, that these regions could not sustain men. On the Atlas given me as a boy, the "Great American Desert" covered the greater part of the region west of the Mississippi. It is now the home of the millions I have been enumerating. And in the last map I have seen, the Great American Desert appears as hardly a "speck on the surface of the earth."

The change which I have described has been wrought in the lifetime of people of my age. It is wrought simply and wholly by the passion for emigration which belongs[10] to our own race. In Mr. Hoar's happy phrase, people of our blood "thirst for the horizon."

In the year 1833 De Tocqueville, observing the steadiness of this wave, calculated its average flow as seventeen miles westward every year. That was the rate at which it had moved since the Federal Constitution made it possible. Speaking roughly, there were then two thousand miles of desert between the Missouri River and the Pacific. At De Tocqueville's rate, the wave would have been one hundred and twenty years in reaching that ocean. But it happened that in 1849 the Western coast was settled in the gold discovery. An Eastern wave began which has now met the Western. The two together have founded the great cities—for we must call them so—of the Rocky Mountains.

Now, in the face of that contrast between the last century and this century, one asks why that half of our continent is any more fit for men than it was then. The answer is, that it was not fit for the kind of men on it then; and that the kind of men that have tamed it are the kind of men who were fit for it, and whom it was fit for.

The study of history and of physical geography becomes a study of what we mean by man and man's capacities. California, for instance, was the same country in 1650 that it was in 1850. The south wind blew from the[11] sea, and that, in the north temperate zone, is the great physical requisite. There was as much gold, and quicksilver, and copper, and tin in the mountains as there is now. There was the same soil and the same water on the hillsides. But the men, and women, and children were afraid of their gods; they were afraid of nature; they had neither faith, nor hope, nor love. They had none of the elements of eternal power except as an acorn has the possibilities of an oak.

To these people there came, sooner or later—with the best motives, but still without the essentials of life—fifty families of Franciscan monks. They came, observe, without wives or children. They defied thus the first law of human life, or the life God intends His children to live in. The primitive trinity, from which all false trinities have grown, is the father, the mother and the child. The Franciscan communities were false to all Divine law, if it were only in their failure here.

They gathered around them, by the higher civilization which they brought, great communities of starving Indians. They taught them to feed themselves as they had never been fed before. So far they improved the race, and lifted its civilization above that ant-eating and lizard-chasing of the Digger Indian. But then the Catholic Church, by the necessary subordination of man to the[12] organized Church, takes man's life out of him.

"The day  
That makes a man a slave, takes all his life away."

The words are as true to-day as they were in Homer's time. Nor is there any sadder instance of it than is the powerlessness of the tribes of amiable slaves who were collected under the protection of the Franciscan missions in California, or Jesuit missions in Paraguay.

The native races between the Pacific and the Atlantic were dying faster than their children were born. They were dying of the diseases named laziness, ignorance, and war. They were not subduing the continent. They were not fit for it, nor it for them. What is the distinction of the race to which we belong, that it succeeds where these have failed? The history of the country accentuates that distinction.

It would be absurd to pretend that the average frontiersman was a man of what are called saintly habits. Often he was not conscious that he had any divine errand. But the frontiersman, to whose courage and perseverance is due that forward wave we study, was a man. He did not take his opinion or instruction from any priest. There was no one between him and the good God. Often he sought Him. So far so good. And often he did not[13] seek Him. That one admits. But he never sought any one else's advice or direction. He was no slave, as the Indian of California was. He was not commissioned by a superior, as the Franciscan priest of the mission was. He was a man. He was independent and he was brave. If he did the right thing, therefore, he succeeded; if he did the wrong thing, why, he failed. And no one else tried just the same experiment. In this first trait of absolute independence he showed the infinite characteristic of a child of God.

Second, and perhaps more important, he took with him his wife and his children. Here is the great distinction of American emigration, which contrasts against the plans of Spaniards or Frenchmen, and of the earlier Englishmen. Historically it begins with the Pilgrims, of whom there were as many Pilgrim mothers as there were Pilgrim fathers. It is of them that Emerson says that "they builded better than they knew."

The frontiersman is independent. He lives with and for his family. And, once more, he is an enthusiast in determining that to-morrow shall be better than to-day. The Indian had no such notion. The Franciscan had not. But this profane, ignorant pioneer had. He believed implicitly in the country behind him and in the future before him. "I tell you, sir, that in ten years you will see in this valley such a city as the world never saw." Profane[14] he may be, ignorant he may be, cruel he may be; but he believes in the idea; he is quickened and goaded forward by an infinite and majestic hope.

Given such conditions, the historical steps are easy. All this is impossible till you have a nation, to give peace and compel peace, so that the separate settler shall know that the whole majesty of the world is behind him. There shall be no abiding quarrel between man and man as to the line of a claim or the title of a mine. The nation shall decide, and its whole majesty shall enforce the decision. Or, if there is any massacre by an Apache or a Blackfoot, the country behind, tho a thousand miles behind, shall stretch forth her arm to avenge that lonely family. This means peace instead of war. All this had to wait, therefore, until the formation of the nation called the United States—the greatest peace society the sun ever shone upon, and the model for societies yet larger. With the birth of that nation, the real Western wave begins.

I do not claim for every pioneer that he thought he went as an apostle of God. But in the emigrant wave from the very beginning, the best blood, the best faith, the best training of the parent stocks have gone. Science has sent her best. The determination for thorough education has planted better school houses in the wilderness than the emigrant left at home. And on Sunday, in a[15] church, one is proud to say that the organized Church of Christ, in the liberty of a thousand communions, has covered with her egis the settler most in advance. He could not keep in advance of the missionary and of his Bible; and, to his credit be it said, he did not want to.

So much for the personnel. Now, speaking roughly, what has been the motive for the great Western wave, which is making this garden out of that desert?

First, there is the passion for adventure, the thirst for the horizon, which drives old Leatherstocking and the men like him away from the haunts of men. This in itself produces nothing. Next and chiefly, the desire to make homes—the noblest desire given to man, and the desire in which he follows the will of God most distinctly and completely. Miners want to strike metals; farmers want to find good soils; fruit men try for climate and irrigation; all with the direct wish to make homes more happy than they have been before.

Again, young men go that they may get forward faster than in old communities—and who can wonder? Men of sense give up the unequal contest with nature in a northern and eastern climate to find a country where nature is on their side. People in delicate health go where they find softer air, more spring and less winter. But no man goes to get rich alone. No man wants to eat gold or[16] to drink it. The wish and hope is to make homes where father, mother and children can live the life which God ordained. These are no Franciscan friars, these are no Apache bandits, to whom has been given the subjugation of a continent. Side by side with the pioneer is the surveyor, marking the lines of future homesteads. Hard behind him are father, mother, boys and girls, to whom the nation gives this homestead thus designated. If the man is sick the woman nurses him. The children grow up to know the world they live in. The boundary of the nation is not a mere chain of garrisons nor the scattered posts of missions; it is a line of homes, founded with all that the word home involves.

All these lessons of three centuries point one way. They show that the world is not very good for wandering Apaches or Digger Indians, freezing and starving under hard winters when harvests have failed. To their point of view it was a world hard and cruel. To Franciscan friars, ruling a little empire which yielded none but physical harvests, where the garden, and orchard, and vineyard were only so many specks in the midst of an unbounded desert, the world can not have seemed a better world—a world made for wild horses, and further East for wild buffaloes, but not for men—"the great American Desert." It is not till man asserts the courage and freedom of a son of God, it is not till man appears with wife[17] and child and proposes to establish his heaven here; it is not till then that he masters nature, and she gladly obeys him. Nay, then he has no success unless he appears as the vicegerent of God Himself, and establishes over this vast domain the empire of law, and speaks as God might speak, with "Thou shalt do this," and "Thou shalt not do that" in this empire.

The Old-World writers are fond of telling us that we owe the prosperity of this nation to its physical resources. It is not so. The physical resources have existed for centuries. It is only in the moral force of sons and daughters of God; it is such working power as takes the names of law, courage, independence, and family affection; it is only in these that our victory is won. The drunken swaggerer of the advance only checks the triumph. The miser, who would carry off his silver to use elsewhere, only hinders the advance. The victory comes from the hand of God to the children of God, who establish His empire in the magic spell of three great names. As always these names are: Faith, which gives courage; Hope, which determines to succeed; and Love, which builds up homes.

It is impossible to see the steps of such a victory without owning the infinite Power behind it all. You cannot use magnetic ore and coal for its smelting and the silicates for its fusion, all flung in together side by side, without asking if the Power who threw these priceless[18] gifts together where each was needed for each did not know what He was doing. But the buffalo passes over it, and the gopher mines under it, and it might be so much gravel of the sea. Savages pass over it, with no future, no heaven, and one would say no God. It is worthless desert still, but one day a man comes who deserves his name. He is a child of God. He is determined that to-morrow shall be better than to-day. He knows he is lord of nature, and he bids her serve him. The coal burns, the iron melts, the silicate fuses. It is impossible to see that miracle and not feel that for this man the world was created, and for this world this man was born. He is in his place. He did not have to seek it; it was made for him. With him it is a garden. Without him it is a desert. He can hew down these mountains. He can fill up these valleys. And where he has filled, and where he has hewed, lo, the present heaven of happy homes! It is thus that prophecy accomplishes itself, and

"The car of the Lord rolls gloriously on."

**÷**07-02 MAGEE

THE MIRACULOUS STILLING OF THE STORM

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Connor Magee, Archbishop of York, was born at Cork in 1821. Educated at Trinity College, Dublin, he was ordained in 1844. His first important charge was the Octagon Chapel at Bath in 1850. In 1864 he was made dean of Cork, and in 1868, Bishop of Peterborough. In 1891 he was appointed to succeed Dr. William Thomson, as Archbishop of York.

Dr. Magee was pronounced by Canon Liddon the greatest preacher of his day. His speech in the House of Lords in 1869 against Irish Disestablishment was said by the highest authorities, as quoted by Lord Salisbury, to be the finest speech ever delivered, in either house of Parliament, by any man then living. His oratory was characterized by clearness and terseness of expression, while his full-toned voice was capable of sounding every gradation of feeling. He died in 1891, three months after his enthronization in York Minster.

[21]

MAGEE

1821-1891

THE MIRACULOUS STILLING OF THE STORM

Lord, save us: we perish.... Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.—Mat 8:25-26.

The story of this miracle reveals to us Christ entering into peril together with His Church. It records for us her faith and her prayer. It reveals to us His presence and His power. That faith has been her faith, that prayer has been her prayer, from that hour until now. In all the long perilous voyage of the Church from that hour, never has she unlearned yet her first prayer; never has she become entirely unconscious of her Lord. Sometimes with a great and a fearless faith that defied the most terrible tempests, sometimes with a little and a timid faith, that shrank from the first ripple upon the deep, but ever with her real faith have Christ's Church and Christ's disciples turned in the hour of their tribulation to seek their Lord. And never has that prayer been said in vain. Never from the Church at large, or from the solitary disciple in his terror, has that prayer gone up without an answer.[22] Never has the eye of faith sought, and sought in vain, the Savior. Ever has the praying Church or the praying disciple found the still present Christ; and we believe that it is so now. We believe that Christ our Lord is here in the midst of us now, and that our eye of faith may see Him, and our prayer of faith may reach Him. And if this be so now—if Christ's presence be a real fact amongst us now, and our prayer have really a might to reveal that presence—then, above all things, it concerns us, that we understand the nature of that prayer, and the manner of that presence, that we understand what it is we mean, and what will come of it when we say: "Lord, save us, or we perish."

We ask you, then, to-night, brethren, to consider these two things: the meaning of the Church's prayer; the manner of her Lord's presence. Now, when we use these words: "Lord, save: we perish," we are really rehearsing two articles of our belief. We are declaring, first of all, that we believe there is a Lord—that in the visible world there is an invisible God with His overruling, and controlling, and appointing will; and, in the next place, we believe that this God is our Lord Jesus Christ. In the first of these, we Christians agree with every religion that ever has been. In the second, we differ from all other religions. When we say that above nature there is a will and a personality, we say what[23] every religion says. Religion is nothing else than the belief in the supernatural, in something above nature, in a person, in a will; and prayer is nothing but the speech of our spirit to that will, and the submission of our will to it. Prayer is the effort of the spirit of man to rise above the visible up to the region of the invisible and the personal, there to speak out his care or his need. There can, therefore, be no prayer without this element of religion; and there can be no religion without this fact of prayer. Without it, you have philosophy, you may have sentiment; but you cannot have a real, practical, every-day religion. And, therefore, all religions have believed in a God or gods, a Lord or lords. Turk, Jew, heathen, in like case, would have said to some lord or other: "Save, or we perish." But the Christian believes something more. He believes that his Lord has come down amongst men; that He has taken to Him human flesh, and lived a human life, and died, and risen again, for his salvation. He worships not only a lord, but the incarnate Lord; and so the Church speaks her twofold faith in her great hymn from the first to Christ as God: "We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord"—Thee, and none other, to be the God, and Thee to be the Lord, and Ruler, and Master of all things. You see, then, that there is something different in Christian prayer from all other prayer and worship,[24] and that the difference consists in this: that it is distinctively and avowedly the prayer to an incarnate Christ.

Now, if there be this difference between this prayer and all other prayer, then there must be a corresponding difference in the feelings and in the practical results of such a religion; and I am about to ask you now to follow me while I endeavor to trace for you this difference between Christian prayer and all other prayer. It seems as if the story in the gospel of this miracle exactly sets out this difference—exactly shows us the distinctive nature of Christian prayer. The story, you observe, divides itself, naturally, into three parts. There is, first of all, the voyage before the storm; there is, then, the storm; and there is, then, the miraculous stilling of the storm. Now, you observe that in each of these three parts, we have one thing in common. We have man, in some way or other, encountering, or encountered by, the outward and visible world. The third of these—the stilling of the storm—differs from the other two in this, that it is miraculous and supernatural. Now, let us, for a moment, leave out this third part. There are some, you know, who say, that we should always leave it out, and be better without it. Let us leave out, then, this third or miraculous part of the story; and let us contrast the first and the second parts. And what have we got? We have got a most remarkable[25] contrast between the two scenes. What is it we see in the first scene? We see a man subduing nature. It was by the knowledge of the elements and the laws of nature, that man learned thus to sail upon the deep; and in that one fact you have represented for you the whole of the material progress of humanity—all the triumphs of science, all the glory and the beauty of art, all that marvelous mastery that man obtains by his inventive and creative will over the secret powers of nature, as he unlocks them one by one, and compels her to tell him her deepest mysteries—all that man has done as he has advanced from horizon to horizon of discovery, finding still new worlds to conquer, until we stand amazed at our own progress and the infinity of it, and we say of man: "What manner of being is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" Yes, there is the man the lord of nature. There is nothing supernatural there. All is natural, all is orderly. Man is lord and master. Nature is man's servant; and, therefore, there seems no room, there seems no need for prayer. There is nothing, seemingly, there to be had for the asking; there is everything, seemingly, there to be had for working. Man is to be seen walking in the garden of his own planting and his own fencing; and he reaches out hands to unforbidden fruits of knowledge; and he believes that at last he shall gather even of the tree of life. He is a[26] god unto himself, and he sees no need for prayer.

And now we turn to the second scene, and what have we there? We have the direct contrast with this scene. We have there, not man subduing nature, but nature subduing man. We have the storm in which the elements are man's masters and not his servants; and he that one minute before was the boasting lord of nature is its toy and its sport. The very foam upon the crest of those billows is not more helpless in the grasp of the elements than the lord and the king of them; and they toss him to and fro, as the wind drives the stubble in the autumn. This is the terrible aspect of nature. This is nature in her might, and in her majesty, and in her pitilessness, and in her capriciousness—when nature seems everything, and man, in her awful presence, dwindles and dwarfs into very nothingness—when man, in the presence of the vastness of her solitude, and the might of her storms, and the terror of her earthquakes, seems no more before her, with his little cares and his sorrows, than the wee bubbles upon the head of the cataract. This is nature as she masters man. Is it, then, any wonder that, in the early struggles of mankind with this terrible visible power of the creature, men came to worship the creature—that they ascribed to every one of these powers a divinity, that in the voice of the wind, and in the roar of the[27] sea, and in the raging of the fire, they saw the signs of a divine presence, and they said to these elements: "Spare us," or "Save us, or else we perish"? And so all creation became peopled with gods—cruel gods, capricious gods, vengeful gods, gods whom men bribed with blood, gods whom, even while they bribed them, they could not love, and did not believe that they loved them. This is the first and most terrible form of creature worship; this was the idolatry of the heathen. But mark this, that such a worship as this could not continue forever, could not continue long, because it is the worship of ignorance; it is the belief in the supernatural, only because it confuses the unknown with the supernatural. Ever as science advances must this faith melt away. Ever must the domain of the known push itself forward into the domain of the unknown. Ever does the man of science take one by one the gods of the man of superstition and break them upon their pedestals, and tell him this: "What you worship is no god. What you worship is no lord. It is not your lord. It is a servant of yours; and I class it in this or that rank of your servants." So, one by one, like ghosts and fantoms in the dawning of the day—one by one, the fantoms of gods that haunted the night of the old world vanish before the dawn of knowledge. But then it is a terrible daylight that breaks on men—a blank, dreary[28] world in which men have no sight of the invisible, no sense of the supernatural. It is that last and most terrible aspect of nature, when she appears, not as many gods, or many wills, but as the great soulless piece of mechanism, of which we are only part—a terrible machinery in which we are, somehow or other, involved, and in the presence of which the sense of our free-will leaves us. The pith, and the manhood, and the vigor of men, and the beauty and the freedom of their life die out of them as they stand appalled before this passionless, this terrible, this awful face of a soulless world. This is the last and the most terrible form of creature worship. And mark this, that between these two aspects of nature, if you have no assured faith, there is no logical resting-place. Without the act of faith, you must take your choice between the superstition of ignorance or the atheism of knowledge.

And now we have seen these, we turn to the third portion of our story; and what is that we see there? We see, again, in this world of men, the miraculous and the supernatural. We hear a prayer, and we see a miracle. In the face of the might of nature and the terrors of her elements there arises up a Man in answer to man's cry—there is heard a Man's voice, which is yet the voice of God; and it rebukes the winds and the sea, and the elements of nature own their real Lord; and[29] immediately there is a great calm. What is it, then, that we see? We see a miracle, and a miracle that answers to prayer; we see the living spirits of living men, in the hour of their agony and their distress, appealing from nature to the God of nature; and we have recorded the answer of God to man's prayer. The answer is, that God is Lord both of man and of nature; and we say, therefore, that the miracle, and the miracle alone, sufficiently justifies the prayer. We say that the reason why men may pray is, and can only be, that they know and believe, that there is a will which rules the visible. If you have not this belief, then believe us that all prayer, whatever men may say about it, is an unreality and a miserable mockery. To what am I to pray if I see no living God to pray to? Am I to pray to a law? Am I to pray to a system? Am I to pray to the winds, or to the waves, as men prayed of old? Am I to pray for physical blessings and deliverances? Men tell us we are not to pray, or to give thanks, concerning the rain or fruitful seasons, for that science has told us that the supernatural has no place there. Am I to pray then (for men do tell me that I may pray) only for spiritual and for moral gifts? Am I to pray only to be made wise, and good, and pure, and true, and holy? Ah! science is beginning to meet us there, too; for she is telling us, and telling us loudly, and telling us shamelessly, that[30] here, too, there is no room, so far as she can tell, for prayer, as our mind is but a part of our body, and that our spiritual condition is a necessary result of our past history and of our present temperament—that we are what we are by virtue of birth and education, and country, and clime, and other things over which we have no control. And so the very spirit of man, all that is left of the invisible, vanishes before the approach of science. The knife of the anatomist lays bare, as he tells you, the secrets of man's being; and he finds no soul—he finds only the gray matter of the brain and the white threads of the nerves; and this is all that is left. Then, if we are not to pray, may we at least praise? Men say that if it is a folly to pray, at least it is a wisdom to praise; and they tell us this is the sentimental theory of the modern gospel. They tell you: "You may not pray,—prayer has no place in our system,—but you may praise; you may lift up your heart in hymns of joy and gratitude to the great Father of your being; you may have festival and flower-crowned processions in honor of the Supreme Being; yes, you may in fine weather, when you are sailing over summer seas, and the pleasant summer wind is filling the sails of your bark, and is wafting sweet odors from the flower-crowned shores along which youth, and hope, and joy are passing—then you may lift up your hearts in thanks to the Father that gave all these, if[31] you do not forget it. But how is it in foul weather? How is it when the sky above us darkens, and the white crests of the waves beneath us are swelling sharp and fierce, and the jagged edges of the rocks are projecting for our shipwreck, and the wild waste of the waters is yawning below us, and we tremble and shudder at their depths, and the wild wind blows our prayer back into our bosoms—is that the time to sing sentimental hymns to our great supreme Father and Giver of all good? It is a time (thank God, thank Christ, for this) when the Christian, when the disciple of Christ, may hold fast his faith and say, "Tho he slay me, yet will I trust in him"; but it is not a time when the deist has breath to sing his hymns to the supreme Author of his being. No, we believe that there is a miracle that justifies, and alone justifies prayer. We know that there are those (and they are good and wise men, many of them) who contrive nice adjustments and philosophical explanations how prayer may be reconciled with universal law. We do not greatly care for these. They may be right; they may be wrong. In some future state and higher condition of our being we may know how far they are true, how far they are false; but, meanwhile, we need not be too nervously anxious to make room for almighty God to work His own will in His own world. We believe in the miracle of creation; we believe[32] that there was once a voice that said, "Let there be light, and there was light"; we believe that at the sound of that voice the universe leapt into life; and we believe in the miracle of the Incarnation, when God took human flesh and dwelt amongst men; we believe in the miracle of the descent of the Spirit of God, when, with the miraculous sound of the rushing wind and the miraculous gleam of the fire, God once more came down to dwell amongst men; we believe in the miracles that are written for us in this Book, were they ten times as many as they are; we believe that the sea has stood on one side like a wall, and that the waters have gushed forth from the rock; we believe that bread has been rained from heaven; we believe that a touch has awakened the dead—we believe all this; and, because we believe it, we believe the voice when it says to us, "Pray"; and because we hear that voice still amongst us, and because we know it to be the same voice, we say, as we hear it, "Lord, save, or we perish."

But still, in the last place, it may be said to us: If you do believe that there is this power of miracle amongst you still, and that it will answer to your prayer, why is it that we do not see more miracles than we do? Why is not the world filled with strange miracles every day, considering the infinite number of men's needs, and the infinite number of human prayers? My[33] brethren, it does seem to me that if we were merely deists, and did not believe in Christ, it would be difficult for us to answer this objection. The spirit of man has, however (thanks be to God for it), in all ages been deeper and truer in its instincts than his mere logical power. Even the deist (and we thankfully acknowledge it), tho inconsistently and illogically, yet really and truly prays. For us Christians there is not any difficulty. There is that difference in our prayer of which I spoke. To whom is it that we pray? Not merely to the invisible Lord or Creator of the past, but to the incarnate Lord of the present. We believe that Christ our Lord, to whom we pray, took flesh and dwelt amongst us, and we believe that He did so that He might work the greatest of all miracles—the salvation of the souls of men; and we believe that He wrought it by dying and by living again. We believe that He established in the world this great and miraculous law, that it is possible out of death to bring life—nay, that death is the way to life. If this be so, that by His death life was purchased for us, then He teaches us that there is another life than this, and that there is another death and a deeper death than that we fear; and He tells us, it may be, that even by dying we shall be saved, that He will not always save us from death—nay, that He may save us by death. And so it comes to pass[34] that we understand how, by losing life, we may miraculously save it; and yet, on the other hand, by trying to save life, we may naturally lose it. So we come to understand this fact, how the beginning of His kingdom was full of miracles, and how, in the history of His kingdom, miracles have since ceased. The kingdom began with miracles that He might teach us that He was able to save; the miracles ceased in order that He might work a greater miracle. The lesser miracle of ruling nature ceased in order that the greatest of all miracles might perpetually be wrought—the regeneration, the redemption, and the glorification of the nature of man. And so we understand that Christ our Lord, because He is our Lord, may save us, even while we seem to perish, and to perish in His presence. He saved us of old by His agony and bloody sweat, by His cross and passion; and He will save us now, and He does save every child of His. Through agony and sweating, through cross and passion—through the agony of our long nights of spiritual darkness, through the sweat of long days of sore trouble and labor, beneath the weight of sharp and heavy crosses and sorrow, and through the bitterness of spiritual or bodily passion, does Christ our Lord still save those who cry to Him, even while He seems to sleep and not to hear them, as, in the bitterness of their souls, thinking themselves Christ-forsaken, they cry,[35] "Our Christ, our Christ, why hast Thou forsaken us? Dost Thou sleep, Lord? Save us, or we perish." And so you understand the peculiarity, the blest and the glorious peculiarity, of our Christian prayer. You understand the meaning of those deep words of Scripture—patience and the faith of the saints. You understand how the Christian man may pray and wait, and wait and pray still. If prayer were always followed by a miraculous answer, then prayer would be easy enough; or, on the other hand, if there were no thought of an answer, then it might be possible, tho not easy, to submit ourselves to the inevitable. But to pray and not to receive an answer, and yet to believe that the very not receiving is an answer; to cry, "Save, or we perish," and to seem about to perish; to believe that in what seems perishing is really salvation; to look for the living and watchful Christ, and to see what seems only the living and regardless Christ, and yet to believe that the time will come when, at His word, there shall be a great calm—this is the patience, this is the faith of those who worship an incarnate Lord. And so we trace the history of Christ's Church, and so we strive to trace the history of our own lives. Comparatively easy it is to trace the Church's history along her voyage. The Church gives time for comparing events and testing faith; and so, believing still in the presence of her[36] living Lord, the litanies of His Church ring out, as they have ever rung, clearly and loudly, and high above the roar of the tempest and the rushing of the waters, still the prayer is heard, "Good Lord, deliver us"; and still, again and again, as the storm sweeps by, and the Church passes out into calmer waters, still comes the voice of thanksgiving: "He hath delivered us." Even in our shorter voyage, are there none of us who can remember times when we have knelt in agony and wrestled in prayer with the Savior, who seemed to have forgotten us, when the mighty storm of temptation and the billows of calamity seemed about to destroy us, and when we have cried (oh, how men do cry in those storms of the soul, in those tempests and terrors of the heart), "Lord, save us, or we perish!" to Him to save us, and He has seemed to sleep and to refuse to save? But at the last we can remember how He did reveal Himself, not stilling the raging storm when we would have had Him still the terrible tempest, not sparing, it may be, the precious bark that we had rigged, and manned, and launched ourselves with trembling hopes and loving prayers, and watched with eyes tearless with agony, as we saw it about to sink before us; and we have been led to see and believe that the living and the loving Lord was answering even then our prayer, for the bark has, at length, entered that haven where we would[37] be, and where the vexed waters of our voyage never awake a ripple on the calm depths of its eternal peace. This has been the experience of more than one of this great multitude that I see. And there is another experience that each one of you may have: it is when, in the troubles of your own spirit, when in the agonies of your own grief-stricken heart, when in the depths of your own repentance, when in the storms of your own fear and your own doubt, you cry to Christ the Savior—when you bring your sins as some men bring their sorrows, as anxious to have them removed as the others—when you cry to Christ your Savior: "Lord, save me! Save me, a sinner! Save me, an unprayerful man hitherto! Save me, an unbelieving man hitherto! Save me, not merely from the hell hereafter, but the present storm and depth of my own sins that threaten to destroy me! Save me, or I perish!" For, brethren, be sure of this, sooner or later this will be the experience of every such vexed and terrified soul—that, after he shall have endured, so long as his Lord sees good, the terrifying storm and the threatening deep that drive him in closer and closer search and seeking after his Lord, then, at last, there will appear the form of the Son of man, the form of Him who hung upon the cross, that He might for ever in the world's history work this great and, to Him, dearest of all miracles; and, at last, He will rebuke the winds and[38] the waves in that troubled soul, and there will be a great calm—a calm that may not last for ever, a calm that will not last for ever, for we have not yet reached the haven of perfect rest, but a calm that is a foretaste of the eternal rest. And so, praying with all our hearts to Christ our Lord, setting our will in submission to His will, pouring out our spirit in prayer to His Spirit, laying bare our hearts before His pure and loving eyes, through calm and through storm, praying still that we suffer not death in either, that we neither rot in the calm nor founder in the storm, praying still for His presence, praying still for grace to realize that presence, crying still for that deeper and yet deeper faith which is the result of more and more constant experience, crying still, "Lord, save, or we perish," wait in patience and in faith until He shall send His last messenger in this world, His angel of death, and bid him for us and in His name rebuke for the last time the winds that have vexed us, and the waves that have terrified us, and then with Him for ever there shall be a great calm.

**÷**07-03 SEISS

THE WONDERFUL TESTIMONIES

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Joseph A. Seiss, Lutheran divine, was born in 1823, at Graceham, Md. He received his theological education as a private pupil of several clergymen and was first settled over churches at Martinsburg and Shepherdstown, Va. In 1843 he was transferred to Cumberland, then to Baltimore, Md., and finally became pastor of St. John's Church, Philadelphia, and for twelve years was editor of "The Lutheran." He died in 1904.

[41]

SEISS

1823-1904

THE WONDERFUL TESTIMONIES[1]

Thy testimonies are wonderful.—Psalms, 119.129.

The Psalmist here addresses himself to God. The testimonies of which he speaks are God's testimonies. As collected and arranged in one book, they are known to us as the Bible. For the contents of these holy oracles the royal singer expresses his admiration. He pronounces them "wonderful."

It was not an unworthy theme with which he was occupied at the time, neither was it an extravagant opinion which he uttered. It is impossible that there should be for man a more important subject than the communications made to him from his God. And if ever there was a marvelous thing submitted to human inspection, it is this book, the holy Bible. It lies before us like an ocean, boundless and unfathomable,—like a Himalayan mountain, whose summit no foot of man has trod, and whose foundation is in the undiscovered heart of the world. To make a full[42] survey of it is not possible in the present condition of the human faculties. Even the inspired Paul, when he came to look into it, found himself gazing into profundities at which he could do no more than exclaim, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!" And yet there are many beautiful shells and pebbles lying on the shore of this sea, and as many precious flowers blooming on this mountain side, which any one may gather, and which, whosoever attentively contemplates, must feel himself impelled to join the admiring exclamation, "The testimonies of the Lord are wonderful."

Let us look briefly at a few particulars by which to verify this declaration, praying that God may open our eyes to behold wondrous things out of His law.

I. The testimonies of the Lord are wonderful in age and preservation.

The Bible is the oldest of books. Some portions of it are much more recent than others, but a large part of it has come down from the remotest antiquity and antedates all other writings in the world. It contains a journal of events which transpired centuries before the building of the Pyramids. The book of Job existed before Cadmus carried letters into Greece. The five books of Moses were read in holy assemblies two hundred years before Sanchoniathon wrote. David and Solomon had uttered their sacred songs and prophecies[43] half a century before Homer enraptured the Greeks with his verses or Lycurgus had given laws to Lacedæmon. Dozens of the books of Scripture were complete a hundred years before the first public library was founded at Athens; and the last of the prophets had ended his message before Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle had propounded their philosophies. When the elements of society were but forming in the womb of the far-distant past, the Bible was there. When the foundations of earth's present greatness were laid, it was there. And when we go back to the very beginnings of history, even there does its hand lead us and its right hand uphold us.

Nor is it as a mere lifeless fossil that this book has come down to us from such remote antiquity. Tho hoary with age, its youthful vigor remains, and its natural force is not abated. It has only grown fresher with age, and strengthened with every new trial. It has been at the births and deaths of a hundred mighty nations, and seen empires rise, flourish, and fall, and coexisted with the longest lines of earthly kings, and beheld some of the sublimest monuments of human effort come forth and disappear, and passed a hundred generations in reaching us; but, withal, it still lives, in all nations, in all languages, the most precious legacy of departed ages, and the only thing that remains to us from some of them. Tho it has encountered many a fierce conflict[44] with the hate of men and the spite of devils,—tho the object of many a concerted scheme to blot it from the earth,—tho often held up to ridicule, with "gigantic apes like Voltaire chattering at it, men of genius turned by some Circean spell into swine, like Mirabeau and Paine, casting filth at it, demoniacs whom it had half rescued and half inspired, like Rousseau, making mouths in its face," and all the varied passions of unsanctified men continually arrayed against it,—it still holds its place as the most uncorrupt and authentic of histories, the most august and controlling of records, the most universal, venerable, and potent of books, imagining in its very history the stupendous majesty of the God whom it reveals.

II. The testimonies of the Lord are wonderful in their authorship.

They are not of man, but of God. We can not now refer to the varied and multitudinous considerations which enter into the proofs of this. It is capable, however, of being established by the very highest moral evidences. The wisest and best men of every age have concurred in receiving the Scriptures as from God. And it is not possible to give a rational account of their origin, and the source of their contents, without ascribing them to the divine authorship which they claim.

It may seem strange that the infinite God should condescend to put His great thoughts[45] into the poor language of mortals, to communicate with creatures so dull and stupid as the sons of men; but this He has done. Portions of the Scriptures are made up of the very words of God, articulated by Himself in the hearing of men commissioned to declare them. One chapter, which embodies the moral essence of all the rest, was engraven by His own finger upon tables of rock, and delivered to Moses all ready formed and set in the alphabetic signs employed by men. Other parts consist of communications of celestial messengers sent directly from heaven's throne to declare God's will and purposes to the dwellers upon earth. A still larger portion was taken down as it fell from the lips of One in whom God had incarnated Himself, and whose every word and act in this world was a revelation from the unknown Deity. Even those parts which were written by men were produced by mysterious motion and illumination of the Holy Ghost,—by inspiration of God. Indeed, the whole book is a literary aerolite, all the characteristics of which are unearthly, and whose own superior attributes are so many demonstrations of its superhuman source. Its very address is so far above that of man, that no mortal, unprompted, could ever have risen to it. Its subjects are all treated after an unearthly manner. Every leaf of it bears the sunlight of some higher sphere. Every page has on it the imprimatur of God. And[46] all its words are instinct with divine fires, flashing the admonition upon every reader, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." They that look upon it look upon expressions of the eternal Spirit. They that rightly take its lessons drink in living emanations from unsearchable Godhead. It is the abiding miracle of rapport with the Mind which projected, upholds, and governs the universe. It is the Word of God.

III. The testimonies of the Lord are wonderful in their originality and instructiveness.

The Bible depends upon no discoveries of man, and leans upon no other books. If it says some things which may be learned elsewhere, its utterances are always independent and peculiarly its own. The world through which it ranges is much wider than that of man's thoughts. It goes back to a remoter antiquity; it takes in a broader space; it extends to a vaster future; it introduces to sublimer spheres and forms of being; and it exhibits a much profounder wisdom. It opens arcana of which no earthly powers ever dreamed, and is at home in regions where the sublimest imaginings of man had hardly extended a guess. On all the great questions of theology, life, death, and futurity, it speaks with a familiarity, comprehensiveness, and propriety which at once command our confidence[47] and satisfy our hearts. What it touches, it touches with a master's hand. It never speaks without pregnant meaning in all its words. And there is nothing in human science, poetry, or tradition which it does not exceed in knowledge, wisdom, and real value.

In its account of the creation, and the origin of things, there is nothing to compare with it. In all the historians, philosophers, and secular authors,-the books of Zoroaster, the records of Phœnicia and Egypt, the Dialogues of Plato and Lucian, the annals of China, the treatises of Plutarch, the Shastras of India, the Edda of Scandinavia, and all the schemes that have ever been given in explanation of the earth's primal history,—there is nothing so natural, so magnificent, so simple, so appropriate, so reliable, so satisfactory, as the first chapter of Genesis. Nor have all the discoveries of modern geology brought forward anything to convict Moses of a false cosmogony. If it is a truth that the history of the earth's formation runs back through uncounted ages, he leaves an interval for it, between "the beginning" and the period when God caused light to appear upon its dark and misty surface. If it is true that vast eras have been traversed by each separate order of living things, one after the other, we find precisely the same succession in the Mosaic account which is found preserved in the different layers of the earth's crust. And[48] if it be true that there was life upon our world ages and cycles of ages before the period noted in Genesis as that in which man was created, it is also true that no traces of human existence are found except in the most recent deposits. A certain stonemason of the village of Cromartie, with sledge and chisel, himself delved through every formation, from the surface-mold down through the old red sandstone to the Silurian, gneiss, and granite, and, having mastered all that is known concerning each, has written it down as the result of his marvelous explorations, that the truthfulness of the Mosaic record is engraven upon the rocks forever.

And so in every department of science the Bible is always true to nature, and has invariably been in advance of all human investigations and discoveries. How many thousands of years have metaphysicians and psychologists been at work to map out, classify, and gauge the various capacities and powers of the human mind and soul! But they have found no way of approach to the heart so masterly and effective as that taken by the Scriptures; and the more that is known of the nature of the man, the more clearly is it seen that the Bible comprehended it from the commencement. It has been but a few years since Newton laid open the laws of gravitation; and yet the Scriptures spoke of the earth being hung "upon nothing," as if familiar[49] with the whole subject, before human science had begun to form even its feeblest guesses in the case. It has only been since the invention of the telescope enabled men to search through the starry spaces that Sir John Herschel has discovered in the northern sky a peculiar barrenness; but more than three thousand years ago Job told Bildad the Shuhite that "God stretched out the north over the empty place." It has been but a few years since science discovered "that the sun is not the dead center of motion, around which comets sweep and planets whirl," but that "the earth and sun, with their splendid retinue of comets, satellites, and planets, are all in motion around some point or center of attraction inconceivably remote, and that that point is in the direction of the star Alcyone, one of the Pleiades"; which would hence seem to be "the midnight throne" in which the whole system of gravitation has its central seat and from which all material orbs are governed. But the Bible asked the question, more than thirty centuries ago, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?" as if the speaker knew all about the facts in the case. How long has it been since the doctrine of the rotundity of the earth has been settled by scientific men? yet the Psalmist spoke of "the round world"; and Solomon described in brief the true theory of wind-currents, and strongly hinted the circulation of the blood, at least twenty-five[50] hundred years ago. And, with all the advances of knowledge which have so wonderfully marked the last three hundred years, in which the spirit of philosophic inquiry has ranged the universe, searched heaven, earth, and sea, knocked at every door, peered into every recess, consulted every oracle of nature, and gathered trophies of power and treasures of wisdom and sublimities of knowledge at which the world has been amazed,—in all the motions which the experimentist has traced, in all the principles of power which the master of physics has discovered, in all the combinations which the chemist has detected, in all the forms which the naturalist has recorded, in all the spiritual phenomena which the metaphysician has described, and in all the conditions and relations of mind or matter, past or present, which human research has found out,—there has not come to light one truth to contradict these holy records, or to require the relinquishment or change of one word in all the great volume of Scripture.

IV. The testimonies of the Lord are wonderful in beauty and literary excellence.

The Bible is a casket of jewelry of the richest hues and the most exquisite workmanship. Sir William Jones, that great Orientalist and scholar, has said, "I have regularly and attentively perused these Holy Scriptures, and am of the opinion that this volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more[51] true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may have been written." Even Rousseau wrote, "The majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration. The works of our philosophers, with all their pomp of diction, how mean, how contemptible, in comparison with them!"

Nor does it matter much what part of the Scriptures we take, or in what department of rhetoric we test them. Whether it be history or prophecy, the Old Testament or the New, narrative or description, poetry or prose, the same characteristics are to be seen. Moses is as pure and simple as Adam and Eve in Paradise, and yet as majestic and grand as that great creation which he describes. Job contains a drama which is without a parallel,—a drama of facts in which heaven and earth, visible and invisible, with all their wonderful interpenetrations, are set out in their connection with a suffering saint upon his couch, and in which the spirit of earnest inquiry urges itself forward until everything comes forth to declare the majesty of God, and all the might and goodness of man lies prostrate before Him who "bringeth forth Mazzaroth in his season" and speaketh comfortably to them that trust in Him. Under the leadership of David's muse, we pass[52] through varied scenes of beauty and grandeur,—pastures and glens, still waters and roaring floods, dismal swamps and silent wildernesses, forests crashing with the lightnings of God and tempests that convulse the seas, the smoke and fury of battle and the shoutings of glad multitudes, by dells of lonely sorrow and along the starry archways of the sky,—until at length we take our places in a temple high as heaven and wide as space, with all objects of creation as living worshipers around us, each with its separate hymn of grateful joy, blending in one almighty adoration. Isaiah rises upon us like some "mighty orb of song," whose rays are streaming minstrelsies, that have thrilled upon the hearts of men for seventy generations, and which must needs thrill on, unrivaled in their kind, while earth and time endure. Ezekiel is a very comet of fire, flaming his impetuous way across the heavens, and, like the living spirits in his own first vision, going and returning as a flash of lightning. And throughout,—the Evangelists with their simple story of Jesus, and Paul in his epistles and orations, and John in his loving letters and apocalyptic visions,—from the first words, "In the beginning," onward to the last "amen," we find variety, beauty, pathos, dignity, sweetness, magnificence, and glory, such as are contained in no other composition. Here are the sublimest heights and the profoundest depths, and all the gradations[53] from the one to the other. From the worm that grovels in the dust, to the leviathan in the foaming deep, and the supreme archangel, and the eternal God; from the hyssop on the wall, to the cedars of Lebanon, and the healing trees which shade life's eternal river; from the pearl-drops which trickle from the mountain rock, to the noise of dashing torrents, and the wide waters of the deluge; from the glowworm under the thorn, to the sun in the heavens, and the great Father of Lights; from the lone pilgrim to the triumphing host, and the gathering multitude which no man can number; from the deepest sorrows of the lost, to the probation scenes of earth and the seraphic visions of the blest,—there is nothing known to mortals which God hath not brought into requisition to intensify and adorn the precious book which He has given to men. As an eloquent preacher beyond the sea remarks, "He has filled it with marvelous incident and engaging history, with sunny pictures from Old-World scenery and affecting anecdotes from patriarchal times. He has replenished it with stately argument and thrilling verse, and sprinkled it over with sententious wisdom and proverbial pungency. It has the gracefulness of high utility; it has the majesty of intrinsic power; it has the charm of its own sanctity: it never labors, never strives, but, instinct with great realities and bent on blessed ends, has all the translucent[54] beauty and unstudied power which you might expect from its lofty object and all-wise Author."

Some call these Scriptures dull and uninviting; but there is no book in being with so many real attractions. There is no classic equal to it,—no historian like Moses, no poet like Job or Isaiah, no singer like David, no orator like Paul, no character like Jesus, and no revelation of God or nature like that which these venerable pages give. Not without reason has Sir Thomas Browne said, "Were it of man, I could not choose but say it was the singularest and superlative piece that hath been extant since the creation. Were I a pagan, I should not refrain the lecture of it, and can not but commend the judgment of Ptolemy, that thought not his library complete without it."

V. The testimonies of the Lord are wonderful in their influences and effects.

The Bible has been, for three thousand years, one of the greatest potencies on earth. It has been, and is to this moment, a greater power than Rome, or Greece, or Babylon ever was. Though it has not conquered the world, it has advanced further towards it than Alexander ever did. It has done more to govern and renew the human heart than all the laws enacted by legislators, and all the maxims devised by uninspired sages, and all the lessons, apart from itself, that were ever given to the[55] race. It is the chief stay of a society which for a thousand years has been the most widespread, the most important, and the most powerful association on the earth. It has controlled the religious opinions of a large part of mankind for nearly forty centuries. It has molded characters and directed the efforts of men whose lives and labors introduced new eras and shaped the destinies of nations and turned the course of the world's entire history. It has begotten and fostered the purest virtue, the sublimest manhood, the noblest beneficence, the sincerest charity, the tenderest kindness, and all the blessed saintship, that have ever been upon earth.

Its vast influence upon the welfare of nations may be estimated in part from the bloody codes, and infamous administrations, and social degradations, and far-reaching wretchedness, of those countries where it is rejected or unknown, contrasted with the blessedness and peace of those who have received it. It was the great Milton who said, "There are no politics like those which the Scriptures teach"; and in proof we need only look at Judea when it knew no laws but those which this book contains. How smooth and steady were the wheels of public justice, and how beautiful was the flow of national peace, in those golden days of the old Hebrew commonwealth! How did the joyous vines, and fields of waving ears, and gold of Ophir, and[56] flocks and cattle abiding on a thousand hills, and cities full of peace and plenty, proclaim abroad the wealth and blessedness of that goodly land! How did the voice of singing and the fragrance of virtue linger round each habitation, and the sacrifices of praise crowd all the temple's courts from tribes rejoicing in the smiles of God!

In the sphere of learning and thought-creations, also, the influence of the Bible is equally marked and wonderful. It is to the world of letters what the sun is to the solar system, the fountain of the purest light and brightest wisdom. It has produced more books than any other one thing in existence. It has fostered learning when there was no other stimulation to its cultivation felt. Even the heathen classics owe their preservation to it. As a book written in other times, places, and languages, it has called forth the most laboriously compiled lexicons, grammars, and works on archeology by which the world of the present communes with the world of the past. As a book claiming the faith and obedience of men, it has created a world of learned apology, comment, and exposition, and some of the noblest specimens of argument, eloquence, and appeal which are known to man. And, simply as a book among books, it has wrought wondrously upon the thoughts and productions of authors of all classes. The Visions of Dante are largely drawn from it.[57] Every canto of the Faerie Queene bears the impress of its influence. Milton's matchless songs of Paradise are from an inspiration which the Bible alone could give. From the same source came the immortal dream of Bunyan, the Pauline reasonings of Barrow, the flaming zeal of Richard Baxter, the "molten wealth" and "lava of gold and gems" which poured down "the russet steep of Puritan theology," the songs of Cowper, and "Thoughts" of Young, and visions of Pollok, and mighty eloquence of the Luthers, the Knoxes, the Massillons, the Whitefields, and the Halls. Addison, and Thomson, and Burke, and Dryden, and Wordsworth, and Coleridge, and Southey, and Campbell, and Goethe, all are vastly indebted to the Scriptures for whatever excellences are found in their works. Shakespeare drew largely from this same precious mine, and also even Hobbes, and Shelley, and Byron. That prince of modern orators, Daniel Webster, once said, "If there be anything in my style or thoughts to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents in instilling into my mind an early love of the Scriptures." Indeed, if we were to destroy the Bible, and take from the world of literature and thought all that it has contributed directly or indirectly, half the history of the race would be swept out of mind, the noblest ideas that have swelled man's heart would be gone, some of the proudest[58] monuments of human genius would be buried in oblivion, and thick darkness would settle down upon the world forever.

VI. The testimonies of the Lord are wonderful as a fountain of consolation, hope and salvation.

The Bible to all its other excellences adds this, that it is the Book of Life. It is not only a basket of silver network, but it contains apples of gold. It is the record of glad tidings to a perishing world, a message of joy to all people. In it, Wisdom hath mingled her wine, and slain her fatlings, and furnished her table, and calls all the hungry and needy to come and partake. The entrance of its words giveth light and imparteth understanding to the simple, and maketh wise unto salvation. It is a balm from Gilead for the sick, oil for the bruises of the wounded, reprieve for the prison-bound, and bread for them that are ready to perish. Its different books are but so many angels of mercy, carrying contentment into the abodes of poverty, enabling even the children of want to lift up their eyes to God who ordereth all things well, and to eat their scanty meals in peace; staying the hearts of the persecuted and opprest, causing them to rejoice and sing under the yoke, at the stake, and in the hottest of the fires, as on their passage-way to crowns immortal in the world to come; calming the minds of the fevered, mollifying where all earthly[59] medicines fail, and kindling glad hopes of recompense yet to be revealed; lighting up comforts in the breasts of those that mourn for their dead, and assuring them of blessed reunions in a better life; and kindling even the dying eye and inspiring the dying heart with thoughts of speedy triumph, causing lips already closed for death to open once more in utterances of victory.

We may talk of the venerable age of the Bible, and its scientific accuracy, and its literary beauty and sublimity, and its wonderful influences upon the ideas, laws, governments, and general order of society and mankind; but it is all nothing in comparison with the spiritual good and immortal hopes and consolations which it begets in those who receive it as a message from their God. Are we voyagers upon a troubled and a dangerous sea? Here is a chart by which to steer in safety to the happy shores. Are we soldiers, beset with foes and required to endure the shocks of battle? This is an armory from which all needed weapons may be drawn at will, and by the right use of which we may hew our way to immortal triumph. Are we pilgrims and strangers, worn and weary in our search for the home from which we are exiles? In this book gush out the pure, fresh waters of life, the cooling shades from the Rock of salvation appear, and the guiding word is heard from pilgrims in advance, to[60] cheer and encourage us till we reach the mansion of our Father. Indeed, it is beyond the power of language to express the excellency and richness of spiritual treasure which we have in this holy Book. It is the miraculous cruse of the Shunamitess which never exhausts. It is the wand of Moses which swallows the serpents of life, and parts the sea of trouble, and brings forth waters in the thirsty wilderness. It is the ladder of Jacob on which our spirits ascend to commune with God and angels. It is the telescope of faith by which we look on things invisible, survey even the third heavens, and have present to our view what is to be in after-ages. It is the chariot of Elijah in which to ride up the starry way to immortality unhurt of death. It is the channel of the almighty Spirit as it goes forth for the sanctification of the race,—the very gulf-stream of eternal life as it pours out for the resuscitation of our wilted and decaying world.

Allusion has been made to the dreadful eclipse it would be to the world of letters and thought, for the Bible, and what it has done for man, to be blotted out. But that were nothing to the moral and spiritual night that would go along with such a calamity. Besides carrying away with it a vast proportion of the intellectual and moral life of the last eighteen centuries, it would silence every preacher of salvation, and abolish at once his[61] office and his text. It would stop every work of mercy and plan of philanthropy in the world.

It would transmute into a lie all our fond anticipations of the return of Jesus to renew the world, restore our dead, complete our salvation, and bring us to an eternal heaven. It would hush forever the glad tidings with which men have comforted themselves for these many weary ages. It would put out the mother's hopes of her dead babes, quench the wife's fond desires for her husband's everlasting peace, destroy the widow's consolation as she lingers by the grave of her buried love, and extinguish the matron's last comfort as she trembles on the verge of eternity.

It would take with it all the reliefs and blessedness which prayer in the name of Jesus gives, and leave the sinner without pardon in the extremities of life. It would take away the last appeal of the slave against his oppressor, remove the last check of tyranny, and lift from the wicked hearts of men the last restraints, giving carnival to every lust and play to every passion, without correction, without limit, and without end!

We stagger, and are horrified, at the mere idea of the loss that would be inflicted. Chills run down our pulses at the contemplation of the despair and wretchedness which would ensue.

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Let us, then, learn to value the possession of such a precious book. Let us bind it to our hearts as our chief treasure in this sin-darkened world. And, whilst we admire its beauty and revere its mysteries, let us abide by its precepts, and, as far as in us lies, practise its sacred mandates.

**÷**07-04 MACLAREN

THE PATTERN OF SERVICE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Alexander Maclaren was born in 1826, educated at Glasgow University, for twelve years preached at Southampton, and afterwards for many years in Manchester. Besides an impressive face and figure he brought to the pulpit a ripe scholarship, an almost perfect English style, and an uncommonly vigorous personality. The keynote of his life and character is disclosed in his own words, uttered in Manchester:

"I have been so convinced that I was best serving all the varied social, economical, and political interests that are dear to me by preaching what I conceived to be the gospel of Jesus Christ, that I have limited myself to that work. I am sure, with a growing conviction day by day, that so we Christian ministers best serve our generation. My work, whatever yours may be, is, and has been for thirty-eight years, and I hope will be for a little while longer yet, to preach Jesus Christ as the King of England and the Lord of all our communities, and the Savior and friend of the individual soul."

[65]

MACLAREN

Born in 1826

THE PATTERN OF SERVICE[2]

He touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, He sighed, and saith, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.—Mar 7:33-34.

For what reason was there this unwonted slowness in Christ's healing works? For what reason was there this unusual emotion ere He spoke the word which cleansed?

As to the former question, a partial answer may perhaps be that our Lord is here on half-heathen ground, where aids to faith were much needed, and His power had to be veiled that it might be beheld. Hence the miracle is a process rather than an act; and, advancing as it does by distinct stages, is conformed in appearance to men's works of mercy, which have to adapt means to ends, and creep to their goal by persevering toil. As to the latter, we know not why the sight of this one poor sufferer should have struck so strongly on the ever-tremulous chords of Christ's pitying heart; but we do know that it was the vision[66] brought before His spirit by this single instance of the world's griefs and sicknesses, in which mass, however, the special case before Him was by no means lost, that raised His eyes to heaven in mute appeal, and forced the groan from His breast.

The missionary spirit is but one aspect of the Christian spirit. We shall only strengthen the former as we invigorate the latter. Harm has been done, both to ourselves and to this great cause, by seeking to stimulate compassion and efforts for heathen lands by the use of other excitements, which have tended to vitiate even the emotions they have aroused, and are apt to fail us when we need them most. It may therefore be profitable if we turn to Christ's own manner of working, and His own emotions in His merciful deeds, set forth in this remarkable narrative, as containing lessons for us in our missionary and evangelistic work. I must necessarily omit more than a passing reference to the slow process of healing which this miracle exhibits. But that, too, has its teaching for us, who are so often tempted to think ourselves badly used, unless the fruit of our toil grows up, like Jonah's gourd, before our eyes. If our Lord was content to reach His end of blessing step by step, we may well accept patient continuance in well-doing as the condition indispensable to reaping in due season.

But there are other thoughts still more[67] needful which suggest themselves. Those minute details which this evangelist ever delights to give of our Lord's gestures, words, looks, and emotions, not only add graphic force to the narrative, but are precious glimpses of the very heart of Christ. That fixed gaze into heaven, that groan which neither the glories seen above nor the conscious power to heal could stifle, that most gentle touch, as if removing material obstacles from the deaf ears, and moistening the stiff tongue that it might move more freely in the parched mouth, that word of authority which could not be wanting even when His working seemed likest a servant's, do surely carry large lessons for us. The condition of all service, the cost of feeling at which our work must be done, the need that the helpers should identify themselves with the sufferers, and the victorious power of Christ's word over all deaf ears—these are the thoughts which I desire to connect with our text, and to commend to your meditation to-day.

We have here set forth the foundation and condition of all true work for God in the Lord's heavenward look.

The profound questions which are involved in the fact that, as man, Christ held communion with God in the exercise of faith and aspiration, the same in kind as ours, do not concern us here. I speak to those who believe that Jesus is for us the perfect example of[68] complete manhood, and who therefore believe that He is "the leader of faith," the head of the long procession of those who in every age have trusted in God and been lightened. But, perhaps, tho that conviction holds its place in our creeds, it has not been as completely incorporated with our thoughts as it should have been. There has, no doubt, been a tendency, operating in much of our evangelical teaching, and in the common stream of orthodox opinion, to except, half unconsciously, the exercises of the religious life from the sphere of Christ's example, and we need to be reminded that Scripture presents His vow, "I will put my trust in Him," as the crowning proof of His brotherhood, and that the prints of His kneeling limbs have left their impressions where we kneel before the throne. True, the relation of the Son to the Father involves more than communion—namely, unity. But if we follow the teaching of the Bible, we shall not presume that the latter excludes the former, but understand that the unity is the foundation of perfect communion, and the communion the manifestation, so far as it can be manifested, of the unspeakable unity. The solemn words which shine like stars—starlike in that their height above us shrinks their magnitude and dims their brightness, and in that they are points of radiance partially disclosing, and separated by, abysses of unlighted infinitude—tell us that in the order of eternity,[69] before creatures were, there was communion, for "the Word was with God," and there was unity, for "the Word was God." And in the records of the life manifested on earth the consciousness of unity loftily utters itself in the unfathomable declaration, "I and my Father are one"; whilst the consciousness of communion, dependent like ours on harmony of will and true obedience, breathes peacefully in the witness which He leaves to Himself: "The Father has not left me alone for I do always the things that please him."

We are fully warranted in supposing that that wistful gaze to heaven means, and may be taken to symbolize, our Lord's conscious direction of thought and spirit to God as He wrought His work of mercy. There are two distinctions to be noted between His communion with God and ours before we can apply the lesson to ourselves. His heavenward look was not the renewal of interrupted fellowship, but rather, as a man standing firmly on firm rock may yet lift his foot to plant it again where it was before, and settle himself in his attitude before he strikes with all his might; so we may say Christ fixes Himself where He always stood, and grasps anew the hand that He always held, before He does the deed of power. The communion that had never been broken was renewed; how much more the need that in our work for God the renewal of the—alas! too sadly sundered—fellowship should[70] ever precede and always accompany our efforts! And again, Christ's fellowship was with the Father. Ours must be with the Father through the Son. The communion to which we are called is with Jesus Christ, in whom we find God.

The manner of that intercourse, and the various discipline of ourselves with a view to its perfecting, which Christian prudence prescribes, need not concern us here. As for the latter, let us not forget that a wholesome and wide-reaching self-denial cannot be dispensed with. Hands that are full of gilded toys and glass beads cannot grasp durable riches, and eyes that have been accustomed to glaring lights see only darkness when they look up to the violet heaven with all its stars. As to the former, every part of our nature above the simply animal is capable of God, and the communion ought to include our whole being.

Christ is truth for the understanding, authority for the will, love for the heart, certainty for the hope, fruition for all the desires, and for the conscience at once cleansing and law. Fellowship with Him is no indolent passiveness, nor the luxurious exercise of certain emotions, but the contact of the whole nature with its sole adequate object and rightful Lord.

Such intercourse, brethren, lies at the foundation of all work for God. It is the condition of all our power. It is the measure of all[71] our success. Without it we may seem to realize the externals of prosperity, but it will be all illusion. With it we may perchance seem to spend our strength for naught; but heaven has its surprizes; and those who toiled, nor left their hold of their Lord in all their work, will have to say at last with wonder, as they see the results of their poor efforts, "Who hath begotten me these? behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?"

Consider in few words the manifold ways in which the indispensable prerequisite of all right effort for Christ may be shown to be communion with Christ.

The heavenward look is the renewal of our own vision of the calm verities in which we trust, the recourse for ourselves to the realities which we desire that others should see. And what is equal in persuasive power to the simple utterance of your own intense conviction? He only will infuse his own religion into other minds, whose religion is not a set of hard dogmas, but is fused by the heat of personal experience into a river of living fire. It will flow then, not otherwise. The only claim which the hearts of men will listen to, in those who would win them to spiritual beliefs, is that ancient one: "That which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, declare we unto you." Mightier than all arguments, than all "proofs of the truth of the Christian religion," and penetrating[72] into a sphere deeper than that of the understanding, is the simple proclamation, "We have found the Messias." If we would give sight to the blind, we must ourselves be gazing into heaven. Only when we testify of that which we see, as one might who, standing in a beleaguered city, discerned on the horizon the filmy dust-cloud through which the spear-heads of the deliverers flashed at intervals, shall we win any to gaze with us till they too behold and know themselves set free.

Christ has set us the example. Let our prayers ascend as His did, and in our measure the answers which came to Him will not fail us. For us, too, "praying, the heavens" shall be "opened," and the peace-bringing spirit fall dove-like on our meek hearts. For us, too, when the shadow of our cross lies black and gaunt upon our paths, and our souls are troubled, communion with heaven will bring the assurance, audible to our ears at least, that God will glorify Himself even in us. If, after many a weary day, we seek to hold fellowship with God as He sought it on the Mount of Olives, or among the solitudes of the midnight hills, or out in the morning freshness of the silent wilderness, like Him we shall have men gathering around us to hear us speak when we come forth from the secret place of the Most High. If our prayer, like His, goes before our mighty deeds, the voice that first pierced the skies will penetrate[73] the tomb, and make the dead stir in their grave-clothes. If our longing, trustful look is turned to the heavens, we shall not speak in vain on earth when we say, "Be opened."

Brethren, we cannot do without the communion which our Master needed. Do we delight in what strengthened Him? Does our work rest upon the basis of inward fellowship with God which underlay His? Alas! that our pattern should be our rebuke, and the readiest way to force home our faults on our consciences should be the contemplation of the life which we say that we try to copy!

We have here pity for the evils we would remove set forth by the Lord's sigh.

What was it that drew that sigh from the heart of Jesus? One poor man stood before Him, by no means the most sorely afflicted of the many wretched ones whom He healed. But He saw in him more than a solitary instance of physical infirmities. Did there not roll darkly before His thoughts that whole weltering sea of sorrow that moans round the world, of which here is but one drop that He could dry up? Did there not rise black and solid against the clear blue, to which He had been looking, the mass of man's sin, of which these bodily infirmities were but a poor symbol as well as a consequence? He saw as none but He could bear to see, the miserable realities of human life. His knowledge of all that man might be, of all that the most of men[74] were becoming, His power of contemplating in one awful aggregate the entire sum of sorrows and sins, laid upon His heart a burden which none but He has ever endured. His communion with Heaven deepened the dark shadow on earth, and the eyes that looked up to God and saw Him could not but see foulness where others suspected none, and murderous messengers of hell walking in darkness unpenetrated by mortal sight. And all that pain of clearer knowledge of the sorrowfulness of sorrow, and the sinfulness of sin, was laid upon a heart in which was no selfishness to blunt the sharp edge of the pain nor any sin to stagnate the pity that flowed from the wound. To Jesus Christ, life was a daily martyrdom before death had "made the sacrifice complete," and He bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows through many a weary hour before He "bare them in his own body on the tree." Therefore, "Bear ye one another's burden, and so fulfil the law" which Christ obeyed, becomes a command for all who would draw men to Him. And true sorrow, a sharp and real sense of pain, becomes indispensable as preparation for, and accompaniment to, our work.

Mark how in us, as in our Lord, the sigh of compassion is connected with the look to heaven. It follows upon that gaze. The evils are more real, more terrible, by their startling contrast with the unshadowed light which[75] lives above cloudracks and mists. It is a sharp shock to turn from the free sweep of the heavens, starry and radiant, to the sights that meet us in "this dim spot which men call earth." Thus habitual communion with God is the root of the truest and purest compassion. It does not withdraw us from our fellow feeling with our brethren, it cultivates no isolation for undisturbed beholding of God. It at once supplies a standard by which to measure the greatness of man's godlessness, and therefore of his gloom, and a motive for laying the pain of these upon our hearts, as if they were our own. He has looked into the heavens to little purpose who has not learned how bad and how sad the world now is, and how God bends over it in pitying love.

And that same fellowship, which will clear our eyes and soften our hearts, is also the one consolation which we have when our sense of all the ills that flesh is heir to becomes deep, near to despair. When one thinks of the real facts of human life, and tries to conceive of the frightful meanness and passion and hate and wretchedness, that has been howling and shrieking and gibbering and groaning through dreary millenniums, one's brain reels, and hope seems to be absurdity, and joy a sin against our fellows, as a feast would be in a house next door to where was a funeral. I do not wonder at settled sorrow falling upon men of vivid imagination, keen moral sense,[76] and ordinary sensitiveness, when they brood long on the world as it is. But I do wonder at the superficial optimism which goes on with its little prophecies about human progress, and its rose-colored pictures of human life, and sees nothing to strike it dumb for ever in men's writhing miseries, blank failures, and hopeless end. Ah! brethren, if it were not for the heavenward look, how could we bear the sight of earth! "We see not yet all things put under him." No, God knows, far enough off from that. Man's folly, man's submission to the creatures he should rule, man's agonies, and man's transgression, are a grim contrast to the psalmist's vision. If we had only earth to look to, despair of the race, exprest in settled melancholy apathy, or in fierce cynicism, were the wisest attitude. But there is more within our view than earth; "we see Jesus"; we look to the heaven, and as we behold the true man, we see more than ever, indeed, how far from that pattern we all are; but we can bear the thought of what men as yet have been, when we see that perfect example of what men shall be. The root and the consolation of our sorrow for man's evils is communion with God.

We have here loving contact with those whom we would help, set forth in the Lord's touch.

The reasons for the variety observable in Christ's method of communicating supernatural[77] blessing were, probably, too closely connected with unrecorded differences in the spiritual conditions of the recipients to be distinctly traceable by us. But tho we cannot tell why a particular method was employed in a given case, why now a word, and now a symbolic action, now the touch of His hand, and now the hem of His garment, appeared to be the vehicles of His power, we can discern the significance of these divers ways, and learn great lessons from them all.

His touch was sometimes obviously the result of what one may venture to call instinctive tenderness, as when He lifted the little children in His arms and laid His hands upon their heads. It was, I suppose, always the spontaneous expression of love and compassion, even when it was something more.

The touch of His hand on the ghastly glossiness of the leper's skin was, no doubt, His assertion of priestly functions, and of elevation above all laws of defilement; but what was it to the poor outcast, who for years had never felt the warm contact of flesh and blood? It always indicated that He Himself was the source of healing and life. It always exprest His identification of Himself with sorrow and sickness. So that it is in principle analogous to, and may be taken as illustrative of, that transcendent act whereby He became flesh, and dwelt among us. Indeed, the very word by which our Lord's taking the blind[78] man by the hand is described in the chapter following our text is that employed in the Epistle to the Hebrews when, dealing with the true brotherhood of Jesus, the writer says, "He took not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold." Christ's touch is His willing contact with man's infirmities and sins, that He may strengthen and hallow.

And the lesson is one of universal application. Wherever men would help their fellows, this is a prime requisite, that the would-be helper should come down to the level of those whom he desires to aid. If we wish to teach, we must stoop to think the scholar's thoughts. The master who has forgotten his boyhood will have poor success. If we would lead to purer emotions, we must try to enter into the lower feelings which we labor to elevate. It is of no use to stand at the mouth of the alleys we wish to cleanse, with our skirts daintily gathered about us, and smelling-bottle in hand, to preach homilies on the virtue of cleanliness. We must go in among the filth, and handle it, if we want to have it cleared away. The degraded must feel that we do not shrink from them, or we shall do them no good. The leper, shunned by all, and ashamed of himself because everybody loathes him, hungers in his hovel for the grasp of a hand that does not care for defilement, if it can bring cleansing. Even in regard to common material helps the principle holds good. We are[79] too apt to cast our doles to the poor like the bones to a dog, and then to wonder at what we are pleased to think men's ingratitude. A benefit may be so conferred as to hurt more than a blow; and we cannot be surprized if so-called charity which is given with contempt and a sense of superiority, should be received with a scowl, and chafe a man's spirit like a fetter. Such gifts bless neither him who gives nor him who takes. We must put our hearts into them, if we would win hearts by them. We must be ready, like our Master, to take blind beggars by the hand, if we would bless or help them. The despair and opprobrium of our modern civilization, the gulf growing wider and deeper between Dives and Lazarus, between Belgravia and Whitechapel, the mournful failure of legalized help, and of delegated efforts to bridge it over, the darkening ignorance, the animal sensuousness, the utter heathenism that lives in every town of England, within a stone's throw of Christian houses, and near enough to hear the sound of public worship, will yield to nothing but that sadly forgotten law which enjoins personal contact with the sinful and the suffering, as one chief condition of raising them from the black mire in which they welter.

The effect of much well-meant Christian effort is simply to irritate. People are very quick to catch delicate intonations which reveal a secret sense, "how much better, wiser,[80] more devout I am than these people!" and wherever a trace of that appears in our work, the good of it is apt to be marred. We all know how hackneyed the charge of spiritual pride and Pharisaic self-complacency is, and, thank God, how unjust it often is. But averse as men may be to the truths which humble, and willing as they may be to assume that the very effort to present these to others on our parts implies a claim which mortifies, we may at least learn from the threadbare calumny, what strikes men about our position, and what rouses their antaganism to us. It is allowable to be taught by our enemies, especially when it is such a lesson as this, that we must carefully divest our evangelistic work of apparent pretensions to superiority, and take our stand by the side of those to whom we speak. We cannot lecture men into the love of Christ. We can but win them to it by showing Christ's love to them; and not the least important element in that process is the exhibition of our own love. We have a gospel to speak of which the very heart is, that the Son of God stooped to become one with the lowliest and most sinful; and how can that gospel be spoken with power unless we, too, stoop like Him?

We have to echo the invitation, "Learn of me, for I am lowly in heart"; and how can such divine words flow from lips into which like grace has not been poured? Our theme[81] is a Savior who shrunk from no sinner, who gladly consorted with publicans and harlots, who laid His hand on pollution, and His heart, full of God and of love, on hearts reeking with sin; and how can our message correspond with our theme if, even in delivering it, we are saying to ourselves, "The temple of the Lord are we: this people which knoweth not the law is curst"? Let us beware of the very real danger which besets us in this matter, and earnestly seek to make ourselves one with those whom we would gather into Christ, by actual familiarity with their condition, and by identification of ourselves in feeling with them, after the example of that greatest of Christian teachers who became "all things to all men, that by all means he might gain some"; after the higher example, which Paul followed, of that dear Lord who, being highest, descended to the lowest, and in the days of His humiliation was not content with speaking words of power from afar, nor abhorred the contact of mortality and disease and loathsome corruption; but laid His hands upon death, and it lived; upon sickness, and it was whole; on rotting leprosy, and it was sweet as the flesh of a little child.

The same principle might be further applied to our Christian work, as affecting the form in which we should present the truth. The sympathetic identification of ourselves with those to whom we try to carry the gospel[82] will certainly make us wise to know how to shape our message. Seeing with their eyes, we shall be able to graduate the light. Thinking their thoughts, and having in some measure succeeded, by force of sheer community of feeling, in having as it were got inside their minds, we shall unconsciously, and without effort, be led to such aspects of Christ's all-comprehensive truth as they most need. There will be no shooting over people's heads, if we love them well enough to understand them. There will be no toothless generalities, when our interest in men keeps their actual condition and temptations clear before us. There will be no flinging fossil doctrines at them from a height, as if Christ's blest gospel were, in another than the literal sense, "a stone of offense," if we have taken our place on their level. And without such sympathy, these and a thousand other weaknesses and faults will certainly vitiate much of our Christian effort.

We have here the true healing power and the consciousness of wielding it set forth in the Lord's authoritative word.

All the rest of His action was either the spontaneous expression of His true participation in human sorrow, or a merciful veiling of His glory that sense-bound eyes might see it the better. But the word was the utterance of His will, and that was omnipotent. The hand laid on the sick, the blind or the deaf was not even the channel of His power. The[83] bare putting forth of His energy was all-sufficient. In these we see the loving, pitying man. In this blazes forth, yet more loving, yet more compassionate, the effulgence of manifest God. Therefore so often do we read the very syllables with which His "voice then shook the earth," vibrating through all the framework of the material universe. Therefore do the gospels bid us listen when He rebukes the fever, and it departs; when He says to the demons, "Go," and they go; when one word louder in its human articulation than the howling wind hushes the surges; when "Talitha cumi" brings back the fair young spirit from dreary wanderings among the shades of death. Therefore was it a height of faith not found in Israel when the Gentile soldier, whose training had taught him the power of absolute authority, as heathenism had driven him to long for a man who would speak with the imperial sway of a god, recognized in His voice an all-commanding power. From of old, the very signature of divinity has been declared to be "He spake, and it was done"; and He, the breath of whose lips could set in motion material changes, is that eternal Word, by whom all things were made.

What unlimited consciousness of sovereign dominion sounds in that imperative from His autocratic lips! It is spoken in deaf ears, but He knows that it will be heard. He speaks as the fontal source, not as the recipient channel[84] of healing. He anticipates no delay, no resistance. There is neither effort nor uncertainty in the curt command. He is sure that He has power, and He is sure that the power is His own.

There is no analogy here between us and Him. Alone, fronting the whole race of man, He stands—utterer of a word which none can say after Him, possessor of unshared might, and of His fulness do we all receive. But even from that divine authority and solitary sovereign consciousness we may gather lessons not altogether aside from the purpose of our meeting here to-day. Of His fulness we have received, and the power of the word on His lips may teach us that of His word, even on ours, as the victorious certainty with which He spake His will of healing may remind us of the confidence with which it becomes us to proclaim His name.

His will was almighty then. Is it less mighty or less loving now? Does it not gather all the world in the sweep of its mighty purpose of mercy? His voice pierced then into the dull cold ear of death, and has it become weaker since? His word spoken by Him was enough to banish the foul spirits that run riot, swine-like, in the garden of God in man's soul, trampling down and eating up its flowers and fruitage; is the word spoken of Him less potent to cast them out? Were not all the mighty deeds which He wrought by the breath[85] of His lips on men's bodies prophecies of the yet mightier which His Will of love, and the utterance of that Will by stammering lips, may work on men's souls. Let us not in our faint-heartedness number up our failures, the deaf that will not hear, the dumb that will not speak, His praise; nor unbelievingly say Christ's own word was mighty, but the word concerning Christ is weak on our lips. Not so; our lips are unclean, and our words are weak, but His word—the utterance of His loving will that men should be saved—is what it always was and always will be. We have it, brethren, to proclaim. Did our Master countenance the faithless contrast between the living force of His word when He dwelt on earth, and the feebleness of it as He speaks through His servant? If He did, what did He mean when He said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father"?

**÷**07-05 CROSBY

THE PREPARED WORM

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Howard Crosby, Presbyterian divine, was born in New York City in 1826, educated at New York University, graduating in 1851, was professor of Greek at that institution until 1859, when he was elected to the same chair in Rutgers College. He was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of New Brunswick, N. J., for the two years ending in 1863, when he assumed charge of the Fourth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York. From 1870 to 1881 he was chancellor of the University of New York. His activities in the cause of social reform were conspicuous and he exercized his influence in organizing the Society for the Prevention of Crime over which he presided for some years. His energies were also directed against the illegal liquor trade. As a scholar he was prominent among the American revisers of the New Testament and edited a new edition of the "Oedipus Tyrannus" of Sophocles. He died in 1891.

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CROSBY

1826-1891

THE PREPARED WORM[3]

But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered.—Jon 4:7.

Just when Jonah had felt the delight of the shadowing foliage and had begun to promise himself a most comfortable retreat against an Assyrian sun, the broad-leaved gourd withered. The morning had arrived and the heat was becoming more intense, when the glad shelter was removed, and the prophet's head was smitten with the scorching rays. "It is better for me to die than live," exclaimed the fainting Jonah. And what caused this calamity? A worm. And is that all? No! God prepared the worm. The worm was under orders from heaven, and while he, doubtless, ate into the gourd, with a good appetite, following the bent of his natural constitution, nevertheless he was acting in direct obedience to God. God prepared the worm. And yet in the sixth verse we read that God prepared the gourd. This is the record. "And the Lord God prepared a gourd and made it to come up over[90] Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceedingly glad of the gourd." And then follows immediately: "But God prepared a worm, when the morning rose the next day, and he smote the gourd that it withered." Does God, then, build up in order to destroy? And does He give comfort to His creatures in order to torment them by its removal? So reasons the carnal heart, ready to complain, and looking on all God's conduct in its superficial aspect, its own selfish and sensuous advantage being the criterion of all its judgments. It is an easy counsel of Satan, when we are fainting by a withered gourd. "Curse God and die," the selfish soul is all ripe for such advice,—desperation is more inviting than faith. And there are but few Jobs who can resist the appeal to discontent and anger, in the face of Satan and wife combined, for when the natural depravity of our own hearts is supported by the entreaties of our nearest and dearest friends, hell's heaviest engine is brought against us. "I do well to be angry, even unto death," is the usual style in which we greet the afflictive providence of God. But a faith like Job's, that learns the lesson which the sorrow teaches, is rewarded, as was Job's, by the presence and communion of God, and by a satisfaction with His holy and righteous will.

Let us endeavor to understand some of the[91] facts connected with our afflictions, as disclosed by the Word of God, in order that we may be prepared to follow Job rather than Jonah.

I. In the first place, God is the author of affliction. "Affliction cometh not forth out of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground." God asserts most positively in His Word, that all the losses in the world are sent by Him. He calls them chastisements from His fatherly hand. "I make peace and create evil," saith the Lord. This is not evil in the sense of wickedness. God does not create wickedness—but it is evil in the sense of affliction and trouble, the opposite of peace in the contrasted clause, "I make peace and create evil." That is, God is the author equally of prosperity and adversity to His creatures. If it were not so, we should have to imagine certain powers in God's universe not subject to His almighty control, which would be an absurdity. "Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?" It is in this sense of God's hand in adversity that the psalmist cries, "Thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us as silver is tried; thou broughtest us into the net, thou laidest affliction upon our loins"; and again, "Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves." God may send affliction by permitting Satan to afflict, but still God is the author of the affliction.[92] He could prevent it, but He permits it. Indeed, it is, perhaps, true that all our losses and injuries in this world are Satan's inflictions, that this ever-active spirit of evil is constantly using the agencies of the natural world for our harm and destruction, and we are preserved simply by the interposing and restraining providence of God. When Satan wished to afflict Job, he sought and gained permission of the Lord. Job's calamities were clearly Satan's blows, and yet Job addresses God, "Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?" So, again, the diseased woman, who heard our Savior's healing words on the Sabbath day and was cured, is described by the same divine Physician (whose diagnosis cannot be questioned) as one whom Satan had bound for eighteen years. Under such examples, I cannot believe we err in attributing all our sicknesses and pains of body to the permitted agency of our arch-adversary.

They are tokens of his power over our race, for he is the prince of this world, and it is only in God that we find protection from his cruel scepter. God suffers us to feel his inflictions in order to remove our affections from the world and to place them more devotedly upon our Heavenly Father. God is thus most truly the author of affliction, whatever may be the agencies He uses in the course of His providence.

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II. He uses the natural laws of the world as His agents in afflicting. These laws may be thus used permissively by Satan in other ways than in sickness or not, but the text shows us clearly that God so uses them. "God prepared a worm." There is a world of instruction in that brief statement. It infinitely transcends the science of the naturalist. Bring the most learned explorers of nature together to this gourd of Jonah, and show them this little worm creeping toward the thick stalk. Let them see it move its many feet and flexible body till it reaches the goal of its instinct. Now it uses its gnawing jaws upon the woody fibre; deeper and deeper it pierces the stem; now it reaches the innermost pith, and again returns upon its course. The current of the gourd's life is marred; the leaves droop, and its shelter is gone. Now, ye scientific men, what made that gourd wither? Hear them philosophize. Yon worm is a caterpillar, whose appropriate food is the ricinus communis, this very gourd with its palmate leaves and red-tinted flower. The worm has merely followed the impulses of its nature in seeking that tree-like plant, and the equally natural result of its feeding upon the stalk has been the failure of the tree's nourishment, and with the failure the foliage has, of course, withered. Well, is that all science can say? Yes, all. It is little more than that a horse is a horse. It explains nothing but the most proximate[94] causes. It classifies facts, and then leaves us gaping into the abyss of causation as ignorant as ever. Four words from the Bible carry us back to the ultimate cause, the first mover in this gourd's withering. Science talks of laws, but these four words go behind all laws to the Maker of laws, to Him in whose hands are all things. "God prepared a worm." What! says science; drag God in to explain anything? Nay, God drags all in to effect His plans. He has made all things, however great, however small, for Himself. And these things which you call laws are only the methods of His activity, and these methods He has formed for the very ends which He accomplishes by them. The worm which crawls to Jonah's gourd was created by God to destroy that plant, and the law of that worm's movement was ordained for that destruction, as well as for all else which it accomplishes. The mind is satisfied when it finds a mind, a purpose, a plan in every event which it observes, and the pious heart is rejoiced to know that it is a Father's mind and purpose and plan which directs every movement, even to the crawling of a worm. "God prepared a gourd—God prepared a worm"; no accident brought the gourd there; no accident brought the worm there. God stood in a like relation to both. He sent the gourd, through nature, to comfort Jonah. He sent the worm, through nature, to trouble Jonah. Nature is a forlorn object[95] to study unless we find it a mirror to reflect God. It is only as we see it, the result of His handiwork and His instrument in governing His creatures, that nature has a glory. Then it is ennobled; then it has a meaning that no mere naturalist can fathom, but which renders valuable the researches of science with its classifications.

III. God is just in afflicting us. If we look at God simply as the Maker and Owner of His creatures, we could easily deduce His right to afflict. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" says the Creator; and he must be a daring soul who disputes the force of this question. "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, 'Why hast thou made me thus?'" But we are not left to this view of God's right to afflict. God has entered into covenant with us. He has said, "Do ye according to my commandments, and ye shall live." This was the purport of His very first communication to our race in Adam. It treated of obedience and reward, of disobedience and punishment. And what is the record of our race since? Have we obeyed or have we disobeyed? Is there the slightest claim in us for the reward? Is there not the most complete demand for the punishment? What sin in the whole catalog of sin has been omitted by man? Enmity to man and God, pride, ingratitude, and rebellion have marked the history of mankind.[96] And are you and I exceptions? Look at our years of worldliness, years of sinful affections, years of opposition to the Word and Spirit, years of selfishness, and then let us confess our full participation in the general depravity. We are unclean in our natures and by practise, and so, under the covenant which our Maker was pleased to form for us, we can only deserve punishment.

Do we then complain in affliction? Surely, if God would be just in casting us down to hell for our rebellion and disobedience, He is just in laying upon us our earthly afflictions. Shall the Jonah, who ran away from the Lord's commandment, and afterward flung His anger in the face of His God, shall such an one feel that God is unjust in preparing a worm to destroy his gourd? By what arithmetic is such a balance cast? It becomes us, rather, to take up the words of David and cry, "I acknowledge my transgression; and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."

IV. God afflicts us in His love. With all Jonah's sins against God, it was not to punish him that God prepared a worm. God is long-suffering and withholds punishment in His desire that all men may come to repentance. If punishment were God's aim in affliction,[97] our afflictions would be infinitely greater than they are, for punishment would be apportioned to desert, and our desert is eternal condemnation; God's aim in affliction is our restoration, our improvement. By it He shakes us off from our dependence upon a world which, however it might please us for the moment, would cheat us sadly in the end. By it He reminds us of Himself as our source of strength and happiness, and then brings us to the unfailing fountain of peace, which our earthly prosperity would hide from our eyes. By it He teaches us to aspire to higher spiritual attainment, to grow in grace, to cultivate a more heavenly disposition of mind and heart.

These are the uses of adversity. Christians who have come through scenes of trial, and whose thankful declaration is, "It was good for me to be afflicted," certify to these blest results. They tell us that they believe nothing else but the severe losses they sustained could have freed them from the fascinations of the world—nothing else could have made holy things so delightful to their soul. Now, such an experience is not the result of God's anger but of God's love. However harsh the voice of God may seem to us, it is yet a Father's voice, with a Father's heart behind it. It is, therefore, meant not to drive us away to seek a hiding corner, but to bring us directly to Himself. The same love which[98] sent the affliction will receive the afflicted. God prepares gourds, and God prepares worms; and He uses each to build up faith and holiness in the human heart. In earnest seeking after God, in complete consecration to His holy will and service, is to be found the surest avoidance of the worm. If we can learn our lesson without the worm, the worm will not be sent to gnaw our gourd to ruins. The nearer our life to Jesus the more free shall we be from the sting of affliction. Had Jonah been an obedient and submissive prophet his gourd would not have withered. But alas! Jonah and ourselves need correction to keep our faces heavenward. Forgetfulness and indulgence plant their weeds in our Lord's garden, and they must be rooted up by force. It is for our own good, and it is infinite love which decrees it.

Now note some inferences from the subject under consideration.

First. If God afflicts, how foolish it is to go to the world for relief? Is the world greater than God? We may be sure that any comfort the world can give, as against God's affliction, must be dangerous. It is a contest with God, which God may allow to be successful, but only for the greater condemnation thereafter. The world's relief is not a cure but an opiate. It stupefies, but does not give health and strength. The world's relief is a temporary application—a[99] lull before a fiercer storm. The world's relief is a determination not to heed the lesson God sends us; it is the invention of frivolity, and not the device of wisdom. More slumber, more pleasure, and more worldly care are three favorite medicaments the world uses in these cases—anodynes which only weaken the system and prepare it for more fearful suffering. God wishes to awaken the mind by affliction, and man immediately prescribes a narcotic. The great Physician brings the affliction for our good; we turn to quackery to destroy the effects of the divine medicine. Ah! the day is coming when God shall appear as no longer our Savior but our Judge, if this be our treatment of His love. "Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind."

Secondly. If God prepares worms, then worms at once form an interesting study for us. We cannot see a caterpillar upon the leaf, but we know God has a mission for that worm. He is an ambassador of the Most High on his way to perform his Master's will. The headache, which unfits us for our ordinary occupation, is more than a headache. It is the voice of our God. Let us listen to the next[100] headache and hear what God would have us learn. Every bird and beast, every raindrop and sunbeam, every breath of wind, and every event, however small, are the writings of a heavenly scribe. Let us study God's providence. It is all a message of love to us. We shall find out infinitely more in this study than in deciphering the hieroglyphics of Egypt. We shall find correction, expostulation, comfort, encouragement and instruction; and the more we look, the more we shall see. We shall become adepts in the high art of interpreting the acts of God toward us, and in this, as in prayer, hold constant communion with our divine Redeemer.

Thirdly. When our gourds wither it is a proof that God is near. We should be ready to say with Jacob, "Surely the Lord is in this place." Prayer and humiliation are now our appropriate exercises. God has put forth His hand to summon us to these duties. Our gourd is gone, but our God is not gone, He can protect far better than a gourd. He will more than make up all our losses. Let us go to Him, and our dark night will make the day-dawn more brilliant. My dying fellow-sinner, do not, I beseech you, grow angry under God's severe dispensations. You do not well to be angry. God is near you with a blessing in His hand for you. He has a lesson for you to learn which will make you wise unto salvation.

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Say, will you learn it? If not, God is near you to condemn you. Oh! dread the alternative, and be wise to say in your heart, "Blest be my God and Father, who prepared the worm to destroy my broad-leaved gourd!"

**÷**07-06 DALE

THE ARGUMENT FROM EXPERIENCE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Robert William Dale was born in London, England, in 1829 and died in 1895. His long and fruitful ministry was confined to Birmingham, where he preached with great power. He believed, as he once said, that if a minister had anything from God to say to his fellow men, they would gladly come to hear him. He favored extemporaneous preaching, was a devoted student of English style, and advocated in his Yale lectures a more thorough attention to this important subject. He said:

"There is no reason why, when you have at your service the noblest language for an orator that was ever spoken by the human race, you should be satisfied with the threadbare phrases, the tawdry, tarnished finery, the patched and ragged garments, with the smell like that of the stock of a second-hand clothes shop, with which half-educated and ambitious declaimers are content to cover the nakedness of their thought. You can do something better than this, and you should resolve to do it."

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DALE

1829-1895

THE ARGUMENT FROM EXPERIENCE[4]

There are large numbers of people who suppose that modern science and modern criticism have destroyed the foundations of faith, and who can not understand how it is possible, in these days, for intelligent, open-minded, educated men to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are many persons who are convinced that the ascertained conclusions of modern science and of modern criticism are destructive of the authority which has been attributed both to the Jewish and the Christian Scriptures, that the traditional opinions concerning the authorship and the dates of many of the books of the Old Testament are false; and that most of the writings contained in the New Testament are spurious. Or, if some of the extreme conclusions of the destructive criticism are not regarded as finally established, it is known that great names can be quoted for, as well as against, them. And as it is assumed that the Jewish and the Christian Scriptures are the foundations of Christian[106] faith, that we must believe in the genuineness and historical trustworthiness of these ancient books, and even in their inspiration, before we can believe in Christ, they argue that, until these discussions are finally closed in favor of the traditional opinions, faith in Christ is impossible. The controversies have not, in any large number of cases, destroyed faith where faith already existed; but where faith does not exist, they appear to very many persons to create an insuperable obstacle to faith.

To such persons, if they are serious and well informed, there is something perplexing in the persistency of the faith of the great majority of Christian believers. Among those who remain Christian there are men whose intellectual vigor, patience, and keenness are equal to their own; men who are their equals in general intellectual culture, and who know as much as they know about the currents of modern thought; candid men; men who are incorruptible in their loyalty to truth; men who have a due sense of the immense importance, in relation to the higher life of the human race, of the questions at issue:

How is it that the faith in Christ of such men is unshaken?

The substance of the answer that I make here to the question, why it is that those who believe in Christ continue to believe, may be given in a single sentence: Whatever may[107] have been the original grounds of their faith, their faith has been verified in their own personal experience.

They have trusted in Christ for certain great and wonderful things, and they have received great and wonderful things. They have not perhaps received precisely what they expected when their Christian life began, for the kingdom of heaven cannot be really known until a man has entered into it; but what they have received assures them that Christ is alive, that He is within reach, and that He is the Savior and Lord of men.

That they have received these blessings in answer to their faith in Christ is a matter of personal consciousness. They know it, as they know that fire burns.

Their experience varies. Some of them would say they can recall acts of Christ in which His personal volition and His supernatural power were as definitely manifested as in any of the miracles recorded in the four Gospels. They were struggling unsuccessfully with some evil temper—with envy, jealousy, personal ambition—and could not subdue it. They hated it; they hated themselves for being under its tyranny; but expel it they could not. If it seemed supprest for a time, it returned; and returned with its malignant power increased rather than diminished. They scourged themselves with scorpions for yielding to it; still they yielded. In[108] their despair they appealed to Christ; and in a moment the evil fires were quenched, and they were never rekindled. These instantaneous deliverances are perhaps exceptional; but to those who can recall them they carry an irresistible conviction that the living Christ has heard their cry and answered them.

The more ordinary experiences of the Christian life, tho less striking, are not less conclusive. The proof that Christ has heard prayer is not always concentrated into a moment, but is more commonly spread over large tracts of time. Prayer is offered for an increase of moral strength in resisting temptation, or for the disappearance of reluctance in the discharge of duties which are distasteful, or for a more gracious and kindly temper, or for patience and courage in bearing trouble, or for self-control, or for relief from exhausting and fruitless anxiety; and the answer comes. It comes gradually, but still it comes. We had lost hope. It seemed as if all our moral vigor was dying down, and as if nothing could restore it. The tide was slowly ebbing, and we were powerless to recall the retreating waters; but after we prayed it ceased to ebb; for a time it seemed stationary; then it began to flow; and tho with many of us it has never reached the flood, the wholesome waters have renewed the energy and the joy of life.

Or we prayed to Christ to liberate us from[109] some evil habit. The chains did not fall away at His touch, like the chains of Peter at the touch of the angel; but in some mysterious way they were loosened, and at the same time we received accessions of strength. The old habit continued to trouble us; it still impeded our movements: but we could move; we recovered some measure of freedom, and were conscious that we were slaves no longer. There still remained a mechanical and automatic tendency to the evil ways of thinking, speaking, or acting; but we had become vigilant and alert, and were prompt to resist the tendency as soon as it began to work; and we were strong enough to master it. In the course of time the tendency became weaker and weaker, and at last, in some cases, it almost disappeared.

Some men have appealed to Christ when they have been seized with a great horror through the discovery of their guilt. It was not the awful penalty which menaces the impenitent that haunted and terrified them. Nor was their distress occasioned chiefly by the consciousness of moral evil. They feared the penalty, and they were humiliated and shamed by the contrast between ideal goodness and their own moral and spiritual life; but what stung and tortured them, sunk them into despair, filled heaven and earth with a darkness that could be felt, and made life intolerable, was their guilt—guilt which they[110] had incurred by their past sins, and which they continued to incur by their present sinfulness.

When once this sense of guilt fastens itself on a man, he cannot shake it off at will. The keen agony may gradually pass into a dull, dead pain; and after a time, the sensibility of the soul may seem to be wholly lost; but a man can never be sure that the horror will not return.

The real nature of this experience is best seen when it has been occasioned by the grosser and more violent forms of crime. Men who have committed murder, for example, have been driven almost insane by the memory of their evil deed. Their agony may have had nothing in it of the nature of repentance; they were not distrest because their crime had revealed to them the malignity and the fierce strength of their passions; they had no desire to become gentle and kindly. They were filled with horror and remorse by their awful guilt. They felt that the crime was theirs, and would always continue to be theirs; that it would be theirs if it remained concealed as truly as if it were known; indeed, it seemed to be in some terrible way more truly theirs so long as the secret was kept. It was not the fear of punishment that convulsed them; they have sometimes brought on themselves public indignation and abhorrence, and have condemned themselves to the gallows by confessing[111] their crime in order to obtain relief from their agony.

Suppose that a man possest by this great horror discovered that, in some wonderful way, the dark and damning stain on his conscience had disappeared; that, altho he had done the deed, the iron chain which bound him to the criminality of it had been broken; that before God and man and his own conscience he was free from the guilt of it;—the supposition, in its completeness, is an impossible one; but if it were possible, the discovery would lift the man out of the darkness of hell into the light of heaven.

But to large numbers of Christian men a discovery which in substance is identical with this has actually come in response to their trust in Christ. Nothing is more intensely real than the sense of guilt; it is as real as the eternal distinction between right and wrong in which it is rooted. And nothing is more intensely real than the sense of release from guilt which comes from the discovery and assurance of the remission of sins. The evil things which a man has done cannot be undone; but when they have been forgiven through Christ, the iron chain which so bound him to them as to make the guilt of them eternally his has been broken; before God and his own conscience he is no longer guilty of them. This is the Christian mystery of justification, which, according to Paul—and his[112] words have been confirmed in the experience of millions of Christian men—is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." It changes darkness into light; despair into victorious hope; prostration into buoyancy and vigor. It is one of the supreme motives to Christian living, and it makes Christian living possible. The man who has received this great deliverance is no longer a convict, painfully observing all prison rules with the hope of shortening his sentence, but a child in the home of God.

There are experiences of another kind by which the faith of Christian men is verified. Of these one of the most decisive and most wonderful is the consciousness that through Christ he has passed into the eternal and divine order. He belongs to two worlds. He is just as certain that he is environed by things unseen and eternal as that he is environed by things seen and temporal. In the power of the life given to him in the new birth he has entered into the kingdom of God. He is conscious that that diviner region is now the native land of his soul. It is there that he finds perfect rest and perfect freedom. It is a relief to escape to its eternal peace and glory from the agitations and vicissitudes, the sorrows and successes, of this transitory world. It is not always that he is vividly conscious of belonging to that eternal order; this supreme blessedness is reserved for the great[113] hours of life; but he knows that it lies about him always, and that at any moment the great Apocalypse may come. And even when it is hidden, its "powers" continue to act upon him, as the light and heat of the sun pass through the clouds by which the burning splendor is softened and concealed.

Further, "in Christ" Christian men know God; they know Him for themselves. The mere conception of God is as different from the immediate knowledge of Him as the mere conception of the Matterhorn from the actual vision of it as an external objective grandeur; and it is not the conception of God, but God Himself, that fills them with awe and wonder, and with a blessedness which trembles into devout fear. Sometimes the "exceeding weight of glory" is too great to bear, and human infirmity is relieved when the vision passes. At other times God is more than a transcendent glory to be contemplated and adored. His infinite love, to use Paul's words, is shed abroad in their hearts, like the sun's heat under tropical heavens; it is immediately revealed. How, they can not tell, any more than they can tell how the material world is revealed to sense; they only know that, apart from any self-originated effort, apart from any movement of their own towards Him, the eternal Spirit draws near to their spirit and reveals God's love to them. It is as if the warm streams of the love which have their[114] fountains in the depths of His infinite life were flowing round them and into them. They are conscious of that love for them of which God is conscious.

And this blessedness is not the prerogative of elect saints, or of those who may be said to have a natural genius for spiritual thought. It is the common inheritance of all that are "in Christ," altho there is reason to fear that many Christian people rarely reach the height of its joy. But among those who reach it are men of every degree of intellectual rank and every variety of moral and spiritual temperament. It is reached by ignorant men, whose thoughts are narrow and whose minds are inert, as well as by men with large knowledge and great powers of speculation; by men destitute of imagination, as well as by men whose imagination kindles as soon as it is touched by the splendors of nature or by the verses of poets. Men whose life moves slowly and sluggishly reach it, as well as men who are impulsive, ardent, and adventurous. And where this experience is known, it becomes an effective force in the moral life. Peter, writing to slaves, says, "For this is acceptable, if through consciousness of God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully."

I have said that "in Christ" men know God—not merely through Christ. It is true that during His earthly ministry He revealed God; so that, in answer to the prayer of one[115] of His disciples, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," He said, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." That revelation has eternal power and value; but there are other words spoken by Christ that same night which suggest that it is not merely by the revelation of God during His earthly ministry that Christ has made it possible for men to know the Father. He said: "I am the true vine, and ye are the branches.... Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing." It is not certain that when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Galatian Christians he had heard of these words; but what they meant he had learnt for himself. He said, "I live: and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." In various measures the experience of Paul has been the experience of Christian men ever since. Their relationship to Christ—their conscious relationship to Christ—has been most mysterious, but most intimate and most certain. They have meditated on the infinite love which moved Him to descend from the heights of God and to become man, upon His graciousness and gentleness, His purity, His spontaneous goodness, His pity for suffering,[116] His merciful words to the sinful, His patience and His long-suffering, and His fiery indignation against hypocrisy; they have meditated on His teaching, on all the words of His that have been preserved concerning the love and grace of God, concerning the remission of sins, the gift of eternal life, the judgment to come, the eternal blessedness of the righteous, and the doom of the lost; they have felt the spell and the charm of that ideal perfection to which He calls them in His precepts, and which He illustrated and transcended in His own character: but they have been conscious that it was not merely by the power of the great and pathetic story of His earthly history, or by the power of His spiritual and ethical teaching, that He gives to men the life of God, and constantly renews, sustains, and augments it. They shared the very life of their Lord. He lived in them. They lived in Him. And it was in the power of this common life that they knew God.

Nor is it only the immediate knowledge of God that is rendered possible by this union with Christ. Christian men are conscious that they do not receive strength from Christ for common duty, as they might receive strength from One who, while He conferred the grace, stood apart from them, but that in some wonderful way they are strong in the strength of Christ Himself. They are too often drawn down into the region of baser forces, and then[117] they fall; but their very failure verifies the truth of their happier experiences, for it brings home to them afresh what they are apart from Christ; and when they recover their union with Him—which indeed had not been lost, tho for a time it was not realized—they recover their power.

The man who has had, and who still has, such experiences as these will listen with great tranquillity to criticisms which are intended to shake the historical credit of the four Gospels, altho the story they contain may have been the original ground of his faith in Christ. The criticism may be vigorous; he may be wholly unable to answer it: but what then? Is he to cease to believe in Christ? Why should he?

Let me answer these questions by an illustration. Towards the close of our Lord's ministry, when He was in the neighborhood of Jericho—just leaving the city or just entering it—Bartimeus, a blind man, who was begging at the side of the road, heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, and He appealed to the great Prophet to have mercy upon him. Jesus answered his appeal, and gave him sight. Now it is possible that Bartimeus may have been told by some passing traveler, of whom he knew nothing, the story of a similar miracle which Jesus had worked a few weeks before in Jerusalem, and this may have been the ground, and the only ground, of his confidence[118] in our Lord's supernatural power. If, after he had received his sight, some sagacious friend of his had asked him how it was that he came to believe that the Nazarene Teacher could give sight to the blind, nothing would have been easier than for his friend to show that, whether the story of the Jerusalem miracle was true or not, Bartimeus had no trustworthy evidence of its truth. A tale told by an unknown stranger! This was no sufficient reason for believing that Jesus had given sight to a man born blind. Did the stranger who told the tale know the beggar who was said to have been cured? Was it certain that the man was blind? Had the stranger examined his eyes the very morning of the day on which he received sight? Was it certain that the vision was not gradually returning? Was the stranger present when Jesus made the clay, and put it on the blind man's eyes; close enough to see that no delicate operation was performed during the process? The sending of the blind man to wash at the Pool of Siloam was suspicious: what could that washing have to do with a miracle? Did the stranger go with the man to the pool, and keep his eye upon him while he was there? Was it quite certain that the blind beggar who was sent to Siloam was the man who came back to the city and declared that Jesus had healed him? Might not one man have been sent to the pool, and another man have come[119] back to Jerusalem? It looked very much as if there were some previous understanding between the blind man and the Nazarene Prophet. The Prophet had rich friends; they could have made it worth the man's while to come into the plot. Had Bartimeus considered all these difficulties? Was it not more probable that the stranger's story should be false than that the miracle should be true? Would it not be well for Bartimeus to suspend his faith in Jesus until he had made further inquiries about the miracle?

We can imagine the answer of Bartimeus. I think that he would have said: "At first I believed in the power of Jesus of Nazareth, because I was told that He had given sight to another blind man; now I am sure of His power, because He has given sight to me. It is possible, as you say, that the story about the blind man in Jerusalem is not true. You have asked me many questions which I can not answer. I can not explain why he should have been sent to the Pool of Siloam. I acknowledge that the evidence which I have for the miracle is not decisive. As Jesus has restored my sight, I think that the story is probably true; but whether the story is true or not can not disturb my faith in Him, for if He did not heal the other man, He has healed me."

And so the faith in the living Christ of those who have had the great experiences of[120] His power and grace which I have described is not shaken by any assaults on the historical trustworthiness of the story of His earthly ministry. Much less can it be shaken by discussions concerning the nature and origin of the ancient Scriptures of the Jewish people. Their confidence in the books, both of the Old Testament and the New, may perhaps have to be suspended until the controversies of scholars are closed, or until, on historical and critical grounds, they can see their own way to firm and definite conclusions about the main questions at issue; but not their confidence in Christ. They may be uncertain about the books; they are sure about Him. Both Christian scholars and the commonalty of Christian people approach the controversies on these ancient records with a settled faith in the power and grace and glory of Christ. Their faith in Him rests on foundations which lie far beyond the reach of scientific and historical criticism. They know for themselves that Christ is the Savior of men: for they have received through Him the remission of their own sins; He has translated them into the divine kingdom; He has given them strength for righteousness, and through Him they have found God.

**÷**07-07 LIDDON

INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Henry Parry Liddon was born at North Stoneham, Hampshire, in 1829. His intellectual power and fearless and earnest preaching attracted immense congregations to St. Paul's Cathedral, London. He sought to meet the speculative fallacies of his day by truth clearly and boldly proclaimed. Probably his greatest fault in delivery was that he tied himself slavishly to a manuscript in all his preaching. There was a force and intensity to his delivery, however, that often projected his words towards his hearers like great projectiles across a battlefield. Dr. Arthur S. Hoyt recommends him for study in these words: "Canon Liddon brings the riches of exegesis and theology and philosophy to the pulpit, and gives to the sermon the distinction of his refined and spiritual personality." He died in 1890.

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LIDDON

1829-1890

INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.—Joh 3:8.

Who has not felt the contrast, the almost tragic contrast, between the high station of the Jewish doctor, member of the Sanhedrin, master in Israel, and the ignorance of elementary religious truth, as we Christians must deem it, which he displayed in this interview with our blest Lord? At first sight it seems difficult to understand how our Lord could have used the simile in the text when conversing with an educated and thoughtful man, well conversed in the history and literature of God's ancient people; and, indeed, a negative criticism has availed itself of this and of some other features in the narrative, in the interest of the theory that Nicodemus was only a fictitious type of the higher classes in Jewish society, as they were pictured to itself by the imagination of the fourth Evangelist. Such a supposition, opposed to external facts and to all internal probabilities, would hardly have been entertained, if the critical ingenuity of its author[124] had been seconded by any spiritual experience. Nicodemus is very far from being a caricature; and our Lord's method here, as elsewhere, is to lead on from familiar phrases and the well-remembered letter to the spirit and realities of religion. The Jewish schools were acquainted with the expression "a new creature"; but it had long since become a mere shred of official rhetoric. As applied to a Jewish proselyte, it scarcely meant more than a change in the outward relations of religious life. Our Lord told Nicodemus that every man who would see the kingdom of God which He was founding must undergo a second birth; and Nicodemus, who had been accustomed to the phrase all his life, could not understand it if it was to be supposed to mean anything real. "How," he asks, "can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Our Lord does not extricate him from this blundering literalism; He repeats His own original assertion, but in terms which more fully express His meaning: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God. Anathema maranatha. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." Our Lord's reference to water would not have been unintelligible to Nicodemus; every one in[125] Judæa knew that the Baptist had insisted on immersion in water as a symbol of the purification of the soul of man. Certainly, in connecting "water" with the Spirit and the new birth, our Lord's language, glancing at that of the prophet, went very far beyond this. He could only be fully understood at a later time, when the sacrament of baptism had been instituted, just as the true sense of His early allusions to His death could not have been apprehended until after the crucifixion. But Nicodemus, it is plain, had not yet advanced beyond his original difficulty; he could not conceive how any second birth was possible, without altogether violating the course of nature. And our Lord penetrates His thoughts and answers them. He answers them by pointing to that invisible agent who could achieve, in the sphere of spiritual and mental life, what the Jewish doctor deemed so impossible a feat as a second birth. Nature, indeed, contained no force that could compass such a result; but nature in this, as in other matters, was a shadow of something beyond itself.

It was late at night when our Lord had this interview with the Jewish teacher. At the pauses in conversation, we may conjecture, they heard the wind without as it moaned along the narrow streets of Jerusalem; and our Lord, as was His wont, took His creature into His service—the service of spiritual[126] truth. The wind was a figure of the Spirit. Our Lord would not have used the same word for both. The wind might teach Nicodemus something of the action of Him who is the real Author of the new birth of man. And it would do this in two ways more especially.

On a first survey of nature, the wind arrests man's attention, as an unseen agent which seems to be moving with entire freedom. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." It is fettered by none of those conditions which confine the swiftest bodies that traverse the surface of the earth; it sweeps on as if independent of law, rushing hither and thither, as tho obeying its own wayward and momentary impulse. Thus it is an apt figure of a self-determining invisible force; and of a force which is at times of overmastering power. Sometimes, indeed, its breath is so gentle, that only a single leaf or blade of grass will at distant intervals seem to give the faintest token of its action; yet, even thus, it "bloweth where it listeth." Sometimes it bursts upon the earth with destructive violence; nothing can resist its onslaught; the most solid buildings give way; the stoutest trees bend before it; whatever is frail and delicate can only escape by the completeness of its submission. Thus, too, it "bloweth where it listeth." Beyond anything else that strikes upon the senses of man, it is suggestive of free supersensuous power; it is an appropriate symbol[127] of an irruption of the invisible into the world of sense, of the action, so tender or so imperious, of the divine and eternal Spirit upon the human soul.

But the wind is also an agent about whose proceedings we really know almost nothing. "Thou hearest the sound thereof"; such is our Lord's concession to man's claim to knowledge. "Thou canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth"; such is the reserve which He makes in respect of human ignorance. Certainly we do more than hear the sound of the wind; its presence is obvious to three of the senses. We feel the chill or the fury of the blast; and, as it sweeps across the ocean, or the forest, or the field of corn, we see how the blades rise and fall in graceful curves, and the trees bend, and the waters sink and swell into waves which are the measure of its strength. But our Lord says, "Thou hearest the sound thereof." He would have us test it by the most spiritual of the senses. It whispers, or it moans, or it roars as it passes us; it has a pathos all its own. Yet what do we really know about it? "Thou canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." Does the wind then obey no rule; is it a mere symbol of unfettered caprice? Surely not. If, as the psalmist sings, "God bringeth the winds out of his treasuries," He acts, we may be sure, here as always, whether in nature or in grace, by some law,[128] which his own perfections impose upon His action. He may have given to us of these later times to see a very little deeper beneath the surface of the natural world than was the case with our fathers. Perchance we explain the immediate antecedents of the phenomenon; but can we explain our own explanation? The frontier of our ignorance is removed one stage farther back; but "the way of the wind" is as fitting an expression for the mysteries now as it was in the days of Solomon. We know that there is no cave of Æolus. We know that the wind is the creature of that great Master who works everywhere and incessantly by rule. But, as the wind still sweeps by us who call ourselves the children of an age of knowledge, and we endeavor to give our fullest answer to the question, "Whence it cometh, and whither it goeth?" we discover that, as the symbol of a spiritual force, of whose presence we are conscious, while we are unable to determine, with moderate confidence, either the secret principle or the range of its action, the wind is as full of meaning still as in the days of Nicodemus.

When our Lord has thus pointed to the freedom and the mysteriousness of the wind, He adds, "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." The simile itself would have led us to expect—"So is the Spirit of God." The man born of the Spirit would answer not to the wind itself, but to the sensible effect[129] of the wind. There is a break of correspondence between the simile and its application. The simile directs attention to the divine Author of the new birth in man. The words which follow direct attention to the human subject upon whom the divine agent works. Something similar is observable when our Lord compares the kingdom of heaven to a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; the kingdom really corresponds not to the merchantman, but to the pearl of great price which the merchantman buys. In such cases, we may be sure, the natural correspondence between a simile and its application is not disturbed without a motive. And the reason for this disturbance is presumably that the simile is not adequate to the full purpose of the speaker, who is anxious to teach some larger truth than its obvious application would suggest. In the case before us, we may be allowed to suppose, that by His reference to the wind our Lord desired to convey something more than the real but mysterious agency of the Holy Spirit in the new birth of man. His language seems designed, not merely to correct the materialistic narrowness of the Jewish doctor, not merely to answer by anticipation the doubts of later days as to the spiritual efficacy of His own sacrament of regeneration, but to picture, in words which should be read to the end of time, the general work of that divine person whose mission of[130] mercy to our race was at once the consequence and the completion of His own.

It may be useful to trace the import of our Lord's simile in three fields of the action of the holy and eternal Spirit; His creation of a sacred literature, His guidance of a divine society, and His work upon individual souls.

I. As, then, we turn over the pages of the Bible, must we not say, "The wind of heaven bloweth where it listeth"? If we might reverently imagine ourselves scheming beforehand what kind of a book the Book of God ought to be, how different would it be from the actual Bible. There would be as many bibles as there are souls, and they would differ as widely. But in one thing, amid all their differences, they would probably agree; they would lack the variety, both in form and substance, of the holy Book which the Church of God places in the hands of her children. The self-assertion, the scepticism, and the fastidiousness of our day would meet like the men of the second Roman triumvirate on that island in the Reno, and would draw up their lists of proscription. One would condemn the poetry of Scripture as too inexact; another its history as too largely secular; another its metaphysics as too transcendental, or as hostile to some fanciful ideal of "simplicity," or as likely to quench a purely moral enthusiasm. The archaic history of the Pentateuch, or the sterner side of the ethics of the psalter, or the[131] supernaturalism of the histories of Elijah or of Daniel, or the so-called pessimism of Ecclesiastes, or the alleged secularism of Esther, or the literal import of the Song of Solomon, would be in turn condemned. Nor could the apostles hope to escape: St. John would be too mystical in this estimate; St. James too legal in that; St. Paul too dialectical, or too metaphysical, or too easily capable of an antinomian interpretation; St. Peter too undecided, as if balancing between St. Paul and St. James. Our new Bible would probably be uniform, narrow, symmetrical; it would be entirely made up of poetry, or of history, or of formal propositions, or of philosophical speculation, or of lists of moral maxims; it would be modeled after the type of some current writer on English history, or some popular poet or metaphysician, or some sentimentalist who abjures history and philosophy alike on principle, or some composer of well-intentioned religious tracts for general circulation. The inspirations of heaven would be taken in hand, and instead of a wind blowing where it listeth, we should have a wind, no doubt, of some kind, rustling earnestly enough along some very narrow crevices or channels, in obedience to the directions of some one form of human prejudice, or passion, or fear, or hope.

The Bible is like nature in its immense, its exhaustless variety; like nature, it reflects all[132] the higher moods of the human soul, because it does much more; because it brings us face to face with the infinity of the divine life. In the Bible the wind of heaven pays scant heed to our anticipations or our prejudices; it "bloweth where it listeth." It breathes not only in the divine charities of the gospels, not only in the lyrical sallies of the epistles, not only in the great announcements scattered here and there in Holy Scripture of the magnificence, or the compassion, or the benevolence of God; but also in the stern language of the prophets, in the warnings and lessons of the historical books, in the revelations of divine justice and of human responsibility which abound in either Testament. "Where it listeth." Not only where our sense of literary beauty is stimulated, as in St. Paul's picture of charity, by lines which have taken captive the imagination of the world, not only where feeling and conscience echo the verdict of authority and the promptings of reverence, but also where this is not the case; where neither precept nor example stimulates us, and we are left face to face with historical or ethical material, which appears to us to inspire no spiritual enthusiasm, or which is highly suggestive of critical difficulty. Let us be patient; we shall understand, if we will only wait, how these features of the Bible too are integral parts of a living whole; here, as elsewhere, the Spirit breathes; in the genealogies of the[133] Chronicles as in the last discourse in St. John, though with an admitted difference of manner and degree. He "bloweth where He listeth." The apostle's words respecting the Old Testament are true of the New: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." And, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

"But thou hearest the sound thereof, and canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." The majesty of Scripture is recognized by man, wherever there is, I will not say a spiritual faculty, but a natural sense of beauty. The "sound" of the wind is perceived by the trained ear, by the literary taste, by the refinement, by the humanity of every generation of educated men. But what beyond? What of its spiritual source, its spiritual drift and purpose, its half-concealed but profound unities, its subtle but imperious relations to conscience? Of these things, so precious to Christians, a purely literary appreciation of Scripture is generally ignorant; the sacred Book, like the prophet of the Chebar, is only "as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument." Or again, the "sound thereof" is heard in the admitted empire of[134] the Bible over millions of hearts and consciences; an empire the evidences of which strike upon the ear in countless ways, and which is far too wide and too secure to be affected by the criticisms that might occasionally seem to threaten it. What is the secret of this influence of Scripture? Not simply that it is the Book of Revelation; since it contains a great deal of matter which lay fairly within the reach of man's natural faculties. The Word or eternal Reason of God is the Revealer; but Scripture, whether it is a record of divine revelations or of naturally observed facts, is, in the belief of the Christian Church, throughout "inspired" by the Spirit. Inspiration is the word which describes the presence and action of the Holy Spirit everywhere in Scripture. We know not how our own spirits, hour by hour, are acted upon by the eternal Spirit, though we do not question the fact; we content ourselves with recognizing what we can not explain. If we believe that Scripture is inspired, we know that it is instinct with the presence of Him whose voice we might hear in every utterance, but of whom we cannot tell whence He cometh or whither He goeth.

II. The history of the Church of Christ from the days of the apostles has been a history of spiritual movements. Doubtless it has been a history of much else; the Church has been the scene of human passions, human[135] speculations, human errors. But traversing these, He by whom the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified, has made His presence felt, not only in the perpetual proclamation and elucidation of truth, not only in the silent, never-ceasing sanctification of souls, but also in great upheavals of spiritual life, by which the conscience of Christians has been quickened, or their hold upon the truths of redemption and grace made more intelligent and serious, or their lives and practise restored to something like the ideal of the Gospels. Even in the apostolic age it was necessary to warn Christians that it was high time to awake out of sleep; that the night of life was far spent, and the day of eternity was at hand. And ever since, from generation to generation, there has been a succession of efforts within the Church to realize more worthily the truth of the Christian creed, or the ideal of the Christian life. These revivals have been inspired or led by devoted men who have represented the highest conscience of Christendom in their day. They may be traced along the line of Christian history; the Spirit living in the Church has by them attested His presence and His will; and has recalled lukewarm generations, paralyzed by indifference or degraded by indulgence, to the true spirit and level of Christian faith and life.

In such movements there is often what[136] seems, at first sight, an element of caprice. They appear to contemporaries to be onesided, exaggerated, narrow, fanatical. They are often denounced with a passionate fervor which is so out of proportion to the reality as to border on the grotesque. They are said to exact too much of us, or to concede too much. They are too contemplative in their tendency to be sufficiently practical, or too energetically practical to do justice to religious thought. They are too exclusively literary and academical, as being the work of men of books; or they are too popular and insensible to philosophical considerations, as being the work of men of the people. Or, again, they are so occupied with controversy as to forget the claims of devotion, or so engaged in leading souls to a devout life as to forget the unwelcome but real necessities of controversy. They are intent on particular moral improvements so exclusively as to forget what is due to reverence and order; or they are so bent upon rescuing the Church from chronic slovenliness and indecency in public worship as to do less than justice to the paramount interests of moral truth. Sometimes these movements are all feeling; sometimes they are all thought; sometimes they are, as it seems, all outward energy. In one age they produce a literature like that of the fourth and fifth centuries; in another they found orders of men devoted to preaching or to works of[137] mercy, as in the twelfth; in another they enter the lists, as in the thirteenth century, with a hostile philosophy; in another they attempt a much-needed reformation of the Church; in another they pour upon the heathen world a flood of light and warmth from the heart of Christendom. It is easy, as we survey them, to say that something else was needed; or that what was done could have been done better or more completely; or that, had we been there, we should not have been guilty of this onesidedness, or of that exaggeration. We forget, perhaps, who really was there, and whose work it is, though often overlaid and thwarted by human weakness and human passion, that we are really criticizing. If it was seemingly onesided, excessive or defective, impulsive or sluggish, speculative or practical, esthetic or experimental, may not this have been so because in His judgment, who breatheth where He listeth, this particular characteristic was needed for the Church of that day? All that contemporaries know of such movements is "the sound thereof"; the names with which they are associated, the controversies which they precipitate, the hostilities which they rouse or allay, as the case may be. Such knowledge is superficial enough; of the profound spiritual causes which really engender them, of the direction in which they are really moving, of the influence which they are destined permanently[138] to exert upon souls, men know little or nothing. The accidental symptom is mistaken for the essential characteristic; the momentary expression of feeling for the inalienable conviction of certain truth. The day may come, perhaps, when more will be known; when practise and motive, accident and substance, the lasting and the transient, will be seen in their true relative proportions; but for the time this can hardly be. He is passing by, whose way is in the sea, and His paths in the deep waters, and His footsteps unknown. The Eternal Spirit is passing; and men can only say, "He bloweth where He listeth."

III. Our Lord's words apply especially to Christian character. There are some effects of the living power of the Holy Spirit which are invariable. When He dwells with a Christian soul, He continually speaks in the voice of conscience; He speaks in the voice of prayer. He produces with the ease of a natural process, without effort, without the taint of self-consciousness, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Some of these graces must be found where He makes His home. There is no mistaking the atmosphere of His presence: in its main features it is the same now as in the days of the apostles. Just as in natural morality the main elements of "goodness" do not change; so in religious life,[139] spirituality is, amid great varieties of detail, yet, in its leading constituent features, the same thing from one generation to another. But in the life of the individual Christian, or in that of the Church, there is legitimate room for irregular and exceptional forms of activity or excellence. Natural society is not strengthened by the stern repression of all that is peculiar in individual thought or practise; and this is not less true of spiritual or religious society. From the first, high forms of Christian excellence have often been associated with unconscious eccentricity. The eccentricity must be unconscious, because consciousness of eccentricity at once reduces it to a form of vanity which is entirely inconsistent with Christian excellence. How many excellent Christians have been eccentric, deviating more or less from the conventional type of goodness which has been recognized by contemporary religious opinion. They pass away, and when they are gone men do justice to their characters; but while they are still with us how hard do many of us find it to remember that there may be a higher reason for their peculiarities than we think. We know not the full purpose of each saintly life in the designs of Providence; we know not much of the depths and heights whence it draws its inspirations; we can not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. Only we know that He whose workmanship it is bloweth where He[140] listeth; and this naturally leads us to remark the practical interpretation which the Holy Spirit often puts upon our Lord's words by selecting as His chosen workmen those who seem to be least fitted by nature for such high service. The apostle has told us how in the first age He set Himself to defeat human anticipations. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called"; learned academies, powerful connections, gentle blood did little enough for the gospel in the days when it won its first and greatest victories. The Holy Spirit, as Nicodemus knew, passed by the varied learning and high station of the Sanhedrin, and breathed where He listed on the peasants of Galilee; He breathed on them a power which would shake the world. And thus has it been again and again in the generations which have followed. When the great Aquinas was a student of philosophy under Albertus Magnus at Cologne, he was known among his contemporaries as "the dumb Ox"; so little did they divine what was to be his place in the theology of Western Christendom. And to those of us who can look back upon the memories of this University for a quarter of a century or more, few things appear more remarkable than the surprizes which the later lives of men constantly afford; sometimes it is a failure of early natural promise, but more often a rich development of intellectual and[141] practical capacity where there had seemed to be no promise at all. We can remember, perhaps, some dull quiet man who seemed to be without a ray of genius, or, stranger still, without anything interesting or marked in character, but who now exerts, and most legitimately, the widest influence for good, and whose name is repeated by thousands with grateful respect. Or we can call to mind another whose whole mind was given to what was frivolous, or even degrading, and who now is a leader in everything that elevates and improves his fellows. The secret of these transfigurations is ever the same. In those days these men did not yet see their way; they were like travelers through the woods at night, when the sky is hidden and all things seem to be other than they are.

Since then the sun has risen and all has changed. The creed of the Church of Christ, in its beauty and its power, has been flashed by the Divine Spirit upon their hearts and understandings; and they are other men. They have seen that there is something worth living for in earnest; that God, the soul, the future, are immense realities, compared with which all else is tame and insignificant. They have learned something of that personal love of our crucified Lord, which is itself a moral and religious force of the highest order, and which has carried them forwards without their knowing it. And what has been will assuredly repeat itself.

**÷**07-08 W. M. TAYLOR

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE—PILATE BEFORE CHRIST

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Mackergo Taylor, Congregational divine, was born at Kilmarnock, Scotland, in 1829. He was for many years pastor of the Broadway Tabernacle, New York. He had an impressive presence and his delivery was marked by a magnetic earnestness. During the first ten years of his ministry he spoke memoriter, but subsequently wrote out his sermons with detailed care and preached them from manuscript, but their delivery was without the freedom and freshness of extemporaneous address. He came to regret this, for he said: "If I might speak from my own experience I would say, that memoriter preaching is the method which has the greatest advantages, with the fewest disadvantages." He died in 1895.

[145]

W. M. TAYLOR

1829-1895

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE—PILATE BEFORE CHRIST[5]

Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do, then, with Jesus, which is called Christ?—Mat 27:22.

During my late visit to my native land I had the great enjoyment of seeing, and somewhat carefully studying, Munkacsy's famous picture of "Christ Before Pilate." Rarely, if ever, had I been so much moved by a work of art; and I propose to give, as nearly as I can recall it, the sermon which it reached to me as I sat silently contemplating the figures, which, even as I looked at them, seemed to grow before me into life.

But, first, I must try to describe to you the picture itself. The canvas is large, and the figures, all of which are on the line of sight, are of life size. The scene is in the pavement or open court before the governor's palace, which was called in the Hebrew tongue Gabbatha, and in which, after all his efforts to[146] wriggle out of the responsibility of dealing with the case, Pilate ultimately gave up Jesus to be crucified. At one end of the court, on a raised bench, and drest in a white toga, Pilate sits. On either side of him are Jews, each of whom has a marked and special individuality. The two on his left are gazing with intense eagerness at Christ. They are evidently puzzled, and know not well what to make of the mysterious prisoner. On his right, standing on one of the seats, and with his back against the wall, is a Scribe, whose countenance is expressive of uttermost contempt, and just in front of this haughty fellow are some Pharisees, one of whom is on his feet, and passionately urging that Jesus should be put to death, presumably on the ground that, if Pilate should let Him go, he would make it evident that he was not Cæsar's friend. Before them again is a usurer, sleek, fat and self-satisfied, clearly taking great comfort to himself in the assurance that, however the matter may be settled, his well-filled money-bags will be undisturbed. Beyond him stands the Christ in a robe of seamless white, and with His wrists firmly bound; while behind, kept in place by a Roman soldier, standing with his back to the spectator, and making a barricade with his spear, which he holds horizontally, is a motley group of onlookers, not unlike that which we may still see any day in one of our criminal courts. Of these,[147] one more furious than the rest is wildly gesticulating, and crying, as we may judge from his whole attitude, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" and another, a little to the Savior's left, but in the second row behind Him, is leaning forward with mockery in his leering look, and making almost as if he would spit upon the saintly one. There is but one really compassionate face in the crowd, and that is a face of a woman who, with an infant in her arms, most fitly represents those gentle daughters of Jerusalem who followed Jesus to Calvary with tears. Then, over the heads of the on-lookers, and out of the upper part of the doorway into the court, we get a glimpse of the quiet light of the morning as it sleeps upon the walls and turrets of the adjacent buildings. All these figures are so distinctly seen that you feel you could recognize them again if you met them anywhere; and a strange sense of reality comes upon you as you look at them, so that you forget that they are only painted, and imagine that you are gazing on living and breathing men.

But, as you sit awhile and look on, you gradually lose all consciousness of the presence of the mere on-lookers and find your interest concentrated on these two white-robed ones, as if they were the only figures before you. The pose of Christ is admirable. It is repose blended with dignity; self-possession rising into majesty. There is no agitation or confusion;[148] no fear or misgiving; but, instead, the calm nobleness of Him who has just been saying, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." The face alone disappoints. Perhaps that may be owing to the lofty ideal we have of the divine Man, so that no picture of our Lord would entirely please. But tho the painter has wisely abandoned the halo, and all similar conventionalisms of art, and has delineated a real man, for all which he is to be highly commended, yet the eyes which look so steadily at Pilate, as if they were looking him through, seem to me to be cold, keen, and condemnatory, rather than compassionate and sad. It is a conception of the Lord of the same sort as that of Doré, in his well-known picture of the leaving of the Prætorium, and the eyes have not in them that deep well of tenderness out of which came the tears which He shed over Jerusalem, and which we expect to see in them when He is looking at the hopeless struggle of a soul which will not accept His aid. It is said that the artist, dissatisfied with his first attempt, has painted the Christ face twice; but this, also, is a partial failure, and here, so at least it seemed to me as I looked upon it, is the one defect in his noble work. But if there is this defect, it is one which it shares with every other effort that human art has made[149] to delineate the Lord. The Pilate, however, is well-nigh faultless. Here is a great, strong man, the representative of the mightiest empire the world has ever seen, with a head indicating intellectual force, and a face, especially in its lower part, suggestive of sensual indulgence. There is ordinarily no want of firmness in him, as we may see from the general set of his features; but now there is in his countenance a marvelous mixture of humiliation and irresolution. He cannot lift his eyes to meet the gaze of Christ; and while one of his hands is nervously clutching at his robe he is looking sadly into the other, whose fingers, even as we look at them, almost seem to twitch with perplexed irresolution. He is clearly pondering for himself the question which a few moments before he had addrest to the multitude, "What shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?" He is annoyed that the case has been brought to him at all, and as he feels himself drifting on, against his own better judgment, toward yielding to the clamor of the multitude, he falls mightily in his own conceit, and begins to despise himself. He would, at that moment, give, oh, how much! to be rid of the responsibility of dealing with the Christ, but he cannot evade it; and so he sits there, drifting on to what he knows is a wrong decision, the very incarnation of the feeling which his own national poet described when he said, "I[150] see and approve the better course; I follow the worse." Thus, as we look at these two, we begin to discover that it was not Christ that was before Pilate so much as Pilate was before Christ. His was the testing experience. His was the trial; his too, alas! was the degradation; and at that coming day when the places shall be reversed, when Christ shall be on the judgment seat, and Pilate at the bar, there will still be that deep self-condemnation which the painter here has fixt upon his countenance. It is a marvelous picture, in many respects the most remarkable I ever looked upon, and, even from this imperfect description of it, you will easily understand how, as I sat intent before it, it stirred my soul to the very depths.

But now, with this portrayal of the scene before us let us see if we can account, first, for the hesitation of Pilate to give up the Lord, and then for his final yielding to the clamor of the people. Why all this reluctance on his part to send Jesus to the cross? He was not usually so scrupulous. A human life more or less gave him generally very little concern. He had all a Roman's indifference for the comfort of those who stood in any respect in his way; and had no compunction, as we know, in mingling the blood of certain turbulent Jews with the very sacrifices which at the moment they were offering. Had Christ been a Roman citizen, indeed, he would[151] most likely have been very watchful over His safety, for in regard to all such the imperial law was peculiarly strict, but the life of a mere Jew was a very small thing in his estimation. Wherefore, then, this unwonted squeamishness of conscience? It was the result of a combination of particulars, each of which had a special force of its own, and the aggregate of which so wrought upon his mind that he was brought thereby to a stand.

There was, in the first place, the peculiar character of the prisoner. A very slight examination had been sufficient to convince him that Christ was innocent of the charge which had been brought against Him. But in the course of that examination much more than the innocence of Christ had come to view. He had manifested a dignified patience altogether unlike anything that Pilate had ever seen; and His answers to certain questions had been so strangely suggestive of something higher and nobler than even the most exalted earthly philosophy that he could not look upon Him as a common prisoner. He was no mere fanatic; neither was He after the pattern of any existing school, whether Jewish, Greek, or Roman. There was about Him an "other-worldliness" which brought those near Him into close proximity, for the time, with the unseen; and an elevation which lifted Him above the tumult that was howling for His destruction. Probably Pilate could not[152] have described it to himself, but there was something which he felt unusual and exceptional in this man, marking Him out from every other he ever had before him, and constraining him to take a special interest in His case. Add to this that his wife had sent to him that singular message—"Have thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him,"—a message which, in those days of mingled scepticism and superstition—for the two always go hand in hand—must have produced a deep impression on his mind. Moreover, there seemed some fatality about the case. He had tried to roll it over upon Herod, but that wily monarch sent the prisoner back upon his hands. He had attempted to release Him, as the Passover prisoner for the year, but neither was there any outlet for him in that, for the people had preferred Barabbas. And so the responsibility had come again to his own door, and could not be passed on to another. Still again, he saw that the Jews were acting most hypocritically in the matter. It was a new thing for them to be zealous for the honor of Cæsar, and he could easily see through the mask they wore into the envy and malice which were the motives for their conduct. The deeper he went into the case he discovered only the more reason for resisting their importunity, and, however, he looked at it, his plain duty was to set the prisoner free.

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Why then, again we ask, was his perplexity? The answer is suggested by the taunt of the Jews, "If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." He foresaw that if he resisted the will of the rulers he would make them his enemies, and so provoke them to complain of him to the emperor, who would then institute an inquiry into the administration of his office—and that he was not prepared to face. He had done things as a governor which would not bear the light, and so at the crisis of his life he was fettered by deeds of the past from doing that which he felt to be the duty of the present. You may, perhaps, remember that expression of the prophet, which thus reads in the margin: "Their doings will not suffer them to turn unto their God": and that other, which affirms, concerning Israel: "Their own doings have beset them about." Now these descriptions most accurately define the cause of Pilate's perplexity here. His conduct in the past had been such that he had not the courage to take any course which might lead to an investigation of that. If he could deliver Christ without provoking that, then he would most cheerfully do so; but if by delivering Christ he would provoke that, then Christ must be given up to the cross. Hence his perplexity at the first, and hence, also, his yielding in the end. His past misdeeds had put[154] him virtually into the power of those who were now so eager for the condemnation of the Christ. On three several occasions his arbitrariness had been such as all but to instigate a rebellion among the people, and his cruelty and contempt for justice, when he had a personal end to gain, were sure, upon appeal to the emperor, to be severely punished; so to save himself from banishment and disgrace, if not even death, he delivered over Jesus to the will of the Jews. He wished to do right in this case more than ever he had wished before; there was something about it which in his view made it more important that he should do right now than ever before; but through all his past official life he had, by his enormities and oppressions, been unconsciously weaving round himself a net, in the meshes of which he was now inextricably caught. His guilty conscience made him a coward at the very time when most of all he wanted to be brave. He had come to his "narrow place," where he could turn neither to the right hand nor to the left, but must face the naked alternative "yes" or "no"; and he fell because in his former life, when he was thinking of no such ordeal, he had sold himself by his evil deeds into the power of the enemy.

Now, what a lesson there is in all this for us! Men think that they may live for the time being as they please, and that at a convenient[155] venient season they can repent and turn to God. But the present is conditioning the future, and making it either possible or the reverse for us to do right in the future. He who neglects the laws of health every day, and lives in intemperance and excess of all kinds, is only making it absolutely certain that when fever lays him low he will die, for he has eaten out the strength of his constitution by his follies. And, in the same way, he who sets all morality at defiance in his ordinary conduct only makes it inevitable that when his convenient season does come, when his time of privilege and testing does arrive, he will fail to rise to the occasion, and be swept away into perdition. The tenor of our ordinary life determines how we shall pass through exceptional and crucial occasions, therefore let us bring that up to the highest level by doing everything as unto God, and then we shall be ready for any emergency.

Nor let me forget to add here, that in spite of all his efforts to keep back investigation, Pilate's day of reckoning with the emperor did come. The Jews complained of him after all, in spite of his yielding to them now; and as the result he was banished, and afterwards, so tradition says, he committed suicide. Thus the ordeal and the disgrace came, notwithstanding all he did to avert them, and he had not under them the solace which he might have enjoyed if only he had stood firm on[156] this great and memorable occasion. Therefore let us all, and especially the young, take to ourselves, as the first lesson from this deeply interesting history, that we should be careful not to hamper ourselves for the discharge of duty in the future by guilt of the present. By our conduct now we are either coiling cords around us which shall hold us fast at the very time when we most desire to be free, or we are forming and fostering a strength of character which, through God, will triumph over every temptation. If "to be weak is to be miserable," it is no less true that to be guilty is to be weak. Preserve yourselves, therefore, from this danger, and seek above all other things to keep your consciences clean; then when you will need all your strength for a crisis, you will not sit, like Pilate here, in nervous perplexity bemoaning your helplessness even while you yield to the adversary; but you will shake the temptation from you with as much ease as the eagle shakes the dewdrop from his wing. Keep yourselves pure: so shall your youth be full of happiness, and you shall go forth out of it with no encumbering past to clog the wheels of your endeavor. How happy he whose youth thus leaves him with a smile and sends him forth upon the duties of manhood with a benediction! But he, how miserable! whose early years heap bitter maledictions on his head, and push him forward into active life with a conscience already[157] laden with guilt, and a soul as weak before temptation as a reed is before the wind.

But while there is thus in this history a lesson for all time, I think Munkacsy, by the appearance of his wondrous picture now, has made it evident that there is also something in it specially adapted to these modern days. It is with artists in the choice of their subjects as it is with ministers in the selection of their themes. Both alike, consciously and unconsciously, and most frequently perhaps unconsciously, are affected by the spirit of their age. The atmosphere—literary, moral, political, and religious—which is round about them, and which they are daily breathing, does, insensibly to themselves, so influence them that their thoughts are turned by it into a channel different from that in which those of a former generation flowed. Hence, whether the painter would admit it or not, I see in this picture, at this juncture, at once a mirror of the times and a lesson for them. The question of Pilate, "What shall I do, then, with Jesus which is called the Christ?" is preeminently the question of the present age. No doubt we may say with truth that it has been the question of all the Christian centuries, and each one of them has faced it and solved it after its own fashion. It has tested the centuries even as it tested Pilate, and those in which Christ was rejected have been the darkest in the world's history; while[158] those in which He has been hailed as the incarnate God have been the brightest which the earth has ever seen, because irradiated with truth, and justice, and benevolence and purity. But tho we are always prone to exaggerate that in the midst of which we are ourselves, it seems to me that in no one age since that of the primitive Church has this jesting question been so prominent as in our own. All the controversies of our times, social, philosophical, and theological, lead up to and find their ultimate hinge in the answer to this inquiry, "Who is this Jesus Christ?" If He be a mere man, then there is for us nothing but uncertainty on any subject, outside of the domain of the exact sciences; and we must all become agnostics, holding this one negative article of belief, that nothing can be known about anything save that of which we can take cognizance with the bodily sense. But if He be incarnate God, then He brings with Him from heaven the final word on all subjects concerning which He has spoken; and tho in His person He is the mystery of mysteries, yet, at once received, He becomes forthwith the solution of all mysteries, and faith in Him is at once the satisfaction of the intellect and the repose of the heart. It is perfectly natural, therefore, that all the controversies of the day should turn on Him. The lives of Christ which have been written during the last thirty or forty years[159] would make in themselves a very respectable library; and the cry even of the sceptic is, "I could get on very well with unbelief, if I only knew what to make of Christ." Yes, that is just the difficulty. Christ is here in the Scriptures a character portrayed in literature; He was in the world for thirty-three years, and lived a life exceptional in every respect, but most of all in the moral and spiritual departments, so that of Him alone perfection can be predicated; He has been ever since a most potent factor in history, for through His influence all that is pure, and noble, and exalted, and lovely and of good report, has come into our civilization. Now, these things have to be accounted for. If He was only a man, how shall we explain them? And if He was more than a man shall we not take His own testimony as to His dignity and mission? If we are to be unbelievers, we must account for Christ on natural principles; but if we cannot do that, then we must conceive Him as He claims to be conceived. There is no alternative. Those in the age who have the spirit and disposition of Pilate will anew reject Him! but those who are sincere and earnest in their inquiries will come ultimately out into the light, for "if any man be willing to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."

And what is true of the age, as a whole, is true also of every individual to whom the gospel[160] is proclaimed. For each of us, my hearers, this is the question of questions, "What shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?" Shall I reject Him and live precisely as if I had never heard His name? or shall I accept Him as the Lord from heaven in human nature, trust in Him as my Savior, and obey Him as my King? I must do the one or the other; and yet how many are seeking, like Pilate, to evade the question? They try to escape the responsibility of dealing with it as a direct alternative of yes or no. But as one has well said, "necessity is laid upon us. The adversaries of Christ press upon us to give our verdict against Him. We are troubled and perplexed, for we have long heard about Him, and have had each of us his own convictions. We would still remain neutral. We try—and try in vain—to escape from the spirit, the conversation, the literature, the question of the times. Again and again we wash our hands. But neither our silence nor our actions are of any avail; and so we are found sitting, conscious of the presence and the claims of our Savior, and, like Pilate, not daring to look at Him, as we puzzle over the answer which we must give to the question that is being forced upon us—Who is this Jesus Christ?" Perhaps this description accurately portrays some one here this morning.

If so, let me give him one parting word.[161] It is this: You can not evade the decision, but be sure that you look at the Christ before you give Him up. Nothing is so remarkable in the picture to which I have so often this day referred as the evident persistency with which Pilate keeps his eyes from Christ; and few things are so saddening as to meet with men who profess to have, and really have, difficulties about Christ, but who have never read the gospels or the New Testament with any attention.

Let me urge you earnestly, therefore, to study these gospels and epistles before you give your voice against the Lord, and I am very sure that if you ponder them thoroughly you will soon accept Him. Give over trying to solve all the difficulties and so-called discrepancies in the Scriptures which form the stock-in-trade of the infidel lecturer—all these are but as dust which he raises that he may blind your eyes to the really important question, "Who is Christ?" Settle that, and if you do, all other difficulties will vanish. Turn your face to the light, and the shadow will fall behind you. Look at the Christ before you give Him up. And remember, if you do reject Christ, you have still to account for Him. It is unreasonable for you, if you believe only in the natural and material, to leave such a phenomenon as Christ unexplained.

Yes, and I must add here that if you reject[162] Him you must yet account to Him. Go, then, and ponder this text; yea, may it continue sounding in your inmost heart until you have determined to receive and rest upon Him as your only Savior, and say to Him, like Thomas, "My Lord and my God."

**÷**07-09 JOHN HALL

LIBERTY ONLY IN TRUTH

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Hall was born at Market Hill, County Armagh, Ireland, in 1829. For many years he was pastor of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, where he had a large and devoted following. He was of fine physique, and there was a power in face and voice that at once commanded his audience. He spoke without manuscript, and his style was marked by great sincerity, directness and earnestness. He died in 1899.

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JOHN HALL

1829-1899

LIBERTY ONLY IN TRUTH

And I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts.—Psa 119:45.

God is the Governor of this world. Some one may say, that is a very elementary truth. Even so; there have been long ages in the history of our race when that truth was not accepted and when the most intelligent of our race believed something directly opposed. There have been multitudes of men, for example, who believed, like Aristotle, that matter is eternal. There are multitudes still who believe that in some way or other nature governs itself. There is a large class of thinkers who, without taking the name to themselves, are practically pantheists, and, like Spinoza and Fichte and Hegel, persuade themselves that all is God, as they express it, and that God is all. You do not need to be told that the earlier portion of the Old Testament Scriptures God has given to us that we might have these illusions banished, and that we might be made to know that God is the Creator and the Ruler of all things, that He is not nature, and nature is not God; that He[166] is not to be confounded with the works of His hands; that He is a distinct, personal and holy Being, who has created all, and who has a right, on the ground of creation, even if there were no other, to be the Ruler of all. It took long to make men understand this truth, simple and elementary as it seems to you and to me.

When we say that God governs the globe, we do not mean the mere earthly, solid structure on which we dwell. We mean that He governs the inhabitants of it, the communities and the individuals. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." "The Lord reigneth, let the nations tremble." "He raiseth up kings and he putteth them down." He calls into being Pharaohs that He may show His power and His glory in relation to them. His providence is most holy and wise and powerful, and it is not general merely, it is particular, extending to all the creatures and to all their actions. These things we have to keep in mind in relation to Jehovah.

Now it would seem, surely, that if a man believed this his common sense would dictate to him that, living in a world that God had made and God rules in every detail, if he wishes to be happy in it, he must have respect to the law of Him who has made and who rules. Common sense indicates that if we live in a house it is desirable to be on good terms with the head of the house if we wish to be[167] comfortable. Common sense dictates that if a man is in the employment of others, it is wise for him to have a right understanding, to stand well with the head of the department in which he is engaged. Common sense teaches us that if we are subjects in a kingdom and wish to be safe and happy, we must respect the laws by which the kingdom is ruled. And we have only to extend this principle, and we get to the point that was before the Psalmist's mind when he says: "I will walk at liberty, for I seek (or, as it is in the revision, without changing the meaning, 'I have sought') thy statutes." I am living in Thy world, I am dependent upon Thee, I have taken pains to know what Thy will is, that I may do it; and so I walk at liberty. That is the idea that is brought to us in the text, and it is easy for you to see how good and practical that idea is.

But the question may arise, can we know the precepts and the statutes that God has given to us? You do not need to be told that that is within our reach. God has spoken to us in this revelation, as He did speak less articulately in the works of His hands, and in the instincts and convictions that He produced in our spirit. We have His revelation in our hands. We can seek the knowledge of it. In many instances well-meaning and right-minded boys, under great difficulties, have sought education that they may get on in this world. In many other cases boys have[168] had education at their very doors, and have never sought it, and consequently have been of little account in the world. Now the difference is not great, in this aspect of it, between ordinary secular education and the spiritual education of which the text gives us an illustration. Here are God's statutes and precepts put within our reach. We can search them, seek them, know them and do them, by the grace that God is willing to give, or we can push them aside, ignore and disregard them, and take our own way, and the result will be absolute and everlasting failure in our lives. We can not have this too solemnly fixt in our thoughts. God has spoken to us. What shall we do with His word? Shall we neglect it and pass it by, or shall we take it, study it, seek it, as the verse expresses it, and make it the rule of our lives? Jesus Christ has come down from heaven to live among us, and has said to our race, "Come unto me and learn of me"; and there are millions to whom this message has come and they disregard and ignore it; they do not come to Him, they do not learn of Him. Can we wonder if the Judge should say to them when they appear at His seat, "I never knew you"? If you read the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, you will see pictures of an angry God, as an avenging fire, in the apostle's description. On whom does the fire fall? On whom does the Judge show his indignation? Is it[169] upon the misers and the miscreants and the murderers of the race merely? Oh, no. It is upon them that "know not God and obey not the gospel of his Son." Is it any wonder that the sacred writer should say, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth"; not merely remember that there is a God—remember thy Creator, who made thee and in whose hand thy fortunes are. Remember in the days of thy youth, the formative days, the days when character is being shaped. What is well begun is half ended. The life that is well begun, in this way has a guaranty of usefulness and success. The life that is not begun in this way has a dark and gloomy prospect before it. Remember thy Creator. We all know well what is meant when some one says to us, on going away from our homes, "Don't forget your home, don't forget your mother." We know what that means. And God's messenger speaks to us in the same tone when he makes this appeal: Remember thy Creator; remember His power, remember His will, remember His statutes, seek His precepts, and by doing this thou wilt be able to walk at liberty.

You may have mere liberty, and not light and not the liberty of God. You may combine liberty with means, with power, and with a certain degree of prosperity; you may combine it with equality and with fraternity, and yet not have the true enlightenment. True enlightenment[170] comes in the way, indicated in the text, by the seeking of God's precepts, the knowing of God's statutes, and this you and I need to keep in mind. "What is liberty?" once asked Burke. "What is liberty without wisdom and without virtue? Such liberty is the greatest of all possible evils, for it is vice and folly and madness, without tuition and without restraint." Mere liberty without other forces working in the sphere that it opens up, is only another name for license. "Give me liberty or give me death," said Patrick Henry—not because he felt the need of enlightenment. He had been enlightened by the teaching of an intelligent Scottish father, by the preaching of the splendid sermons of Samuel Davies, and especially by the daily study, which he kept up to his dying day, of his Bible. He had been enlightened by these things. What he craved for himself and for his fellow men was open space in which, unhindered, other and mighty influences might tell upon his fellow men and make the country what, in the blessing of God, it has become. Settle this in your minds: Liberty is simply the freedom for other forces to act, and it is for you and me who are free, to see what these forces are, and we never can have any so good as those which the Psalmist speaks of when he says that he sought God's precepts, he studied God's statutes, that he might do them, and so walk at liberty. We want to walk at liberty.[171] How can we do it? If we do not thus walk at liberty, there is only one alternative—stay in bondage and walk in bondage, moving about indeed, and apparently free, but with moral chains binding our natures and our whole being in bondage to the powers that will rejoice in our misery and ultimate ruin. It is to make men understand this that we have such institutions as we enjoy to-day. For this end church edifices are reared. For this end people are invited to come and be regularly in them and under their influence. For this end God has been pleased to give us the day of holy rest. For this purpose the ministry has been instituted. Our business is to make men seek and know God's precepts and statutes, that they may do them and that they may walk at liberty. "We ministers are for you; our business is to seek your moral and spiritual good, your full and complete liberation. Our business is to enlighten you with the truth as God has been pleased to reveal it unto us. You do not come to these churches for our sakes, to hear us. You do not give your money that we may be sustained and upheld. I tell you I would rather sweep the streets, I would rather carry bricks on my shoulder to the builder, than be a mere official person maintained because he can teach so much and get so many people to hear him. Brethren, it is that you may be enlightened and saved with the light of life, that God has[172] brought us into the position in which we are now together. Keep this in your thoughts; and that you may be enlightened and free, look upward and not downward, nor around you. In that statue in our harbor, the light that will shine is light that comes, I suppose, from the heart of the earth; but the light that is to enlighten the world is the light of the sun, the Sun of Righteousness. See that you have that shining into your souls, that you may walk at liberty.

Having looked at the former part of this text, namely, what the Psalmist did with a view to the end, we look at the end at which he was aiming. He studied God's Word, not simply that he might have so much intellectual knowledge. He studied it for practical uses. He studied God's precepts that he might obey them. I do not need to remind you that you and I have advantages greater than he had, in some important respects. He had the revelation in part; we have it in its completeness. He had the preparatory dispensation; we have the dispensation that fulfils the promises of the preparatory. He had the beginning; we have the complement. We know more than he did. He wrote these words, "I have sought thy precepts." He knew of the Paschal Lamb and of its typical significance; we know the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. He knew the Hebrew priest and the[173] general character of his functions. We know a High Priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God. He knew of the altar and the victim, and the blood that made typical atonement; we know of the great sacrifice on the cross, bringing in a redemption that is complete and eternal. He knew of a Messiah that was to come. You, even children in the Sunday-school to-day, know of that Messiah risen, risen triumphant, risen a conqueror, risen for you, risen because He has finished the work God gave Him to do. If the Psalmist studied God's will that he might walk at liberty, how much greater is the obligation upon us to do the same, and how much greater our facilities and our encouragement. Let us try, then, to travel in the Psalmist's steps, and let us see some, not all, of the forms of liberty that we can have by compliance with the divine precepts.

There is liberty, in the first place, from the world. I use the word now in the sense in which it is used so frequently in the Bible—not merely this round globe or the hundreds of millions that are upon it—not merely these millions in that capacity. The world lieth in the wicked one; the mass of men, that is, do not know God. They constitute the world of the New Testament; we can be in bondage to this world. Natural men are in bondage to it. They are not at liberty in relation to that natural world. It is without God; it does[174] not ask what His will is. It enquires as to its own will, and it tries to enforce it. You sometimes see cliques and coteries and collections of men insisting at any cost upon carrying out their own will. This is only the spirit of the greater world of which they constitute a section. Sometimes men are in bondage to the world in this sense, and the mainspring of their life is to stand well with it, to do what their set, their society, the world round about them, wishes them to do. Sometimes the bondage is aggravated by another feature, viz., the effort to rise higher, to get upon a more elevated plane, to get into another set; and, oh, how aggravated is the bondage under which many thus live and labor! Freedom from that is obtained when we walk according to God's statutes. Believers, the world is not your master. One is your Master, even Christ, and we are brethren in Him, and He is reasonable and kind and just and brotherly, and you can walk with Him. His favor is enough for you, His smile satisfies you. Fellowship with Him is the best society. Let society stigmatize you, let it stamp its enmity upon you, but seek God's precepts. If you only have Christ walking with you, then you walk at liberty. But as to the life-work in which many are busy, or trying to get up a little higher socially, take this precept of the Word, "Godliness with contentment is great gain"; and these things, the godliness with the contentment,[175] will break these clanking chains of insane and stupid ambition and will prepare you to walk at liberty. "I am in the place where God puts me. I am trying to do the work that God gives to me. I am responsible to Him. I belong to Him. He is my Father, Christ is my Brother, heaven is my home. This I believe on the authority of His word. I will walk at liberty." Let me commend that form of true freedom to you.

There is liberty, in the second place, from bad ways. Do I need to describe these bad ways to you? You can not live in the city, you can not read the newspapers, you can not hear the gossip, you can not know what is going on in the circles in which you mingle, without knowing some of these bad ways. There is the lover of this world's possessions, so strongly denounced in Isaiah's prophecies: beginning, perhaps, with necessary saving, but coming slowly but steadily to a sordid love of the thing that is saved, till the whole spirit is mercenary, and gold is the deity that is practically worshiped. There is the drunkard, sipping a little innocently, as he thinks, at the beginning, then going a little farther, and secretly, until shame is lost and the victim is under the power of the drink—degraded, wretched, irresponsible, not ashamed of himself, for shame is gone, but an object for which all are ashamed that are connected with him. There is the gambler, beginning perhaps with[176] what he deemed innocent recreation, and catching the spirit of the thing till it masters him, until he flings away all that he has, and all that he hopes to have, in the chance of recovering something already lost, till life is a burden and fortune is gone, and suicide is perhaps the tragical termination. These are specimens of the bad ways—marked specimens, I grant, but still simple specimens. There is freedom from this when we seek and do God's statutes—real freedom. We learn to walk circumspectly; we learn to keep the heart with all diligence; we learn to hate evil and to do good; we learn to flee from the snares that Satan sets for the feet of men. We walk securely, for we have been taught of the Spirit to walk with God. Make sure, dear hearers, that you have this liberty.

There is liberty from bad memories—bad, putrid memories. When the corrupt imagination contemplates indulgences in sin, it often dwells upon these long before the actual execution of them, and as they linger in the mind they photograph themselves upon its surface, and they stay there. There may be compunction for the sin, there may be shame over it, there may be vows against it, there may be honest purposes to resist and overcome it, and these purposes to a good degree carried out; but the horrid, poisonous memories remain in the soul. You know what it is to be in a house where[177] animal matter is decaying and poisoning fumes are being scattered up and down. Oh! the misery of the human mind that is haunted with the ghosts of bad deeds that have been done in the past. It is bondage of the keenest and sorest kind. There is liberty from these to those who walk in God's statutes, liberty that can be had nowhere else. "A new heart will I give you, and a right spirit will I put within you. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." Happy are they to whom this word was fulfilled in their early youth, and who in consequence were kept from the sins, the very recollection of which is sometimes like the beginning of hell.

There is bondage to bad associates and bad associations. In how many instances, in thoughtlessness, inexperience, under the impulses of mere feeling, do men become entangled in connections that mar their lives and spoil all their happiness—make happiness practically impossible! I speak what I know, when I say that there are too many cases in which boys are practically ruined where they go as pupils to schools away from their parents' supervision, thrown into dependence, in some degree, upon those whom they call friends, and these friends bad, initiating them into ways and habits and modes of thinking and doing, for which they only want the liberty of later years that they[178] may put them into practise, with disgrace, misery and ruin. Relief from this bondage, escape from it, these can be had when we seek God's statutes, when we walk according to His precepts. Wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and her paths are peace. There are no bad habits in them; there are no entangling associations in them; there are no corrupting and degrading influences in them. There is nothing in them that plays upon passion, till passion, once our idol and our sport, becomes our ruler and our cruel tyrant. To escape all these, this is the way: seek God's statutes, that you may know and do them, and you shall walk at liberty.

**÷**07-10 BACON

GOD INDWELLING

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Leonard Woolsey Bacon, Congregational divine, born in New Haven, Conn., 1830. He was educated at Yale, from which university he graduated in 1850. He has filled the position of pastor in many important churches and has done much theological and literary work. Among other things he edited Luther's "Deutsche Geistliche Lieder" (New York, 1883), and wrote "History of American Christianity" (New York, 1897).

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BACON

Born in 1830

GOD INDWELLING[6]

Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.—Isa 57:15.

Inhabiting eternity; yet making His abode within a broken heart! It seems as if we might apprehend either of these things singly; but both together—how can it be? The distresses, the wants, the fears, of life, make us long that indeed it were so. Our soul crieth out for God, for the living God.

We cry; but there seems no answer; only an awful silence. We look upon the outward facts of life and death, and see the steady, unswerving march of law—the unbroken, irrefragable chain of causes and effects—never yielding nor bending to all our needs, to all our prayers. And God seems so far, so far away! We turn the pages of our knowledge from the physical to the metaphysical, and[182] we come no nearer. Our philosophical, our theological, yes, our religious meditations upon the nature and attributes of the infinite One—the omniscient, the eternal, the unchangeable—set Him more and more beyond the reach of our fellowship and prayer. But all the time, one thing testifies to us of a heavenly Father that hears and loves and answers, and that is our ineradicable need. The cravings of our nature cannot be rebuked by scientific observation of the constancy of law, nor by philosophic meditation of the properties of absolute and infinite being. We need, we must have, a Father. Our heart and flesh, our soul, crieth out for the living God.

In such a strait, there is true comfort in this word of the Lord by His prophet, in which the full measure of the difficulty is set forth, and the solution of it is found in faith.

It has seemed to me that we need not seek in vain in the created works of God for helps to that faith by which we know that the infinite and eternal God can have fellowship with us and can dwell within the narrow precincts of a human heart.

That sight in visible nature which gives to us the highest sense of vastness,—the aptest suggestion of infinity,—is doubtless the aspect of the starry heavens;—to all of us, ignorant or learned, poetic or unimaginative. It needs no diagrams nor distances from a book of astronomy to tell the lessons of the firmament.[183] "Their sound is gone out into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."

And yet it is when we come to study the dimensions of this operation in detail, that the sense of its vastness grows upon us and overpowers us. David never could have felt, as we can feel, the force of his own words:

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,  
The moon and the stars which thou hast ordained,  
What is man that thou art mindful of him,  
And the son of man that thou visitest him!

They are like the chariot of Ezekiel's vision, "so high that it was dreadful." It seems a fearful thing to have to do with such magnitudes; and when we hear of scholars in their observatories measuring the distances among the stars, it overcomes us with a giddy feeling, as when we see men clambering on church spires, or crossing the East River on a strand of wire. A row of figures on a slate does seem such a frail support on which to go marching through the starry spaces! We almost shudder when we see human science springing clear of the narrow boundaries of the earth, and on such attenuated threads of calculation venturing boldly forth to other planets, and thence over chasms of space so vast that it is easiest to call them infinite, until he reaches the fixt stars. No longer content with numbering and naming the host of heaven, and marshaling them in constellations, this tiny[184] creature must take upon himself to scrutinize their constitution, must weigh their floating bulk, must

"Speed his flight from star to star,  
From world to luminous world, as far  
As the universe rears his flaming wall,"

and, as if bearing in this amazing flight the measuring-rod which once the prophet saw in an angel's hand, must measure the paths along which the planets travel, and tell in human language the distances on the chart of heaven.

And how human language staggers under the burden thus laid upon it! We begin with attempting to state the least of these distances in numbers of a unit of earthly distance, but, when we speak of some of our near neighbors in celestial space as being twenty trillions of English miles away, the words will not hold the meaning—they carry no conception to the mind. They are good to cipher with, but that is all they are good for. We try to invent a new form of speech, and for our unit we take the distance which a cannon-ball, if retaining the velocity with which it leaves the gun, would travel in twenty-four hours, and say that, at this rate of speed, it would take so many months, and years, and centuries, to reach such and such of the nearer stars. But this, too, is a clumsy failure; and we resort, at last, to the heavens themselves for a standard[185] of measurement, and find it in the velocity of light. It shoots from the sun to the earth, a distance of ninety-two millions of miles, in eight minutes and seven seconds. And we attempt to represent the distance of certain of the stars by stating how many years, how many hundred years, how many thousand years, it takes a ray of their light to reach the earth. But it is all in vain. We commonly speak of imagination as outstripping, in its speed, the slow-paced reason; but here it is the reason that has outrun the imagination. From these unspeakable tracts of space, over which the reason of man has not hesitated to go,

"Sounding along its dim and perilous way,"

the imagination shrinks back and refuses to follow. We know things which we cannot conceive. In presence of such stupendous magnitudes,

"Imagination's utmost stretch  
In wonder dies away."

We can only bow with awe in the presence of things which the calmest computations have revealed, and seizing the words kindled on the lips of inspiration, sing aloud in worship:

"O Lord, how great are they works!  
In wisdom hast thou made them all!"

I have shown you what is wonderful. Come now and I will show you what is more wonderful.[186] For I will show you these infinite spaces of the sky, and the glory of them, and the innumerable host of starry worlds, gathered up in a moment of time, within the tiny pupil of a human eye. It is wonderful that the heavens and the host of them should be so great; but that, being so great, they should be able to become so infinitely little,—this passes all wonder. The shepherd stretched upon the ground amid his sheep gazes up into the starry depths, and finds them wonderful; but never thinks how far more wonderful than the heavens which he beholds is himself beholding them. As he lies gazing, long lines of light, from planet and star and constellation, come stretching on through the infinite void spaces, to center on the lenses of his drowsy eye. Side by side, and all at once, yet never twisted or confused, these ten thousand rays of different light enter the little aperture in the center of the eye which we call the pupil. There they cross, in a point which has no dimensions, and separate again, and paint in microscopic miniature upon the little surface of the retina, behind the eyeball, the inverted facsimile of the visible heavens. There, in the ante-chamber of the brain, marches Orion, with his shining baldric and his jeweled sword; there glow Arcturus and Sirius, and the steadfast North Star; there pass the planets to and fro; and the far-off nebulæ are painted there with suffused and[187] gentle radiance—all the heavens and the glory of them gathered in that slender filament of light, threaded through that tiny aperture, painted by their own rays upon that little patch of nervous network, apprehended, felt, known through and through by that finite human mind. How far stranger and sublimer a thing is this than the mere bulk of the worlds, or the mere chasms of void space in which they hang weltering!

By this sublime fact of God's visible creation, we are led on to apprehend and feel the sublimest of the glories of God Himself, set forth in the prophet's words,—that He whose lifetime is infinite duration, whose dwelling-place is infinite space,—He who before the earth and the world were made was no younger, neither will be older when they are all consumed,—whose presence reaches out to the farthest fixt star that eye or telescope has ever described floating upon the far verge of the universe, and occupies beyond in all the orbits of worlds yet undiscovered, and still beyond in the regions of space where is naught but the possibility of future worlds, and fills all this immensity to repletion,—that this "high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" should enter into some poor, crusht and broken spirit, that trembles at the very whisper of His voice, and should make the narrow recesses of that heart His abode, His home. This is the mystery and glory of the[188] Godhead,—not alone that He should be infinite, eternal, immortal, invisible, but that being all these, He should yet be apprehended by the little mind of a man, and call Himself that man's Friend and Comforter and Father.

For it is not more evident that the tiny pupil of human eye can take in the expanses and abysses of the heavens, than it is that the little soul of man can receive into itself the infinite God.

I. Man receives God into himself by the intellect. We trifle with the facts of our own consciousness, if we suffer the theological description of God as incomprehensible to divert us from the fact that our minds are made for nothing more expressly than for this, that they should receive God. The lowest rudiments of the knowledge of the simplest forms of matter are the beginnings of the knowledge of God. If we could remember, you and I, now that we are grown, all that came to us in infancy—the first struggles of the childish mind with the questions that we are not done with yet, we should see how soon the knowledge of God comes to the little one. Beyond the cradle in which it wakes up to the wonders of a new day is the nursery, and beyond the nursery is the house, and beyond the house is the garden, and beyond the garden there lies all the world, and beyond the world shuts down the sky with its stars, and beyond the sky—what? "Tell me, father—tell me,[189] mother, what is there beyond the sky?" And, according to your knowledge or your ignorance, your faith or your unbelief, you may tell the little questioner of heaven, or of infinities of other worlds, or of infinite waste room and empty space, and he will believe you. But attempt to tell him that beyond is nothing, and not even room for anything, and will he believe you? He may seem to believe you, but it is impossible that he really should believe. The infant mind—any mind—rejects it as impossible. It cannot live in anything less than infinite space. It stifles. It leaps up and beats its wings against any bars with which you would cage it in, but that it will break through and take possession of its inheritance.

And as with infinite extent, so with infinite duration. How well I remember, as a very little child, when men were talking of the end of the world, and the great comet stretched amain across the sky, and men's hearts were failing them for fear, how the thought of infinite duration prest in, inexorably, on my soul! Come judgment day, come final conflagration, come end of all material things, come cessation and extinction of all angels, all souls, all sentient creatures, still this could not be the end. Eternity must needs go on and on, tho there were never an event or thought to mark its movement. There cannot be an end.

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They err, not measuring the import of their own arguments, who tell us, in that pride of not-knowing which is so high uplifted beyond any pride of knowledge, that the very form of the word infinite marks it as the sign of a thing inconceivable, being a mere negation. Nay, verily, it is the word end, limit, cessation, that is the negative word, having no meaning except as the negation of continuance; and infinite is the negation of this negation—a thing positive, affirmative, real.

So, then, it is not the idea of infinity to which the human mind is unfitted. The mind is so made that it cannot help receiving that. The incredible, inconceivable idea is the idea of absolute end. So far is the idea of infinity from being inconceivable, that it is just impossible to thrust the conception out of the mind. And with the conception of eternity, there rushes into the thoughtful spirit at once, the awful and lovely conception of "that high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy." By such a wonder of creation is it, that He who made the little ball of the human eye so that it can take in the heavens and the earth, has made the petty intellect of man so that it can take in the knowledge of the infinite God.

II. But, secondly, it is even a greater wonder than this, that the infinite God, whom the intellect has conceived, draws near for a more intimate society with His creature, and enters[191] the heart of man through the gateway of his affections. I say a greater wonder; for it must be confest that this ideal of the intellect, this center in which all infinite attributes inhere, does by His very majesty so overawe the heart that we shrink away from Him. By every new perfection of His nature, that grows upon our apprehension; by His awful power as the Almighty; by His perfect knowledge as the All-wise; by His unswerving steadfastness as the Faithful and True—the Immutable; by the very infinitude of His nature, He is withdrawn farther and farther from the possibility of being counted among those humble objects on which the tendrils of a human heart are able to lay hold. How, for instance, shall this Inhabitant of eternity, whose name is Holy, be well-pleased with His petty creature who has dared withstand His perfect law, and looks shrinking toward the throne of infinite Majesty, fearing and crying, "Unclean! unclean!" How shall any prayer that we can frame bring arguments to bear upon the Mind that knows the end from the beginning, and to whom there is not a word upon our lips, but lo! He knoweth it altogether? How can any pitiful plight into which we may fall move the compassion of Him who is immutable, and under whose benign government even the pains and severities that befall His creatures are wrought into a plan of common beneficence to the whole?[192] These are questions which the awe-struck intellect, gazing upward at the infinite attributes that adorn the name which is holy, puts to the yearning heart, which, with all the craving of its love, with all the outstretching of its need, gropes after a God to worship, to love, to pray to, if haply it may find Him. And the heart cannot answer back the intellect with arguments of language. But love contains more reason than many arguments; and the strong instincts of affection and devotion with which the humble and contrite heart reaches out after the love and personal friendship of an infinite Creator are themselves an argument that God will not refuse Himself to the affections which He has Himself implanted. The hunger and thirst of our hearts for God are a promise from Him that they shall be filled. He cannot deny Himself.

The very arguments by which we climb to the knowledge of the infinite Spirit are like mountains that separate us from any relation with him of childlike prayer and mutual love. But a trustful confidence can say to these mountains, "Be ye removed and be ye cast into the sea," and it shall be done.

Have you ever pondered that dark mystery of human nature, the origin of the frightful idolatries of India? It seems to be proved that they had their beginning, not (as the prepossessions of modern science would suggest) through development from some form[193] of fetishism baser and coarser still, but by degradation from the most refined and abstract speculations on the infinity, the spirituality, and the immutability of God. No subtler metaphysics is taught to-day in the lecture-rooms of Yale and Princeton than was taught long centuries ago by Hindoo sages, enthroning their supreme divinity in the everlasting, impassive repose of the unconditioned, far beyond the reach of affection, sympathy or prayer, until the needy millions cried out, stifling, famishing, "Give us a God to love, to worship, to pray to!" and, for lack of answer, betook them to the forest or the quarry or the mine, to the carver and the smith, and made them gods that were no gods. So little can argument and reason hold us back in times when the stress of life comes down upon us, and the cravings of the soul grow strong!

I am bringing to the altar of God my offering—my poor little offering of thankfulness and prayer. Here have I my little bundle of anxieties, cares, troubles,—it may be the concerns of a nation in fear and perplexity; it may be the distress and terror of some sorely afflicted little household; it may be the secret of bitterness of some humble and contrite spirit; in any case, a matter how infinitely small when measured by the scale of immensity and eternity; but oh, how great a thing to me! And there meets me, in the way, a philosopher. "And what, forsooth,[194] have you there? Show it me, now." And I unroll before Him my little bundle of griefs, of cares, of pains, of sickness, of fears, of forebodings,—here a handful of myrrh from a troubled heart, and there a sprig of frankincense from a grateful spirit. "And this, then, is what you would bring to lay before the infinite, the eternal, the omniscient, the unchangeable God!" And each great title smites upon my heart with discouragement and dismay. "This is what you would bring to Him in prayer and deprecation! But do you not know that all this is a part of a perfect system?—that it is all fixt by the laws of nature, which no prayer can change or suspend without upsetting the constitution of the universe. You would lay before God your wretched plight to move His pity? Tush! Did He not know it all a hundred thousand ages ago, or ever the earth was?" And I cannot gainsay Him, and I cannot cease to pray. But by and by the philosopher himself comes face to face with some of the overwhelming things in human life and human death. He hangs with tears and wringing of hands over some cradleful of childish anguish, and shrinks from what the laws of nature, the system of the universe, are doing there—so pitiless, so deaf to prayer, so blind to agony; and he looks away, and looks up, and cries, "My God, my God!" And his reason is not one whit the less true, because now, at last,[195] his love and faith are also true and strong. The awful wonder of God's unchangeable infinity abides; but out of cloud and darkness breaks forth, oh, what light of fatherly love! And the bewildered soul sings:—

And can this mighty King  
Of glory condescend?  
And will He write His name  
My Father, and my Friend?  
I love His name! I love His word!  
Join all my powers and praise the Lord!

And now behold a mystery—the mystery of godliness, without controversy great, manifest in the flesh! That He may come over these mountains of helpless separation, that we may be helped to know, to love, to trust that which is far too vast for the reach of our clinging affections to clasp, what wonders of condescending tenderness will not our Father do! There draweth near to us One having the likeness of man, but glorious with an unearthly glory, as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He stands beside us in our daily cares, our household joys and griefs, our business troubles and anxieties, our national fears and sorrows. He shares our temptations. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He carries our sorrows. He bears our sickness. He dies our death. How easy to love Him, to come near to Him, to trust Him! Being lifted up, how doth[196] He draw all men unto Him! And what mean those wonderful words of His, telling of His intimacy, His sonship, His oneness with the invisible and eternal God? Could it be, perhaps, that such an one might bring us nearer to the inaccessible Light—might help us to draw nigh as seeing Him who is invisible? Oh, Master, show us the Father and it sufficeth us! And hear now His gracious words: "He that believeth on me believeth on him that sent me." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father also." Thus the high and lofty One, who hath wonderfully entered into our narrow understanding, cometh also into our heart, and draweth us to His own bosom "with the chords of love, with the bands of a man."

III. Finally, with a true spiritual intercourse and converse, which no man can define, which is as the viewless wind that men know altho they see it not, and feel its quickening and refreshment, altho they cannot tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth, God entereth into our spirits, "not to sojourn, but to abide with us," and we become the temples of the Holy Ghost.

**÷**07-11 JOSEPH PARKER

A WORD TO THE WEARY

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Joseph Parker was born at Hexham-on-Tyne, England, in 1830. He was a prodigious worker, writer, and preacher. His "The People's Bible," in twenty-eight large volumes, a popular commentary on the Scriptures, is his greatest work. To a naturally energetic personality he added great originality and resourcefulness. He gave much time to the preparation of sermons, reading them aloud as he wrote in order to test their effect upon the ear. A strong personal quality pervaded all his preaching. "If I have not seen Him myself," he said, "I cannot preach Him." In lectures to students he gave much valuable advice gathered from the storehouse of his own varied experience. He gave particular attention to the use of the voice. "It is not enough," he said, "that you be heard; you must be effective as well as audible; you must lighten and thunder with the voice; it must rise and fall like a storm at times; now a whisper, now a trumpet, now the sound of many waters. There is an orator's voice, and there is a bellman's. The auctioneer talks; the orator speaks." Dr. Parker's sermons are published in numerous volumes. He died in 1902.

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JOSEPH PARKER

1830-1902

A WORD TO THE WEARY[7]

The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.—Isa 50:4.

The power of speaking to the weary is nothing less than a divine gift. As we see the divinity in our gifts shall we be careful of them, thankful for them: every gift seems to enshrine the giver, God. But how extraordinary that this power of speaking to the weary should not be taught in the schools. It is not within the ability of man to teach other men how to speak to the weary-hearted, the wounded in spirit, the sore in the innermost feelings of the being. But can we lay down directions about this and offer suggestions? Probably so, but we do not touch the core of the matter. There is an infinite difference between the scholar and the genius. The scholar is made, the genius is inspired. Information can be imparted, but the true sense, the sense that feels and sees God, is a gift direct from heaven.

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It is a common notion that anybody can sing. Why can you sing? Why, because I have been taught. That is your mistake. You can sing mechanically, exactly, properly, with right time, right tune, but really and truly you can not sing. Here is a man with his music and with the words; he sings every note, pronounces every word, goes through his lesson, finishes his task, and nobody wants to hear him any more. Another man takes up the same music, the same words, and the same hearers exclaim, "Oh, that he would go on for ever!" How is that?—the words exactly the same, the notes identical—how? Soul, fire, ever-burning, never consuming, making a bush like a planet. The great difficulty in all such cases is the difficulty of transferring to paper a proper or adequate conception of the power of the men who thus sway the human heart. There are some men whose biographies simply belie them, and yet every sentence in the biography is true in the letter; but the biography is little else than a travesty and a caricature, because the power was personal, it was in the face, in the voice, in the presence, in the gait, in the touch—an incommunicable power; the hem of the garment trembled under it, but no biographer could catch it in his scholarly ink.

Very few ministers can enter a sick chamber with any probability of doing real and lasting good. They can read the Bible, and[201] they can pray, and yet, when they have gone, the room seems as if they had never been there. There is no sense of emptiness or desolation. Other men, probably not so much gifted in some other directions, will enter the sick room, and there will be a light upon the wall, summer will gleam upon the windowpane, and angels will rustle in the air, and it will be a scene of gladness and a vision of triumph. How is that? The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned that I might know how—how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. The Lord God hath not only given me a word to say, but hath given me learning to teach me how to speak it. Place the emphasis upon the how, and then you develop all the mystery, all the tender music, all the infinite capacity of manner.

We may say the right word in the wrong tone; we may preach the gospel as if it were a curse. The common notion is that anybody can go into the Sunday-school and teach the young. We sometimes think that it would be well if a great many persons left the Sunday-school all over the world. Teach the young—would God I had that great gift, to break the bread for the children, and to be able to lure and captivate opening minds, and to enter into the spirit of the words—

"Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,  
To teach the young idea how to shoot."

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It requires to be father and mother and sister and nurse and genius to speak to the young. They may hear you and not care for you: they may understand your words, and be repelled by your spirit. You require the tongue of the learned to know how to speak, and that tongue of the learned is not to be had at school, college, university—it is not included in any curriculum of learning—it is a gift divine, breathing an afflatus, an inspiration—the direct and distinct creation of God, as is the star, the sun. The speaker, then, is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the representative of the Father, the incarnate Deity—He it is who is charged with the subtle learning; He it is whose lips tremble with the pathos of this ineffable music.

Tho the gift itself is divine, we must remember that it is to be exercised seasonably. The text is, "that I should know how to speak a word in season." There is a time for everything. It is not enough to speak the right word, it must be spoken at the right moment. Who can know when that is! We can not be taught. We must feel it, see it hours beyond: nay, must know when to be silent for the whole twenty-four hours and to say, "To-morrow, at such and such a time, we will drop that sentence upon the listening ear." "The day after to-morrow, he will probably be in circumstances to admit of this communication being delivered with sympathy and effect."[203] How few persons know the right time—the right time in conversation. Some people are never heard in conversation tho they are talking all the time. They talk so unseasonably, they talk when other people are talking; they can not wait; they do not know how to come in along the fine line of silence: they do not understand the German expression "Now an angel has passed," and they do not quickly enough follow in his wake. Consequently, tho chattering much they are saying nothing—tho their words be multitudinous, the impression they make is a blank.

I have a ripe seed in my hand. As an agriculturist I am going to sow it. Any laborer in the field can tell me that I should be acting foolishly in sowing it just now. Why? "It is out of season," the man says. "There is a time for the doing of that action: I will tell you when the time returns—do it then, and you may expect a profitable result of your labor."

Then I will change the character and be a nurse, and I will attend to my patient (perhaps I will over attend to him—some patients are killed by over nursing), and I will give the patient this medicine—it is the right medicine. So it is, but you are going to give it at the wrong time, and if you give the medicine at the wrong time, tho itself be right, the hour being wrong you will bring suffering upon the patient, and you yourself will be involved[204] in pains and penalties. Thus we touch that very subtle and sensitive line in human life, the line of refined discrimination. You may say "I am sure I told him." You are right—you did tell him and he did not hear you. You may reply, "I am perfectly confident I delivered the message,—I preached the exact words of the gospel." So you did, but you never got the hearing heart, your manner was so unsympathetic, so ungentle, so cruel (not meant to be—unconsciously so), that the man never understood it to be a gospel. You spoilt the music in the delivery, in the giving of the message. The Lord God giveth the tongue of the learned, that he to whom it is given may know how to speak—how to speak the right word—how to speak the right word at the right point of time. You want divine teaching in all things, in speech not least.

This is a curious word to find in the Bible. Does the Bible care about weary people? We have next to no sympathy with them. If a man be weary, we give him notice to quit: if he ask us to what place he can retire, we tell him that it is his business not ours. Now the tenderness of this Book is one of the most telling, convincing arguments on behalf of its inspiration, and its divine authority. This Book means to help us, wants to help us, it says, "I will try to help you, never hinder you: I will wait for you, I will soften the wind into a whisper, I will order the thunder to be[205] silent, I will quiet the raging sea; I will wait upon you at home, in solitude, at midnight, anywhere—fix the place, the time, yourself, and when your heart most needs me I will be most to your heart." Any book found in den, in gutter, that wants to do this, should be received with respect. The purpose is good: if it fail, it fails in a noble object.

Everywhere in this Book of God we find a supreme wish to help man. When we most need help the words are sweeter than the honeycomb. When other books are dumb, this Book speaks most sweetly. It is like a star, it shines in the darkness, it waits the going down of the superficial sun of our transient prosperity, and then it breaks upon us as the shadows thicken. This is the real greatness of God: he will not break the bruised reed. Because the reed is bruised, therefore the rude man says he may break it. His argument in brief is this: "If the reed were strong, I should not touch it, but seeing that it is bruised what harm can there be in completing the wound under which it is already suffering? I will even snap it and throw the sundered parts away." That is the reasoning of the rude man—that is the vulgar view of the case. The idea of the healing is the idea of a creator. He who creates also heals. Herein we see God's estimate of human nature: if He cared only for the great, the splendid, the magnificent, the robust, and the everlasting, then[206] He would indeed be too like ourselves. The greatness of God and the estimate which He places upon human nature are most seen in all these ministrations in reference to the weak and the weary and the young and the feeble and the sad. Made originally in the image of God, man is dear to his Maker, tho ever so broken. Oh, poor prodigal soul with the divinity nearly broken out of thee, smashed, bleeding, crushed, all but in hell—while there is a shadow of thee outside perdition, He would heal thee and save thee. Thou art a ruin, but a grand one,—the majestic ruin of a majestic edifice, for knowest thou not that thou wast the temple of God?

When we are weary, even in weariness, God sees the possibility of greatness that may yet take place and be developed and supervene in immortality. How do we talk? Thus: "The survival of the fittest." It is amazing with what patience and magnanimity and majestic disregard of circumstances we allow people to die off. When we hear that thousands have perished, we write this epitaph on their white slate tombstones: "The survival of the fittest required the decay of the weakest and the poorest." We pick off the fruit which we think will not come to perfection. The gardener lays his finger and thumb upon the tree, and he says, "This will not come to much"—he wrenches the poor unpromising piece of fruit off the twig and throws it down as useless.[207] In our march we leave the sick and wounded behind. That is the great little, the majestic insignificant, the human contradiction. We go in for things that are fittest, strongest, most promising, healthy, self-complete, and therein we think we are wise. God says, "Not a lamb must be left out—bring it up: not a sick man must be omitted: not a poor publican sobbing his 'God be merciful to me a sinner' must be omitted from the great host. Bring them all in, sick, weary, wounded, feeble, young, illiterate, poor, insignificant, without name, fame, station, force—all in: gather up the fragments that nothing be lost." Let us go to that Shepherd—He will spare us and love us. When our poor strength gives out, He will not set His cruel heel upon us and kill us, He will gather us in His arms and make the whole flock stand still till He has saved the weakest one.

Did we but know the name for our pain we should call it Sin. What do we need, then, but Christ the Son of God, the Heart of God, the Love of God? He will in very deed give us rest. He will not add to the great weight which bows down our poor strength. He will give us grace, and in His power all our faintness shall be thought of no more. Some of us know how dark it is when the full shadow of our sin falls upon our life, and how all the help of earth and time and man does but mock the pain it can not reach. Let no man[208] say that Christ will not go so low down as to find one so base and vile as he. Christ is calling for thee; I heard His sweet voice lift itself up in the wild wind and ask whither thou hadst fled, that He might save thee from death and bring thee home. There is no wrath in His face or voice, no sword is swung by His hand as if in cruel joy, saying, "Now at last I have My chance with you." His eyes gleam with love: His voice melts in pity: His words are gospels, every one. Let Him but see thee sad for sin, full of grief because of the wrong thou hast done, and He will raise thee out of the deep pit and set thy feet upon the rock.

**÷**07-12 McKENZIE

THE ROYAL BOUNTY

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Alexander McKenzie was born at New Bedford, Mass., in 1830, and graduated from Harvard in 1859. Since 1867 he has been pastor of the First Congregational Church, Cambridge, Mass. His voice is rich, full and sympathetic, and his pulpit style that of one man talking earnestly and directly to another, there being no attempt at oratorical effect. He is to-day probably the most acceptable preacher at Harvard, and the leading Congregational minister in New England. The discourse reprinted here is from his volume "A Door Opened," and has been noted as one of the greatest sermons of the century.

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McKENZIE

Born in 1830

THE ROYAL BOUNTY[8]

And King Solomon gave to the Queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own land, she and her servants.—1Ki 10:13.

The Queen of Sheba came from the uttermost part of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. She was amazed at all that she had heard, and delighted with all that she saw, and confest that after the generous rumors that had reached her in her distant home the half had not been told her. She brought her present to him, as was the custom of the times; and when she went away she asked a gift of him, and history says that the king gave her all that she desired; and that, having given her everything of which she had thought, he added something more of his own thought. He gave her this, not because she had desired it, but because he had desired it; not for her heart's seeking, but out of his heart's wishing to bestow. This is the simple[212] record: "And King Solomon gave to the Queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty." These last words describe the added gift, and this was doubtless the best of all; that upon which she would think with the greatest pleasure, and of which she would speak with the greatest pride. The word "royal" is well chosen, for we think of something which is great when we apply this term to it, as we speak of a royal deed, royal magnificence, royal benevolence, royal bounty. We readily approve the action of the king, for it is this excess of giving, beyond that which is demanded of us, which makes the real generosity. We are in the habit ourselves, so far as we are generous at all, of reaching beyond the real necessities and requests of our friends, and giving out of the largeness of our hearts. It is this excess which commands the high price. It is the added, extraordinary beauty of a painting which enhances its worth. Some pictures are sold by the square yard, and some by the inch. It is that which genius adds which is the royal bounty. It marks the difference between genius and talent. To be what we must, and to do what we must, is narrow and uninteresting. The man who is just, and no more, wins our praise for his integrity, but not our regard for his liberality. There are some men who would on no account have their measures in the slightest degree too small, but would be[213] quite as careful not to have them too large. There is no reason why justice should not be combined with charity, and a strict regard for the legal demands which are made upon us with the excess out of a free heart which will make our justice beautiful. I saw in a fine country town a tall, graceful tree which cast its pleasant shade upon the path, and I marked that men had fastened upon it an iron frame which held a lamp that gave out its light upon the path. The tree was not the less a tree that it added the light, and the lamp was not less a lamp because it belonged to the tree. I came afterward and found that the bark of the tree had grown up around the iron where it was fastened to it, till the frame and lamp were fairly incorporated in the tree itself. It is easy thus to enlarge our life, adding beauty to strength, giving what our heart desires to give to that which Sheba asks at our hands. This thought is strongly expressed by St. Paul, "Scarcely for a righteous man," the man who does exactly what he ought to do, and nothing more, "will one die." Yet peradventure, for a good man, who does all he ought to do, and adds something because he wants to do it, some would even give their life. This man appeals to our heart which is ready to respond. The best things are indeed only to be given in this way. They can not be bought. They can not be had for the asking; such things as confidence,[214] and friendship, and courtesy, which no statute can demand, but which the royal heart delights to give; and there is a like royalty which is able to receive and prize the gift.

This is God's way, to whom all life is but the expression of his heart. We rejoice continually in his bountiful goodness. What is the need of flowers? He could have made a strong and honest earth which would take in the seed and give it out in harvest, and thus we could live; but when He had made the earth substantial, useful as it is, He added flowers, because He wished to give them, was delighted to look upon them, and knew how happy we should be who saw them blossom by the roadside. There is no need of birds. The world would go its way, the seasons would follow one another, the sun would rise and set, the forest trees would reach up toward the clouds, without them. God made all this, and then filled the quiet woods with forms of beauty, and changed silence into songs. Even heaven itself has more than we should have looked for or asked for. We might have had a good delightful heaven, without pain or sorrow or sighing, without death, and such a heaven we have. But in the vision of the Apocalypse, which only dimly sees the heavenly reality, its streets are covered with gold, as it were transparent glass; its gates are pearl, and the strong walls, which can not be[215] moved, glisten with jewels. So it might have been with the arrangement of this world. We might have had men to care for us, women to nurture us, fathers to work for us, a society whose process might move on with industry and safety from year to year. But God has added the richer delights of love and sympathy, of all that we name friend and friendship. It is in the same way that He frames His ordinances for us. We could have had all days alike, but when He had made six good days He added a seventh which should be wearied by no work, wherein the soul should be at leisure to live with itself in quietness, and worship God. He might have supplied all our wants in the course of nature, bringing His gifts to our door with regularity, and we should have lived our appointed time; but He does more than this. He lets us thank Him when we take our daily bread, and blesses the bread with the love which gives it. He even lets us tell Him what we wish, and to our wishes He gives patient heed. He might have left us to conscience and experience, in the light of nature to frame our character and our hope, but to these He has added the thought of other men, the revelation of His wisdom by His saints, the gift of His spirit to our spirit, to be in us a continual light.

There is a very good expression of God's way of dealing with us in a line of the twenty-third Psalm, "My cup runneth over." This[216] seems unnecessary. To have the cup full, or a little less than full, is enough for us, and more convenient. For us, but not for God, who delights in filling it; and when we bid Him stay His hand, He keeps on pouring, and the water flows, till, presently, the cup is overflowing, but not because we thought to have it so, but because of His great delight in giving; until it would seem as if He could not stop, or content Himself with that which He has already bestowed upon us. Let this stand as a simple expression of His way with us.

When we come upon anything that all good men approve, we may be very certain that we have found something which God Himself approves, and which is the method of His life. We like, among ourselves, this principle of the cup that runneth over. Our liking for it we have inherited from God. We might expect, therefore, that when the Son of God has His life in the world He will live by this rule, which is of heaven and of earth; and it is even so. His first miracle would seem unnecessary. There have been people who blindly but honestly wished that He had never wrought it. Why did He do it if there was no need of it, if it were even possible that it should be wrested from its meaning? He had gone as a guest to a wedding, perhaps because the bride was his friend, and there came that grave calamity which would mar the feast; for presently it was whispered to Him, "They[217] have no wine." Surely they could have a wedding without wine. Not that wedding. Not in the custom of that time. He knew that the bride, if she lived to be old, would never recover from the shame of her wedding-day, whose beauty was lost. Here was a necessity, in love, in kindness; and that the cheeks of this girl might not redden with shame, He reddened the water into wine.

He was at Capernaum. They brought to Him a sick man with the palsy. They broke up the roof, and lowered him to the feet of Jesus, who knew well what they wanted. He passed over the little thing which they sought, and, governed by His own feeling, not by theirs, he said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are sent away from thee." That was enough. In a few days, the man would be able to walk without His help. Death comes to the succor of cripples. The man gave no sign of discontent, but Jesus found that the friends were unsatisfied, and He thought within Himself, "You brought him here that he might be raised up, and be made able to carry his bed home. I have done a greater thing for him, but I will add this which you want." "Arise," He said, "take up your bed and go your way." He did the greater work which made the soul strong, and for the lesser work,—well, He threw that in. It was the royal bounty. There was a time later than that, after His resurrection, when some of His[218] disciples had toiled all the night upon the sea, and had taken nothing. He could not have it a fruitless night for them. In the morning He was their risen Savior, who might well bestow some spiritual gift becoming to the resurrection. This He did, but He said, "Cast your net on the right side of the ship, and you will find what you have been seeking." They cast it, therefore, and drew it in, full of fishes, a hundred and fifty and three. This is the record of a fisherman, who wrote that the fish were large; and of an old man, who remembered the number of them. They drew their net to shore, and there was a fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, another fish. When they had enough, one that was better than all was added. Have you not sometimes wished that you could have had that hundred and fifty-fourth fish? This was Christ's way all the while, and is His way still. He fills the net as full as it will hold, that our life may be sustained, and then He adds more, that His love may be gratified, and that which He adds is the "royal bounty."

The work of our Lord was not merely in meeting the wants of men, but in creating the wants; not in gratifying their great desires, but in making their desires great. His own work in the world was twofold: to teach men how much more there was which they could enjoy, and how much more there was which He was eager to impart. The greater[219] the desire, the surer it was that it would be met by His desire. Indeed, a large desire is necessary to wealth. We must look out toward that wherein our riches lie. "He who would bring home the wealth of the Indies must send out the wealth of the Indies." To him whose desires are allowed liberty there comes the answer of fulfillment from "the unsearchable riches of Christ." In all His life and in all His teachings we see vastly more than men ever asked, much more than they are willing to take even to-day. It has often been, as it was at the first, that "he came unto his own, and his own received him not"; but to those who received Him He gave all they wished, and more than they had thought; He gave the right to become the sons of God. They would have been content with a greater prophet, a bolder leader, a stronger king, a Messiah who should enthrone Israel and bring the nations in homage to its feet. He came bringing God to the world, giving an eternal liberty, erecting an everlasting kingdom. They wanted manna; He gave the bread of life. They wanted wells of water; He gave the well that should be within them, springing up for evermore. They wanted a leader; He gave a Savior. They wanted man; and He was God. This has continued even to our time. Many admire Christ because He was a teacher, neglecting that wherein He was infinitely more than teacher. They are glad of[220] an example; He was that, but, far beyond it, He was the life whereby righteousness became possible. There are those who would be content with His beautiful spirit, His blameless life, His deeds of charity, His patience, His submission, His consent to a death which He could not avoid. He offers to the world the spirit of the Eternal, the life of God to be lived upon the earth; He lays down the life which no man could take from Him; and, with all the roads leading from Jerusalem open before Him, walks with determined step to Calvary and the cross. Beyond that which has contented many in the world, He gave Himself, the world's Redeemer, the Lamb of God, the Good Shepherd giving His life for the sheep.

It is very, very sad to mark how ready we are to measure Christ's gifts to us by our narrow wants and limited desires; not by the greatness of His love, not by His exhaustless riches, not by the fulness of the grace of the Eternal, who is the Father and friend of all men. If ever we shall pass beyond the gratifying of ourselves, and allow Christ to gratify Himself in blessing us, we shall find in a glad experience what the simple words mean, "I am come that they might have life"—oh, friends, do not stop there, finish the sentence,—"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." We ask life of Him, and He gives us life, and[221] offers length of days forever and forever. We pray that we may live; and we set up a goal at seventy or ninety years, when He draws no line across our path. "I give eternal life," He says. We pray for help that we may live; He offers more than that in the unrivaled sentence, "Because I live, ye shall live also." We think of life as being, and are content. We use existence as a synonym of living, but He said, "This is eternal life, to know God, and me."

So for ourselves; we are to live as His disciples. We wish to be true, useful, and generous. We wish to do in small measure such things as He did,—in His name to give the cup of water, and the healing of the sick. He grants all that we desire, then speaks out of His own heart, and His desire, "The works that I do shall ye do, and greater works than these"; for the miracles which attract us or baffle us, which draw us to His love, or possibly turn us from His word, which are only miracles because they are strange to us, are to be exceeded in the things which we do, when by our teaching we open the eyes of men that they may see God, and lift them up to the ways of holy living, and raise them from being into life. Our visions of heaven in our reverent imagination, even in the exultant words of the Revelation, are not equal to the simple truths which He taught, and men learned to repeat after Him. For what are[222] golden streets and jeweled walls beside that which He meant, "In my Father's house are many mansions." "I go to prepare a place for you." "Ye shall behold my glory." "Ye shall be loved as I am loved." The thought of Christ far outruns the aspiration of the world, as it comes to us from the lips of that disciple whom Jesus loved, "We shall be like him, for we shall see him even as he is."

What do we need, then? To enlarge our desires! Yes, but to consent to God's desires. To wish for more, but to consent to be blest as Christ longs to bless us. We must know the methods of God, whose will to give is greater and more constant than our will to receive. We must adjust our life to God's desire. Faith is the compact of the soul with God, rather than with itself. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it," is a promise ever old and ever new. We must be firm enough and aspiring enough to hold the cup after it has begun to overflow, and to let God's hand pour the water of life as long as He will, for this world and all the worlds that are to be. If we could desire more, if we could ascend to God's desire for us, life would be transfigured.

"The balsam, the wine, of predestinate wills  
Is a jubilant longing and pining for God."

"God loves to be longed for, He loves to be sought,  
For He sought us Himself, with such longing and love."

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We wish now to take this method for our own in all our dealing with God. Our sense of what is right, the voice of conscience, the commands of Scripture, call us to our duty. Let us do what they require till conscience is satisfied; but let us add to this more than a rigid obedience asks for, all that a loving heart, grateful and generous, wishes to bestow. The little questions of life, small matters of casuistry, minute affairs of conduct, would be quite readily determined if we would live by this rule, wherewith God blesses us. That question which with unusual urgency now presses upon us, how we shall regard the Sabbath day, would not be difficult if it were our delight to remember it, and to keep it holy because it is our delight to please Him who has given to us its sacredness and blessedness. It is pitiful when we find ourselves questioning how much of the day should be holy; how much of it should be given to the thought of God and the divine life; how much of it we should yield to the holy spirit of truth; how many of the hours we should keep in the remembrance of Him whose resurrection gives to the Sabbath its greater meaning. We should keep the Sabbath holy as if we desired to keep it holy. All its hours should be sacred. They need not be less joyous, less friendly, for being holy; and we can not be gratified with the spirit in which we find ourselves trying to divide the time. Keep twenty-four hours for[224] God, and if by any means you can make the time overflow add a twenty-fifth hour.

We question again about money. What proportion of our property should we devote to God? The Jews said one-tenth. Can we do no better, after so long a time? Let us give the whole, and if by any means we can compass it, let us add another tenth, simply to show what a delight it is to give all things to Him, and to let Him make the allotment in His care for us, and for our household, and for the Church, and for the wide world that we are living in. There are many who do this, and they learn how true is that word of Christ that is called to mind among the Acts of the Apostles, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Thus, in all things let us make the way of God our own, become His children entirely, receive the love of Christ in its fulness, make up our own life in His name, according to the largeness of His thought. If we will consent to it, we can be great and rich and strong. It seems strange to say that we are not ready to be blest, but of many it is true. They are not willing to be greatly blest, to have the cup run over. They are willing to be useful, but not very useful. They ask to be set in His service, but when He takes their word and breathes His own desire into it, they shrink back. It is a very serious thing, if we are able to perceive it, to consent that God should bless[225] us as He pleases, should have His own estimate of our character, His own measure of our powers, His own vision of our accomplishment, and should call us to greater service, to diviner employment, than we have ever dreamed of. It was a wise woman who said, "I have had to face my own prayers." We face our prayers when God gives His own wish to our words, and makes them large enough to hold His thoughts. It is one of the hardest things to believe, but one to which, in humbleness of mind and in a faith which will not falter, we should consent,—that high word of calling and consecration which Christ gave more than once,—"As the Father hath sent me into the world, even so send I you." Not our thought but His thought makes our calling, and the thought of God is the summons and the guidance of our life. Even so, even according to Thy greatness, and Thy gentleness which makes men great; Thine infinite purposes, and Thine eternal grace; even so, O Lord of mercy and of truth, send us into the world!

As we close these thoughts, let us remember that promise which comes at the close of the Old Testament, which almost seems to reverse the promise at the beginning of the Old Testament, "I will never open the windows of heaven and pour out a flood again"; for the last of the prophets brings to us the word of God, that He will open the windows of heaven, and pour out a flood again. It shall not come[226] to destroy, but to preserve; it shall create life; it shall enlarge life, but it shall be after the measure of His will, not ours. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, and prove me now herewith, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Not drops here and there, but showers of blessing. Not running brooks, but broad rivers. Not pools of water, but a shoreless sea; deep, deep waters, when, looking up into the infinite Love, and consenting to be blest of God as God would bless us, we bring all the tithes into the storehouse and the remainder of the tithes, if any have been left. "I will pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Not room enough to receive it; that is the royal bounty.

**÷**07-13 FARRAR

WORK IN THE GROANING CREATION

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Frederick William Farrar was born in Bombay, India, in 1831. He was educated at King's College, London, and at Trinity College, Cambridge. He became dean of Canterbury in 1895, and died in 1903. His Life of Christ, the most widely read of his many religious works, has been translated into many languages—even into Japanese. The following illustrates his power of emphasis.

"There, amid those voluptuous splendors, Pilate, already interested, already feeling in this prisoner before him some nobleness which touched his Roman nature, asking Him in pitying wonder, 'Art thou the King of the Jews?'—Thou poor, worn, tear-stained outcast, in this hour of Thy bitter need—O pale, lonely, friendless, wasted man, in Thy poor peasant garments, with Thy tied hands and the foul traces of the insults of Thine enemies on Thy face and on Thy robes—Thou, so unlike the fierce, magnificent Herod, whom this multitude which thirsts for Thy blood acknowledged as their sovereign—art Thou the King of the Jews?"

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FARRAR

1831-1903

WORK IN THE GROANING CREATION[9]

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.—Gen 1:31.

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.—Rom 7:22.

And there shall be no more curse.—Rev 22:3.

In those three texts you have the past, the present, the future of our earth; what was, what is, what shall be; the perfectness which man has marred, the punishment which he is enduring, the hope to which he looks. What share we may have in the marring or the mending of this our transitory dwelling, that is our main subject to-day.

We see some glimpses at least of the truth that actively by sympathy, by thoughtfulness, by charity, by unselfishness, by loving one another;—that even passively by abstaining from the fashionable and universal vice of biting and devouring one another;—we see that by honesty, by self-reverence, by reverence for others, by obeying the golden rule of[230] "doing unto others as we would they should do unto us," we may do very much to limit the realm of sorrow, and to substitute a golden for an iron scepter in its sway over human hearts. We see, too, that our own inevitable trials and humiliations,—all the neglect, all the insult, all the weariness, all the disappointment, all the ingratitude, which may befall us,—can be better borne if we be cheerful and active in doing good. Labor for God is the best cure for sorrow, and the best occupation of life.

Can we to-day push the inquiry yet further, and learn whether it is in our power in any way to mend the flaw which runs for us through the material world; or in any way to diminish for ourselves and for mankind the pressure of that vast weight of laws which exercises over us, undoubtedly, a sway of awful potency? The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; can we—not by any strength of ours, but because God permits and desires it, can we do anything to hasten that blest hour for which we wait—the hour of the new creation; of the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body; of the restitution of all things; of the palingenesia of the world?

I think we can. I know that the supposed helplessness of man is a favorite topic of modern materialism, which makes of man the irresponsible tool of forces which he can not resist,[231] the sport and prey of dumb powers which are alike inexorable and passionless. This philosophy—if we may call it a philosophy—laughs to scorn the notion of a miracle, and makes virtue and vice not the conscious choice of free beings, but the inevitable result of material causes and hereditary impulses, of which in all but semblance, we are the mere automata and slaves. My brethren, into all these speculations of a baseless atheism, I need not enter. To us, nature means nothing but the sum total of phenomena which God has created; and since in the idea of nature is included the idea of God, a miracle becomes as natural and as easily conceivable as the most ordinary occurrence. And we know that we are free, that God does not mock us, that we can abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good. The laws of nature are nothing, then, for us but observed sequences, and we do not admit that there is anything fearful in their uniformity. It is true that nature drives her plowshare straight onwards, and heeds not what may be lying in the furrow; it is true that therefore she shows an apparent indifference to human agony; it is true that if the fairest and sweetest child which earth ever saw be left at play in the face of the advancing tide, the tide will still advance and drown the little life; it is true that the fire in its ruthless vividness will roll over the loveliest maiden whose[232] rich dress should catch its flame. It is a law that resistance must be equal to force, and that if there be a certain amount of pressure of vibration, whatever comes of it, a structure will give way, even though, alas, it hurl nearly a hundred human beings, with one flash of horror, into the gulf of death. But is this any reason for a fierce arraignment of nature, as tho she were execrably ruthless, and execrably indifferent? Not so, my brethren. Death whenever it comes is but death. None of us has any promise of this or that amount of life. It needs no railway accident, no sinking ship, or breaking ice, or burning town, or flame from heaven, or arrow in the darkness, or smiting of the sun by day, or the moon by night, to cut short our days. An invisible sporule in the air may do it, or a lesion no bigger than a pin's point.

"He ate, drank, laughed, loved, lived, and liked life well;  
Then came—who knows?—some gust of jungle wind,  
A stumble on the path; a taint i' the tank;  
A snake's nip; half a span of angry steel;  
A chill; a fishbone; or a falling tile,—  
And life is over, and the man is dead."

But is this any reason why we should look on ourselves as victims of dead irresponsible forces? Why so? Death is but death, and if we live faithfully, death is our richest birthright. "Were you ready to die that you jumped into the stormy sea to save that child's[233] life?" said a gentleman to an English sailor. "Should I have been better prepared, sir," the sailor answered, "if I had shirked my duty?" A sudden death is often, and in many respects, the most merciful form of death; and the apparently terrible death of a few may save the lives of many hundreds. The uniformity of nature may sometimes wear the aspect of passionless cruelty; but as we learn more and more to observe and to obey her laws, we find more and more that they work for countless ends of beneficence and beauty, that out of seeming evil she works real good, out of transient evil enduring good. The fires which rend the earthquake and burst from the volcano, are the quickening forces of the world; her storms lash the lazy atmosphere which otherwise would stagnate into pestilence, and it is for man's blessing, not for his destruction, that her waters roll and her great winds blow.

But are we, after all, so very helpless before the aggregate of these mighty forces, as materialism loves to represent? Not so! "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands," said the Psalmist, "Thou hast put all things under his feet." "Replenish the earth, and subdue, and have dominion," said the first utterance of God to man. And what is this but an equivalent of the latest utterances of science, that "the order of nature is ascertainable by our faculties to an[234] extent which is practically unlimited, and that our volition counts for something in the course of events"? Man has done much to make the world in all senses a worse place for himself, but he has also, thank God, done much to make it better, and he may, to an almost unspeakable extent, remedy for himself and for his race the throes and agonies of the groaning universe. God meant His earth to be a more blest place for us than it is, and in every instance men have made it more blest when they have read the open secrets, by virtue of which, for our excitement, if not for our reward, "herbs have their healing, stones their preciousness, and stars their times." Ancient nations have shuddered at the awfulness of the sea. It drowns ship and sailor; but "trim your sail, and the same wave which drowns the bark is cleft by it, and bears it along like its own foam, a plume and a power." The lightning shatters tower and temple; but once learn that it is nothing but the luminous all-pervading fluid which you may evolve by rubbing a piece of amber, and brush out of a child's fair hair, and then with no more potent instrument than a boy's kite you may dash harmless to the earth the all-shattering brand which was the terror of antiquity; nay, you may seize it by its wing of fire, and bid it carry your messages around the girdled globe. Zymotic diseases smite down the aged and young, but, when you have[235] learnt that they are caused by myriads of invisible germs which float in the water or the air, you have but to observe the commonest rules of sanitary science, to filter and boil the dangerous water, to insure free currents of air, to breathe as nature meant you to breathe, through the nostrils, and not through the throat, and you rob them of half their deadliness. Why has smallpox been stayed in its loathly ravages, and deprived of its hideous power? Why does the Black Death rage no longer, as it raged among the monks of this Abbey four centuries ago? Why do we not have pestilence, like that great plague of London, which destroyed 7,165 persons in a single week? Why has jail fever disappeared? Why are the cities of Europe horrified no longer by the hideousness of medieval leprosy? Because men live amid cleaner and purer surroundings. Because rushes are no longer strewn over floors which had been suffered to be saturated with the organic refuse of years. Because the simplest laws of nature are better understood. Because, in these respects, men have remedied by God's aid, some of those miseries for which the Savior sighed.

And this amelioration of man's miseries is a great, and noble, and Christlike work. Would that there were no other side to the picture! Man, alas! also has done, and may do, infinite mischief to the world he lives in. He may cut down the forests on the hills, and[236] so diminish the necessary rain. He may pluck up the grasses on the shore, and so lay waste whole acres to the devastating sands. He may poison the sweet, pure rivers of his native soil, till their crystal freshness is corrupted into deathful and putrescent slime. He may herd together, as we suffer our poor to do, in filthy tenements which shall breed every species of disease and vice. He may indulge or acquiesce in senseless fashions and pernicious vanities which shall mean not only wasteful ugliness and grotesque extravagance, but leave shattered health and ruined lives, to the mothers of his race. He may in greed of competition extirpate the game of the forest, the fishes of the sea. He may destroy the exquisite balance of nature, by shooting down or entrapping the sweet birds of the air, till his vines and his harvests are devastated by the insects on which they feed. He may suffer the chimneys of his manufactories to poison the atmosphere with black smoke and sulphurous acid, till his proudest cities are stifled at noonday, as we all have seen in London for these many weeks, with the unclean mirk of midnight fogs. He may suffer noxious gases to be vomited upon the breeze, till the most glorious buildings in his cities corrode and crumble—as the stones of this Abbey are doing—under their influence,—till the green woods blacken into leafless wastes, and life is lived at miserable levels of vitality under the[237] filthy reek. There is hardly any limit to the evil, no less than to the good, which man may do to this his earthly environment. Nor is it less deplorable that he may go out of his way to do endless mischief to himself by his misuse or abuse of the properties of things. From the dried capsules of the white poppy he extracts opium, and he grows acres of poppies that with thousands of chests of that opium he may degrade into decrepitude and wretchedness the most populous nations upon earth. Nature gives him the purple grape and the golden grain, and he mashes them and lets them rot and seethe, and assists, and superintends, and retards their decomposition, till he has educed from them a fermented intoxicating liquor; and not content with this luxury, he pours it into Circean cups of degrading excess; not content with even fermentation, he further, by distillation, extracts a transparent, mobile, colorless fluid, which is the distinctive element in ardent spirits, and these, whatever may be their legitimate use in manufacture or in medicine, he has so horribly abused that they have become to mankind, the spiritus ardentes indeed, but not of heaven—fiery spirits of the abyss, which have decimated nations, ruined continents, shortened millions of lives, and turned for millions of God's children, and millions of Christ's little ones, life into an anguish, and earth into a hell. Do not say we can do nothing to soften[238] for man the deadly agencies which are working in the world,—for all this mischief, and incalculably more than this, is man's own doing.

But let me ask you to glance for a moment at one of the beneficent secrets which nature has yielded up to man. Have you ever realized, with heartfelt gratitude to God, the priceless boon which He has granted to this generation in the diminution of pain? One of our best surgeons has just told us the strange yet simple story of this discovery, from the first dim intimation of the possibility in 1789, till in 1846 it might almost be said that in Europe we could name the month, before which all operative surgery was agonizing, and after which it was painless. But what an immense, what an enormous boon is this application of anodynes! "Past all counting is the sum of happiness enjoyed by the millions who have, in the last thirty-three years, escaped the pain that was inevitable in surgical operations; pain made more terrible by apprehension; more keen by close attention; sometimes awful in a swift agony; sometimes prolonged beyond even the most patient endurance, and then renewed in memory, and terrible in dreams. This will never be felt again." And besides this abolition of pain, it would take long to tell how chloroform and ether "have enlarged the field of useful surgery, making many things easy which were[239] difficult, many safe which were perilous, many practical which were nearly impossible." But another lesson this eminent man of science draws, which bears directly on our subject, is that while we are profanely decrying nature, discoveries the most blest, boons the most priceless, may lie close to us and yet God leave us to discover them; and that we may endure many needless miseries, falsely accusing nature and even God, only because we have neither hope enough to excite intense desire, nor desire enough to encourage hope. We wonder that for forty years the discovery of anesthetics was not pursued, tho, after the pregnant hint of Sir H. Davy, it lay but half hidden under so thin a veil. Our successors will wonder at us, as we at those before us, that we were as blind to who can tell how many great truths, which, they will say, were all around us, within reach of any clear and earnest mind. They will wonder at the quietude with which we stupidly acquiesce in, or immorally defend, the causes which perpetuate and intensify our habitual miseries. Our fathers needlessly put up with these miseries "as we now put up with typhoid fever and sea-sickness; with local floods and droughts; with waste of health and wealth in pollutions of rivers; with hideous noises, and foul smells"; with the curse of alcoholic poisoning, and many other miseries. Our successors, when they have remedied or prevented these,[240] will look back on them with horror, and on us with wonder and contempt, for what they will call our idleness or blindness, or indifference to suffering. Alas! in the physical as in the moral world, we murmur at the evils which surround us, and we do not remove them. We multiply those evils, and make life wretched, and then curse nature because it is wretched, and neglect or fling away the precious gifts and easy remedies which would make it blest. And is it not so in the spiritual world? Nine-tenths of our miseries are due to our sins. Yet the remedy of our sins is close at hand. We have a Savior; we have been commemorating His birth, but we live and act as tho He were dead; in our own lives and those of others we suffer those miseries to run riot which He came to cure; we talk and live as tho those remedies were undiscoverable, while from day to day His Word is very nigh us, even in our mouths and in our hearts!

For one sermon you hear about work for the secular amelioration of the suffering world for which Christ sighed, you may (I suppose) hear fifty on passing ecclesiastical controversies and five thousand about individual efforts for personal salvation. And yet one pure, self-sacrificing deed, one word of generosity to an opponent, one kindly act to aid another, may have been better for you in God's sight and far harder for you to do, than to attend[241] in the year the 730 daily services which this Abbey provides. Yes, I am glad that I have preached to you to-day the duty of what some would call secular work—as tho secular work were not often the most profoundly religious work!—for the amelioration of the world. And I say, it were better for you to have made but two blades of grass grow where one grew before, than if, with the hollow, hateful, slanderous heart of some false prophets of modern religionism, you were every morning to do whatever modern thing may be analogous to binding your fringes with blue, and broadening your phylacteries,—to making the hilltops blaze with your sacrificial fires, building here seven altars, and offering a bullock and a ram on every altar. And so, my brethren, let us leave this Abbey to-day with conceptions of duty larger and more hopeful; with more yearning both after the sympathy of Christ and after His activity; with more faith to see that the world would not be so utter a ruin but for our perversity; with more hope to be convinced that even we can help to redeem its disorders, and restore its pristine perfectness. Let us obey the command, "Ephphatha, Be opened!" Let us lift up our eyes to see that, tho the air around us is colorless, the far-off heaven is blue. Let us see and be thankful for the beauty of the world, the sweet air, the sunshine, the sea, the splendid ornaments of heaven, the ever-recurring circles[242] of the divine beneficence. Let us learn the secrets of the mighty laws which only crush us when we disobey them, and which teach us, with divine inflexibility, that as we sow we reap. Let us not hinder the students of science in their patient toil and marvelous discovery by the crude infallibilities of our ignorant dogmatism. Let us believe—for we were saved in hope—that "Utopia itself is but another word for time"; and that, if our own work seems but infinitesimal, yet "there are mites in science, as well as in charity, and the ultimate results of each are alike important and beneficial." And so the more we share in the sigh and in the toil of the Savior, the more shall we share in His redeeming gladness.

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VOLUME VIII TALMAGE TO KNOX LITTLE

1908

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**÷**08-01 TALMAGE

A BLOODY MONSTER

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Thomas De Witt Talmage was born at Bound Brook, N.J., in 1832. For many years he preached to large and enthusiastic congregations at the Brooklyn Tabernacle. At one time six hundred newspapers regularly printed his sermons. He was a man of great vitality, optimistic by nature, and particularly popular with young people. His voice was rather high and unmusical, but his distinct enunciation and earnestness of manner gave a peculiar attraction to his pulpit oratory. His rhetoric has been criticized for floridness and sensationalism, but his word pictures held multitudes of people spellbound as in the presence of a master. He died in 1901.

TALMAGE

1832—1901

A BLOODY MONSTER[1]

[Footnote 1: Copyright, 1900, by Louis Klopsch, and reprinted by permission.]

*It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him.*—Gen 37:33.

Joseph's brethren dipt their brother's coat in goat's blood, and then brought the dabbled garment to their father, cheating him with the idea that a ferocious animal had slain him, and thus hiding their infamous behavior. But there is no deception about that which we hold up to your observation to-day. A monster such as never ranged African thicket or Hindustan jungle hath tracked this land, and with bloody maw hath strewn the continent with the mangled carcasses of whole generations; and there are tens of thousands of fathers and mothers who could hold up the garment of their slain boy, truthfully exclaiming, "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him." There has, in all ages and climes, been a tendency to the improper use of stimulants. Noah took to strong drink. By this vice, Alexander the Conqueror was conquered. The Romans at their feasts fell off their seats with intoxication. Four hundred millions of our race are opium-eaters. India, Turkey, and China have groaned with the desolation; and by it have been quenched such lights as Halley and De Quincey. One hundred millions are the victims of the betelnut, which has specially blasted the East Indies. Three hundred millions chew hashish, and Persia, Brazil, and Africa suffer the delirium. The Tartars employ murowa; the Mexicans, the agave; the people at Guarapo, an intoxicating product taken from sugarcane; while a great multitude, that no man can number, are the votaries of alcohol. To it they bow. Under it they are trampled. In its trenches they fall. On its ghastly holocaust they burn. Could the muster-roll of this great army be called, and could they come up from the dead, what eye could endure the reeking, festering putrefaction? What heart could endure the groan of agony? Drunkenness! Does it not jingle the burglar's key? Does it not whet the assassin's knife? Does it not cock the highwayman's pistol? Does it not wave the incendiary's torch? Has it not sent the physician reeling into the sick-room; and the minister with his tongue thick into the pulpit? Did not an exquisite poet, from the very top of his fame, fall a gibbering sot, into the gutter, on his way to be married to one of the fairest daughters of New England, and at the very hour the bride was decking herself for the altar; and did he not die of delirium tremens, almost unattended, in a hospital? Tamerlane asked for one hundred and sixty thousand skulls with which to build a pyramid to his own honor. He got the skulls, and built the pyramid. But if the bones of all those who have fallen as a prey to dissipation could be piled up, it would make a vaster pyramid. Who will gird himself for the journey and try with me to scale this mountain of the dead—going up miles high on human carcasses to find still other peaks far above, mountain above mountain white with the bleached bones of drunkards?

The Sabbath has been sacrificed to the rum traffic. To many of our people, the best day of the week is the worst. Bakers must keep their shops closed on the Sabbath. It is dangerous to have loaves of bread going out on Sunday. The shoe store is closed: severe penalty will attack the man who sells boots on the Sabbath. But down with the window-shutters of the grog-shops. Our laws shall confer particular honor upon the rum-traffickers. All other trades must stand aside for these. Let our citizens who have disgraced themselves by trading in clothing and hosiery and hardware and lumber and coal take off their hats to the rum-seller, elected to particular honor. It is unsafe for any other class of men to be allowed license for Sunday work. But swing out your signs, and open your doors, O ye traffickers in the peace of families and in the souls of immortal men. Let the corks fly and the beer foam and the rum go tearing down the half-consumed throat of the inebriate. God does not see! Does He? Judgment will never come! Will it?

It may be that God is determined to let drunkenness triumph, and the husbands and sons of thousands of our best families be destroyed by this vice, in order that our people, amazed and indignant, may rise up and demand the extermination of this municipal crime. There is a way of driving down the hoops of a barrel so tight that they break. We have, in this country, at various times, tried to regulate this evil by a tax on whisky. You might as well try to regulate the Asiatic cholera or the smallpox by taxation. The men who distil liquors are, for the most part, unscrupulous; and the higher the tax, the more inducement to illicit distillation. Oh! the folly of trying to restrain an evil by government tariff! If every gallon of whisky made—if every flask of wine produced, should be taxed a thousand dollars, it would not be enough to pay for the tears it has wrung from the eyes of widows and orphans, nor for the blood it has dashed on the Christian Church, nor for the catastrophe of the millions it has destroyed for ever.

I sketch two houses in one street. The first is bright as home can be.  
The father comes at nightfall, and the children run out to meet him.  
Bountiful evening meal! Gratulation and sympathy and laughter! Music  
in the parlor! Fine pictures on the wall! Costly books on the table!  
Well-clad household! Plenty of everything to make home happy!

House the second! Piano sold, yesterday by the sheriff! Wife's furs at pawnbroker's shop! Clock gone! Daughter's jewelry sold to get flour! Carpets gone off the floor! Daughters in faded and patched dresses! Wife sewing for the stores! Little child with an ugly wound on her face, struck by an angry blow! Deep shadow of wretchedness falling in every room! Doorbell rings! Little children hide! Daughters turn pale! Wife holds her breath! Blundering step in the hall! Door opens! Fiend, brandishing his fist, cries, "Out! out! What are you doing here?" Did I call this house second? No; it is the same house. Rum transformed it. Rum embruted the man. Rum sold the shawl. Rum tore up the carpets. Rum shook his fist. Rum desolated the hearth. Rum changed that paradise into a hell.

I sketch two men that you know very well. The first graduated from one of our literary institutions. His father, mother, brothers and sisters were present to see him graduate. They heard the applauding thunders that greeted his speech. They saw the bouquets tossed to his feet. They saw the degree conferred and the diploma given. He never looked so well. Everybody said, "What a noble brow! What a fine eye! What graceful manners! What brilliant prospects!"

Man the second: Lies in the station-house. The doctor has just been sent for to bind up the gashes received in a fight. His hair is matted and makes him look like a wild beast. His lip is bloody and cut. Who is this battered and bruised wretch that was picked up by the police and carried in drunk and foul and bleeding? Did I call him man the second? He is man the first! Rum transformed him. Rum destroyed his prospects. Rum disappointed parental expectation. Rum withered those garlands of commencement day. Rum cut his lip. Rum dashed out his manhood. Rum, accurst rum!

This foul thing gives one swing to its scythe, and our best merchants fall; their stores are sold, and they sink into dishonored graves. Again it swings its scythe, and some of our physicians fall into suffering that their wisest prescriptions cannot cure. Again it swings its scythe, and ministers of the gospel fall from the heights of Zion, with long resounding crash of ruin and shame. Some of your own households have already been shaken. Perhaps you can hardly admit it; but where was your son last night? Where was he Friday night? Where was he Thursday night? Wednesday night? Tuesday night? Monday night? Nay, have not some of you in your own bodies felt the power of this habit? You think that you could stop? Are you sure you could? Go on a little further, and I am sure you cannot. I think, if some of you should try to break away, you would find a chain on the right wrist, and one on the left; one on the right foot, and another on the left. This serpent does not begin to hurt until it has wound 'round and 'round. Then it begins to tighten and strangle and crush until the bones crack and the blood trickles and the eyes start from their sockets, and the mangled wretch cries. "O God! O God! help! help!" But it is too late; and not even the fires of we can melt the chain when once it is fully fastened.

I have shown you the evil beast. The question is, who will hunt him down, and how shall we shoot him? I answer, first, by getting our children right on this subject. Let them grow up with an utter aversion to strong drink. Take care how you administer it even as medicine. If you must give it to them and you find that they have a natural love for it, as some have, put in a glass of it some horrid stuff, and make it utterly nauseous. Teach, them, as faithfully as you do the truths of the Bible, that rum is a fiend. Take them to the almshouse, and show them the wreck and ruin it works. Walk with them into the homes that have been scourged by it. If a drunkard hath fallen into a ditch, take them right up where they can see his face, bruised, savage, and swollen, and say, "Look, my son. Rum did that!" Looking out of your window at some one who, intoxicated to madness, goes through the street, brandishing his fist, blaspheming God, a howling, defying, shouting, reeling, raving, and foaming maniac, say to your son, "Look; that man was once a child like you." As you go by the grog-shop let them know that that is the place where men are slain and their wives made paupers and their children slaves. Hold out to your children warnings, all rewards, all counsels, lest in afterdays they break your heart and curse your gray hairs. A man laughed at my father for his scrupulous temperance principles, and said: "I am more liberal than you. I always give my children the sugar in the glass after we have been taking a drink." Three of his sons have died drunkards, and the fourth is imbecile through intemperate habits.

Again, we will grapple this evil by voting only for sober men. How many men are there who can rise above the feelings of partizanship, and demand that our officials shall be sober men? I maintain that the question of sobriety is higher than the question of availability; and that, however eminent a man's services may be, if he have habits of intoxication, he is unfit for any office in the gift of a Christian people. Our laws will be no better than the men who make them. Spend a few days at Harrisburg or Albany or Washington and you will find out why, upon these subjects, it is impossible to get righteous enactments.

Again, we will war upon this evil by organized societies. The friends of the rum traffic have banded together; annually issue their circulars; raise fabulous sums of money to advance their interests; and by grips, passwords, signs, and strategems, set at defiance public morals. Let us confront them with organizations just as secret, and, if need be, with grips and pass-words and signs, maintain our position. There is no need that our beneficent societies tell all their plans. I am in favor of all lawful strategy in the carrying on of this conflict. I wish to God we could lay under the wine-casks a train which, once ignited, would shake the earth with the explosion of this monstrous iniquity!

Again, we will try the power of the pledge. There are thousands of men who have been saved by putting their names to such a document. I know it is laughed at; but there are some men who, having once promised a thing, do it. "Some have broken the pledge." Yes; they were liars. But all men are not liars. I do not say that it is the duty of all persons to make such signature; but I do say that it would be the salvation of many of you. The glorious work of Theobald Mathew can never be estimated. At this hand four millions of people took the pledge, and multitudes in Ireland, England, Scotland, and America, have kept it till this day. The pledge signed has been to thousands the proclamation of emancipation.

Again, we expect great things from asylums for inebriates. They have already done a glorious work. I think that we are coming at last to treat inebriation as it ought to be treated, namely, as an awful disease, self-inflicted, to be sure, but nevertheless a disease. Once fastened upon a man, sermons will not cure him, temperance lectures will not eradicate it; religious tracts will not remove it; the Gospel of Christ will not arrest it. Once under the power of this awful thirst, the man is bound to go on; and, if the foaming glass were on the other side of perdition, he would wade through the fires of hell to get it. A young man in prison had such a strong thirst for intoxicating liquors that he had cut off his hand at the wrist, called for a bowl of brandy in order to stop the bleeding, thrust his wrist into the bowl, and then drank the contents. Stand not, when the thirst is on him, between a man and his cups. Clear the track for him. Away with the children! he would tread their life out. Away with the wife! he would dash her to death. Away with the cross! he would run it down. Away with the Bible! he would tear it up for the winds. Away with heaven! he considers it worthless as a straw. "Give me the drink! Give it to me! Tho the hands of blood pass up the bowl, and the soul trembles over the pit—the drink! Give it to me! Tho it be pale with tears; tho the froth of everlasting anguish float on the foam—give it to me! I drink to my wife's wo to my children's rags; to my eternal banishment from God and hope and heaven! Give it to me! the drink!"

Again, we will contend against these evils by trying to persuade the respectable classes of society to the banishment of alcoholic beverages. You who move in elegant and refined associations; you who drink the best liquors; you who never drink until you lose your balance, let us look at each other in the face on this subject. You have, under God, in your power the redemption of this land from drunkenness. Empty your cellars and wine-closets of the beverage, and then come out and give us your hand, your vote, your prayers, your sympathies. Do that, and I will promise three things: first, that you will find unspeakable happiness in having done your duty; secondly, you will probably save somebody—perhaps your own child; thirdly, you will not, in your last hour, have a regret that you made the sacrifice, if sacrifice it be. As long as you make drinking respectable, drinking customs will prevail, and the plowshare of death, drawn by terrible disasters, will go on turning up this whole continent, from end to end, with the long, deep, awful furrow of drunkards' graves.

This rum fiend would like to go and hang up a skeleton in your beautiful house, so that, when you opened the front door to go in, you would see it in the hall; and when you sat at your table you would see it hanging from the wall; and, when you opened your bedroom you would find it stretched upon your pillow; and, waking at night, you would feel its cold hand passing over your face and pinching at your heart. There is no home so beautiful but it may be devastated by the awful curse. It throws its jargon into the sweetest harmony. What was it that silenced Sheridan, the English orator, and shattered the golden scepter with which he swayed parliaments and courts? What foul sprite turned the sweet rhythm of Robert Burns into a tuneless babble? What was it that swamped the noble spirit of one of the heroes of the last war, until, in a drunken fit, he reeled from the deck of a Western steamer, and was drowned. There was one whose voice we all loved to hear. He was one of the most classic orators of the century. People wondered why a man of so pure a heart and so excellent a life should have such a sad countenance always. They knew not that his wife was a sot.

I call upon those who are guilty of these indulgences to quit the path of death! Oh! what a change it would make in your home! Do you see how everything there is being desolated? Would you not like to bring back joy to your wife's heart, and have your children come out to meet you with as much confidence as once they showed? Would you not like to rekindle the home-lights that long ago were extinguished? It is not too late to change. It may not entirely obliterate from your soul the memory of wasted years and a ruined reputation, nor smooth out from your anxious brow the wrinkles which trouble has plowed. It may not call back unkind words uttered or rough deeds done; for perhaps in those awful moments you struck her! It may not take from your memory the bitter thoughts connected with some little grave. But it is not too late to save yourself, and secure for God and your family the remainder of your fast-going life.

But perhaps you have not utterly gone astray. I may address one who may not have quite made up his mind. Let your better nature speak out. You take one side or other in war against drunkenness. Have you the courage to put your foot down right, and say to your companions and friends, "I will never drink intoxicating liquor in all my life; nor will I countenance the habit in others"? Have nothing to do with strong drink. It has turned the earth into a place of skulls, and has stood opening the gate to a lost world to let in its victims; until now the door swings no more upon its hinges, but, day and night, stands wide open to let in the agonized procession of doomed men.

Do I address one whose regular work in life is to administer to this appetite? For God's sake get out of that business! If a we be pronounced upon the man who gives his neighbor drink, how many woes must be hanging over the man who does this every day and every hour of the day!

Do not think that because human government may license you that therefore God licenses you. I am surprized to hear men say that they respect the "original package" decision by which the Supreme Court of the United States allows rum to be taken into States like Kansas, which decided against the sale of intoxicants. I have no respect for a wrong decision, I care not who makes it; the three judges of the Supreme Court who gave minority report against that decision were right, and the chief justice was wrong. The right of a State to defend itself against the rum traffic will yet be demonstrated, the Supreme Court notwithstanding. Higher than the judicial bench at Washington is the throne of the Lord God Almighty. No enactment, national, State, or municipal, can give you the right to carry on a business whose effect is destruction.

God knows better than you do yourself the number of drinks you have poured down. You keep a list; but a more accurate list has been kept than yours. You may call it Burgundy, Bourbon, cognac, Heidsieck, sour mash, or beer. God calls it "strong-drink." Whether you sell it in low oyster-cellar or behind the polished counter of a first-class hotel, the divine curse is upon you. I tell you plainly that you will meet your customers one day when there will be no counter between you. When your work is done on earth, and you enter the reward of your business, all the souls of the men whom you have destroyed will crowd around you, and pour their bitterness into your cup. They will show you their wounds and say, "You made them"; and point to their unquenchable thirst and say, "You kindled it"; and rattle their chain and say, "You forged it." Then their united groans will smite your ear; and with the hands out of which you once picked the sixpences and the dimes they will push you off the verge of great precipices; while rolling up from beneath, and breaking away among the crags of death, will thunder, "Wo to him that giveth his neighbor drink!"

**÷**08-02 SPURGEON

SONGS IN THE NIGHT

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was born at Kelvedon, Essex, England, in 1834. He was one of the most powerful and popular preachers of his time, and his extraordinary force of character and wonderful enthusiasm attracted vast audiences. His voice was unusually powerful, clear and melodious, and he used it with consummate skill. In the preparation of his sermons he meditated much but wrote not a word, so that he was in the truest sense a purely extemporaneous speaker. Sincerity, intensity, imagination and humor, he had in preeminent degree, and an English style that has been described as "a long bright river of silver speech which unwound, evenly and endlessly, like a ribbon from a revolving spool that could fill itself as fast as it emptied itself." Thirty-eight volumes of his sermons were issued in his lifetime and are still in increasing demand. Dr. Robertson Nicoll says: "Our children will think more of these sermons than we do; and as I get older I read them more and more." He died in 1892.

SPURGEON

1834—1892

SONGS IN THE NIGHT

*But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night*?—Job 35:10.

Elihu was a wise man, exceeding wise, tho not as wise as the all-wise Jehovah, who sees light in the clouds, and finds order in confusion; hence Elihu, being much puzzled at beholding Job thus afflicted, cast about him to find the cause of it, and he very wisely hit upon one of the most likely reasons, altho it did not happen to be the right one in Job's case. He said within himself—"Surely, if men be tried and troubled exceedingly, it is because, while they think about their troubles and distress themselves about their fears, they do not say, 'Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night?'" Elihu's reason was right in the majority of cases. The great cause of the Christian's distress, the reason of the depths of sorrow into which many believers are plunged, is this—that while they are looking about, on the right hand and on the left, to see how they may escape their troubles, they forget to look to the hills whence all real help cometh; they do not say, "Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night?" We shall, however, leave that inquiry, and dwell upon those sweet words, "God my maker, who giveth songs in the night."

The world hath its night. It seemeth necessary that it should have one. The sun shineth by day, and men go forth to their labors; but they grow weary, and nightfall cometh on, like a sweet boon from heaven. The darkness draweth the curtains, and shutteth out the light, which might prevent our eyes from slumber; while the sweet, calm stillness of the night permits us to rest upon the lap of ease, and there forget awhile our cares, until the morning sun appeareth, and an angel puts his hand upon the curtain, and undraws it once again, touches our eyelids, and bids us rise, and proceed to the labors of the day. Night is one of the greatest blessings men enjoy; we have many reasons to thank God for it. Yet night is to many a gloomy season. There is "the pestilence that walketh in darkness"; there is "the terror by night"; there is the dread of robbers and of fell disease, with all those fears that the timorous know, when they have no light wherewith they can discern objects. It is then they fancy that spiritual creatures walk the earth; tho, if they knew rightly, they would find it to be true, that

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk this earth,  
Unseen, both when we sleep and when we wake,"

and that at all times they are round about us—not more by night than by day. Night is the season of terror and alarm to most men. Yet even night hath its songs. Have you never stood by the seaside at night, and heard the pebbles sing, and the waves chant God's glories? Or have you never risen from your couch, and thrown up the window of your chamber, and listened there? Listened to what? Silence—save now and then a murmuring sound, which seems sweet music then. And have you not fancied that you heard the harp of God playing in heaven? Did you not conceive, that yon stars, that those eyes of God, looking down on you, were also mouths of song—that every star was singing God's glory, singing, as it shone, its mighty Maker, and His lawful, well-deserved praise? Night hath its songs. We need not much poetry in our spirit, to catch the song of night, and hear the spheres as they chant praises which are loud to the heart, tho they be silent to the ear—the praises of the mighty God, who bears up the unpillared arch of heaven, and moves the stars in their courses….

If we are going to sing of the things of yesterday, let us begin with what God did for us in past times. My beloved brethren, you will find it a sweet subject for song at times, to begin to sing of electing love and covenanted mercies. When thou thyself art low, it is well to sing of the fountain-head of mercy; of that blest decree wherein thou wast ordained to eternal life, and of that glorious Man who undertook thy redemption; of that solemn covenant signed, and sealed, and ratified, in all things ordered well; of that everlasting love which, ere the hoary mountains were begotten, or ere the aged hills were children, chose thee, loved thee firmly, loved thee fast, loved thee well, loved thee eternally. I tell thee, believer, if thou canst go back to the years of eternity; if thou canst in thy mind run back to that period, or ere the everlasting hills were fashioned, or the fountains of the great deep scooped out, and if thou canst see thy God inscribing thy name in His eternal book; if thou canst see in His loving heart eternal thoughts of love to thee, thou wilt find this a charming means of giving thee songs in the night. No songs like those which come from electing love; no sonnets like those that are dictated by meditations on discriminating mercy. Some, indeed, cannot sing of election: the Lord open their mouths a little wider! Some there are that are afraid of the very term; but we only despise men who are afraid of what they believe, afraid of what God has taught them in His Bible. No, in our darker hours it is our joy to sing:

"Sons we are through God's election,  
Who in Jesus Christ believe;  
By eternal destination,  
Sovereign grace we now receive.  
Lord, thy favor,  
Shall both grace and glory give."

Think, Christian, of the yesterday, I say, and thou wilt get a song in the night. But if thou hast not a voice tuned to so high a key as that, let me suggest some other mercies thou mayest sing of; and they are the mercies thou hast experienced. What! man, canst thou not sing a little of that blest hour when Jesus met thee; when, a blind slave, thou wast sporting with death, and He saw thee, and said: "Come, poor slave, come with me"? Canst thou not sing of that rapturous moment when He snapt thy fetters, dashed thy chains to the earth, and said: "I am the Breaker; I came to break thy chains, and set thee free"? What tho thou art ever so gloomy now, canst thou forget that happy morning, when in the house of God thy voice was loud, almost as a seraph's voice, in praise? for thou couldst sing: "I am forgiven; I am forgiven":

"A monument of grace,  
A sinner saved by blood."

Go back, man; sing of that moment, and then thou wilt have a song in the night? Or if thou hast almost forgotten that, then sure thou hast some precious milestone along the road of life that is not quite grown over with moss, on which thou canst read some happy inspiration of His mercy toward thee! What! didst thou never have a sickness like that which thou art suffering now, and did He not raise thee up from that? Wast thou never poor before, and did He not supply thy wants? Wast thou never in straits before, and did He not deliver thee? Come, man! I beseech thee, go to the river of thine experience, and pull up a few bulrushes, and weave them into an ark, wherein thy infant faith may float safely on the stream. I bid thee not forget what God hath done. What! hast thou buried thine own diary? I beseech thee, man, turn over the book of thy remembrance. Canst thou not see some sweet hill Mizar? Canst thou not think of some blest hour when the Lord met with thee at Hermon? Hast thou never been on the Delectable Mountains? Hast thou never been fetched from the den of lions? Hast thou never escaped the jaw of the lion and the paw of the bear? Nay, O man, I know thou hast; go back, then, a little way, and take the mercies of yesterday; and tho it is dark now, light up the lamps of yesterday, and they shall glitter through the darkness, and thou shalt find that God hath given thee a song in the night.

But I think, beloved, there is never so dark a night, but there is something to sing about, even concerning that night; for there is one thing I am sure we can sing about, let the night be ever so dark, and that is, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, and because His compassions fail not." If we cannot sing very loud, yet we can sing a little low tune, something like this—"He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."

"Oh!" says one, "I do not know where to get my dinner from to-morrow. I am a poor wretch." So you may be, my dear friend; but you are not so poor as you deserve to be. Do not be mightily offended about that; if you are, you are no child of God; for the child of God acknowledges that he has no right to the least of God's mercies, but that they come through the channel of grace alone. As long as I am out of hell, I have no right to grumble; and if I were in hell I should have no right to complain, for I feel, when convinced of sin, that never creature deserved to go there more than I do. We have no cause to murmur; we can lift up our hands, and say, "Night! thou art dark, but thou mightst have been darker. I am poor, but, if I could not have been poorer, I might have been sick. I am poor and sick—well, I have some friend left, my lot cannot be so bad, but it might have been worse." And therefore, Christian, you will always have one thing to sing about—"Lord, I thank Thee, it is not all darkness!" Besides, Christian, however dark the night is, there is always a star or moon. There is scarce ever a night that we have, but there are just one or two little lamps burning up there. However dark it may be, I think you may find some little comfort, some little joy, some little mercy left, and some little promise to cheer thy spirit. The stars are not put out, are they? Nay, if thou canst not see them, they are there; but methinks one or two must be shining on thee; therefore give God a song in the night. If thou hast only one star, bless God for that one, perhaps He will make it two; and if thou hast only two stars, bless God for the two stars, and perhaps He will make them four. Try, then, if thou canst not find a song in the night.

But, beloved, there is another thing of which we can sing yet more sweetly; and that is, we can sing of the day that is to come. I am preaching to-night for the poor weavers of Spitalfields. Perhaps there are not to be found a class of men in London who are suffering a darker night than they are; for while many classes have been befriended and defended, there are few who speak up for them, and (if I am rightly informed) they are generally ground down within an inch of their lives. I suppose that their masters intend that their bread shall be very sweet, on the principle, that the nearer the ground, the sweeter the grass; for I should think that no people have their grass so near the ground as the weavers of Spitalfields. In an inquiry by the House of Commons last week, it was given in evidence that their average wages amount to seven or eight shillings a week; and that they have to furnish themselves with a room, and work at expensive articles, which my friends and ladies are wearing now, and which they buy as cheaply as possible; but perhaps they do not know that they are made with the blood and bones and marrow of the Spitalfields weavers, who, many of them, work for less than man ought to have to subsist upon. Some of them waited upon me the other day; I was exceedingly pleased with one of them. He said, "Well, sir, it is very hard, but I hope there is better times coming for us." "Well, my friend," I said, "I am afraid you cannot hope for much better times, unless the Lord Jesus Christ comes a second time." "That is just what we hope for," said he. "We do not see there is any chance of deliverance, unless the Lord Jesus Christ comes to establish His kingdom upon the earth; and then He will judge the opprest, and break the oppressors in pieces with an iron rod, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." I was glad my friend had got a song in the night, and was singing about the morning that was coming. Often do I cheer myself with the thought of the coming of the Lord. We preach now, perhaps, with little success; "the kingdoms of this world" are not "become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ"; we send out missionaries; they are for the most part unsuccessful. We are laboring, but we do not see the fruits of our labors. Well, what then? Try a little while; we shall not always labor in vain, or spend our strength for naught. A day is coming, and now is, when every minister of Christ shall speak with unction, when all the servants of God shall preach with power, and when colossal systems of heathenism shall be scattered to the winds. The shout shall be heard, "Alleluia! Alleluia! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." For that day do I look; it is to the bright horizon of that second coming that I turn my eyes. My anxious expectation is, that the sweet Sun of righteousness will arise with healing beneath His wings, that the opprest shall be righted, that despotisms shall be cut down, that liberty shall be established, that peace shall be made lasting, and that the glorious liberty of the gospel shall be extended throughout the known world. Christian! if thou art in a night, think of the morrow; cheer up thy heart with the thought of the coming of thy Lord.

There is another sweet to-morrow of which we hope to sing in the night. Soon, beloved, you and I shall lie on our dying bed, and we shall want a song in the night then; and I do not know where we shall get it, if we do not get it from the to-morrow. Kneeling by the bed of an apparently dying saint, last night, I said, "Well, sister, He has been precious to you; you can rejoice in His covenant mercies, and His past loving-kindnesses." She put out her hand, and said, "Ah! sir, do not talk about them now; I want the sinner's Savior as much now as ever; it is not a saint's I want; it is still a sinner's Savior that I am in need of, for I am a sinner still." I found that I could not comfort her with the past; so I reminded her of the golden streets, of the gates of pearl, of the walls of jasper, of the harps of gold, of the songs of bliss; and then her eyes glistened; she said, "Yes, I shall be there soon; I shall meet them by-and-by;" and then she seemed so glad! Ah! believer, you may always cheer yourself with that thought. Thy head may be crowned with thorny troubles now, but it shall wear a starry crown directly; thy hand may be filled with cares—it shall grasp a harp soon, a harp full of music. Thy garments may be soiled with dust now; they shall be white by-and-by. Wait a little longer. Ah! beloved, how despicable our troubles and trials will seem when we look back upon them! Looking at them here in the prospect, they seem immense; but when we get to heaven, we shall then,

"With transporting joys recount  
The labors of our feet."

Our trials will seem to us nothing at all. We shall talk to one another about them in heaven, and find all the more to converse about, according as we have suffered more here below. Let us go on, therefore; and if the night be ever so dark, remember there is not a night that shall not have a morning; and that morning is to come by and by.

And now I want to tell you, very briefly, what are the excellences of songs in the night above all other songs.

In the first place, when you hear a man singing a song in the night—I mean in the night of trouble—you may be quite sure it is a hearty one. Many of you sang very prettily just now, didn't you? I wonder whether you would sing very prettily, if there was a stake or two in Smithfield for all of you who dared to do it? If you sang under pain and penalty, that would show your heart to be in your song. We can all sing very nicely indeed when everybody else sings. It is the easiest thing in the world to open your mouth, and let the words come out; but when the devil puts his hand over your mouth, can you sing then? Can you say, "Tho he slay me, yet will I trust in him"? That is hearty singing; that is real song that springs up in the night. The nightingale singeth most sweetly because she singeth in the night. We know a poet has said that, if she sang by day, she might be thought to sing no more sweetly than the wren. It is the stillness of the night that makes her song sweet. And so doth a Christian's song become sweet and hearty, because it is in the night.

Again: the songs we sing in the night will be lasting. Many songs we hear our fellow-creatures singing in the streets will not do to sing by-and-by; I guess they will sing a different kind of tune soon. They can sing nowadays any rollicking, drinking songs; but they will not sing them when they come to die; they are not exactly the songs with which to cross Jordan's billows. It will not do to sing one of those light songs when death and you are having the last tug. It will not do to enter heaven singing one of those unchaste, unholy sonnets. No; but the Christian who can sing in the night will not have to leave off his song; he may keep on singing it forever. He may put his foot in Jordan's stream, and continue his melody; he may wade through it, and keep on singing still, and land himself safe in heaven; and when he is there, there need not be a gap in his strain, but in a nobler, sweeter strain he may still continue singing His power to save. There are a great many of you that think Christian people are a very miserable set, don't you? You say, "Let me sing my song." Ay, but, my dear friends, we like to sing a song that will last; we don't like your songs; they are all froth, like bubbles on the beaker, and they will soon die away and be lost. Give me a song that will last; give me one that will not melt. Oh, give me not the dreamster's gold! he hoards it up, and says, "I'm rich"; and when he waketh, his gold is gone. But give me songs in the night, for they are songs I sing forever.

Again: the songs we warble in the night are those that show we have real faith in. God. Many men have just enough faith to trust God as far as they can see Him, and they always sing as far as they can see providence go right; but true faith can sing when its possessors cannot see. It can take hold of God when they cannot discern Him.

Songs in the night, too, prove that we have true courage. Many sing by day who are silent by night; they are afraid of thieves and robbers; but the Christian who sings in the night proves himself to be a courageous character. It is the bold Christian who can sing God's sonnets in the darkness.

He who can sing songs in the night, too, proves that he has true love to Christ. It is not love to Christ to praise Him while everybody else praises Him; to walk arm in arm with Him when He has the crown on His head is no great deed, I wot; to walk with Christ in rags is something. To believe in Christ when He is shrouded in darkness, to stick hard and fast by the Savior when all men speak ill of Him and forsake Him—that is true faith. He who singeth a song to Christ in the night, singeth the best song in all the world; for He singeth from the heart.

I am afraid of wearying you; therefore I shall not dwell on the excellences of night songs, but just, in the last place, show you their use.

It is very useful to sing in the night of our troubles, first, because it will cheer ourselves. When you were boys living in the country, and had some distance to go alone at night, don't you remember how you whistled and sang to keep your courage up? Well, what we do in the natural world we ought to do in the spiritual. There is nothing like singing to keep your spirits alive. When we have been in trouble, we have often thought ourselves to be well-nigh overwhelmed with difficulty; and we have said, "Let us have a song." We have begun to sing; and Martin Luther says, "The devil cannot bear singing." That is about the truth; he does not like music. It was so in Saul's days: an evil spirit rested on Saul; but when David played on his harp, the evil spirit went away from him. This is usually the case: if we can begin to sing we shall remove our fears. I like to hear servants sometimes humming a tune at their work; I love to hear a plowman in the country singing as he goes along with his horses. Why not? You say he has no time to praise God; but he can sing a song—surely he can sing a Psalm, it will take no more time. Singing is the best thing to purge ourselves of evil thoughts. Keep your mouth full of songs, and you will often keep your heart full of praises; keep on singing as long as you can; you will find it a good method of driving away your fears.

Sing, again, for another reason: because it will cheer your companions. If any of them are in the valley and in the darkness with you, it will be a great help to comfort them. John Bunyan tells us, that as Christian was going through the valley he found it a dreadful dark place, and terrible demons and goblins were all about him, and poor Christian thought he must perish for certain; but just when his doubts were the strongest, he heard a sweet voice; he listened to it, and he heard a man in front of him saying, "Yea, when I pass through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Now, that man did not know who was near him, but he was unwittingly singing to cheer a man behind. Christian, when you are in trouble, sing; you do not know who is near you. Sing, perhaps you will get a companion by it. Sing! perhaps there will be many a heart cheered by your song. There is some broken spirit, it may be, that will be bound up by your sonnets. Sing! there is some poor distrest brother, perhaps, shut up in the Castle of Despair, who, like King Richard, will hear your song inside the walls, and sing to you again, and you may be the means of getting him a ransom. Sing, Christian, wherever you go; try, if you can, to wash your face every morning in a bath of praise. When you go down from your chamber, never go to look on man till you have first looked on your God; and when you have looked on Him, seek to come down with a face beaming with joy; carry a smile, for you will cheer up many a poor way-worn pilgrim by it.

One more reason; and I know it will be a good one for you. Try and sing in the night, Christian, for that is one of the best arguments in all the world in favor of your religion. Our divines nowadays spend a great deal of time in trying to prove Christianity against those who disbelieve it. I should like to have seen Paul trying that! Elymas the sorcerer withstood him: how did our friend Paul treat him? He said, "Oh, full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of the righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" That is about the politeness such men ought to have who deny God's truth. "We start with this assumption: we will prove that the Bible is God's word, but we are not going to prove God's word. If you do not like to believe it, we will shake hands, and bid you good-by; we will not argue with you. The gospel has gained little by discussion. The greatest piece of folly on earth has been to send a man round the country, to follow another up who has been lecturing on infidelity just to make himself notorious.

Why, let them lecture on; this is a free country; why should we follow them about? The truth will win the day. Christianity need not wish for controversy; it is strong enough for it, if it wishes it; but that is not God's way.

God's direction is, "Preach, teach, dogmatize." Do not stand disputing; claim a divine mission; tell men that God says it, and there leave it. Say to them, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned"; and when you have done that, you have done enough. For what reason should our missionaries stand disputing with Brahmins? Why should they be wasting their time by attempting to refute first this dogma, and then another, of heathenism? Why not just go and say, "The God whom ye ignorantly worship, I declare unto you; believe me, and you will be saved; believe me not, and the Bible says you are lost." And then, having thus asserted God's word, say, "I leave it, I declare it unto you; it is a thing for you to believe, not a thing for you to reason about."

Religion is not a thing merely for your intellect; a thing to prove your own talent upon, by making a syllogism on it; it is a thing that demands your faith. As a messenger of heaven, I demand that faith; if you do not choose to give it, on your own head be the doom, if there be such, if there be not, you are prepared to risk it. But I have done my duty; I have told you the truth; that is enough, and there I leave it. Oh, Christian, instead of disputing, let me tell thee how to prove your religion. Live it out!

Live it out! Give the external as well as the internal evidence; give the external evidence of your own life. You are sick; there is your neighbor who laughs at religion; let him come into your house. When he was sick, he said, "Oh, send for the doctor"; and there he was fretting, and fuming, and whining, and making all manner of noises. When you are sick, send for him, tell him that you are resigned to the Lord's will; that you will kiss the chastening rod; that you will take the cup, and drink it, because your Father gives it.

You do not need to make a boast of this, or it will lose all its power; but do it because you cannot help doing it. Your neighbor will say, "There is something in that." And when you come to the borders of the grave—he was there once, and you heard how he shrieked, and how frightened he was—give him your hand, and say to him, "Ah! I have a Christ that will do to die by; I have a religion that will make me sing in the night." Let me hear how you can sing, "Victory, victory, victory!" through Him that loved you. I tell you, we may preach fifty thousand sermons to prove the gospel, but we shall not prove it half so well as you will through singing in the night. Keep a cheerful frame; keep a happy heart; keep a contented spirit; keep your eye up, and your heart aloft, and you prove Christianity better than all the Butlers, and all the wise men that ever lived. Give them the analogy of a holy life, and then you will prove religion to them; give them, the evidence of internal piety, developed externally, and you will give the best possible proof of Christianity.

**÷**08-03 POTTER

MEMORIAL DISCOURSE ON PHILLIPS BROOKS

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Henry Codman Potter was born at Schenectady, New York, in 1834, and was graduated from the Theological Seminary of Virginia in 1857. He was appointed rector of Grace Protestant Episcopal Church, New York, in 1868, and was coadjutor to his uncle, Horatio Potter, from 1883 to 1887, when he was made Bishop of the Diocese of New York. He won considerable distinction as a clear-cut and eloquent speaker. He dealt in pulpit and on platform, with many public questions, such as temperance, capital and labor, civic righteousness, and the purifying of East Side slum life. He advocated personal freedom, and invariably spoke with authority. He was particularly happy as an after-dinner speaker. He died in 1908.

POTTER

1834—1908

MEMORIAL DISCOURSE ON PHILLIPS BROOKS[1]

[Footnote 1: Reprinted by permission of Bishop Henry C. Potter and The  
Century Company, publishers of "The Scholar and the State."]

*It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*.—Joh 6:63.

He who stops over-long in the mere mechanism of religion is verily missing that for which religion stands. Here, indeed, it must be owned is, if not our greatest danger, one of the greatest. All life is full of that strange want of intellectual and moral perspective which fails to see how secondary, after all, are means to ends; and how he only has truly apprehended the office of religion who has learned, when undertaking in any wise to present it or represent it, to hold fast to that which is the one central thought and fact of all: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

And this brings me—in how real and vivid a way I am sure you must feel as keenly as I—face to face with him of whom I am set to speak to-day.

Never before in the history, not only of our communion, but of any or all communions, has the departure of a religious teacher been more widely noted and deplored than in the case of him of whom this Commonwealth and this diocese have been bereaved. Never before, surely, in case of any man whom we can recall, has the sense of loss and bereavement been more distinctly a personal one,—extending to multitudes in two hemispheres who did not know him, who had never seen or heard him, and yet to whom he had revealed himself in such real and helpful ways.

It has followed, inevitably, from this, that that strong tide of profound feeling has found expression in many and most unusual forms, and it will be among the most interesting tasks of the future biographer of the late Bishop of Massachusetts to take note of these various memorials and to trace in them the secret of his unique power and influence.

But just because they have, so many of them, in such remarkable variety and from sources so diverse, been written or spoken, and no less because a memoir of Phillips Brooks is already undertaken by hands preeminently designated for that purpose, I may wisely here confine myself to another and very different task. I shall not attempt, therefore, even the merest outline of a biographical review. I shall not undertake to analyze, nor, save incidentally, even to refer to, the influences and inheritances that wrought in the mind and upon the life of your late friend and teacher. I shall still less attempt to discover the open secret of his rare and unique charm and attractiveness as a man; and I shall least of all endeavor to forecast the place which history will give to him among the leaders and builders of our age. Brief as was his ministry in his higher office, and to our view all too soon ended, I shall be content to speak of him as a bishop,—of his divine right, as I profoundly believe, to a place in the episcopate, and of the preeminent value of his distinctive and incomparable witness to the highest aim and purpose of that office.

And first of all let me say a word in regard to the way in which he came to it. When chosen to the episcopate of this diocese, your late bishop had already, at least once, as we all know, declined the office. It was well known to those who knew him best that, as he had viewed it for a large part of his ministry, it was a work for which he had no especial sympathy either as to its tasks, or, as he had understood them, its opportunities.

But the time undoubtedly came when, as to this, he modified his earlier opinions; and the time came too, as I am most glad to think, when he was led to feel that if he were called to such an office he might find in it an opportunity for widening his own sympathies and for estimating more justly those with whom previously he had believed himself to have little in common.

It was the inevitable condition of his strong and deep convictions that he should not always or easily understand or make due allowance for men of different opinions. It was—God and you will bear me witness that this is true!—one of the noblest characteristics of his fifteen months' episcopate that, as a bishop, men's rightful liberty of opinion found in him not only a large and generous tolerance, but a most beautiful and gracious acceptance. He seized, instantly and easily, that which will be forever the highest conception of the episcopate in its relations whether to the clergy or the laity, its paternal and fraternal character; and his "sweet reasonableness," both as a father and as a brother, shone through all that he was and did.

For one, I greatly love to remember this,—that when the time came he himself, with the simple naturalness which marked all that he did, was brought to reconsider his earlier attitude toward the episcopal office, and to express with characteristic candor his readiness to take up its work if he should be chosen to it; he turned to his new, and to him most strange, task with a supreme desire to do it in a loving and whole-hearted way, and to make it helpful to every man, woman, and child with whom he came in contact. What could have been more like him than that, in that last address which he delivered to the choir-boys at Newton, he should have said to them, "When you meet me let me know that you know me." Another might easily have been misunderstood in asking those whom he might by chance encounter to salute him; but he knew, and the boys knew, what he had in mind,—how he and they were all striving to serve one Master, and how each—he most surely as much as they—was to gain strength and cheer from mutual recognition in the spirit of a common brotherhood.

And thus it was always; and this it was that allied itself so naturally to that which was his never-ceasing endeavor—to lift all men everywhere to that which was, with him, the highest conception of his office, whether as a preacher or as a bishop,—the conception of God as a Father, and of the brotherhood of all men as mutually related in Him.

In an address which he delivered during the last General Convention in Baltimore to the students of Johns Hopkins University, he spoke substantially these words:

"In trying to win a man to a better life, show him not the evil but the nobleness of his nature. Lead him to enthusiastic contemplations of humanity;"

in its perfection, and when he asks, 'Why, if this is so, do not I have this life?'—then project on the background of his enthusiasm his own life; say to him, 'Because you are a liar, because you blind your soul with licentiousness, shame is born,—but not a shame of despair. It is soon changed to joy. Christianity becomes an opportunity, a high privilege, the means of attaining to the most exalted ideal—and the only means.'

"Herein must lie all real power; herein lay Christ's power, that he appreciated the beauty and richness of humanity, that it is very near the Infinite, very near to God. These two facts—we are the children of God, and God is our Father—make us look very differently at ourselves, very differently at our neighbors, very differently at God. We should be surprized, not at our good deeds, but at our bad ones. We should expect good as more likely to occur than evil; we should believe that our best moments are our truest. I was once talking with an acquaintance about whose religious position I knew nothing, and he exprest a very hopeful opinion in regard to a matter about which I was myself very doubtful.

"'Why, I said to him, 'You are an optimist.'

"'Of course I am an optimist,' he replied, because I am a Christian.'

"I felt that as a reproof. The Christian must be an optimist."

Men and brethren, I set these words over against those of his Master with which I began, and the two in essence are one. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." There is a life nobler and diviner than any that we have dreamed of. To the poorest and meanest of us, as to the best and most richly-dowered, it is alike open. To turn toward it, to reach up after it, to believe in its ever-recurring nearness, and to glorify God in attaining to it, this is the calling of a human soul.

Now then, what, I ask you, is all the rest of religion worth in comparison with this?—not what is it worth in itself, but what is its place relatively to this? This, I maintain, is the supreme question for the episcopate, as it ought to be the supreme question with the ministry of any and every order. And therefore it is, I affirm, that, in bringing into the episcopate with such unique vividness and power this conception of his office, your bishop rendered to his order and to the Church of God everywhere a service so transcendent. A most gifted and sympathetic observer of our departed brother's character and influence has said of him, contrasting him with the power of institution, "His life will always suggest the importance of the influence of the individual man as compared with institutional Christianity."

In one sense, undoubtedly, this is true; but I should prefer to say that his life-work will always show the large and helpful influence of a great soul upon institutional Christianity. It is a superficial and unphilosophical temperament that disparages institutions; for institutions are only another name for that organized force and life by which God rules the world. But it is undoubtedly and profoundly true that you no sooner have an institution, whether in society, in politics, or in religion, than you are threatened with the danger that the institution may first exaggerate itself and then harden and stiffen into a machine; and that in the realm of religion, preeminently, those whose office it should be to quicken and infuse it with new life should themselves come at last to "worship the net and the drag." And just here you find in the history of religion in all ages the place of the prophet and the seer. He is to pierce through the fabric of the visible structure to that soul of things for which it stands. When, in Isaiah, the Holy Ghost commands the prophet, "Lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid: say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" it is not alone, you see, his voice that lie is to lift up. No, no! It is the vision of the unseen and divine. "Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!"

Over and over again that voice breaks in upon the slumbrous torpor of Israel and smites the dead souls of priests and people alike. Now it is a Balaam, now it is an Elijah, a David, an Isaiah, a John the Baptist, a Paul the Apostle, a Peter the Hermit, a Savonarola, a Huss, a Whitefield, a Wesley, a Frederick Maurice, a Frederick Robertson, a Phillips Brooks.

Do not mistake me. I do not say that there were not many others. But these names are typical, and that for which they stand cannot easily be mistaken. I affirm without qualification that, in that gift of vision and of exaltation for which they stand, they stand for the highest and the best,—that one thing for which the Church of God most of all stands, and of which so long as it is the Church Militant it will most of all stand in need: to know that the end of all its mechanisms and ministries is to impart life, and that nothing which obscures or loses sight of the eternal source of life can regenerate or quicken;—to teach men to cry out, with St. Augustine, "*Fecisti nos ad te, Domine, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te*": Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is unquiet until its rests in Thee,—this however, as any one may be tempted to fence and juggle with the fact, is the truth on which all the rest depends.

Unfortunately it is a truth which there is much in the tasks and engagements of the episcopate to obscure. A bishop is preeminently, at any rate in the popular conception of him, an administrator; and howsoever wide of the mark this popular conception may be from the essential idea of the office, it must be owned that there is much in a bishop's work in our day to limit his activities, and therefore his influence, within such a sphere.

To recognize his prophetic office as giving expression to that mission of the Holy Ghost of which he is preeminently the representative, to illustrate it upon a wider instead of a narrower field, to recognize and seize the greater opportunities for its exercise, to be indeed "a leader and commander" to the people, not by means of the petty mechanisms of officialism, but by the strong, strenuous, and unwearied proclamation of the truth; under all conditions to make the occasion somehow a stepping-stone to that mount of vision from which men may see God and righteousness and become sensible of the nearness of both to themselves,—this, I think you will agree with me, is no unworthy use of the loftiest calling and the loftiest gifts.

And such a use was his. A bishop-elect, walking with him one day in the country, was speaking, with not unnatural shrinking and hesitancy, of the new work toward which he was soon to turn his face, and said among other things, "I have a great dread, in the Episcopate, of perfunctoriness. In the administration, especially, of confirmation, it seems almost impossible, in connection with its constant repetition, to avoid it."

He was silent a moment, and then said, "I do not think that it need be so. The office indeed is the same. But every class is different; and then—think what it is to them! It seems to me that that thought can never cease to move one."

What a clear insight the answer gave to his own ministry. One turns back to his first sermon, that evening when, with his fellow-student in Virginia, he walked across the fields to the log-cabin where, not yet in holy orders, he preached it, and where afterward he ministered with such swiftly increasing power to a handful of negro servants. "It was an utter failure," he said afterward. Yes, perhaps; but all through the failure he struggled to give expression to that of which his soul was full; and I do not doubt that even then they who heard him somehow understood him. We pass from those first words to the last,—those of which I spoke a moment ago,—the address to the choir-boys at Newton,—was there ever such, an address to choir-boys before? He knew little or nothing about the science of music, and with characteristic candor he at once said so. But he passed quickly from the music to those incomparable words of which the music was the mere vehicle and vesture. He bade the lads to whom he spoke think of those who, long ago and all the ages down, had sung that matchless Psalter,—of the boys and men of other times, and what it had meant to them. And then, as he looked into their fresh young faces and saw the long vista of life stretching out before them, he bade them think of that larger and fuller meaning which was to come into those Psalms of David, when he,—was there some prophetic sense of how soon with him the end would be?—when he and such as he had passed away,—what new doors were to open, what deeper meanings were to be discerned, what nobler opportunities were to dawn, as the years hastened swiftly on toward their august and glorious consummation! How it all lifts us up as we read it, and how like it was to that "one sermon" which he forever preached!

And in saying so I do not forget what that was which some men said was missing in it. His, they tell us—who hold some dry and formalized statement of the truth so close to the eye that it obscures all larger vision of it,—his, they tell us, was an "invertebrate theology." Of what he was and spoke, such a criticism is as if one said of the wind, that divinely appointed symbol of the Holy Ghost, "it has no spine nor ribs."

A spine and ribs are very necessary things; but we bury them as so much chalk and lime when once the breath has gone out of them! In the beginning we read, "And the Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

And all along since then there have been messengers of God into whom the same divine breath has been, as it were, without measure breathed, and who have been the quickeners and inspirers of their fellows. Nothing less than this can explain that wholly exceptional and yet consistent influence which he whom we mourn gave forth. It was not confined or limited by merely personal or physical conditions, but breathed with equal and quickening power through all that he taught and wrote. There were multitudes who never saw or heard him, but by whom nevertheless he was as intimately known and understood as if he had been their daily companion.

Never was there an instance which more truly fulfilled the saying, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." They reached down to the inmost need of empty and aching hearts and answered it. They spoke to that in the most sin-stained and wayward soul which is, after all, the image of the invisible God,—spoke to it, touched it, constrained it. "What has this fine-bred Boston scholar," plain men asked, when he bade him come to us and preach in our Trinity—"what has such an one to say to the business men of Wall Street?" But when he came, straightway every man found out that he had indeed something to say to him,—a word of power, a word of hope, a word of enduring joy and strength!

A kindred thinker of large vision and rare insight, New England born and nurtured like himself, speaking of him not long after his death, said:

"There are three forms pertaining to the Christian truths: they are true as facts, they are true as doctrines intellectually apprehended, they are true as spiritual experiences to be realized. Bishop Brooks struck directly for the last. In the spirit he found the truth; and only as he could get it into a spiritual form did he conceive it to have power.

"It was because he assumed the facts as true in the main, refusing to insist on petty accuracy, and passed by doctrinal forms concerning which there might be great divergence of opinion, and carried his thought on into the world of spirit, that he won so great a hearing and such conviction of belief. For it is the spirit that gives common standing-ground; it says substantially the same thing in all men. Speak as a spirit to the spiritual nature of men, and they will respond, because in the spirit they draw near to their common source and to the world to which all belong.

"It was because he dealt with this common factor of the human and the divine nature that he was too positive and practical. In the spirit it is all yea and amen; there is no negative; in the New Jerusalem there is no night. We can describe this feature of his ministry by words from, one of his own sermons: 'It has always been through men of belief, not unbelief, that power from God has poured into man. It is not the discriminating critic, but he whose beating, throbbing life offers itself a channel for the divine force,—he is the man through, whom the world grows rich, and whom it remembers, remembers with perpetual thanksgiving.'"

And shall not you who are here to-day thank God that such a man was, tho for so brief a space, your bishop? Some there were, you remember, who thought that those greater spiritual gifts of his would unfit him for the business of practical affairs. "A bishop's daily round," they said, "his endless correspondence, his hurried journeyings, his weight of anxious cares, the misadventures of other men, ever returning to plague him,—how can he bring himself to stoop and deal with these?"

But as in so much else that was transcendent in him, how little here, too, his critics understood him! No more pathetic proof of this has come to light than in that testimony of one among you who, as his private secretary, stood in closest and most intimate relations to him. What a story that is which he has given to us of a great soul—faithful always in the greatest? Yes, but no less faithful in the least. There seems a strange, almost grotesque impossibility in the thought that such an one should ever have come to be regarded as "a stickler for the canons."

But we look a little deeper than the surface, and all that is incongruous straightway disappears. His was the realm of a divine order,—his was the office of his Lord's servant. God had called him. He had put him where he was. He had set his Church to be His witness in the world, and in it, all His children, the greatest with the least, to walk in ways of reverent appointment. Those ways might irk and cramp him sometimes. They did: he might speak of them with sharp impatience and seeming disesteem sometimes. He did that too, now and then,—for he was human like the rest of us! But mark you this, my brothers, for, in an age which, under one figment or another, whether of more ancient or more modern license, is an age of much self-will,—we shall do well to remember it,—his was a life of orderly and consistent obedience to rule. He kept to the Church's plain and stately ways: kept to them and prized them too.

But all the while he held his soul wide open to the vision of his Lord! Up out of a routine that seemed to others that did not know or could not understand him, and who vouchsafed to him much condescending compassion for a bondage which he never felt, and of which in vain they strove to persuade him to complain,—up out of the narrower round in which so faithfully he walked, from time to time he climbed, and came back bathed in a heavenly light, with lips aglow with heavenly fire. The Spirit had spoken to him, and so he spoke to us. "The flesh profiteth nothing: it is the spirit that quickeneth. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

And so we thank God not alone for his message, but that it was given to him to speak it as a bishop in the Church of God. We thank God that in a generation that so greatly needs to cry, as our *Te Deum* teaches us, "Govern us and lift us up!" he was given to the Church not alone to rule but to uplift.

What bishop is there who may not wisely seek to be like him by drawing forever on those fires of the Holy Ghost that set his lips aflame? Nay, what soul among us all is there that may not wisely seek to ascend up into that upper realm in which he walked, and by whose mighty airs his soul was filled? Unto the almighty and ever-living God we yield most high praise and hearty thanks for the wonderful grace and virtue declared in all His saints who have been the chosen vessels of His grace and the lights of the world in their several generations; but here and to-day especially for his servant, Phillips Brooks, some time of this Commonwealth and this diocese, true prophet, true priest, true bishop, to the glory of God the Father.

**÷**08-04 ABBOTT

THE DIVINITY IN HUMANITY

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Lyman Abbott was born at Roxbury, Mass., in 1835. As successor to Henry Ward Beecher, at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, he ministered with great spiritual power until 1898, when he resigned his pastorate to devote his entire time to *The Outlook*, of which he was, and still is, the editor. Dr. Abbott's conception of the minister's work is briefly summed up in his own words:

"Whenever a minister forgets the splendid message of pardon, peace and power based on faith in Jesus Christ as God manifest in the flesh, whenever for this message he substitutes literary lectures, critical essays, sociological disquisitions, theological controversies, or even ethical interpretations of the universal conscience, whenever, in other words, he ceases to be a Christian preacher and becomes a lyceum or seminary lecturer, he divests himself of that which in all ages of the world has been the power of the Christian ministry, and will be its power so long as men have sins to be forgiven, temptations to conquer, and sorrows to be assuaged."

ABBOTT

BORN IN 1835

THE DIVINITY IN HUMANITY

*Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God*?—Joh 10:34-36.

The context and argument is this: Jesus Christ has declared that He will give unto His sheep eternal life; and that no one can pluck them out of His hand, because He and His Father are one; and the Father who gives these sheep to His care and keeping is greater than all the forces that are leagued against them. Thereat the Jews took up stones against Him, saying: "Being a man thou makest thyself equal with God." And Christ answers with our text. He refers them back to the Old Testament, which, He says, declares of the judges of Israel, of the men to whom the inspiration of God came, that they are divine. "Why, then," He says, "do you accuse Me of blasphemy because I claim divinity?" It is impossible to consider this a mere play upon the word; that Christ uses the word God in one sense in one paragraph and in another sense in the paragraph immediately following. It is impossible to conceive that this is a kind of sacred pun. No, no; the argument is clear and unmistakable. According to your Old Testament scripture, He says, the men in whom and to whom and through whom the power and grace of God are manifested are themselves the partakers of the divine nature. If that is so, if the men of the olden times, patriarchs and prophets, through whom the divine nature was manifested—if they are divine, do not accuse me of blasphemy because I claim for Myself divinity. If in this message, on the one hand, Christ claims kinship with God, on the other He lifts the whole of humanity up with Him and makes the claim for them. The religion of the Old Testament and the New Testament, the religion of Christianity and of Judaism, is a religion of faith in God. But it is not less truly a religion of faith in man, and of faith in man because man is a child of God. And the one faith would be utterly useless without the other. For faith in God is effective because it is accompanied with faith in man as the child of God.

And in this faith in man is the inspiration of all human progress. *Faith* in man, I say. Faith sees something which the eye does not see. Faith sees something which the reason does not perceive. Faith is not irrational, but it perceives a transcendent truth, over beyond that which the sense perceives. Faith is always intermixed with hope and with a great expectation, either with a hope because it sees something which is not yet but will be, or else with a hope because it sees something which is not yet seen but will be seen. Faith in a man is not a belief that man is to-day a great, noble character, but it is a perception in man of dormant possibilities of greatness and nobility which time and God will develop. It is only the man who has faith in man who can really interpret man. It is faith in man that gives us all true human insight. The difference between a photograph and a portrait is this: the photograph gives the outward feature, and stops there; and most of us, when we stand in a photograph saloon to have our picture taken, hide our soul away. The artist sees the soul behind the man, knows him, understands something of his nature, and paints the soul that looks out through the eyes. He sees in the man something which the sun does not exhibit, and makes that something shine on the canvas. The artist in literature sees an ideal humanity, and interprets it. Realism in literature does not portray the real man. Anthony Trollope pictures the Englishman as he is to-day, and society as any man may take it with a kodak; but Dickens gives Toby Veck and Tiny Tim; George Eliot, Adam Bede and Dinah Morris. Men say that no such boy ever lived as MacDonald has portrayed in Sir Gibbie. In every street Arab is a possible Sir Gibbie; and MacDonald has seen the possible and shown us what Christianity may make out of a street Arab. In this perception of a possible in man lies the spirit of all progress in science. The man of practical science laughs at the notion of an iron railway on which steam cars shall travel faster than English coaches. But the man of faith in men, who believes that it is in the power of men to dominate the powers of nature, builds the road. The man of practical science laughs at the notion that we can reach up our hands into the clouds and draw down the lightning. But Franklin does it. The man of faith is sometimes mistaken, but he is always experimenting, because he always believes that man to-morrow will be more than man is to-day or was yesterday. And all progress in civilization has its secret in this great faith in man as a being that has a mastery, not yet interpreted, not yet understood, not yet comprehended in its fulness, over all the powers of nature.

Now, is there any ground or basis for this faith in man? Have we a right to believe that man is more than he seems to be, as we can see him in the street to-day? Have we a right to build our institutions and fabrics on this belief? Have we a right to think that man can govern himself, or must we go back and say with Carlyle and Ruskin and Voltaire that the great body of men are incompetent to govern themselves, and a few wise rulers must govern them? Have we a right to believe that all the progress that has thus far been made in science is but an augury of progress far greater, reaching into the illimitable? Have we a right to say that these portraits of a possible humanity, this Portia, this Toby Veck, this Tiny Tim, this ideal man and woman, are real men and real women in possibility, if not in the actualities of life? Or are we to think of them as simply phantasmagoria hung up for the delectation of a passing moment? The Bible makes answer to that question,—the Bible preeminently, but the great poets and the great prophets of all religions; the Bible, because the poets and the prophets of the Bible transcend the poets and the prophets of all other religions. And that declaration is that man is made in the image of God, and that God dwells in man and is coming to the manifestation of Himself in growing, developing, redeemed humanity. Our Bible starts out with the declaration that God made man in His own image. The poets take the idea up. MacDonald tells us in that beautiful poem of his, that the babe came through the blue sky and got the blue of his eyes as he came; Wordsworth, that the child's imaginings are the recollected glory of a heavenly home; and the author of the first chapter of Genesis, that God breathed his own breath into the nostrils of man and made him in the image of God. All fancy, all imaginings? But, my dear friends, there is a truth in fancy as well as in science. We need not believe that this aspiration that shows itself in the pure mind of a little child is a trailing glory that he has brought with him from some pre-existent state. We need not think that it is physiological fact that the sky colored the eyes of the babe as the babe came through. Nor need we suppose that man was a clay image into which God breathed a physical breath, so animating him. But beyond all this imagery is the vision of the poet. God in man; a divine life throbbing in humanity; man the offspring of God; man coming forth from the eternal and going forth into the eternal.

This is the starting-point of the Bible. Starting with this, it goes on with declaration after declaration based on this fundamental doctrine that man and God in their essential moral attributes have the same nature. It is human experience which is used to interpret divine experience. According to pagan thought, God speaks to men through movements of the stars, through all external phenomena, through even entrails of animals. Seldom so in the Bible, save as when the wise men followed the star, and then that they might come to a divine humanity. In the Old Testament God speaks in human experience, through human experience, about human experience, to typify and interpret and explain Himself. God is like a shepherd that shepherds his flock. God is like a king that rules in justice. He is like the father that provides for his children. He is like the mother that comforts the weeping child. All the experiences of humanity are taken in turn and attributed to God. The hopes, the fears, the sorrows, the joys, the very things which we call faults in men—so strong and courageous are the old prophets in this fundamental faith of theirs that man and God are alike—the very things we call faults in men are attributed to the Almighty. He is declared to hate, to be wrathful, to be angry, to be jealous; because, at the root, every fault is a virtue set amiss; and the very faults of men have in them something that interprets the power and will of God, as the very faults of a boy interpret the virtues of his father. All through the Old Testament God manifests Himself through human experience. He speaks in the hearts of men; He dwells in the experience of men; He interprets Himself through the life of men; and, finally, when this one selected nation which has a genius for spiritual truth has been so far educated that there is no danger that it will go back and worship man, that it will become a mere hero-worshiper, when it has been so far educated that there is no danger of that, then Jesus Christ comes into the world—God manifests Himself in human life.

Who, then, is Jesus Christ? Let John tell us. The Oriental world was puzzled about the question of the origin of evil. They said, in brief, a good God cannot make a bad world. Out of a good God, therefore, there have emanated other gods, and out of these gods other gods, until at last there came to be imperfect gods or bad gods. And the world was made, some of them said, partly by a good god and partly by a bad one; and others by an imperfect god who was an emanation of the perfect one. Of these emanations one was Life, another was Light, another was the Word. And John, writing in the age of Oriental philosophy, uses the phraseology of Oriental philosophy in order that he might tell mankind who and what Jesus Christ is. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God." God never was an abstraction; from the very beginning He was a speaking God, a living God, a manifesting God, a forth-putting God. "The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. And this Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." Let me put this into modern language. What is it but this? From eternity God has been a manifesting God. When the fulness of time came, God, that He might manifest Himself to His children, came into a human life and dwelt in a human life. He that had spoken here through one prophet, there through another prophet; He that had sent one message in this direction and another in that; He that had spoken through signs and tokens, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, in divers manners and in fragmentary utterances—when the fulness of time had come, He spoke in one perfect human life, taking entire possession of it and making it His own, that He might manifest Himself in terms of human experience to humanity. Or turn to Paul and let me read you this declaration; "Let this mind be in you which was also in Jesus Christ; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." What is this, again, but the same declaration? God desiring to show Himself to humanity, entered into one human life, became subject to human conditions, shared the weakness, the wants, the ignorance of humanity, entered into and was identified with one human life.

Do I say, then, that Jesus Christ was a man like other men? No. But I do say that in their essential qualities God and man are identical, and God entered into humanity that He might show to humanity what He is. I do say, not that Jesus Christ was a man like other men, but that other men may become like Jesus Christ. I hold a bulb in my one hand and a tulip in my other. Will any man say to me, this beautiful flower with all its rich coloring is like this bulb? Oh, no! But let the sun of God shine long enough on this bulb, put it where it belongs, subject it to the conditions of life, and this bulb will become like this flower. Man is made in the image of God. All that is in man that is not in God's image does not belong to man's nature. Natural depravity? There is no natural depravity. Depravity is unnatural. Depravity is contra-natural. It is against the whole law of man's being. It is never wrong for any creature God has made to act out the nature which God endowed him with. It is not wicked for a tiger to be ravening. It is not wicked for a snake to be sinuous. It is wicked for man to be ravening or sinuous, because it is against the divine nature that God has put in man. He made man for better things.

God made man in His own image, God coming through successive stages, manifesting Himself in successive relations of Himself in human experience, God at last disclosing Himself in one pure, sinless, typical man in order that man through that humanity might know who and what God is—and is that the end? Oh, no! That is the beginning, only the beginning. For what did God come in Christ? Simply to show Himself? Here is a hospital—all manner of sick; the paralytic, the fever-stricken, the consumptive. Is it good news to these hospital bedridden ones if an athlete come in and show them his life, his muscles, the purity of his lungs, the health of his constitution, and then goes out? But if he comes in and says, "My friends, if you will follow my directions I will put into you consumptive ones some of the strength of my lungs, into you fever-stricken ones some of the purity of my blood; into you paralytic ones some of the sinew and muscle I possess—you can become like me," then there is good news in the message. If God came into the world simply to tell us what God is and what the ideal of humanity is, the gospel would be the saddest message that could be conceived, as delivered to the human race. It would add gloom to the gloom, darkness to the darkness, chains to the chains, despair to despair. He comes not merely to show divinity to us, but to impart divinity to us; rather, to evolve the latent divinity which He first implanted in us. As God has entered into Christ, He will enter into me. Christ says to me: As I am patient, you can become patient; as I am strong, you can become strong; as I am pure, you can become pure; as I am the Son of God, you can become the Son of God. Therefore His message is the gospel that it is.

Christ is not a man like other men. I can find in the biography of Jesus no trace of sin. In every other biography, oh, how many traces! There is no trace of repentance. The Hebrew Psalmist laments his iniquity. Paul confesses himself to be the chief of sinners. Luther, Calvin, Melanchthon, Edwards—go where I will, in the biography of all the saints there are signs of sin and iniquity. Never a trace of repentance or confession in Christ. In all others we see a struggle after God. "My heart panteth after thee, as the hart panteth after water-brooks." "I count not myself to have attained, but, forgetting those things that are behind, I press forward toward the mark." Never in the written biography of Christ a trace of that aspiration after something not yet reached. On the contrary, a great peace and a great possession. He says: I have come full of life. I have come to give life. This sinless Christ comes that He may give to us that which He Himself possesses; that He may take the sin out of our lives and sorrow out of our hearts, and for the yearning desire give a great, great peace. I have come, He says, that you might have life. How much, Lord and Master? Life more abundantly. What kind of life, Lord and Master? Eternal life. Has He come with that great life of His to give a little and then stop? Nay, to give all to every one that every one will take.

I marvel to find Christian men denying that Christ is the type and manifestation and revelation of the possible divinity in universal humanity. It is written all over the Bible. What says Christ Himself? I have come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly. As the Father has sent Me into the world, even so I send you into the world. You shall be My disciples. You shall learn of Me. You shall be My followers, and tread where I have trod. You shall take up My cross, and suffer as I have suffered. The secret of My life shall be the secret of your life. Ye shall be in Me. I will abide with you. Ye shall be as a branch grafted on the vine, drawing the same life as I have, as out of My very veins. As the Father was in Me, so I and My Father will come and abide in you. He breathes upon the disciples and tells them to receive the Spirit that was in Him; and in His last prayer He prays that they may share His glory, that they may be one with the Father, as He is one with the Father. Paul takes up the same refrain and repeats it over and over again. Righteousness in man is the righteousness of God, God's own righteousness coming out of God's heart into human hearts. Ye shall be partakers of the divine nature. Ye shall be joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ, inheriting all that Christ inherited from His Father. Ye shall have the same spirit that was in Christ. Metaphor and trope and figure are exhausted in the endeavor of the apostle to set forth this sublime truth. Christ is the servant of God. We are the servants of God. He is the Son of God. We are the sons of God. He is the light of the world. We are the lights of the world. He is a priest forever. We are priests perpetually serving in His temple. He is the one eternal sacrifice. We are to present our bodies a living sacrifice before God. He is dead. We are to die with Him. He has risen. We are to rise with Him. Already we sit in the heavenly place with Christ Jesus. We are changed from glory to glory into His image. We are predestined to be conformed to that image. We are bid to pray that we may be rooted and grounded in Christ, and that with Him, we may be filled with all the fulness of God.

Do I say, then, that I am equal to Christ? Or that I shall ever become equal to Christ? No! Let me try to make this plain to the child, and then the rest will perhaps understand it. Here is a great man. He is a great statesman. He is a great poet. He is a great orator. He is a great philosopher. He is a great general. He is Bismarck and Gladstone and Dante and Napoleon and Raphael and Plato all combined in one. And he has children, and this boy is a statesman, and this boy is a general, and this boy is an orator, and this boy is a poet, and this boy is an artist. No one of them comprizes all the genius that was in his father, but each one has one quality of that father, and all the boys together reflect their father's nature. No, I shall never be equal to Christ. But according to the measure of my own capacity, I may reflect even here and now something of Christ and be really Christ-like.

Christ is my Master. I acknowledge no other Master than Him. I wish to follow where He leads. I gladly believe whatever He says. And I have no other ambition—oh, I wish it were true that I never had any other ambition!—than to be like Him. But He is my Master because He bids me follow where He leads, because He gives what I can take, because He promised what He will yet fulfil. I believe in the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the center of my faith, as He is the center and source of my life. But I do not believe in the medieval formula that Jesus Christ is God and man mysteriously joined together, because to believe that would be to leave me both without an ideal of man which I might follow, and without a manifestation of God to which I might cling. In my country home two Christians quarreled. An atheist went to them and said to one of them, "Your Christ said, 'Forgive all your enemies and love one another.'" "Yes," he said, "Christ was divine. He could. I cannot." But there was nothing of moral virtue that God wrought in Christ that He cannot work in you and me if we give Him time enough. And, on the other hand, this separation of "God" and "man" in Christ denies the real manifestation of God to man. Jesus called His disciples to watch while He wrestled with agony in Gethsemane, and Dean Alford, speaking on Gethsemane, says this was the manifestation in Christ of human weakness. No! no! A thousand times, No! It is the glorious manifestation of that sympathy in God which wants the sympathy of the feeblest of His followers, as the mother wants the sympathy and love of the babe on her lap. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be. Only we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." There are two things we do not know. Genius is always a mystery, spiritual genius the greatest mystery of genius, and Christ the greatest mystery of all. We do not know what we shall be, any more than one who never had seen a garden could guess what the mold would be when the spring had finished its work. Those are two things we do not know. But there are two things we do know. We shall be like Him, and when we are like Him, we shall see Him as He is. We shall be like no imagination of Him, no deteriorated or imperfect conception of Him; but when we come to see Him in all the regal splendor of His character, with all the love, all the justice, all the purity, all the divine glory which is adumbrated and shadowed here because our eyes could not look upon it and still live—when we come to see Him in all the glory of that divine character, we shall be like Him—*we shall be like Him*.

BROOKS

THE PRIDE OF LIFE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Phillips Brooks was born at Boston, Mass., in 1835, graduated at Harvard in 1855 and studied theology at the P.E. Seminary, Alexandria, Va. He was elected rector of the Church of the Advent, Philadelphia, in 1859, and three years later to that of Holy Trinity in the same city. In 1869 he became rector of Trinity Church, Boston, and was consecrated Bishop of Massachusetts in 1891. He died in 1893. He was in every sense a large man, large in simplicity and sympathy, large in spiritual culture. In his lectures to the students at Yale he spoke of the preparation for the ministry as being nothing less than the making of a man. Said he:

"It cannot be the mere training to certain tricks. It cannot be even the furnishing with abundant knowledge. It must be nothing less than the kneading and tempering of a man's whole nature till it becomes of such a consistency and quality as to be capable of transmission. This is the largeness of the preacher's culture." Doctor Brastow describes him thus: "The physical equipment was symbol of his soul; and the rush of his speech was typical of those mental, moral, and spiritual energies that were fused into unity and came forth in a stream of fiery intensity."

**÷**08-05 BROOKS

1835—1893

THE PRIDE OF LIFE[1]

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*The pride of life*.—1Jn 2:16.

John is giving his disciples the old warning not to love the world, that world which then and always is pressing on men's eyes and ears and hearts with all its loveliness and claiming to be loved. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world…. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

What is the pride of life? Pride is one of those words which hover in the middle region between virtue and vice. The materials which under one set of circumstances and in one kind of character make up an honorable self-respect, seem so often to be precisely the same as those which under another set of circumstances and in another kind of character make up arrogance and self-conceit. This last is the tone evidently in which John speaks. So it is with most moral minglings. All character is personal, determined by some force that blends the qualities into a special personality. The same apparent qualities unite into the most various results. It is like the delicate manufacture of mosaics. The skilful workers of Rome or Venice put in the same ingredients in nature and amount, and the composition comes out at one time dull and muddy and at another time perfectly clear and lustrous. Some subtle difference in the mixture of the constituents or in the condition of the atmosphere or in the heat of the furnace alters the whole result. So out of life we may say in its various minglings there come various products in character, either humility or thankfulness or contentment or self-respect, from some failure of the qualities to meet in perfect union, from some fault in the shape or misregulation of the temperature of the human furnace in which they are fused, this degenerate and confused result of pride which yet is often so near to, that we can see how it was only some slightest cause, some stray and unguarded draft across the surface that hindered it from being, one of the clear and lustrous combinations of the same material. But that fact makes it no better. The muddy glass is no more useful because it is made of the same components as the clear glass. There is nothing still to be done with it but to throw it away.

What then is the pride of life which is bad, which "is not of the Father, but is of the world"? Life itself we know is of the Father. In whatever sense we take that much-meaning word, life is God's gift. The mere physical being, if that be life, is the creation of His mighty word. The continuance, the prolongation of the vital function, if that be life, that too is the result of His never-sleeping care. The surrounding circumstances, the scenery of our experience, if that be life, is also of His arranging. The spiritual vitality, all the higher powers as we call them, of thought and feeling and conscience, if they be life, no hand but His strung and tuned their manifold and subtle cords. Everywhere there is no life but what He gives. It is not of the world. In no sense does any creative power of being issue either from the material earth, or from the social system, or from the mass of conventional laws and standards, each of which is sometimes, in different uses of the word, characterized as "the world." They may all influence and change and give character to life, but none of them can create it.

And perhaps this brings us to what we want. The world may give a certain character or shape to life, even altho it cannot create it. Now pride is a certain character or shape of life. It is a term of description not of the material of life but of a particular result of that material fused into a particular furnace. In general the shape of life which pride describes may be otherwise characterized as arrogant self-reliance or self-sufficiency. We may reach more minute definitions of it before we are done, but this seems to make the meaning plain when it is said that the pride of life is not of the Father, but of the world. Life comes from God. It is the world's influence that shapes that life, which has no moral character in itself, into arrogance and self-sufficiency, makes it up into pride instead of into humility, and so leaves as the result the pride of life. The pride of life, then, is God's gift which means dependence changed and distorted into independence, revolt and disobedience.

Most necessary is it that in all we say we should keep clear in mind that the first gift is God's. The substance of life is His. All evil is misuse, otherwise repentance must be cursed with misanthropy and hopelessness instead of being as it always ought to be, the very birthplace of hope, the spring of a new life from the worn-out failure of an old, back into the possibility of life that is older still, as old as man's first creation.

Let us see where the pride of life shows itself. First of all doubtless in the mere exuberance of animal strength. To be well and strong, full of spirit and physical vitality, this is beyond all doubt one of the most precious gifts of God. We never can forget the large strong physical strain with which our Bible opens, the torrent of health and full life that seems to pour down to us out of those early days when the world was young, when the giants made the earth shake under their mighty tread and the patriarchs outlived the forests with their green old years. The fulness of physical vitality is of God, to be accepted as His benefaction, to be cultivated and cared for with the reverence that His gifts demand. And round the mere physical life group a whole circle of tastes and enjoyments and exercises which belong with the sensuous more than with the intellectual or moral part of us, and whose full life seems to be dependent upon the fulness of physical being, the mere perception of beauty, the love of comfort, the delight in enterprise and adventure and prowess. The sum of all these is what we call full physical life. It is what gives youth its most generous charm and makes it always poetic with its suggested powers and unaccomplished possibilities.

But yet this mere fulness of life as we all know has its dangers. Mere health is overbearing by its very nature. There is a lack of sympathy in it. Not knowing suffering itself, it is not respectful of suffering in others. It is not careful of inflicting suffering. The full blood sings of nothing but itself. It is careless of others. It is careless of God, not malignantly cruel, nor deliberately atheistic, but selfish with a sort of self-absorption which is often, very gracious in its forms and infidel with a mere forgetfulness of God. Who of us does not know, and who of us, wavering between his standards and his feelings, has not very often found it hard to tell just how he ought to value the enthusiastic and arrogant self-sufficiency of healthy youth?

It is this, I take it, that is described here as "the pride of life." Wherever there is eager and full-blooded youth there it appears. It breaks out in the wild and purposeless mob of lower city life, in the impatience and insubordination of the country boy who longs to be free from his father's farm, in the crude skepticism of college students' first discussions of religion. It is jealous of slight, of insult, of the least suspicion of restraint or leading. It belongs to strong young nations as well as to strong young men. By it they flaunt defiance in the face of the world and are afraid of the imputation of prudence. It is what you can see in the faces of any group of eager young men as you pass them on the street. Sometimes it makes them attractive and sometimes it makes them detestable. It turns the noble youth into a hero and the mean youth into a bully. A fine nature it leads into the most exquisite tastes and encircles it with art and music. A coarse nature it plunges into the vilest debauchery and vice. In good fortune it makes the temper carelessly benignant. In bad fortune it makes the temper recklessly defiant. It works these very different effects but is always the one same spirit still,—the pride of life. The gift of life which came from God, taken possession of by the world and tamed into self-sufficiency, a thing not of the Father, but of the world, who does not know in himself, or see in somebody he watches, something of this pure pride in life? Just to live is so attractive that the higher ends and responsibilities of living drift away out of sight. This instinctive almost physical selfishness is the philosophy of more than we think both of the good and of the bad that is in young people.

I have seen too much of it to undervalue the sweet and sober piety of old age. There is a beauty in it that is all its own. A softness and tenderness and patience and repose in the western sky that the bolder glories of the east where the morning breaks never can attain. Many and many of the best men we have known have been old men, but no one looks at men's progress without feeling that a great deal of what passes for growth in goodness as men grow old is in reality only the deadening of the pride of life from the dying-down of the life itself. Many and many a man who passes for a sober, conscientious, religious sort of man at fifty, if you put back into his cooled blood the hot life he had at twenty-five would be the same reckless, profligate, arrogant sinner that he was then. It is the life, not the pride, that he has lost. Many and many a man thinks that he has saved his house from conflagration because he, sees no flame, when really the flame is hidden only because the house is burnt down and the fire is still lurking among the ashes, hunting out any little prey that is left and hungrily waiting for more fuel to light up the darkness again. One thing at least is true, that the goodness of old age in what we may call its passive forms, humility, submission, patience, faith, is necessarily far more hard to recognize and be sure of than the same goodness in a younger man. What you call piety may be only deadness.

And young men are often pointed just to this old age as the golden time when they will be religious as they cannot be now. They look to it themselves. "You are full of the pride of life," men say to them; "Ah, wait! By and by the life will flag. The senses will grow dull, the tastes will stupefy, the enterprise will flicker out, and the days come in which your soul will say 'I have no pleasure in them.' Just wait for that! Then your pride will go too, and then you will need and seek your God." It is a poor taunt and a poorer warning. If you have nothing better to say to make men use their powers rightly than to tell them that they will lose their powers some day, the answer will always be, "Well, I will wait until that losing day comes before I worry." If you tell a young man that his life is short, the old bacchanalian answer is the first one, "Live while we live." You must somehow get hold of that, you must persuade him that the true life now is the holy life, that life, this same life that he prizes, ought to breed humility and faith, not arrogance and pride, or else you must expect to talk to the winds. It surely is important that the conversion of the pride of life must come not by the putting-out of life but by making it a source of humility instead of pride. The humbleness of life. How can it come? By clearer and deeper truthfulness to let us see what the real facts of the case are, that is all; but that is very hard, so hard that it can be brought about by no other than the Almighty Holy Ghost. Let me see that this physical life of mine, having no true character of its own, is made to be a great machinery for simply conducting the knowledge and the love of God into my life; let all my study of the exquisite adaptations of the physical organs for their work be sanctified with this idea, this ever-pervading consciousness that eye and ear and hand are doors for the knowledge and the love of Him to enter by, and that all their marvelous mechanism is only the perfecting of hinges and bolt that He may enter more impressively and lovingly and entirely; let me learn that every bright taste or fine instinct or noble appetite is a ray of sunlight, not the sun, is the projection into my life of some force above, outside of me, which I can find only by climbing back along the ray that is projected, up to it; let me see all animal life a study and preparation for this final life of man, sensations and perceptions, growing clearer and clearer as we rise in the scale until in man they are fit to convey this knowledge which man alone can have, the knowledge of God; let me see this, and I must be ashamed to make that life a thing of pride which might be the seat of such an exalted and exalting dependence and humility. I am unwilling that those well-built cisterns which ought to be so full of God should hold nothing but myself, as if one crept into his aqueduct and closed it up where the water came into it from the fountain and lived in it for a house and found it very dry.

We see clearly enough what the change is that is needed. It is to substitute for self-consciousness as the result of life the ever-abiding consciousness of God. Do you ask how it shall be done? Ah, my dear friends, that is the very miracle of the gospel. I can tell you only this about it, which the Lord has told us all before: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The kingdom of God, that region of life in which God is the life's King. And again: "If any man love me he will keep my words and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." "We will come to him!" That is what we want, for that is the source of all humility, the coming of God into us, and the condition is love and obedience, the spiritual and the active forms of faith. That is all we can say. And that is enough, for in that this at least is clear, that such a conversion is a work that God has undertaken to do for us, that He asks of us nothing but submission to His willing helpfulness, and that being a transformation of life, it may, nay it must, be done while life is in possession, it can be done best when life is in its fullest. We have not to wait till movement is slow and color is dull. We are not tempted to make a vacancy and call it piety; but when man's life is so full that it tempts him daily to self-consciousness and pride, then let him open it wide to the consciousness of God and ennoble it with the full dignity of that humility whose first condition is the presence of God in the soul that He built for His own inhabiting.

There is a condition possible where the life shall flow with God as fully and freely as it ordinarily flows with self, where the greater volume it acquires, it only bears the more of Him; where every joy delights in Him, and every power depends on Him, and the whole man lives in Him and knows it. It is not a constant effort. It is the spontaneous direction of the whole nature. It is the new condition of the Christian who has been exalted from the human pride into the divine humility of life, out of self to God.

But I suggested at the outset that the word life was used in various meanings, and in connection with one or two of them I should like to develop a little what is meant by this phrase the "pride of life." Life sometimes familiarly signifies what we otherwise call circumstances. A man is said to "get on in life," not with reference to his growing older or growing healthier, but as he grows more rich, more prosperous. The pride of life in this sense would be the pride of success, which we see wherever men are struggling in this world of competition. Look at the young merchant who is making a living. Things go well with him. He rises from stratum to stratum of that commercial system whose geology is the ever-eluding study of the toilers of the street. He grows rich. His store begins to spread with the pressure of new enterprises. His house begins to blossom into the rich bloom of luxury. He is greeted with a new respect. He is courted with an eagerness he never knew before. Friends gather about him. His word has weight. His name means money. He is successful. What is the result? Those facts in themselves signify nothing, let us remember, but material capable of being made into one thing or another wholly its opposite. These are the gift of the Father, every one of them, all that profusion of life. But there is a possible effect of them all in character, a pride, which is not of the Father, but of the world. With a morbid sympathy the man assimilates all that is poor and mean and worldly out of his prosperity, and rejects, because he has no affinity for it, all that is good and sweet and heavenly. He is chilled and narrowed and embittered. All the old sweetness and humility fade out of his nature. Need I tell you of it? Our streets are full of the pride of life. Its types only, its outer types flash in the splendid carriages and blaze in the fronts of gaudy houses and sweep the floors of drawing-rooms and the aisles of churches. Those types, the mere outward trappings of success, are not wherein the badness lies. The reality is in the hard hearts and selfish tempers and undocile minds which, in the splendor or the squalidness of wealth, show the sad ruin of self-sufficient success, the pride of life.

The pride of life kills out the life itself. Is there a sadder picture than you have in the life of a man, old or young, to whom God has sent prosperity, who by his own act then turns that prosperity into a failure by being proud of it? Christ Himself has told us how it is. The life is more than meat. He has no tolerance for this little meaning of a word that He made so large. The life is more than meat. Yes, life is meat and man, and to lose the best manhood to get the meat, to lose the soul to save the body, to fail of heaven above you and before you that you may own the ground under your feet, that is not success but failure. "In all time of our prosperity, Good Lord deliver us!" May God help you who are prosperous.

I would speak again of what is called intellectual life, the life of thought. It is "of the Father," indeed. We picture to ourselves the pure joy of God in thought. Free from so many of our cumbrous processes, free from the limitations of slow-moving time, free from all imperfection, with an instantaneous thought as is His being, the intellect that is the center of all reason revolves in its unfathomed majesty. And man thinks too. God makes him think. God gives him powers to think with, and then, as when you pour for your child a stream of water out of your cisterns upon the wheels of the machinery that you have first built for him, God gives man thoughts to exercise his power of thinking upon. Can anything be more humble? The power was from God, the thoughts by which the power moves were God's thoughts first. "Oh, God, I think Thy thoughts after Thee," cried John Kepler, when he caught sight of the great law of planetary motion. But mere thought, self-satisfied, seeking no unity in God, owning no dependence, boasting of itself, counting it hardship that it cannot know all where it knows so much, this is the pride of thought, and this is not of the Father, but is of the world. How arrogant it is! How it is jealous of dictation, how it chafes under a hand that presses it down and a voice that says to it, "Wait! what thou knowest not now thou shall; know hereafter." How carefully it limits its kind of evidence, shutting out everything that sounds like personal communication, revelation, in its impatient independence; how studiously it orphans itself. And then how, in some moods, orphaned by its arrogance, it suddenly becomes intensely cognizant of its orphanage, and the child's hunger for a Father takes possession of its heart and it is dreary and miserable!

I always know, when I speak thus of types of men, that you will think that I am talking of those types in their extreme specimens. I am not speaking to-day of the miracles of physical vitality, nor of the over-successful men with their colossal fortunes, nor of the mighty thinkers only. We all have our certain share in these various kinds of life, and each of us may make his little share a seed of pride. We are strangely ingenious here. We have an easy faculty of persuading ourselves that ours is best of everything and growing arrogant, unfilial and worldly over it. I speak to the men confident in their youth and health, to the merchants strong in their business credit, to the thoughtful brains at work over their problems of settling the universe for themselves. I warn them all against the pride of life. I would try to show them all that the same material which is capable of being made into pride is capable also of being made into humility. I would tell them therefore that they have not to be made old or sick or poor or stupid before they can be made humble, that the best humility, as well as the hardest, is that which can come to them here, right in the midst of their strength and wealth and study!

Do you ask how that can be? It is time that I tried to tell you, tried to tell how one may be full of life and yet be free from the pride of life. That question must somehow be answered, or else the world will be condemned to choose forever between an arrogant prosperity and a salvation by misery, distress and disaster, by death. What do we need for the salvation of a prosperous life? The answer in one word is consecration. Consecration, that is what we need. There have been men in whom life seemed complete who have yet walked very humbly. They had no pride of life. And why? Because always before them and above them there stood some great principle, some idea, some duty to which their life belonged, not to themselves. All work is modest, all idle self-contemplation is vain. And what the young man needs with his vague aspirations and conceits is to make himself the servant of some worthy purpose. And what the merchant needs with his growing business is to count himself the steward of some worthy Master. And what the student needs with his active mind is to trace the footsteps of the God of wisdom in the path he walks and to count the reaching nearer to Him, the true prize and object of all thinking. Consecration! We are proud of life because we do so little with it. It is as if the bearer of dispatches sat down calmly and boasted of the well-made box in which they had been given to him, and never bore them to their destination. Life is force, to be transmitted and delivered to a purpose and an end. It loses its true nature and sweetness, it corrupts into pride, when it is robbed of its true purpose and cherished only for itself.

We can find our example of the consecrated man wherever we see true lives lived in history or about us now, in the Bible or in common life. Moses, David, Paul! But why look at the poor, imperfect copies when in our Lord Himself we have the consummate human life clothed in the wondrous humility of His appointed work. The life of lives! and yet was ever any life so utterly free from the tawdry pride that makes our poor achievements so wretched and unsatisfying. You say He cut Himself off from all that men are proud of. Not so. He gave up house and home, but he carried about with Him always the devotion of the people, the mystery of unknown power and the consciousness of great work and influence, the very things that have always seduced the best men most and in their highest labors made them proud. You say He was divine and so could not be humble. Yes, but He was profoundly human also, and humility is not subserviency or meanness. It is a grace not unworthy of, nay, necessary to, even the perfect humanity. But one thing stands out always: His was the consecrated life. It was all given to its purpose. "He was called Jesus because he should save his people from their sins." "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" "Behold we go up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man shall be betrayed." "To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Everywhere the consecration, a life appointed to an end, the face set to Jerusalem, the hands and feet waiting for the cross! Meanwhile it was the fullest life, but lived so high that the "pride of life" lay all below under His feet and out of sight.

And our life must be consecrated even as His was. What shall the consecration be? Far be it from me to undervalue the exaltation into humility that comes to a man when he consecrates himself to any great and noble cause. I believe that it helps to save any man from pride when he gives himself to his family or his country or his fellow men, to truth, to liberty, to purity, to anything outside of and above himself, but there is a consecration higher and fuller and more saving than any such can be. We go back to the Cross. Jesus is dying there for us. He dies and we are saved. What then? When a soul "knows its full salvation" and sees it all bought by, all wrapt up in, that Redeemer, then in the outburst of a grateful love, he gives himself to the Redeemer Christ. There is no hesitation, no keeping back of anything. He is all offered up to Christ; and then to serve that Christ, to follow Him, to do His will, to enter into Him, that is the one great object of the whole consecrated life, and in that consecration, the straining of the life toward that One Object, the "pride of life" is swept down and drowned. Not merely the life then, but the use of the life, comes from the Father. It is not of the world. The soul is saved!

The salvation of the Cross! Its center is the forgiveness of sins which the cross alone made possible; but is not its issue here, in the lifting of the soul above the pride of life and consecrating it in the profoundest gratitude to "Him who redeemed us and washed us from sins in His own blood"? What humility! What self-forgetfulness! What unworldliness! What utter childhood to the Father!

My friends, my people, would you be saved, saved from your sins, saved from yourselves, saved from the pride of life? You must be His that you may not be your own! He died for you that you might not henceforth live to yourself but unto Him. You must be consecrated to your Savior. If there is one soul in my church to-day who is weary and dissatisfied with his self-slavery, I offer him Jesus for Savior, for Master! If any man thirst let him come unto Him and drink. Turn unto Him and be ye saved! You can, you must! His service is life, life in its fullest because life in humility. Outside of His gospel and His service there is the pride of life, and the pride of life is death.

**÷**08-06 GLADDEN

THE PRINCE OF LIFE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Washington Gladden, Congregational divine, was born at Pottsgrove, Pa., in 1836. After graduating at Williams College he was ordained pastor, and occupied pulpits in Brooklyn, Morrisania, N.Y., and Springfield, Mass., until 1882, when he assumed charge of the First Congregational Church of Columbus, Ohio. He has also occupied editorial positions, and has published many books on social and civil reform and the practical application of Christian truth to popular and common life. His style, whether he is writing or speaking, combines vigor with grace.

GLADDEN

BORN IN 1836

THE PRINCE OF LIFE[1]

[Footnote 1: From Mr. Gladden's "The New Idolatry." By permission of  
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*And killed the prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead.*—Act 3:15.

This is the phrase with which Peter, in his great speech in the temple porch, describes the Master whose disciple he had been for three years, whose death he had witnessed on Calvary, and to whose resurrection from the dead he is now bearing witness. "The prince of life!" It is one of the many great titles conferred upon the Lord by those who loved Him. Reverence and devotion fell from their lips in lyrical cadences whenever they spoke of Him, and they wreathed for Him garlands of words with which they loved to deck His memory. He was "the Prophet of the Highest"; He was "the Great High Priest"; He was "the Shepherd of the Sheep"; He was "the Captain of Salvation"; He was "the First Born of Many Brethren"; He was "Redeemer," "Reconciler," "Savior." Gratitude and affection shaped many a tender phrase in which to describe Him, but there is none, perhaps, more luminous or more comprehensive than this with which the impulsive Peter, facing the men who had put Him to death, gave utterance to his loyalty. Its pertinence is confirmed by the word of Jesus Himself, in one of the sayings in which He described His mission: "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it abundantly." Author and Giver of life He was, and what He gave He gave with princely munificence—freely, unstintedly.

The phrase seems to be one on which we may fitly dwell to-day, since the day of the year which commemorates His birth occurs on the day of the week which celebrates His resurrection. Both events proclaim Him the Prince of Life. In the one He is the Bringer of new life, in the other He is the Victor over death; and thus He becomes, in the impassioned confessions of the apostle, the Alpha and the Omega, the Author and the Finisher of Faith, the First and the Last and the Living One.

Those who are familiar with the New Testament narration do not need to have their attention called to the constant ministry of this Son of Man to the vital needs of men. The impartation of life seems to have been His main business. Somehow it came to be believed by the multitude, at the very beginning of His public ministry, that He possest some power of communicating life. The wonderful works ascribed to Him are nearly all of this character. The healing of the sick, the cleansing of the lepers, all resulted from the reenforcement of the vital energies of the sufferers. When He laid His hand upon men, new life seemed to speed through their veins. We have known some who seemed to have, in some imperfect way, this quickening touch. It is a physiological fact that warm blood from the veins of a thoroughly healthy person, transfused through the veins of one who is emaciated or exhausted, quickens the wavering pulse and brings life to the dying. It may be that through the nerve tissues, as well as through the veins, the same vitalizing force may be communicated, and that those who are in perfect health, both of body and of mind, may have the power of imparting life to those who are in need of it. The miracles of healing ascribed to Jesus must have been miracles in the literal sense; they were wonders, marvels—for that is what the word miracle means; that they were interruptions or violations of natural law is never intimated in the New Testament; they may have been purely natural occurrences, taking place under the operation of natural laws with which we are not familiar. We are far from knowing all the secrets of this wonderful universe; the time may come when these words of Jesus will have larger meaning than we have ever given them: "If ye abide in me, the works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father."

The fact to be noted is, however, that the people with whom Jesus was brought into contact were made aware in many ways of the impartation of His Life to them. "Of His fulness," said John, "we all received, and grace for grace." There seemed to be in Him a plenitude of vitality, from which health and vigor flowed into the lives of those who came near to Him. Nor does this seem to have been any mere physical magnetism; there is no intimation that His physical endowments were exceptional; the restoring and invigorating influence oftener flowed from a deeper source. The physical renewal came as the result of a spiritual quickening. He reached the body through the soul. The order was, first, "Thy sins be forgiven thee"; then, "Arise and walk." If the spirit is thoroughly alive, the body more quickly recovers its lost vigor. And it was mainly in giving peace to troubled consciences and rest to weary souls that He conferred upon those who received Him the great boon of life.

Thus Jesus proved Himself "the Prince of Life." In the early ages of the Church the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, came to be described as "the Lord and Giver of Life"; but that was because He was believed to be the Continuator of the work of Jesus—the spiritual Christ.

There seems to be in this conception a great and beautiful revelation of the essential nature of Christianity. There are many ways of conceiving of this, but I am not sure that any one of them is more significant than that which we are now considering. Those words of Jesus to which I have before referred are wonderful words when we come to think upon them. They occur in that discourse in which He describes Himself first as the Good Shepherd, and contrasts Himself with the thieves and robbers who have been ravaging the flock. "The thief cometh not," He says, "but that he may steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly," Have we not here the great fundamental distinction between men—the line that separates the evil from the good, the just from the unjust, the sheep from the goats—that distinction which Jesus marks so clearly in His parable of judgment, and which must never, in our interpretations or philosophizings, be blotted or blurred? Some are life-givers; some are life-destroyers. "The thief cometh not but that he may steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

I do not suppose that Jesus meant in this to declare that there is a large class of persons whose entire purpose it is to steal and kill and destroy; probably there are none so malevolent that they do not cherish some kindly impulses and perform some generous deeds. It is a distinction between acts, or perhaps between tendencies of character, that He is making. He speaks in the concrete, as He always does; but He expects us to make the proper application of His words. The fact to which He guides our thought is this—that there are ways of living, forms of conduct, which are predatory and destructive of life, and other ways that tend to make life increase and abound. When Jesus contrasts His own conduct, as one who gives life and gives it abundantly, with the thieves and robbers who kill and destroy, we must interpret the conduct of those whom He describes as destructive of life—as tending to the diminution of life. Indeed, it is a very deep and awful truth that all our social action tends in one or other of these directions. Life, in its proper relation, is the one supreme and central good; the life of the body is the supreme good of the body; the life of the spirit is the supreme good of the spirit. And you can rightly estimate any act or habit or tendency of human conduct only by determining whether it increases and invigorates the life of men, body and spirit, or whether it reduces or diminishes their life. Good men are adding to the life of those with whom they have to do; evil men are debilitating and depleting the life of those with whom they have to do.

Even in our economic relations the final effect of all our conduct upon those with whom we deal is to replenish or diminish their life. The wage question is at bottom a question of more or less life for the wage-worker. Starvation wages are wages by which the hold upon life of the wage-earner and his wife and children is weakened. Systems of industry are good in proportion as they enlarge and invigorate the life of the whole population; evil in proportion as they lessen and weaken its life. So all industrial and national policies are to be judged by the amount of life which they produce and maintain—life of the body and of the spirit. Those strong words of John Ruskin are the everlasting truth:

"There is no wealth but life—life including all its powers of love, of joy and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others,"

We have here, as you see, the Christian conception—the very word of the Prince of Life, of Him who came that we might have life, and that we might have it abundantly. And when His kingdom has come, this will be the end for which wealth is sought and used in every nation.

It is possible to use wealth so that it shall be productive of life; so that the entire administration of it shall tend to the enlargement and enrichment of the life of men; so that the labor which it employs shall obtain an increasing share of the goods which it produces; so that all the conditions under which that labor is performed shall be favorable to health and life and happiness; so that the spiritual life, also, of all who are employed shall be nourished by inspiring them with good-will and kindness, with the confidence in man which helps us to have faith in God. Such an administration of wealth is perhaps the very best testimony to the reality of the truth of the Christian religion which it is possible to bear in this day and generation. One who handles capital with this clear purpose can do more to establish in the earth the kingdom of heaven than any minister or missionary can do.

But it is possible to use wealth in the opposite way, so that it shall be destructive rather than productive of life. A man may manage his industry in such a way that the last possible penny shall be taken from wages and added to profit; in such a way that the health of his employees shall be impaired and their happiness blighted and their hope taken, away. He may do this while maintaining an outwardly religious behavior and giving large sums to philanthropy. But such a handling of wealth does more to make infidels than any heretical teacher or lecturer ever did or can do.

The fact needs to be noted that all the predatory schemes by which capital is successfully inflated and nefariously manipulated, and the community is thus burdened, are deadly attacks upon the life of the people. They filch away the earnings of the laboring classes. They increase the cost of rent and transportation and all the necessaries of life. They extort from the people contributions for which no equivalent has been given, of commodity or service. Thus the burden of toil is increased and the reward of industry is lessened for all who work; the surplus out of which life would be replenished is consumed, and the amount of life in the nation at large is lessened. Every one of those schemes of frenzied finance about which we are reading in these days is a gigantic bloodsucker, with ten million minute tentacles which it stealthily fastens upon the people who do the world's work, and each one of the victims must give up a little of his life for the aggrandizement of our financial Titans. When such schemes flourish, by which men's gains are suddenly swollen to enormous proportions, somebody must be paying for it, and life is always the final payment. It all comes out of the life of the people who are producing the world's wealth. The plethora of the few is the depletion of the millions. In every great aggregation of workers, the faces of the underfed are a little paler and the pulses of the children beat a little less joyously, and the feet are hastened on that journey to the tomb—all because of those who come to steal and to kill and to destroy.

Such is the contrast between beneficent business and maleficent business. The good business employs men, feeds them, clothes them, shelters them, generously distributes among them the goods that nourish life; the bad business contrives to levy tribute on the resources out of which they are fed and clad and nourished, and thus enriches itself by impoverishing the life of the multitude.

And I suppose that we should all find, whether we are engaged in what is called business or not, that the work which we are doing, the way in which we are spending our time and gaining our income, is tending either to the enlargement and increase of the life of those with whom we have to do or to the impoverishment and destruction of their life; and that this is the final test by which we must be judged—are we producers of life or destroyers of life? Is there more of life in the world—more of physical and spiritual life—because of what we are and what we do, or is the physical and spiritual vitality of men lessened by what we are and what we do? Are we helping men to be stronger and sounder in body and mind and soul for the work of life, or are we making them feebler in muscle and will and moral stamina?

When Jesus Christ came into the world the civilization prevailing—if such it could be called—was under the dominion of those who came to steal and to kill and to destroy. Rome was the world, and the civilization of Rome, with all its splendor, was at bottom a predatory civilization. It overran all its neighbors that it might subjugate and despoil them; its whole social system was based on a slavery in which the enslaved were merely chattels; the life of its ruling class was fed by the literal devouring of the lives of subject classes. Of course, this civilization was decadent. That terrible decline and fall which Gibbon has pictured was in full progress. It was in the midst of this awful scene that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. Can anyone doubt that His heart was full of divine compassion for those who were trampled on and preyed upon by the cruel and the strong, for those whose lives were consumed by the avarice and greed of their fellows? What did He mean when, at the beginning of His ministry in the synagog where He had always worshiped, He took in his hand the roll of the prophet Isaiah and read therefrom: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord"—adding as He sat down, under the gaze of the congregation, "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears"? What could He have meant but this, that it was His mission to change the entire current and tendency of human life; to put an end to the plunderers and devourers; to chain the wolfish passion in human hearts which prompts men to steal and to kill and to destroy; to inspire them with His own divine compassion; to give life and to give it abundantly? And is it not true that so far as men do receive of His fulness, so far as they are brought under the control of His spirit, they do cease to be destroyers and devourers of the bodies and souls of their fellows, and become helpers, saviors, life-bringers? And is not this included in His meaning when He says: "I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it abundantly"?

To-day, then, we hail Him as Prince of Life, the glorious Giver to men of the one supreme and crowning good. And the manner of the giving is not hard to understand. He gives life by kindling in our hearts the flame of sacred love. Love is life. Love to God and man brings the soul into unity with itself; it is obeying its own organic law, and obedience to its law brings to any organism life and health and peace. If the spirit of Christ has become the ruling principle of our conduct, then we have entered into life, and it is a life that knows no term; it is the immortal life. If the spirit of Christ has entered into our lives, then in all our relations with others life is increased; we are by nature givers of good; out of our lives are forever flowing healing, restoring, saving, vitalizing influences; and when all the members of the society in which we move have received this spirit and manifest it, there are none to bite and devour, to hurt and destroy; the predatory creatures have ceased their ravages, and the world rejoices in the plenitude of life which He came to bring.

We hail Him, then, to-day, as the Lord and Giver of life. We desire to share with Him the unspeakable gift, and to share it, as best we may, with all our fellow men. What we freely receive from Him, we would freely give. What the whole world needs to-day is life, more life, fuller life, larger life. We spend all our energies in heaping up the means of life, and never really begin to live; our strength is wasted, our health is broken, our intellects are impoverished, our affections are withered, our peace is destroyed in our mad devotion to that which is only an adjunct or appendage of life. Oh, if we could only understand how good a thing it is to live, just to live, truly and freely and largely and nobly, to live the life that is life indeed!

Shall we not draw to this Prince of Life and take from Him the gift that He came to bring? Is not this the one thing needful? We are reading and hearing much in these days of the simple life. What is it but the life into which they are led who take the yoke of this Master upon them and learn of Him? It is a most cheering omen that this little book of Pastor Wagner's is falling into so many hands and littering its ingenuous and persuasive plea before so many minds and in so many homes. If we heed it, it must bring us back to the simplicity of Christ. Pastor Wagner is only preaching over again the Sermon on the Mount; it is nothing but the teaching of Jesus brought down to this day and applied to the conditions of our complex civilization. It is the true teaching; none of us can doubt it. And I wish that we could all begin the new year with the earnest purpose to put ourselves under the leadership of the Prince of Life. I know that we should find His yoke easy and His burden light, and that there would be rest for our souls in the paths into which He would lead us. We should know, if we shared His life, that we were really living; and we should know also that we wore helping others to live; that we were doing what we could to put an end to the ravages of the destroyers and the devourers, and to fill the earth with the abundance of peace.

Is not this, fellow men, the right way to live? Does not all that is deepest and divinest in you consent to this way of life into which Jesus Christ is calling us, as the right way, the royal way, the blessed way? Choose it, then, with all the energy of your volition, and walk in it with a glad heart and a hope that maketh not ashamed.

**÷**08-07 CLIFFORD

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Clifford, Baptist divine, was born at Lawley, Derbyshire, in 1836. He was educated at the Baptist College, Nottingham, and University College, London. He has had much editorial as well as ministerial experience and has published a number of works upon religious, educational and social questions. The Rev. William Durban, the editor, writing from London of John Clifford in the *Homiletic Review*, styles him "the renowned Baptist preacher, undoubtedly the most conspicuous figure in his own denomination." He speaks of "the profundity of thought," "simplicity and beauty of diction," the "compactness of argument" and "instructive expository character" of this preacher's discourses.

CLIFFORD

BORN IN 1836

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

*I believe in the forgiveness of sins*.—Apostles' Creed.

This is the first note of personal experience in the Apostles' Creed. We here come into the society of men like John Bunyan and go with them through the wicket-gate of repentance, through the Slough of Despond, getting out on the right side of it, reaching at length the cross, to find the burden fall from our backs as we look upon Him who died for us; and then we travel on our way until we come to the River of Death and cross it, discovering that it is not so deep after all, and that on the other side is the fulness of the life everlasting.

It is a new note, and it is a little surprizing—is it not?—to most students of this creed that we should have to travel through so many clauses before we reach it. It scarcely seems to be in keeping with the spirit and temper of the early Christian Church that we should have all this analysis of thought, this statement of the facts of Christian revelation, this testimony as to the power of the Holy Spirit, before we get any utterance as to that individual faith by which the Christian Church has been created, and owing to which there has been the helpful and inspiring fellowship of the saints.

I say it is a new note, but it is fundamental. When the Creed does touch the inward life, it goes straight to that which is central—to that which is preeminently evangelical. Without the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins you could have no good news for a sinful world; but with the assertion of this faith as the actual faith of the man, you have possibilities of service, the upspringing of altruism, the conquest of self, the enthronement of Christ, the advancement of humanity after the likeness of Jesus Christ.

A note it is which is not only fundamental but most musical, harmonious and gladdening. In the ancient Psalms we hear it oft—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases." It recurs in the prophets: "I, the Lord, am he that blotteth out thy sins; yea, tho they be as a thick cloud, I will blot them out." It is the highest note reached by the singers of the Old Testament; but it comes to us with greater resonance and sweetness from the lips of the men who have stood in the presence of Jesus Christ, and who are able to say, as they look into the faces of their fellows: "Be it known unto you that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins from which you could not have been freed by the law of Moses." With emphasis, with, strength, with fulness of conviction, with gladdening rapture, these men proclaimed their faith in the forgiveness of sins, and tho the Creed of the churches travels slowly after the faith of the early Church, its last note sounds out a note of triumph: "I believe in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting."

It is the crown of the whole Creed. It is the flowering of the truths that are contained in the Creed. Let a man understand God, and let him have such a vision of the Eternal as Job had, and he is constrained to say, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." He desires first and chiefly to know that the true relation between the human spirit and God which has been broken by sin has at length been rearranged, and that sin is no longer an obstacle to the soul's converse with a holy God, but that the ideal relation of the human spirit with the divine spirit is reestablished by the proclamation of forgiveness. For, as you know, pardon is not the extinguishing of a man's past; that cannot be done. What has been done by us of good or evil abides, it endures; not God Himself can extinguish the deeds of the past. What forgiveness does is this: it rearranges the relations between the spirit of man and our Father, so that the sins of the past are no longer an obstacle to us in our speech with Him, our trust in Him—our using the energies of God for the accomplishment of His purposes. It is the restoration of the human spirit to right relations with God. Forgiveness of sins conies, therefore, at the very start of a right life. It is the beginning. All else in the spiritual life succeeds upon this.

I know there is a theory among us, and I am prepared to endorse it, that, if we are trained by godly parents in godly homes, we may grow into the spiritual life, pass into it, as it were, by stages which it is impossible for us to register. We are largely unconscious of these spiritual ascents; they are being made by the gracious use of influences that are in our environment, that reach us through sanctified folk, and we travel on from strength to strength, and, then, perchance, in our young manhood or womanhood, there comes a crisis of revelation, and we discover that we are in such relations with God our Father, Redeemer, and Renewer as fill us with peace, create hope and conscious strength. But I assure you that in addition to this experience there will come, it may be early, it may be late, some moment in the life when there is discovered to the individual spirit making that ascent a sense of the awful heinousness of sin; and tho we may not have such a unique experience of evil as the Apostle Paul had, and become so conscious of it as to feel, as it were, that it is a dead body that we have to carry about with us as we go through life, interfering with the very motions of our spirit; yet we do approximate to it, and it is through these approximations to the Apostle Paul that we are lifted to the heights of spiritual achievement, and are qualified for sympathy with a sin-stricken world, and inspired by and nourished in a passionate enthusiasm to serve that world by bringing it into right relations with God.

When, therefore, a man says, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth," he is asserting that which, being turned to its full and true use, carries him to this goal, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." For a full and true doctrine of God can only be heartily welcomed when it is associated with the message of the forgiveness of sins. Otherwise the visions of the eternal Power may start in us the cry of Peter: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," When a man asserts his faith in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was crucified, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, who died on the cross; he is himself asserting his faith in the great purpose for which God sent His Son; even to take away the sin of the world, to make an end of iniquity, to bring in an everlasting righteousness; and so out of that faith he prepared for the response which the soul makes to the workings of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost within him, and he is able to say from his own knowledge of what God has been to him, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins."

Friends, you have said this again and again, some of you hundreds of times. You have asserted it week by week. What did you mean by it? What exactly was the thought in your heart as the words passed over your lips, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins"? Was it simply the recognition of a universal amnesty for a world of rebels? Was it merely the assertion of your confidence in the goodness of God irrespective of His holiness? Or when you uttered that faith of yours, did it mean that you were able to say, "My sins, which were many, are all forgiven. My sins are forgiven, not may be—that pardon is a glorious possibility only—but are forgiven, not will be forgiven at some future time. I am now at peace with God through faith, in our Lord Jesus Christ"? Could you say that? Was that what it meant; or was it simply the repetition of a phrase which has been handed down to you by your predecessors, and which you took up as part of an ordered service, without putting the slightest fiber of your soul into it?

Depend upon it, the mere recitation of a creed will not bring you God's peace, it will not open your heart to the access of His infinite calm. It will not secure you that emancipation from evil which will mean immediate dedication of yourself to work for the emancipation of the world. You must know of yourself, of your own heart and consciousness, that God has forgiven you. And if you do get that consciousness, that moment of your life will be marked indelibly upon the tablet of your memory. The dint will go so deeply into your nature that it will be impossible for you to forget it. Speaking for myself, I can at this moment see the whole surroundings of the place and time when to me there came the glad tidings, "God has forgiven you." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto men their trespasses."

Do you believe in the forgiveness of sins? Then preach it. Tell it to other people. Let your neighbors know about it. I do not mean by preaching at the street corners, but by getting into such close affectionate touch, with your friends as that you shall be able to persuade them to disinter the thoughts of their own hearts, and show the sorrows that are there—sorrows produced by sin. For, believe me, behind all the bright seeming of human countenances there is a subtle bitterness gnawing constantly at the heart, consequent upon the consciousness of failure—the sense of having broken the law of God. I know that hundreds of people go into the church and tell God that they are miserable sinners. They do that in a crowd; it is saying nothing. They no more think of saying it in such a way as to place themselves apart from their fellows than they would of saying: "I am a thief!"

Do you believe in the forgiveness of sins? What, then, are you going to do with your faith?

Prove your faith by your works. Every time you ask God for forgiveness you should feel yourself pledged to a most strenuous and resolute fight with the sin you ask God to forgive. The acceptance of pardon pledges you to the pursuit of holiness, and yet we have to keep on with this doctrine, because it is not only the very beginning of the Christian life, but also the continuous need of that life.

We have to say night by night, "Forgive the ill that I this day have done." And if we say it as we ought, as really believing that God forgives us, so that we may not lose heart, may never encourage despair of final victory, we shall get up next morning resolved to make a fiercer fight than ever with the evil that sent us on our knees last night. Do you believe in the forgiveness of sins? Let the joy of it come to you, and as your own heart overflows with the fulness of that joy, declare unto others God's salvation, and teach transgressors His way. Do you believe in the forgiveness of sins? Then find in that faith an impact to obedience to the law of Jesus: "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect"; and do not forget that He who begins the good work in you with His pardon will carry it on to the day of Jesus Christ; so that you may add the last words of the Creed: "I believe in the resurrection from the dead and in the life everlasting."

It is not altogether a good sign that we have pushed eternity out of our modern thought. Confronted as man is every moment by a sense of the fragility and the brevity of human life, it is not surprizing that we should welcome everybody who comes with a message concerning eternity.

Is there not, in truth, beauty in the old Anglo-Saxon story of the bird that shot in at one open window of the large assembly hall and out at another, where were gathered together a great company of thanes and vassals; and when the missionary was asked to speak to them concerning God and His salvation, the thane who was presiding rose and said, recalling the bird's speedy flight from side to side of the hall, "Such is our life, and if this man can tell us anything concerning the place to which we are going, let him stand up and be heard." Brothers, a few days may carry us into eternity. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Strong, hopeful, rich in promise of service is to-day; to-morrow friends may be weeping, kith and kin full of sorrow for our departure. This life does not end all; we are going to an eternity of blessedness, to progress without limit, to an assimilation with God that shall know no sudden break or failure, but shall be perfect, even as He is perfect.

**÷**08-08 MOODY

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Dwight Lyman Moody, the evangelist, was born at Northfield, Massachusetts, in 1837, and died in 1899. As a business man he brought to his evangelistic work exceptional tact, initiative, and executive ability, but the main source of his power lay in his knowledge of the Bible, his constant companion. In preaching he largely disregarded form, and thought little of the sermon as such. His one overwhelming and undeviating purpose was to lead men to Christ. His speaking was in a kind of monotone, but his straightforward plainness never failed to be effective. He usually held the Bible in his hand while speaking, so that there was little of gesture. His great sympathetic nature is spoken of by Henry Drummond in these words:

"If eloquence is measured by its effect upon an audience, and not by its balanced sentences and cumulative periods, then this is eloquence of the highest sort. In sheer persuasiveness Mr. Moody has few equals, and rugged as his preaching may seem to some, there is in it a pathos of a quality which few orators have ever reached, and an appealing tenderness which not only wholly redeems it, but raises it, not unseldom, almost to sublimity."

MOODY

1837—1899

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?[1]

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*What think ye of Christ*?—Matt, 22.42.

I suppose there is no one here who has not thought more or less about Christ. You have heard about Him, and read about Him, and heard men preach about Him. For eighteen hundred years men have been talking about Him and thinking about Him; and some have their minds made up about who He is, and doubtless some have not. And altho all these years have rolled away, this question comes up, addresst to each of us, to-day, "What think ye of Christ?"

I do not know why it should not be thought a proper question for one man to put to another. If I were to ask you what you think of any of your prominent men, you would already have your mind made up about him. If I were to ask you what you thought of your noble queen, you would speak right out and tell me your opinion in a minute.

If I were to ask about your prime minister, you would tell me freely what you had for or against him. And why should not people make up their minds about the Lord Jesus Christ, and take their stand for or against Him? If you think well of Him, why not speak well of Him and range yourselves on His side? And if you think ill of Him, and believe Him to be an impostor, and that He did not die to save the world, why not lift up your voice and say you are against Him? It would be a happy day for Christianity if men would just take sides—if we could know positively who is really for Him and who is against Him.

It is of very little importance what the world thinks of any one else. The queen and the statesman, the peers and the princes, must soon be gone. Yes; it matters little, comparatively, what we think of them. Their lives can only interest a few; but every living soul on the face of the earth is concerned with this Man. The question for the world is, "What think ye of Christ?"

I do not ask you what you think of the Established Church, or of the Presbyterians, or the Baptists, or the Roman Catholics; I do not ask you what you think of this minister or that, of this doctrine or that; but I want to ask you what you think of the living person of Christ?

I should like to ask, Was He really the Son of God—the great God-Man? Did He leave heaven and come down to this world for a purpose? Was it really to seek and to save? I should like to begin with the manger, and to follow Him up through the thirty-three years He was here upon earth. I should ask you what you think of His coming into this world and being born in a manger when it might have been a palace; why He left the grandeur and the glory of heaven, and the royal retinue of angels; why He passed by palaces and crowns and dominion and came down here alone.

I should like to ask you what you think of Him as a teacher. He spake as never man spake. I should like to take Him up as a preacher. I should like to bring you to that mountain-side, that we might listen to the words as they fall from His gentle lips. Talk about the preachers of the present day! I would rather a thousand times be five minutes at the feet of Christ than listen a lifetime to all the wise men in the world. He used just to hang truth upon anything. Yonder is a sower, a fox, a bird, and He just gathers the truth around them, so that you cannot see a fox, a sower, or a bird, without thinking what Jesus said. Yonder is a lily of the valley; you cannot see it without thinking of His words, "They toil not, neither do they spin."

He makes the little sparrow chirping in the air preach to us. How fresh those wonderful sermons are, how they live to-day! How we love to tell them to our children, how the children love to hear! "Tell me a story about Jesus," how often we hear it; how the little ones love His sermons! No story-book in the world will ever interest them like the stories that He told. And yet how profound He was; how He puzzled the wise men; how the scribes and the Pharisees would never fathom Him! Oh, do you not think He was a wonderful preacher?

I should like to ask you what you think of Him as a physician. A man would soon have a reputation as a doctor if he could cure as Christ did. No case was ever brought to Him but what He was a match for. He had but to speak the word, and disease fled before Him. Here comes a man covered with leprosy.

"Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean," he cried.

"I will," says the Great Physician, and in an instant the leprosy is gone. The world has hospitals for incurable diseases; but there were no incurable diseases with Him.

Now, see Him in the little home at Bethany, binding up the wounded hearts of Martha and Mary, and tell me what you think of Him as a comforter. He is a husband to the widow and a father to the fatherless. The weary may find a resting-place upon that breast, and the friendless may reckon Him their friend. He never varies. He never fails, He never dies. His sympathy is ever fresh, His love is ever free. Oh, widow and orphans, oh, sorrowing and mourning, will you not thank God for Christ the comforter?

But these are not the points I wish to take up. Let us go to those who knew Christ, and ask what they thought of Him. If you want to find out what a man is nowadays, you inquire about him from those who know him best. I do not wish to be partial; we will go to His enemies, and to His friends. We will ask them, What think ye of Christ? We will ask His friends and His enemies. If we only went to those who liked Him, you would say:

"Oh, he is so blind; he thinks so much of the man that he can't see His faults. You can't get anything out of him unless it be in His favor; it is a one-sided affair altogether."

So we shall go in the first place to His enemies, to those who hated Him, persecuted Him, curst and slew Him. I shall put you in the jury-box, and call upon them to tell us what they think of Him.

First, among the witnesses, let us call upon the Pharisees. We know how they hated Him. Let us put a few questions to them. "Come, Pharisees, tell us what you have against the Son of God, What do you think of Christ?" Hear what they say! "This man receiveth sinners." What an argument to bring against Him! Why, it is the very thing that makes us love Him. It is the glory of the gospel. He receives sinners. If He had not, what would have become of us? Have you nothing more to bring against Him than this? Why, it is one of the greatest compliments that was ever paid Him. Once more: when He was hanging on the tree, you had this to say to Him, "He saved others, but He could not save Himself and save us too." So He laid down His own life for yours and mine. Yes, Pharisees, you have told the truth for once in your lives! He saved others. He died for others. He was a ransom for many; so it is quite true what you think of Him—He saved others, Himself He cannot save.

Now, let us call upon Caiaphas. Let him stand up here in his flowing robes; let us ask him for his evidence. "Caiaphas, you were chief priest when Christ was tried; you were president of the Sanhedrin; you were in the council-chamber when they found Him guilty; you yourself condemned Him. Tell us; what did the witnesses say? On what grounds did you judge Him? What testimony was brought against Him?" "He hath spoken blasphemy," says Caiaphas. "He said, 'Hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' When I heard that, I found Him guilty of blasphemy; I rent my mantle and condemned Him to death." Yes, all that they had against Him was that He was the Son of God; and they slew Him for the promise of His coming for His bride!

Now let us summon Pilate. Let him enter the witness-box.

"Pilate, this man was brought before you; you examined Him; you talked with Him face to face; what think you of Christ?"

"I find no fault in him," says Pilate. "He said he was the King of the Jews [just as He wrote it over the cross]; but I find no fault in him." Such is the testimony of the man who examined Him! And, as He stands there, the center of a Jewish mob, there comes along a man elbowing his way in haste. He rushes up to Pilate, and, thrusting out his hand, gives him a message. He tears it open; his face turns pale as he reads—"Have thou nothing to do with this just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." It is from Pilate's wife—her testimony to Christ. You want to know what His enemies thought of Him? You want to know what a heathen, thought? Well, here it is, "no fault in him"; and the wife of a heathen, "this just man."

And now, look—in comes Judas. He ought to make a good witness. Let us address him. "Come, tell us, Judas, what think ye of Christ? You knew the Master well; you sold Him for thirty pieces of silver; you betrayed Him with a kiss; you saw Him perform those miracles; you were with Him in Jerusalem. In Bethany, when He summoned up Lazarus, you were there. What think you of Him?" I can see him as he comes into the presence of the chief priests; I can hear the money ring as he dashes it upon the table, "I have betrayed innocent blood!" Here is the man who betrayed Him, and this is what he thinks of Him! Yes, those who were guilty of His death put their testimony on record that He was an innocent man.

Let us take the centurion who was present at the execution. He had charge of the Roman soldiers. He told them to make Him carry His cross; he had given orders for the nails to be driven into His feet and hands, for the spear to be thrust in His side. Let the centurion come forward. "Centurion, you had charge of the executioners; you saw that the order for His death was carried out; you saw Him die; you heard Him speak upon the cross. Tell us, what think you of Christ?" Hark! Look at him; he is smiting his breast as he cries, "Truly, this was the son of God!"

I might go to the thief upon the cross, and ask what he thought of Him. At first he railed upon Him and reviled Him. But then he thought better of it: "This man hath done nothing amiss," he says.

I might go further. I might summon the very devils themselves and ask them for their testimony. Have they anything to say of Him? Why, the very devils called Him the Son of God! In Mark we have the unclean spirit crying, "Jesus, thou Son of the most high God." Men say, "Oh, I believe Christ to be the Son of God, and because I believe it intellectually I shall be saved." I tell you the devils did that. And they did more than that, they trembled.

Let us bring in His friends. We want you to hear their evidence. Let us call that prince of preachers. Let us hear the forerunner; none ever preached like this man—this man who drew all Jerusalem and all Judea into the wilderness to hear him; this man who burst upon the nations like the flash of a meteor. Let John the Baptist come with his leathern girdle and his hairy coat, and let him tell us what he thinks of Christ. His words, tho they were echoed in the wilderness of Palestine, are written in the Book forever, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!" This is what John the Baptist thought of him. "I bear record that He is the Son of God." No wonder he drew all Jerusalem and Judea to him, because he preached Christ. And whenever men preach Christ, they are sure to have plenty of followers.

Let us bring in Peter, who was with Him on the mount of transfiguration, who was with Him the night He was betrayed. Come, Peter, tell us what you think of Christ. Stand in this witness-box and testify of Him. You denied Him once. You said, with a curse, you did not know Him. Was it true, Peter? Don't you know Him? "Know Him!" I can imagine Peter saying: "It was a lie I told then. I did know Him." Afterward I can hear him charging home their guilt upon these Jerusalem sinners. He calls Him "both Lord and Christ." Such was the testimony on the day of Pentecost. "God had made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ." And tradition tells us that when they came to execute Peter he felt he was not worthy to die in the way his Master died, and he requested to be crucified with the head downward. So much did Peter think of Him!

Now let us hear from the beloved disciple John. He knew more about  
Christ than any other man. He had laid his head on his Savior's bosom.  
He had heard the throbbing of that loving heart. Look into his Gospel  
if you wish to know what he thought of Him.

Matthew writes of Him as the royal king come from His throne. Mark writes of Him as the servant, and Luke of the Son of Man. John takes up his pen, and, with one stroke, forever settles the question of Unitarianism. He goes right back before the time of Adam. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Look into Revelation. He calls him "the bright and the morning star." So John thought well of Him—because he knew Him well.

We might bring in Thomas, the doubting disciple. You doubted Him, Thomas? You would not believe He had risen, and you put your fingers into the wound in His side. What do you think of Him?

"My Lord and my God!" says Thomas.

Then go over to Decapolis and you will find Christ has been there casting out devils. Let us call the men of that country and ask what they think of Him. "He hath done all things well," they say.

But we have other witnesses to bring in. Take the persecuting Saul, once one of the worst of his enemies. Breathing out threatenings he meets Him. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" says Christ. He might have added, "What have I done to you? Have I injured you in any way? Did I not come to bless you? Why do you treat Me thus, Saul?" And then Saul asks, "Who art thou, Lord?"

"I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." You see, He was not ashamed of His name, altho He had been in heaven; "I am Jesus of Nazareth." What a change did that one interview make to Saul! A few years afterward we hear him say, "I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dross that I may win Christ." Such a testimony to the Savior!

But I shall go still further. I shall go away from earth into the other world. I shall summon the angels and ask what they think of Christ. They saw Him in the bosom of the Father before the world was. Before the dawn of creation, before the morning stars sang together, He was there. They saw Him leave the throne and come down to the manger. What a scene for them to witness! Ask these heavenly beings what they thought of Him then. For once they are permitted to speak; for once the silence of heaven is broken. Listen to their song on the plains of Bethlehem, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." He leaves the throne to save the world. Is it a wonder the angels thought well of Him?

Then there are the redeemed saints—they that see Him face to face. Here on earth He was never known, no one seemed really to be acquainted with Him; but He was known in that world where He had been from the foundation. What do they think of Him there? If we could hear from heaven we should hear a shout which would glorify and magnify His name. We are told that when John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and being caught up, he heard a shout around him, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands and thousands of voices, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing!" Yes, He is worthy of all this. Heaven cannot speak too well of Him. Oh, that earth would take up the echo and join with heaven in singing, "Worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing!"

But there is still another witness, a higher still. Some think that the God of the Old Testament is the Christ of the New. But when Jesus came out to Jordan, baptized by John, there came a voice from heaven. God the Father spoke. It was His testimony to Christ: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Ah, yes! God the Father thinks well of the Son. And if God is well pleased with Him, so ought we to be. If the sinner and God are well pleased with Christ, then the sinner and God can meet. The moment you say, as the Father said, "I am well pleased with Him," and accept Him, you are wedded to God. Will you not believe the testimony? Will you not believe this witness, this last of all, the Lord of hosts, the King of kings himself? Once more he repeats it, so that all may know it. With Peter and James and John, on the mount of transfiguration, He cries again, "This is my beloved Son; hear him." And that voice went echoing and reechoing through Palestine, through all the earth from sea to sea; yes, that voice is echoing still, Hear Him! Hear Him!

My friend will you hear Him to-day? Hark! what is He saying to you? "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Will you not think well of such a Savior? Will you not believe in Him? Will you not trust in Him with all your heart and mind? Will you not live for Him? If He laid down His life for us, is it not the least we can do to lay down ours for Him? If He bore the cross and died on it for me, ought I not to be willing to take it up for Him? Oh, have we not reason to think well of Him? Do you think it is right and noble to lift up your voice against such a Savior? Do you think it is just to cry, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" Oh, may God help all of us to glorify the Father, by thinking well of His only-begotten Son.

**÷**08-09 FOWLER

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Charles H. Fowler, Methodist Episcopal divine, was born 1837 in Burford, Ontario, Canada, was educated at Syracuse University and the Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Ill. He was ordained in 1861 and after filling pastorates in many places was made president of the Northwestern University in 1872, but vacated this post to become editor of the *Christian Advocate*; four years later he was appointed missionary secretary and in 1884 was elected bishop. He was well-known as an able preacher and administrator. He died in 1908.

FOWLER

1837—1908

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

*Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*.—Rom 8:9.

I read that with the conviction that it is one of the most searching passages that can be found in the Book of God. It takes hold of the question of our salvation as a very substantial and thorough question. It removes indefinitely, almost infinitely, from this problem of our destiny, all shadow of uncertainty or of doubt. It brings us squarely to the facts in our character. On the force of this Scripture we are borne up on to a platform where we stand with our hearts uncovered and naked before the eye of God.

This means that the saint must be great in the arduous greatness of things achieved; that there is no chance for sainthood by any fixt, imputed plan, but that our real selves shall test and make our real future.

I never read this Scripture in the presence of a Christian congregation without feeling that I have in some way chopped down through every heart with a great broadaxe. There is no whitewashing this passage: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Not, "He will do tolerably well, but not quite as well as he might do"; not that he will get on after a fashion, and have quite a respectable entrance into the city of the great King, tho he may not push quite as far toward the front as he might have done if he had had the Spirit of the Lord Jesus. Not that at all; but, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, there is not the remotest shadow of a chance for him: "he is none of his."

And so I put this at you, asking you, on account of the great fact that you are going hence, to so apply this critical test to your hearts and lives that you may see and feel your need, and that you may take hold on the great supply, and have that actual transformation of character that will justify you in believing that you have the Spirit of Christ.

The success of the missionary cause turns upon exactly the spirit of this text. I have no faith in the final triumph, of the missionary cause based upon any other ground than that of the honest, deep-down conviction of the people of God that the Lord God of Heaven wants this work done. I am here as a believer in a supernatural gospel—not with philosophy that may be framed out of the human life of Jesus, but with a religion that is based upon the supernatural life of the divine Christ. And I appeal to you on this subject of missions as to a company of men who believe in the divine authority of the Book of God; who believe in a blood atonement; who believe in salvation by faith only; who believe in the pardon of sin and in the regeneration of your natures; who believe in the power of the Holy Ghost; who believe, in short, in the sum and substance of an old-fashioned orthodoxy. And I put this cause upon you as such believers, knowing that, if such is your position, you have at least the large part of the argument wrought into the very fiber of your being, by which you cannot stop short of the conviction that what you have need of for your salvation other people will need for their salvation. You know that you need a divine Redeemer; you know that you need the divine pardoning of your sins; you know that you need the supernatural and divine cleansing of your hearts; you know that you need the divine, unbreakable promises; you know that you need this Word, and the way to salvation set forth in this Book of God, by which you know that there is none other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved. And so I come to you as to those who have had some experience in supernatural matters, with the cause based upon this Book of God, asking that your experience may be made possible for the multitudes beyond, who have not yet had this opportunity.

Let us take some of the simpler and plainer things in this question, that we may come up to it without any hesitation. Now, I do not need to go into the question as to what God will do with the heathen. I don't know what He will do with them. I know as much about it as you do, or anybody else, because I know what the Book says about it. God knows better about this than I do, and will find a way that I cannot dream of. But, because the words are not uttered by divine authority, I dare not stand here and utter any word of hope for any man beyond the gospel committed to me to preach. This I know: That if the heathen have the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, whether they ever saw the Lord Jesus or not, they are of His. And this I know: That if this congregation have not the spirit of the Lord Jesus, tho it may have seen Him, they are not of His. And this I know: That He will save a Jew and a Gentile on the same terms; that He will do no better for the Gentile than He will for the Jew, and no better for the Jew than for the Gentile. And if there was no other name given under heaven among men by which an ancient Jew or an ancient Gentile might be saved, that is true to-day. The Lord Jesus thought that these people needed the gospel, and that they needed it so much that He actually came and submitted Himself unto death that they might have the gospel. And God seems so thoroughly to believe that they need the gospel that He actually gives His only-begotten Son to die, that they may have the gospel. He treats the case just exactly as if He thought, at least, that they do really need this divine Redeemer. He has done, in every step and process of this great work of world-saving, just exactly as He would have done had He absolutely thought and believed that they needed a divine Redeemer.

And then I understand another thing out of the Book: That the very last and supreme utterance of the Master on earth grew out of His conviction that we should do exactly this thing. And see how He comes up to it, little by little! He does not rush suddenly upon it—He does not, upon any truth. It is not in the divine plan to flash upon us in anything. Truths grow; moral ideas grow. They come into the race little, and hardly able to stand at all; we can barely find them beneath us in the lower strata of our being. But they struggle into power and strength until they fill the field of vision. Nearly every great truth of Old and New Testament Scripture is to be found in the Book of Genesis. In Genesis you will find the principle of the atonement; you will find the division of animals into clean and unclean, foreshadowing sacrifice; you will find the principle of the acceptance of offerings that came out of the flock, and the rejection of the offerings out of the field; you will find the pardon of sin and the giving of covenants—all the essential parts of the New Testament growing with their roots away back in Genesis. There is the first declaration of the coming of this wondrous Redeemer. It was so dim and uncertain that it was hard to tell what it meant; somehow, somewhere, some time, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." It was so dim that our first great mother, when she had gotten her first son, cried out in her joy, "I have gotten a man from the Lord!" She thought she had the Redeemer, but she had only a murderer. It was many a century before the Redeemer would come. The truth was unfolded little by little; a little brighter it shone on the altars of the patriarchs; it was unfolded a little more in the visions of the prophets; was exemplified in the ceremonials of the temple; and in the fullness of time it came with the Master and His disciples and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

And then see, when the Master comes, how He takes hold of us, knowing that we are but little, and that we have to be lifted up and enlarged before we can take in these great truths! He says: "I have more to tell you: you cannot bear it to-day; I will tell you to-morrow." And so He gives lesson and instruction, and parable and illustration, all through. His life, teaching these disciples, chosen on account of their particular adaptation for the reception of His truth; walking with them day by day, trying to lift their thought toward the spiritual and the eternal; teaching them that it is not His plan to put them on His right hand and His left, and trying to lift them up toward a spiritual and eternal kingdom. So He keeps on all the time, lifting them out of their littleness, saying to them later: "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and in the uttermost parts of the earth." They did not know what to make of that. He was lifting them out of their narrowness. And so He pushes on still further with them, lifting them up, until, in the supreme hour of His earthly history—after His agony, after the cross, after He had broken asunder the bars of the sepulcher, after He had risen, and been declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead—He hovers over the Church, coming down to speak to them by the sea-side and mountain-side; appearing to them suddenly, vanishing as quickly; offering His hands to their touch, showing His body to their vision, yet all the time lifting them up, until He brought them to the thought and gave to the Church the idea of His ubiquity, saying: "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"; and they appreciated the feeling that He was within hand-reach, and that this was a spiritual kingdom, and that they could take hold upon the great spiritual forces. And thus He lifted them up and prepared them for His great truth, until at last, in the supreme moment of His earthly history, we see Him yonder on the summit of the mount—the earth beneath Him, the angels gathered above Him—with His hands spread out over His followers, with the summit of Olivet receding beneath His feet. He cries out to them: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." And the unspeakable glory took Him out of their sight.

That is the supreme utterance of the Master after many a century of preparation, opening our hearts, bringing us to this great truth, and that this one thing He wants done is His final charge to believers: Go everywhere; teach, preach, baptize, agonize, give, sacrifice—out to the very ends of the earth. And lo! I am with you alway, and you shall lack no good thing. Surely, there can be no doubt that the Master, at least, thinks that these people have a great need for this gospel.

There are some who have an idea that salvation is to be the sum and substance of what we are. Well, I think that way myself: that, if you find heaven on the other side of death, you will take it over with you; if there is any condition of peace, you will take that condition of peace with you. Death will be no more than going over a seam in this carpet. The moment after death will differ from the moment before death in your essential character no more than any two consecutive moments in your life. If you are a mean, narrow, selfish, ugly, cross man the moment before death, you will be a mean, narrow, selfish, ugly, cross man the moment after death. If you find a good character over yonder, you will take it over with you. If you have a good character to take over with you, you will have it in the Lord Jesus Christ here. If you live on that basis, I think this is pretty safe that those millions out yonder in the darkness, plunged in ignorance and superstition, knowing nothing about morality and nothing about heaven—those millions want a chance, that the same law that governs our lives will govern theirs. I surround my boy with the best possible opportunities; I watch every book that comes in his hands; I watch every playmate that I possibly can that comes in his path; I see to it, as my highest business on this footstool—higher than my call to this pulpit—that that boy has a fair chance for heaven. If I push him out into the alley to herd with criminals, and be dandled in the lap of vice, and be familiar with all corruption, I have no moral right to expect to meet him in heaven. But if I multiply advantages about him, give him the best possible books and surroundings, make him at home with the Lord Jesus, so that he talks about his salvation and life eternal as he does about matters in the home, I have a good right to expect that the King will give me His eternal peace.

Now, I think that the law that holds over my boy holds over all boys in China and Japan and Hindustan; that, just in proportion as we multiply the light and the favorable circumstances about them, then in that proportion we increase their fair chance for heaven. I think it is sound in philosophy. I believe that, just in proportion as we act by it, we will be safe.

Now, they are plunged in darkness. They know nothing about our way of salvation, nothing about the pardon of sin, nothing about purity, nothing about righteousness, nothing about heaven. We want to multiply their chances to rid themselves of sin, and to take hold upon life, and make their way in the path of peace. And the Master seems to so think it that He says: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." And if they will believe it, as I read, they will be saved. "But how can they believe if they have not heard? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how can they preach except they be sent?" So the Master says, Go, send quick, everywhere. That I take to be the teaching of the Book concerning their needs.

But there is another side of it, and that is the side that swings in under the passage I have read this morning, and that is our side of it, our relation to the cause: "If any man have not the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, he is none of his."

Now, what is the spirit of Christ? I will tell you: He came not to be ministered unto. Please remember that. Not to see how much He could gather into His own bosom out of the lives of others. Not to be ministered unto; not to be petted, and dandled, and lifted along and fed all the way, with no burden and no care and no work—not that. He came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister; to pour out of His life into the lives of others; to see what He could do to make others blest; and "to give his life a ransom for many." Not merely to give the little pittance that He could spare and not know it any more than one would miss the farthing with which he would buy his ride on the street car, but to give His life a ransom for many. And if any man have not that spirit, he is none of His.

Now I preach you a doctrine of salvation by faith only, and I put the emphasis on the word only. That is exactly what I need as a sinner: I want some sort of release from my past transgressions that will give me a new start. I have gotten behind; I am borrowing money to pay interest with, and I see no way out. I must have a spiritual bankruptcy law. Somebody must come in to my relief, or I am everlastingly undone. And so I preach this blest doctrine of the Book of God: "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves: it (the salvation) is the gift of God." I take salvation as a divine gift, and take it with a glad heart. It gives me a new chance; it unhinges my present struggle for heaven from the past transgressions of my life, and gives me an open door to heaven that I could not reach on any other platform. And so I preach this doctrine to sinners, knowing that it is exactly what they need.

There is another part of it that covers the question of our pardon; that takes all my past sins and wipes them out; that gives me a new chance for righteousness. Now mind: That pardon, that new life, that new chance works out all the time necessarily from my finger-ends; it shows itself in my life, absolutely, as certainly as it is there; and if I cannot find the fruit of it in the fruits of the Spirit, in the interest in God's cause, in patience and teachableness, in gentleness and love, I have the absolute demonstration that I have not the thing itself. Saved by faith, kept alive, kept saved by work, in work, by grace in work. Let me touch that theology just a little. If you are pardoned, you are pardoned by the Lord in a second, through faith—when you believe, that is. Pardon is an operation in God's mind concerning myself; you cannot pardon yourself. God pardons. If we are pardoned He can do it in a second, when we believe.

The next step in the case is, that there is not anything in the Book of God that gives us any ground to believe that in that same faith, or believing, or pardon, we will be instantly lifted up into the stature of a man in Christ Jesus. What I mean to say is this: That there is not one word in this Book that will justify any man in believing that he may be brought by any process to the stature of a man in Christ Jesus in a minute. But some good brother will say: "Oh! now I am just a little afraid that you are striking against that blest old Methodist doctrine of sanctification." No, I am not. I haven't said anything about sanctification. But I will. If you are sanctified, or cleansed, that is God's work, through faith, and He can do it in a second. Now, understand me definitely, you cannot cleanse yourself. God cleanses you through faith in the cleansing blood of His Son. It is His work. You cannot grow into it. You can grow in it, but if you don't grow in it you may know you are not in it—you are in something else. But you can grow in it, because it is God's work, and He will do it when you believe. But what of that? What are you after you are cleansed? I will tell you. You are a clean baby: that is all. You are not a man in Christ Jesus; you are only a babe—cleansed, indeed, and greatly improved by the process, too, but you are not matured. Do not miss, now, the broad distinction between purity and maturity. You are purified, through faith, in a second; you are matured through many a struggle and many a year. God cannot make a twenty-one-year-old saint in one second less than twenty-one years. There is no platform marked over with faith upon which a man may step and be lifted up into the perfect stature of a man in Christ Jesus in a minute. It is not the teaching of the Book. But all the year, loving, and giving, and fighting, and praying, and walking in righteousness, you will mature characters, and by and by you will grow into the manhood in Christ Jesus that is set before us in the gospel. Now, if you come in here and tell me that there is a baby over yonder in the next square, that is three weeks old, and can talk Greek and Latin, and Spanish and Italian, and solve all the problems in mathematics, I will tell you that that is a monstrosity, and you don't want that kind of babies in your house: they will turn you out in a few days. So, if you come in here and tell me that you have, down in your prayer-meeting, a spiritual baby three or four weeks old, that can teach all the old saints, and can tell them all about God, and heaven, and faith, and theology, and all about everything in the Church, I will tell you that that is a monstrosity. And you don't want that kind in your prayer-meeting; they will turn you out before a great while. St. Paul says: "Ye are born babes, and ye are fed on milk"; and the trouble with too many of us is that we keep on that diet when we ought to be eating meat. The Master says: "First the blade, then the ear; after that, the full corn in the ear." So I am free to say that God's plan of making saints is to give them the divine germ—if you please, the supernatural principle; or, as our scientists would say, with proper environments, "That have the divine initial impulse," but as our fathers would have said, "They got through at the altar"; born of God, and then cleansed of God in the true process of education and faith, they matured at the harvest. God gives us the start and the cleansing, and we have to do all the rest of it. He will give us opportunity for growth by loading and goading us, by setting on our track every sort of force to test us—to "polish us," as the old Hebrew word means. When Abraham was tested he was "polished." He will put us on such lines that, if we stand true to our convictions and walk according to the light we have, He will bring us on to manhood.

See how wonderfully the Word of God fits down upon this? Take that remarkable passage that, to me, is as beautiful as anything can be, where He says: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor"—I know what that means in the struggle under sin—"all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give"—I will give: it is mine. You cannot earn it: you cannot buy it; you cannot find it; you cannot dig it out. It is mine—"I will give you rest"—the blest pardon that only God can give. Then, in the very next second and breath, He says: "Take my yoke upon you"—that means work—"and learn of me"—that is more work—and, "For I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find"—that is yours; I do not give that to you; that is not mine to give; that is yours. "Ye shall find rest to your souls." That is the rest that comes from the crystallization of the character in righteousness; that comes from the habit of believing, and the habit of obeying, and the habit of praying; from the habit of righteousness, until the old saint is ready for any struggle, and never expects to be turned aside. That, I take it, is God's plan of building up saints, and for fitting them for the rest that is in God, that abides.

**÷**08-10 WHYTE

EXPERIENCE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Alexander Whyte, senior minister of St. George's Free Church, Edinburgh, was born at Kirriemuir (Thrums), Scotland, in 1837. He was educated at Aberdeen University (M.A., 1862), and at New College, Edinburgh (1862-66), and after being assistant minister of Free St. John's, Glasgow, from 1866 to 1870, became at first assistant minister, and later (1873) minister, of Free St. George's, Edinburgh, a position which be still retains, having had there an uninterrupted success. He is the author of a number of biographies, his most recent work being "An Appreciation of Newman."

WHYTE

BORN IN 1837

EXPERIENCE

*And patience; experience; and experience, hope*.—Rom 5:4.

The deeper we search into the Holy Scriptures the more experimental matter do we discover in that divine Book. Both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament the spiritual experiences of godly men form a large part of the sacred record. And it gives a very fresh and a very impressive interest to many parts of the heavenly Book when we see how much of its contents are made up of God's ways with His people as well as of their ways with Him. In other words, when we see how much of purely experimental matter is gathered up into the Word of God. In a brilliant treatise published the other year, entitled, "The Gospel in the Gospels," the author applies this experimental test even to our Lord's teaching and preaching. Writing of the beatitudes in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount that fresh and penetrating writer says: "When our Savior speaks to us concerning what constitutes our true blessedness He is simply describing His own experience. The beatitudes are not the immediate revelation of His Godhead, they are much more the impressive testimony of His manhood. He knew the truth of what He was saying because He had verified it all in Himself for thirty experimental years." Now if that is so demonstrably true of so many of our Lord's contributions to Holy Scripture, in the nature of things, how much more must it be true of the experimental contributions that David and Paul have made to the same sacred record. And we ourselves are but imitating them in their great experimental methods when we give our very closest attention to personal and spiritual religion, both in ourselves and in all our predecessors and in all our own contemporaries in the life of grace in all lands and in all languages.

Now by far the deepest and by far the most personal experience of every spiritually minded man is his experience of his own inward sinfulness. The sinfulness of his sin; the malignity of his sin; the ungodliness and the inhumanity of his sin; the dominion that his sin still has over him; the simply indescribable evil of his sin in every way: all that is a matter, not of any man's doctrine and authority; all that is the personal experience and the scientific certainty, as we say, of every spiritually minded man; every man, that is, who takes any true observation of what goes on in his own heart. The simply unspeakable sinfulness of our own hearts is not the doctrine of David, and of Christ, and of Paul, and of Luther, and of Calvin, and of Bunyan, and of Edwards, and of Shepard only. It is their universal doctrine, indeed, it could not be otherwise; but it is also the every-day experience and the every-day agony of every man among ourselves whose eyes are open upon his own heart.

And then, if you are that spiritually enlightened man, from the day when you begin to have that heart-sore experience of yourself you will begin to search for and to discover those great passages of Holy Scripture that contain the recorded experiences of men like yourself. "I am but dust and ashes," said the first father of all penitent and believing and praying men. "I am vile," sobs Job. "Behold, I am vile, and I will lay my hand upon my mouth. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." And David has scarcely heart or a pen for anything else. "There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. My loins are filled with a loathsome disease. For, behold, I was shapen in iniquity." And Daniel, the most blameless of men and a man greatly beloved in heaven and on earth: "I was left alone and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned to corruption, and I retained no strength." And every truly spiritually minded man has Paul's great experimental passage by heart; that great experimental and autobiographic passage which has kept so many of God's most experienced saints from absolute despair, as so many of them have testified. Yes! There were experimental minds long before Bacon and there was a great experimental literature long before the Essays and the "Advancement" and the "*Instauratio Magna*."

And then among many other alterations of intellectual insight and spiritual taste that will come to you with your open eyes, there will be your new taste, not only for your Bible, but also for spiritual and experimental preaching. The spiritual preachers of our day are constantly being blamed for not tuning their pulpits to the new themes of our so progressive day. Scientific themes are prest upon them and critical themes and social themes and such like. But your new experience of your own sinfulness and of God's salvation: your new need and your new taste for spiritual and experimental truth will not lead you to join in that stupid demand. As intelligent men you will know where to find all the new themes of your new day and you will be diligent students of them all, so far as your duty lies that way, and so far as your ability and your opportunity go; but not on the Lord's Day and not in His house of prayer and praise. The more inward, and the more spiritual, and the more experimental, your own religion becomes, the more will you value inward, and spiritual, and experimental preaching. And the more will you resent the intrusion into the evangelical pulpit of those secular matters that so much absorb unspiritual men. There is another equally impertinent advice that our preachers are continually having thrust upon them from the same secular quarter. And that is that they ought entirely to drop the old language of the Scriptures, and the creeds, and the classical preachers, and ought to substitute for it the scientific and the journalistic jargon of the passing day. But with your ever-deepening knowledge of yourselves and with the disciplined and refined taste that will accompany such knowledge you will rather demand of your preachers more and more depth of spiritual preaching and more and more purity of spiritual style. And then more and more your estimates of preaching and your appreciations of preachers will have real insight and real value and real weight with us. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." But he that is spiritual discerneth spiritual things and spiritual persons and he has the true authority to speak and to write about them.

And then, for all doubting and skeptically disposed persons among you, your own experience of your evil heart, if you will receive that experience and will seriously attend to it, that will prove to you the true apologetic for the theism of the Holy Scriptures and for the soul-saving faith of Jesus Christ. What is it about which you are in such debate and doubt? Is it about the most fundamental of all facts—the existence, and the nature, and the grace, and the government of Almighty God? Well, if you are really in earnest to know the truth, take this way of it: this way that has brought light and peace of mind to so many men. Turn away at once and forever from all your unbecoming debates about your Maker and Preserver and turn to what is beyond all debate, your own experience of yourselves. There is nothing else of which you can be so sure and certain as of the sin and the misery of your own evil hearts, your own evil hearts so full of self-seeking, and envy, and malice, and pride, and hatred, and revenge, and lust. And on the other hand, there is nothing of which you can be so convinced as that love, and humility, and meekness, and purity, and benevolence, and brotherly kindness, are your true happiness, or would be, if you could only attain to all these beatitudes. Well, Jesus Christ has attained to them all. And Jesus Christ came into this world at first, and He still comes into it by His Word and by His Spirit in order that you may attain to all His goodness and all His truth and may thus escape forever from all your own ignorance and evil. As William Law, the prince of apologists, has it: "Atheism is not the denial of a first omnipotent cause. Real atheism is not that at all. Real atheism is purely and solely nothing else but the disowning, and the forsaking, and the renouncing of the goodness, and the virtue, and the benevolence and the meekness, of the divine nature: that divine nature which has made itself so experimental and so self-evident in us all. And as this experimental and self-evident knowledge is the only sure knowledge you can have of God; even so, it is such a knowledge that cannot be doubted or debated away. For it is as sure and as self-evident as is your own experience." And so is it through all the succeeding doctrines of grace and truth: The incarnation of the divine Son: His life, His death, His resurrection, and His intercession: and then your own life of faith, and prayer, and holy obedience: and then your death, "dear in God's sight." Beginning with this continually experienced need of God, all these things will follow, with an intellectual, and a moral, and a spiritual demonstration, that will soon place them beyond all debate or doubt to you. Only know thyself and admit the knowledge: and all else will follow as sure as the morning sun follows the dark midnight.

And then in all these ways, you will attain to a religious experience of your own, that will be wholly and exclusively your own. It will not be David's experience, nor Paul's, nor Luther's, nor Bunyan's; much as you will study their experiences, comparing them all with your own. As you go deeper and ever deeper, into your own spiritual experience, you will gradually gather a select and an invaluable library of such experiences, and you will less and less read anything else with very much interest or delight. But your own unwritten experience will, all the time, be your own, and in your own spiritual experience you will have no exact fellow. For your tribulations, which work in you your experience,—as the text has it,—your tribulations are such that in all your experimental reading in the Bible, in spiritual biography, in spiritual autobiography, you have never met the like of them. Either the writers have been afraid to speak out the whole truth about their tribulations; or, what is far more likely, they had no tribulations for a moment to match with yours. There has not been another so weak and so evil heart as yours since weak and evil hearts began to be; nor an evil life quite like yours; nor surrounding circumstances so cross-bearing as yours; nor a sinner, beset with all manner of temptations and trials, behind and before, like you. So much are you alone that, if your fifty-first Psalm, or your seventh of the Romans, or your "Confessions," or your "Private Devotions," or your "Grace Abounding," could ever venture to be all honestly and wholly written and published, your name would, far and away, eclipse them all. You do not know what a singular and what an original and what an unheard-of experience your experience is destined to be; if only you do not break down under it; as you must not and will not do.

Begin, then, to make some new experiments upon a new life of faith, and of the obedience of faith. And begin to-day. If in anything you have been following a false and an unphilosophical and an unscriptural way of life, leave that wrong and evil way at once. Be true Baconians, at once, as all the true men of science will tell you to be. "If we were religious men like you," they will all say to you, "we would do, and at once, what you are now being told to do. We would not debate, or doubt, but we would make experiment, and would follow out the experience": so all the scientifically minded men will say to you. Come away then, and make some new experiments from this morning. For one thing, make a new experiment on secret prayer. And then come forth from your place of secret prayer and make immediate experiment on more love, and more patience, and more consideration for other men, and, especially, for the men of your own household. Be more generous-minded, and more open-handed, as God has been so generous-minded, and so open-handed toward you: if that has indeed been so. Make experiment upon the poor and the needy and help them according to your ability and opportunity and watch the result of the experiment upon yourself; and so on, as your awakened conscience, and as the regenerate part of your own heart, will prompt you and will encourage you to do.

Make such experiments as these and see if a new peace of conscience and a new happiness of heart does not begin to come to you, according to that great experimental psalm,—"Oh, that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee."

**÷**08-11 WATKINSON

THE TRANSFIGURED SACKCLOTH

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William L. Watkinson, Wesleyan minister, was born at Hull, 1838, was educated privately and rose to eminence as a preacher and writer. The Rev. William Durban calls him "The classic preacher of British Methodism." "He ranks," says Dr. Durban, "with Dr. Dallinger and the Rev. Thomas Gunn Selby as the three most learned and refined of living preachers in the English Methodist pulpit. Dr. Watkinson is famous for the glittering illustrations which adorn his style. These are for the most part gathered from biography, the classics, and science, and of late years Dr. Watkinson has become more and more addicted to spiritualizing the aspects of modern scientific discovery. Dr. Watkinson never reads his utterances from a manuscript. Nor does he preach memoriter, as far as the language of his addresses is concerned. They are always carefully thought out and are never characterized by florid diction. His simple, strong Anglo-Saxon endears him to the people, for he is never guilty of an obscure sentence. He is in the habit of saying, 'I have always been aware that I have no power of voice for declamation, and therefore I can only hope for success in the pulpit by originality of thought.'" He was president of the Wesleyan Conference, 1897-1898, and editor of the *Wesleyan Church*, 1893-1890. He has published several volumes of sermons.

WATKINSON

BORN IN 1838

THE TRANSFIGURED SACKCLOTH[1]

[Footnote: Printed by permission of B.P. Button & Company from "The  
Transfigured Sackcloth and Other Sermons," by W.L. Watkinson.]

*For none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth*.—Est 4:2.

The sign of affliction was thus excluded from the Persian court in order that royalty might not be discomposed. The monarch was to see bright raiment, flowers, pageantry, smiling faces only; to hear only the voices of singing men and singing women; no smatch of the abounding wormwood of life was to touch his lip, no glimpse of its we to disturb his serenity. The master of an empire spreading from India to Ethiopia was not to be annoyed by a passing shadow of mortality. Now, this disposition to place an interdict on disagreeable and painful things still survives. Men of all ranks and conditions ingeniously hide from themselves the dark facts of life—putting these aside, ignoring, disguising, forgetting, denying them. Revelation, however, lends no sanction to this habit of passing by the tragedy of life with averted face; and in this discourse we wish to show the entire reasonableness of revelation in its frank recognition of the dark aspects of existence. Christianity is sometimes scouted as "the religion of sorrow," and many amongst us are ready to avow that the Persian forbidding the sackcloth is more to their taste than the Egyptian or the Christian dragging the corpse through the banquet; but we confidently contend that the recognition by Christ of the morbid phases of human life is altogether wise and gracious.

I. We consider, first, the recognition by revelation of sin. Sackcloth is the outward and visible sign of sin, guilt, and misery. How men shut their eyes to this most terrible reality—coolly ignoring, skilfully veiling, emphatically denying it! "The heart from the moment of its first beat instinctively longs for the beautiful…." We strive for the right and the true: it is circumstance that thrusts wrong upon us. What is popularly called sin these philosophers call error, accident, inexperience, indecision, misdirection, imperfection, disharmony; but they will not allow the presence in the human heart of a malign force which asserts itself against God, and against the order of His universe. That principle which is darkness in the mind, perverseness in the will, idolatry in the affections, "every passion's wild excess, anger, lust, and pride,"—the existence of any such principle they absolutely and scornfully deny. There is no evil in the universe, all is good, and where everything is good human nature is still the best. A single substance comprises all that is, and no place is left for that profoundly decisive and destructive element called sin; all that we have to do is to descant on the marvelous loveliness of the world, the serene harmony of the universe, man's love of the true, the beautiful, and the good. Intellectual masters like Emerson and Renan. ignore conscience; they refuse to acknowledge the selfishness, the baseness, the cruelty of society; they are deaf to the groans of creation; they smile, and expect us to smile, whilst they clap a purple patch of rhetoric on the running sores of humanity. No sackcloth must pass their gate, and no craftsman of Ind ever wove gossamer half so delicate and delightful as the verbal veil with which these literary artists attempt to conceal the leprosy of our nature.

And men generally are willing to dupe themselves touching the fact and power of sin; they are strongly disinclined to look directly and honestly at that inner confusion of which we are all more or less conscious. We willingly acknowledge our transgression of the higher law, that we do the things we ought not to do, and leave undone the things that we ought to do; we have an unpleasant feeling that all is not right, nay, indeed, that something is seriously wrong; but we do not unshrinkingly acquaint ourselves with the malady of the spirit as we should at once acquaint ourselves with any malady hinting itself in the flesh. The sackcloth must not mar our shallow happiness. Great is the power of self-deception, but in no other direction do we permit ourselves to be more profoundly cheated than we do in this. In the vision of beautiful things we forget the troubles of conscience, as the first sinners hid themselves amid the leaves and flowers of Paradise; in fashion and splendor we forget our guilty sorrow, as medieval mourners sometimes concealed their cerements with raiment of purple and gold; in the noises of the world we become oblivious of the interior discords, as soldiers forget their wounds amid the stir and trumpets of the battle. With a busy life, a gay life, we manage to forget the skeleton of the heart, rarely permitting ourselves to look upon the ominous specter which some way or other has entrenched itself within us, and which is the bane of our existence.

Nevertheless, sin thrusts itself upon our attention. The greatest thinkers in all ages have been constrained to recognize its presence and power. The creeds of all nations declare the fact that men everywhere feel the bitter working and intolerable burden of conscience. And, however we may strive to forget our personal sinfulness, the cry is ever being wrung from us in the deepest moments of life, "O wretched man that I am! who can deliver me from the body of this death?" The sense of sin has persisted through changing generations; it is the burden of experience and philosophy, and the genius of the race has exhausted itself in devising schemes of salvation.

Aeschylus, Dante, Shakespeare, knew of truth, justice, purity, and love, of the supreme and eternal law of righteousness; they knew that man alone of all this lower creation is subject to this transcendental rule; they knew also that the violation of this highest law lay at the root of the world's mysterious and complex suffering—in other words, that sin was the secret of the tragedy of life. The beasts are happy because they are beasts; they do not lie awake in the dark weeping over their sins, because they have no sins to weep over; they do not discuss their duty to God, they do it; whilst, on the contrary, men are unhappy because being subject to the highest law of all, and competent to fulfil that law in its utmost requirements, they have consciously fallen short of it, wilfully contradicted it. We cannot accept the coat of many colors, whatever the flatterers may say; the sackcloth is ours, and it eats our spirit like fire.

Most fully does Christ recognize the great catastrophe. Some modern theologians may dismiss sin as "a mysterious incident" in the development of humanity, as a grain of sand that has unluckily blown into the eye, as a thorn that has accidentally pierced our heel, but the greatest of ethical teachers regarded sin as a profound contradiction of that eternal will which is altogether wise and good. More than any other teacher Jesus Christ emphasized the actuality and awfulness of sin; more than any other has He intensified the world's consciousness of sin. He never attempted to relieve us of the sackcloth by asserting our comparative innocence; He never attempted to work into that melancholy robe one thread of color, to relieve it with one solitary spangle of rhetoric. Sin was the burden of the life of Christ because it is the burden of our life. Christ has done more than insisted on the reality, the odiousness, the ominousness, of sin—He has laid bare its principle and essence. The New Testament discovers to us the mystery of iniquity as ungodliness; its inmost essence being unbelief in God's truth, the denial of His justice, the rejection of His love, the violation of His law. The South Sea islanders have a singular tradition to account for the existence of the dew. The legend relates that in the beginning the earth touched the sky, that being the golden age when all was beautiful and glad; then some dreadful tragedy occurred, the primal unity was broken up, the earth and the sky were torn asunder as we see them now, and the dewdrops of the morning are the tears that nature sheds over the sad divorce. This wild fable is a metaphor of the truth; the beginning of all evil lies in the alienation of the spirit of man from God, in the divorce of earth from heaven; here is the final reason why the face of humanity is wet with tears. How vividly Christ taught that all our fear and we arise out of this false relation of our spirit to the living God! Above and beyond all, Christ recognizes the sackcloth that He may take it away. In the anguish of his soul Job cried, "I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou Preserver of men?" Christianity is God's full and final answer to that appeal. In Christ we have the revelation of God's ceaseless, immeasurable, eternal love. In Him we have the satisfaction of God's sovereign justice. Our own awakened conscience feels the difficulty of absolution; it demands that sin shall not be lightly passed over; it wearies itself to find an availing sacrifice and atonement. "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" In Him, too, we have that grace which brings us into accord with the mind and government of God. Christ reveals to us the divine ideal life; He awakens in us a passion for that life; He leads us into the power and privilege, the liberty and gladness, of that life. He fills our imagination with the vision of His own divine loveliness; He refreshes our will from founts of unfathomable power; He fills us with courage and hope; He crowns us with victory. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Sin is ungodliness; Christ makes us to see light in God's light, fills us with His love, attunes our spirit to the infinite music of His perfection. Instead of shutting out the signs of wo, Christ followed an infinitely deeper philosophy; He arrayed Himself in the sackcloth, becoming sin for us who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. We have redemption in His blood, even the forgiveness of sins; he established us in a true relation to the holy God; He restores in us the image of God; He fills us with the peace of God that passeth understanding.

Not in the spirit of a barren cynicism does Christ lay bare the ghastly wound of our nature, but as a noble physician who can purge the mortal virus which destroys us. He has done this for thousands; He is doing it now; in these very moments He can give sweet release to all who are burdened and beaten by the dire confusion of nature. Sin is a reality; absolution, sanctification, peace, are not less realities. Christ's gate is not shut to the penitent, neither does He send him empty away. We go to Him in sackcloth, but we leave His presence in purity's robe of snow, in honor's stainless purple, in the heavenly blue of the holiness of truth. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Him, that He may give to the mourners in Zion beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

II. We consider the recognition by revelation of sorrow. Sackcloth is the raiment of sorrow, and as such it was interdicted by the Persian monarch. We still follow the insane course, minimizing, despising, masking, denying suffering. Society sometimes attempts this. The affluent entrench themselves within belts of beauty and fashion, excluding the sights and sounds of a suffering world. "Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall, that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." So do opulent and selfish men still seek "to hide their heart in a nest of roses." Literature sometimes follows the same cue. Goethe made it one of the rules of his life to avoid everything that could suggest painful ideas, and the taint of his egotism is on a considerable class of current literature which serenely ignores the morbid aspects of life. Art has yielded to the same temptation. The artist has felt that he was concerned only with strength, beauty, and grace; that he had nothing to do with weakness, agony, wretchedness, and death. Why should sorrow find perpetual remembrance in art? Pain will tear our bodies, but we will have no wrinkles on our statues; suffering will rend our heart, but we will have no shadows on our pictures. None clothed in sackcloth might enter the gate that is called Beautiful.

Most of us are inclined to the sorry trick of gilding over painful things. We resolutely put from us sober signs, serious thoughts, and sometimes are really angry with those who exhibit life as it is, and who urge us to seek reconciliation with it. When the physician prescribed blisters to Marie Bashkirtseff to check her consumptive tendency, the vain, cynical girl wrote, "I will put on as many blisters as thee like. I shall be able to hide the mark by bodices brimmed with flowers and lace and tulle, and a thousand other delightful things that are worn, without being required; it may even look pretty. Ah! I am comforted." Yes, by a thousand artifices do we dissemble our ugly scars, sometimes even pressing our deep misfortunes into the service of our pride. Many of the fashions and the diversions of the world much sought after have little positive attractiveness, but the real secret of their power is found in the fact that they hide disagreeable things, and render men for a while oblivious of the mystery and weight of an unintelligible world.

Nevertheless suffering is a stern fact that will not long permit us to sleep. Some have taught the unreality of pain, but the logic of life has spoiled their plausible philosophizing. A man may carry many hallucinations with him to the grave, but a belief in the unreality of pain is hardly likely to be one of them. The laughing philosopher is quite invincible on his midsummer's day, but ere long fatality makes him sad. There is no screen to shut off permanently the spectacle of suffering. When Marie Antoinette passed to her bridal in Paris, the halt, the lame, and the blind were sedulously kept out of her way, lest their appearance should mar the joyousness of her reception; but, ere long, the poor queen had a very close view of misery's children, and she drank to the dregs the cup of life's bitterness. Reason as we may, suppress the disagreeable truths of life as we may, suffering will find us out, and pierce us to the heart. Indeed, despite our dissimulations, we know that life is not a matter of lutes, doves, and sunflowers, and at last we have little patience with those who thus seek to represent it. We will not have the philosophy which ignores suffering; witness the popularity of Schopenhauer. We resent the art which ignores sorrow. True art has no pleasure in sin and suffering, in torture, horror, and death; but on its palette must lie the sober colorings of human life, and so to-day the most popular picture of the world is the "Angelus" of Millet. We will not have the literature that ignores suffering. "Humanity will look upon nothing else but its old sufferings. It loves to see and touch its wounds, even at the risk of reopening them. We are not satisfied with poetry unless we find tears in it." We will not have the theology which ignores sin and suffering. The preacher who confines his discourses to pleasant themes has a meager following; the people swiftly and logically conclude that if life is as flowery as the discourse, the preacher is superfluous. Foolish we may often be, yet we cannot accept this Gethsemane for a garden of the gods; the most wilful lotus-eater must perforce see the streaming tears, the stain of blood, the shadow of death. Nature in the full swing of her pageantry soon forgets the wild shriek of the bird in the red talons of the hawk, and all other sad and tragic things, but humanity is compelled to note the blood and tears which flow everywhere, and to lay these things to heart.

Christ giveth us the noblest example of suffering. So far from shutting His gate on the sackcloth, once more He adopted it, and showed how it might become a robe of glory. He Himself was preeminently a Man of sorrows; He exhausted all forms of suffering; touching life at every point, at every point He bled; and in Him we learn how to sustain our burden and to triumph throughout all the tragedy. In His absolute rectitude, in His confidence in His Father, in His hours of prayer, in His self-sacrificing regard for His fellow-sufferers, in His charity, and patience, we see how the heaviest cross may be borne in the spirit of victory. We learn from Him how divine grace can mysteriously make the sufferer equal to the bitterest martyrdom; not putting to our lips some anodyne cup to paralyze life, but giving us conquest through the strength and bravery of reason in its noblest mood, through faith in its sublimest exercise, through a love that many waters cannot quench nor the floods drown. Poison is said to be extracted from the rattlesnake for medicinal purposes; but infinitely more wonderful is the fact that the suffering which comes out of sin counterworks sin, and brings to pass the transfiguration of the sufferer.

Christ teaches us how, under the redemptive government of God, suffering has become a subtle and magnificent process for the full and final perfecting of human character. Science tells us how the bird-music, which is one of nature's foremost charms, has risen out of the bird's cry of distress in the morning of time; how originally the music of field and forest was nothing more than an exclamation caused by the bird's bodily pain and fear, and how through the ages the primal note of anguish has been evolved and differentiated until it has risen into the ecstasy of the lark, melted into the silver note of the dove, swelled into the rapture of the nightingale, unfolded into the vast and varied music of the sky and the summer. So Christ shows us that out of the personal sorrow which now rends the believer's heart he shall arise in moral and infinite perfection; that out of the cry of anguish wrung from us by the present distress shall spring the supreme music of the future.

The Persian monarch forbidding sackcloth had forgotten that consolation is a royal prerogative; but the King of kings has not forgotten this, and very sweet and availing is His sovereign sympathy. Scherer recommends "amusement as a comfortable deceit by which we avoid a permanent *tête-à-tête* with realities that are too heavy for us." Is there not a more excellent way than this? Let us carry our sorrows to Christ, and we shall find that in Him they have lost their sting. It is a clumsy mistake to call Christianity a religion of sorrow—it is a religion *for* sorrow. Christ finds us stricken and afflicted, and His words go down to the depths of our sorrowful heart, healing, strengthening, rejoicing with joy unspeakable. He finds us in sackcloth; He clothes us with singing-robes, and crowns us with everlasting joy.

III. We consider the recognition by revelation of death. We have, again, adroit ways of shutting the gate upon that sackcloth which is the sign of death. A recent writer allows that Shakespeare, Raleigh, Bacon, and all the Elizabethans shuddered at the horror and mystery of death; the sunniest spirits of the English Renaissance quailed to think of it. He then goes on to observe that there was something in this fear of the child's vast and unreasoned dread of darkness and mystery, and such a way of viewing death has become obsolete through the scientific and philosophic developments of the later centuries. Walt Whitman also tells us "that nothing can happen more beautiful than death," and he has exprest the humanist view of mortality in a hymn which his admirers regard as the high-water mark of modern poetry. But will this rhapsody bear thinking about? Is death "delicate, lovely and soothing," "delicious," coming to us with "serenades"? Does death "lave us in a flood of bliss"? Does "the body gratefully nestle close to death"? Do we go forth to meet death "with dances and chants of fullest welcome"? It is vain to attempt to hide the direst fact of all under plausible metaphors and rhetorical artifice. It is in defiance of all history that man so write. It is in contradiction of the universal instinct. It is mockery to the dying. It is an outrage upon the mourners. The Elizabethan masters were far truer to the fact; so is the modern skeptic who shrinks at "the black and horrible grave." Men never speak of delicious blindness, of delicious dumbness, of delicious deafness, of delicious paralysis; and death is all these disasters in one, all these disasters without hope. No, no, the morgue is the last place that lends itself to decoration. Death is the crowning evil, the absolute bankruptcy, the final defeat, the endless exile. Let us not shut our eyes to this. The skeptic often tells us that he will have no "make-believe." Let us have no "make-believe" about death. Let us candidly apprehend death for all that it is of mystery and bitterness, and reconcile ourselves to it, if reconciliation be possible. If we are foolish enough to shut the gate on the thought of death, by no stratagem can we shut the gate upon death itself.

Without evasion or euphony Christ recognizes the somber mystery. The fact, the power, the terror of death are displayed by Him without reserve or softening. And He goes to the root of the dire and dismal matter. He shows us that death as we know it is an unnatural thing, that it is the fruit of disobedience, and by giving us purity and peace He gives us eternal life. The words of Luther, so full of power, were called "half-battles"; but the words of Christ in their depth and majesty are complete battles, in which sin, suffering, and death are finally routed. He attempts no logical proof of immortality; He supplies no chemical formula for the resurrection; He demonstrates immortality by raising us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, by filling our soul with infinite aspirations and delights. Here is the proof supreme of immortality. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." The moral works are the greater works. Wonderful is the stilling of the sea, the healing of the blind, the raising of the dead, but the moral miracles of our Lord express a still diviner power and carry with them a more absolute demonstration. If, therefore, we have known the power of Christ delivering our soul from the blindness, the paralysis, the death of sin, lifting it above the dust and causing it to exult in the liberties and delights of the heavenlies, why should we think it a thing incredible that God should raise the dead? If He has wrought the greater, He will not fail with the less. Christianity opens our eyes to splendid visions, makes us heirs of mighty hopes, and for all its prospects and promises it demands our confidence on the ground of its present magnificent and undeniable moral achievements. Its predictions are credible in the light of its spiritual efficacy. "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you," Being one with Christ in the power of purity, we are one with Him in the power of an endless life. Death has its temporary conquest, but grace reigning through righteousness shall finally purge the last taint of mortality. Not through the scientific and philosophic developments of later centuries has the somber way of viewing death become obsolete; Christ bringing life and immortality to life has brought about the great change in the point of view from which we regard death, the point of view which is full of consolation and hope. In Christ alone the crowning evil becomes a coronation of glory; the absolute bankruptcy, the condition of an incorruptible inheritance; the final defeat, an everlasting victory; the endless exile, home, home at last. Once more, by boldly adopting the sackcloth Christ has changed it into a robe of light. "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil"

We cannot escape the evils of life; they are inevitable and inexorable. We may hide from our eyes the signs and sights of mourning; but in royal splendor our hearts will still bleed; wearing wreaths of roses, our heads will still ache. A preacher who complains that Christianity is "the religion of sorrow" goes on to predict that the woes of the world are fast coming to an end, and then the sorrowful religion of Jesus Christ will give place to some purer faith. "Through the chinks we can see the light. The condition of man becomes more comfortable, more easy; the hope of man is more visible; the endeavor of man is more often crowned with success; the attempt to solve the darkest life-problems is not desperate as it was. The reformer meets with fewer rebuffs; the philanthropist does not despair as he did. The light is dawning. The great teachers of knowledge multiply, bear their burdens more and more steadily; the traditions of truth and knowledge are becoming established in the intellectual world. It is so; and those of us who have caught a vision of the better times coming through reason, through knowledge, through manly and womanly endeavor, have caught a sight of a Christendom passing away, of a religion of sorrow declining, of a gospel preached for the poor no longer useful to a world that is mastering its own problems of poverty and lifting itself out of disabling misery into wealth without angelic assistance. This is our consolation; and while we admit, clearly and frankly, the real power of the popular faith, we also see the pillars on which a new faith rests, which shall be a faith, not of sorrow, but of joy." Now, the deepest sorrow of the race is not physical, neither is it bound up with material and social conditions. As the Scotch say, "The king sighs as often as the peasant"; and this proverb anticipates the fact that those who participate in the richest civilization that will ever flower will sigh as men sigh now. When the problem of poverty is mastered, when disease is extirpated, when a period is put to all disorganization of industry and misgovernment, social and political, it will be found by the emancipated and enriched community what is now found by opulent individuals and privileged classes, that the secret of our discontent is internal and mysterious, that it springs from the ungodliness, the egotism, the sensuality, which theology calls sin. But whatever the future may reveal, all the sorrows of life are upon us here and now; we cannot deny them, we have constantly to struggle with them, we are often overwhelmed by irreparable misfortune. Esther "sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take his sackcloth from him; but he received it not." In vain do men offer us robes of beauty, chiding us for wearing the color of the night; we cannot be deceived by flattering words; we must give place to all the sad thoughts of our mortality until haply we find a salvation that goes to the root of our suffering, that dries up the fount of our tears.

In a very different spirit and for very different ends do men contemplate the dark side of human life. The cynic expatiates on painful things—the blot on life's beauty, the shadow on its glory, the pitiful ending of its brave shows—only to gibe and mock. The realist lingers in the dissecting chamber for very delight in revolting themes. The pessimist enlarges on the power of melancholy that lie may justify despair. The poet touches the pathetic string that he may flutter the heart. Fiction dramatizes the tragic sentiment for the sake of literary effect. Cultured wickedness drinks wine out of a skull, that by sharp contrast it may heighten its sensuous delight; whilst estheticism dallies with the sad experiences of life to the end of intellectual pleasure, as in ornamental gardening, dead leaves are left on ferns and palms in the service of the picturesque. But Christianity gives such large recognition to the pathetic element of life, not that it may mock with the cynic, or trifle with the artist; not because with the realist it has a ghoulish delight in horror, or because with the refined sensualist it cunningly aims to give poignancy to pleasure by the memory of pain; but because it divines the secret of our mighty misfortune, and brings with it the sovereign antidote. The critics declare that Rubens had an absolute delight in representing pain, and they refer us to that artist's picture of the "Brazen Serpent" in the National Gallery. The canvas is full of the pain, the fever, the contortions of the wounded and dying; the writhing, gasping crowd is everything, and the supreme instrument of cure, the brazen serpent itself, is small and obscure, no conspicuous feature whatever of the picture. The manner of the great artist is so far out of keeping with the spirit of the gospel. Revelation brings out broadly and impressively the darkness of the world, the malady of life, the terror of death, only that it may evermore make conspicuous the uplifted Cross, which, once seen, is death to ever vice, a consolation in every sorrow, a victory over every fear.

**÷**08-12 LORIMER

THE FALL OF SATAN

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

George C. Lorimer was born at Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1838. He was brought up by his stepfather who was associated with the theater, and in this relation he received a dramatic education and had some experience on the stage. In 1855 he came to the United States, where he joined the Baptist Church and abandoned the theatrical profession. Later he studied for the Baptist ministry, being ordained in 1859. He died in 1904. His direct and dramatic, pulpit style brought him into great popularity in Boston, Chicago, and New York. At Tremont Temple, Boston, he frequently spoke to overflowing congregations. He is the author of several well-known books, from one of which the sermon here given is taken as indicating his familiarity with and liking for dramatic literature. His pulpit manner always retained a flavor of dramatic style that contributed to his popularity.

LORIMER

1838—1904

THE FALL OF SATAN[1]

[Footnote 1: Copyright, 1882, by "The Homiletic Monthly," New York.]

*I beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven*.—Luk 10:18.

Whether the "glorious darkness" denoted by the name Satan is an actual personage or a maleficent influence, is of secondary moment as far as the aim and moral of this discourse are concerned. If the ominous title applies to an abstraction, and if the event so vividly introduced is but a dramatical representation of some phase in the mystery of iniquity, the spiritual inferences are just what they would be were the words respectively descriptive of an angel of sin, and of his utter and terrible overthrow. I shall not, therefore, tax your patience with discussions on these points, but shall assume as true that literal reading of the text which has commended itself to the ripest among our evangelical scholars.

The Scriptures obscurely hint at a catastrophe in heaven among immortal intelligences, by which many of them were smitten down from their radiant emerald thrones. Their communications on the subject are not specific and unambiguous, and neither can they escape the suspicion of being designedly figurative; intended, probably, as much to veil as to reveal. One of the clearest statements is made by Jude, where he says: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day"; and Peter, in like manner, speaks of God sparing not the angels that sinned, "but cast them down to hell"; and yet these comparatively lucid passages suggest a world of mist and shadow, which becomes filled with strange images when we confront the picture, presented by John, of war in heaven, with Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon, "that old serpent called the devil." Back of them there doubtless lies a history whose tragic significance is not easily measured. The sad, imperishable annals of our race prove that sin is a contingency of freedom. Wherever creatures are endowed with moral liberty, transgression is impliedly possible. It is, consequently, inherently probable that celestial beings, as well as man, may have revolted from the law of their Maker; and a fall accomplished among the inhabitants of heaven should no more surprize us than the fall of mortals on earth. Perhaps, after all, there is as much truth as poetry in Milton's conception of the rebellion, and of the fearful defeat that overtook its leader:—

"Him the almighty Power  
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,  
With hideous ruin and combustion, down  
To bottomless perdition: there to dwell  
In adamantine chains and penal fire,  
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms."

An apostle, admonishing a novice, bids him beware of pride, "lest he fall into the condemnation of the devil." Here presumptuous arrogance and haughtiness of spirit are specified as the root and source of the great transgression. Shakespeare takes up this thought:—

"Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition.  
By that sin fell the angels: how can man, then,  
The image of his Maker, hope to win by't?"

And Milton repeats it in the magnificent lines:—

"What time his pride  
Had cast him out of heaven, with all his host  
Of rebel angels; by whose aid, aspiring  
To set himself in glory above his peers,  
He trusted to have equalled the Most High,  
If He opposed; and, with ambitious aim,  
Against the throne and monarchy of God  
Raised impious war in heaven, and battle proud,  
With vain attempt."

Our Savior, also, sanctions this idea in the text. Joining His disciples again, after their brief separation, He finds them elated and exultant. They rejoiced, and, apparently, not with modesty, that devils were subject unto them, and that they could exorcize them at their pleasure. While they acknowledged that their power was due to the influence of His name, they evidently thought more of themselves than of Him. They were given to unseemly glorifying and self-satisfaction, and were met by the Master's words—half warning, half rebuke—"I beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven." He thus identifies their pride with that evil spirit which led to angelic ruin, and seeks to banish it from their hearts: "Rejoice not that the demons are subject unto you, but, rather, rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Rejoice not on account of privilege and power, but on account of grace; for the memory of grace must promote humility, as it will recall the guilt of which it is the remedy.

We have, here, a lesson for all ages and for all classes of society—a lesson continually enforced by Scripture, and illustrated by history. It deals with the insanity of pride and the senselessness of egotism. It reminds us, by repeated examples, of the temptations to self-inflation, and of the perils which assail its indulgence. "Ye shall be as gods," was the smiling, sarcastic allurement which beguiled our first parents to their ruin. They thought that before them rose an eminence which the foot of creaturehood had never trodden; that from its height the adventurous climber would rival Deity in the sweep of his knowledge and the depth of his joy. Elated and dazzled by the prospect, they dared tread through sin to its attainment, vainly dreaming that wrong-doing would lead to a purer paradise and to a loftier throne. One step, and only one, in the gratification of their desires, converted their enchanting mountain into a yawning gulf, and in its horrid wastes of darkness and of sorrow their high-blown pride was shamed and smothered. The haughty king walked on the terrace heights of Babylon, and, beneath the calm splendor of an Assyrian sky, voiced the complacent feeling which dulled his sense of dependence upon God—as the perfumes of the East lull into waking-slumber the faculties of the soul. Thus ran his self-glorifying soliloquy: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" Alas for the weakness of the royal egotist! In an hour his boasting was at an end, and, reduced by the chastening judgment of the Almighty to the level of the brute creation, he was compelled to learn that "those who walk in pride the King of heaven is able to abase." Similar the lesson taught us by the overthrow of Belshazzar when, congratulating himself on the stability of his throne, and in his excess of arrogance, he insulted the sacred vessels which his father had plundered from the temple at Jerusalem. I say taught us, for the foolhardy braggart was past learning anything himself. Like the yet more silly Herod, who drank in the adulation of the mob as he sat shimmering in his silver robe and slimed his speech from his serpent-tongue, he was too inflated and bloated with vanity to be corrected by wholesome discipline. Both of these rulers were too self-satisfied to be reproved, and God's exterminating indignation overtook them. Like empty bubbles, nothing could be done with them, and hence the breath of the Almighty burst and dispersed their glittering worthlessness. Pope John XXI., according to Dean Milman, is another conspicuous monument of this folly. "Contemplating," writes the historian, "with too much pride the work of his own hands"—the splendid palace of Viterbo—"at that instant the avenging roof came down, on his head." And Shakespeare has immortalized the pathetic doom which awaits the proud man, who, confident in his own importance and in the magnitude of his destiny, is swallowed up in schemes and plans for his personal aggrandizement and power. Wolsey goes too far in his self-seeking, is betrayed by his excess of statecraft, and, being publicly disgraced, laments, when too late, his selfish folly:—

"I have ventured,  
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,  
These many summers on a sea of glory,  
But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride  
At length broke under me; and now has left me,  
Weary, and old with service, to the mercy  
Of a rude stream, that must forever hide me."

It is not difficult to discern the fatal effects of this spirit in the lives of the great and mighty; but we are frequently blind to its pernicious influence on the lowly and weak. We do not realize, as we ought, that the differences between men lie mainly in their position, not in their experiences and dangers. The leaders of society are merely actors, exhibiting on the public stage of history what is common to mankind at large. However insignificant we may be, and however obscure our station, our inner life is not far removed from that of the exalted personages who draw to themselves the attention of the world. The poorest man has his ambitions, his struggles and his reverses; and the first may take as deep a hold upon his heart, and the second call forth as much cunning or wisdom to confront, and the last as much bitterness to endure, as are found in the vicissitudes of a Richelieu or a Napoleon. The peasant's daughter, in her narrow circle, feels as keenly the disappointment of her hopes, and mourns as intensely the betrayal of her confidence, or the rude ending of her day-dreams, as either queen or princess, as either Katharine of England or Josephine of France. We do wrong to separate, as widely as we do in our thoughts, ranks and conditions of society. The palace and the hovel are nearer to each other than we usually think; and what passes beneath the fretted ceiling of the one, and the thatched roof of the other, is divided by the shadowy line of mere externalities. And so it happens that the fall of an angel may be pertinent to the state of a fisherman-disciple, and the fall of a prime minister or ruler have its message of warning for the tradesman and mechanic.

Indeed, it will generally be found that the failures of life, and the worse than failures, are mainly due to the same cause which emptied heavenly thrones of their angelic occupants. What is it, let me ask, that comes into clearer prominence as the Washington tragedy[1] is being investigated and scrutinized? Is it not that a diseased egotism, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, a stalwart egotism, robbed this country of its ruler, committed "most sacrilegious murder," and "broke ope"

"The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence  
The life o' the building."

[Footnote 1: The assassination of President Garfield.]

Like bloody Macbeth, who greedily drank in the prognostications of the weird sisters, tho he feared that the "supernatural soliciting" could not be good, because they pandered to his monstrous self-infatuation, Guiteau, having wrought himself up through many years of self-complacency, claims to have believed that the divine Being had chosen him to do a deed which has filled the earth with horror. Thus the growth of self-conceit into mammoth proportions tends to obscure the rights of others, and to darken with its gigantic shadow the light of conscience. If we are to admit the prisoner's story, as the expression of his real condition prior to the assassination, we look on one so intoxicated with the sense of his own importance that he would "spurn the sea, if it could roar at him," and hesitate not to perform any deed of darkness that would render him more conspicuous. Others, less heinous offenders than this garrulous murderer, have, from similar weakness, wrought indescribable mischief to themselves. The man, for instance, who frets against providence because his standing is not higher and his influence greater, has evidently a better opinion of his deservings than is wholesome for him. He imagines he is being wronged by the Creator—that his merits are not recognized as they should be—never, for a moment, remembering that, as a sinner, he has no claims on the extraordinary bounty of his heavenly Father. From murmuring he easily glides into open rebellion, and from whispered reproaches to loud denunciations. There are people in every community whose pride leads them into shameful transactions. They would not condescend to mingle with their social inferiors, but they will subsist on the earnings of their friends, and consider it no disgrace to borrow money which they have no intention of returning. Their vanity, at times, commits them to extravagances which they have no means of supporting. They ought to have carriages and horses, mansions and pictures, with all the luxuries of affluence—at least so they think—and, being destitute of the resources requisite to maintain such state, they become adepts in those arts which qualify for the penitentiary. Others have such confidence in the strength of their virtue, such commanding arrogance of integrity, that, like a captain who underestimates the force of an enemy and overrates his own, they neglect to place a picket-guard on the outskirts of their moral camp, and in such an hour as they think not they are surprized and lost. Even possessors of religion are not always clear of this folly, or safe from its perils. They "think more highly of themselves than they ought to think"; they come to regard themselves as specially favored of heaven; they talk of the Almighty in a free and easy manner, and of Jesus Christ as tho He were not the Judge at all. When they pray, it is with a familiarity bordering on irreverence, and when they deal with sacred themes it is with a lightness that breeds contempt. When they recount the marvels which they have wrought in the name of Christ, it is hardly-possible for them to hide their self-complacency; for, while they profess to give Him the glory, the manner of their speech shows that they are taking it to themselves. They are like the disciples, who were as proud of their prowess in casting out devils as children are with their beautiful toys, and they are as much in need of the Savior's warning: "I beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven." And because they have failed to give heed unto it, they have oftentimes followed the Evil One in his downward course, and in a moment have made shipwreck of their faith.

"As sails, full spread, and bellying with the wind,  
Drop, suddenly collapsed, if the mast split;  
So to the ground down dropped the cruel fiend";

and earthward have the unsaintly saints of God as swiftly sped, when they have fostered the pride which changed angels into demons.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" What more pitiable spectacle than the ruin of an angel! We have seen the forsaken halls of time-worn and dilapidated castles, have stood in the unroofed palaces of ancient princes, and have gazed on the moss-covered and ivy-decked towers of perishing churches, and the sight of them has tilled our hearts with melancholy, as we thought of what had been, and of the changes that had swept over the fair, valiant and pious throngs whose laughter, bravery and prayers once made these scenes so gay and vocal. All is hushed now, and the silence is broken only by the hoot and screech of the owl, or by the rustle of the nightbat's leathern wing. But how much sadder is the form of the mighty spirit, who once sat regnant among the sons of light, emptied of his innocence, filled with foul, creeping, venomous thoughts and feelings, uncrowned, dethroned only with malignity and throned in evil! The Bible calls him the prince and the god of this world; and everywhere we are surrounded with evidences of his despotic sway. Unlike earthly rulers, whose exhausted natures exact repose, he is ever sleepless, and his plotting never ends. Enter his somber presence-chamber, and commotion, bustle, activity will confront and amaze you. He is continually sending his emissaries forth in every direction. The perpetual wranglings, ceaseless distractions, irreconcilable contradictions, disquieting doubts, discouraging outlooks, inharmonious and jangling opinions, unaccountable delusions, clashing and crashing dissonances, cruel hatreds, bitter enmities and stormful convulsions, which so largely enter and deface the course of human history, proceed mainly from his influence. We know that "the heart of a lost angel is in the earth," and as we know its throbbings carry misery and despair to millions of our fellow-beings, we can surmise the intensity of we wherewith it afflicts himself. Mrs. Browning's Adam thus addresses Lucifer:—

"The prodigy  
Of thy vast brows and melancholy eyes,  
Which comprehend the heights of some great fall.  
I think that thou hast one day worn a crown  
Under the eyes of God."

But now the vast brow must wear a heavier gloom, and the eyes betray a deeper sorrow, as in his ruin he has sought to bury the hopes and joys of a weaker race. How different his dealings with the race from those which mark the ministry of Christ! Immortal hate on the one side of humanity; immortal love on the other; both struggling for supremacy. One sweeping across the soul with pinions of dark doubts and fears; the other, with the strong wing of hope and fair anticipations. One seeking to plunge the earth-spirit into the abysmal depths of eternal darkness; the other seeking to bear it to the apex of light, where reigns eternal day. And of the two, Christ alone is called "the blest." In the agony and anguish of His sufferings He yet can exclaim, "My joy I leave with thee"; and in the lowest vale of His shame can calmly discourse on peace. The reason? Do you ask the question? It is found in His goodness. He is good, and seeks the good of all; and goodness crowns His lacerated brow with joy. This Satan sacrificed in his fall; this he antagonizes with, in his dreary career, and so remains in the eyes of all ages the monument of melancholy gloom. Thus, also, is it with man, whose haughtiness thrusts him into evil. He is morose and wretched, crusht beneath a burden of we, which weighs the eyelids down with weariness and the heart with care, and which constrains him to curse the hour of his birth. Next to the grief-crowned angel, there is no more pitiable object in all God's fair creation than a human soul tumbled by its own besotted pride into sin and shame. "How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!" aye, changed to dross, which the foot spurns, and which the whirlwind scatters to the midnight region of eternity.

In view of these reflections, we can understand the stress laid by the inspired writers on the grace of humility. We are exhorted to be like Jesus, who was meek and lowly in heart; and we are commanded to esteem others better than ourselves. These admonitions are not designed to cultivate a servile or an abject spirit, but to promote a wholesome sense of our own limitations, weaknesses and dependence. They would foster such a state of mind as will receive instruction, as will lean on the Almighty, and recognize the worthiness and rights of all. Just as the flower has to pass its season entombed in the darkness of its calyx before it spreads forth its radiant colors and breathes its perfume, so the soul must veil itself in the consciousness of its own ignorance and sinfulness before it will be able to expand in true greatness, or shed around it the aroma of pure goodness. Crossing the prairies recently between this city and St. Louis, I noticed that the trees were nearly all bowed in the direction of the northeast. As our strongest winds blow from that quarter, it was natural to inquire why they were not bent to the southwest. The explanation given was, that the south winds prevail in the time of sap, when the trees are supple with life and heavy with foliage, and consequently, that they yield before them. But when the winter comes they are hard and firm, rigid and stiff, and even the fury of the tempest affects them not. Thus is it with human souls. When humility fills the heart, when its gentleness renders susceptible its thoughts and feelings, the softest breath of God's Spirit can bend it earthward to help the needy, and downward to supplicate and welcome heaven's grace. But when it is frozen through and through with pride, it coldly resists the overtures of mercy, and in its deadness is apathetic even, to the storm of wrath. Nothing remains but for the wild hurricane to uproot it and level it to the ground. Such is the moral of my brief discourse. God grant we may have the wisdom of humility to receive it!

**÷**08-13 KNOX LITTLE

THIRST SATISFIED

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William John Knox Little, English preacher, was born 1839 and educated at Cambridge University. He has filled many parochial cures, and in 1881 was appointed canon of Worcester, and sub-dean in 1902. He also holds the vicarage of Hoar Cross (1885). He is of high repute as a preacher and is in much request all over England. He belongs to the High Church school and has printed, besides his sermons, many works of educational character, such as the "Treasury of Meditation," "Manual of Devotion for Lent," and "Confirmation and Holy Communion."

KNOX LITTLE

BORN IN 1839

THIRST SATISFIED[1]

[Footnote 1: Reprinted by permission of Hodder & Stoughton, London.]

*My soul is athirst for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before the presence of God?*—Psa 42:2.

The verse, dear friends, which I have read to you for a text is one of those verses which justify in the highest degree the action of the Christian Church in selecting the Hebrew Psalter as, in fact, her prayer-book. There are many passages, as you will feel with me, in the Hebrew psalter that express in a very high degree the wants of the human soul; but perhaps there is no passage more telling, more touching, more searching, more expressive than that solemn and that exalted sentiment which is spoken in the text, "My soul is athirst for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before the presence of God?" The passage is a justification, then, of the action of the Christian Church. People sometimes ask why in the daily service, why on Sundays, you rehearse the Psalms, which have about them so much that is incomprehensible, so much that requires explanation; why there are those tremendous denunciations of enemies, why there are those prayers that seem at first sight to touch wants that we modern people scarcely know; but if you want a real justification and a handy answer you may fall back upon the general texture of the psalter as exprest by such solemn words as those of the text. If you would find any document, any volume that will speak your thoughts best about and towards eternity, you cannot select a better than the Hebrew psalter, for the general tone and temper of its teaching is the cry of the soul for God.

And then there is another thought upon the threshold of such a subject that demands our attention. This verse of the text, being a sort of example or representative verse of the psalter, expresses to us—does it not?—the attitude and the mission of the Christian Church. The attitude. For what is the position, dear friends, of the Christian Church? What are the struggles of Christian souls except, in the midst of a world that is quite complicated with difficulties, in the midst of a world that is overwhelmed with sorrow, in the midst of a time of severe temptation, to constantly rise and gaze high above the thought of evil, and gaze towards the sun of brightness, and cry for God? And what is the mission of the Christian Church? Is it not to help men and women in their struggle and their sorrow to forget at least at times their pettinesses and degradation to rise to better standards and loftier ideals, and cry for God? And if that be the mission of the Christian Church, then I hold—and that is my point this morning—that that is the justification of such noble efforts as have been made in your church to enable so great, so sinful a city as London to have at least moments of relaxation from its world-wide weariness, moments of pause in the pursuit of its sin, and to call it back from that which is overpowering tho transient—to ask it to pass them in the ministrations of religion. What is the object of such a church as this? Why, buried among your buildings, in the midst of this great, powerful, sinful city,—why has it a mission for eternity? Why is it good that you should do your best? Why is it praiseworthy and beautiful that your rector and churchwardens should have exerted themselves to the utmost to make this church what it ought to be? Why? Because there is not a man or woman in London, not one in this bustling crowd, not one in this confusion of commerce, not one in this sink of sin, but might say "Yes"—ought to say, and must ultimately feel, and should now be taught to realize that the soul has one satisfaction, one only—"My soul is athirst for God, for the living God." Well, if that be so, can we be wrong, dear friends, can we waste our time, if we ask ourselves this morning something quite practical about this thirst of the soul?

And, first of all, I submit that in such a verse as this, and in such a work as this, we are face to face with one of those great governed contrasts that are found throughout Scripture and throughout human life. I may say, *par parenthèse*, that that is one of the great proofs of sacred Scripture. When your shallow thinker, when your wild and profound philosopher, kicks the sacred Book with the toe of his boot, and denounces it because he does not like the measure of Noah's Ark or the exact activity of Jonah's whale, the moment you begin to think beneath those mere sharpnesses of speech and those mere quicknesses of the thought, you say this: "There may be this or that about the surface of Scripture which I do not and cannot explain, and cannot entirely understand; but at least there is no book—no, not excepting Milton; no, not even excepting Dante; no, for us English people, making no reserve for Shakespeare—there is no book that, after all, expresses that deep, inner, serious fact of my being, of my soul, of myself; the fact that lives when our facts are dying; the fact that persists in asserting itself when the noise of the world is still; the fact that does not care about daylight only, but comes up in the dark; the fact that whispers low when I am in the crowd, but speaks loud in the darkest night, when the clock is ticking on the stairs, and conscience has stalked out and stood before me, asserting facts that I cannot contradict—there is no look that can speak that fact of facts, that thirst, that longing, that desolation, that desire, that hope, that activity, that possibility of supreme contention and final victory, there is nothing like the Bible that does that." And so wise men, while they admit difficulties, thoughtful men, while they do not controvert the fact that that which is divine needs larger explanation, fall back upon such great governed truths as that text to support the Bible. The Bible says, asserts, determines, and insists upon the truth which the Church is insisting upon, which you and I, in our better moments, emphasize and say "Amen" to—the soul is athirst for God. The Bible brings home the great contrast that is present to us all.

Let us dwell, that we may realize this thirst of the soul, upon the contrast. There are, at least, four forms of attraction which are presented, as I suppose, to your soul, certainly to mine. First of all, there is the attraction of natural beauty. If you stand on a fair August afternoon on the terrace, for instance, at Berne, or on the heights of Chaumont; if you gaze at the distant Alps, crowned with snow which was generated in winter, but which takes the brightness and glory of diamonds in the summer sun; if, coming from the noise and heat of England, you first gaze at that line of strange pointed mountains crowned with that whiteness, struck with the sunlight, you are moved by natural beauty. If you stand in America on the upper reaches of the St. Lawrence, and watch the river as it hurries to its destiny at Niagara; if you see the tossing water writhing almost like living creatures anticipating a dreadful destiny and passing over the fall; or if, rising out of what is tragic in nature, you come to what is homely—if, for instance, you see the chestnut woods of spring with an inspiration of quiet joy, or if you see the elms at Worcester or Hereford in our common England in the autumn time with an inspiration of sorrow; wherever you turn with eye or head, with a feeling in your heart, a thought in your mind, nature demands her recognition; and you London men, in the toil of your struggle, in the noise of your work, in the dust of your confusion of life, when you get your holiday in spring or autumn,—unless, indeed, you have passed into the mere condition of brutes,—while you still keep the hearts of men, you feel there is something in the apostles of culture, in the teachers of esthetics, in persons who say that beauty is everything to satisfy the soul. Nature, you say—and you say it justly—says, "Beauty." You find a delight as you gaze upon nature. Yes, dear friends, you are stimulated, you are delighted, you are consoled; there is one thing which you are not—you are not satisfied.

Or, quite possibly, you turn to that which seems to English natures more practical and less poetical—you turn to the attraction of activity. You say the poets, or the preachers, or the dreamers may gaze upon nature; but Englishmen have something else to do—we have to work. You look at the result of activity, and it is splendid. Imagine, picture for a moment, political achievement; picture to yourselves the power not only of a mind, but of a personality, of a character which can attract vast millions who have never gazed upon the human expression in the human face—can attract them to great love or to great hatred, can mold the destinies of an empire, can change the current of the time—think of such men as Richelieu or Cavour, or more modern instances, and you understand what is the greatness and the power of the attraction of political activity. Or, to come nearer home, go into your London city, and watch the working of your London mart. What have you before you there? The activity of the hearts and minds of Englishmen, sending out the force of the life that is in them from the heart that is beating in those tremendous centers to the distances that are only stopt by the most distant frontiers of the world. Your sayings and thoughts are quoted throughout the markets of Europe—yes, throughout the markets of other continents; your actions and decisions make the difference between the decisions and the actions of men that you have never seen, that you shall never see. The Medici were a power in Florence, first as bankers, then as governors. There are men in London who have power throughout the world, not only in Florence, not as profest governors, but as practical governors through the activity of commercial instinct. Certainly, it seems to me quite possible that there may be minds carried away by such a great activity; but that great activity I submit to your deeper, quieter English Sunday thought—that activity will stimulate, will delight, will attract, will intoxicate; one thing it will not do—I am bold to say it will never satisfy.

And if I may take another instance for a moment, there is this pure intellect, bidding good-by to the political arena, to the commercial strife, saying farewell to the dreams of beauty, and falling back upon the cells of the brain, traversing the corridors of thought, and entering first here and there into that labyrinth of instinct, or association, or accumulative learning. Certainly, there is a power of a delight that the world can never realize outside the region of the brain. If that needs proof you have only, dear friends, to meditate upon such lives as Newton, or Shakespeare, or Kepler, or if you turn to the region of meditative thought, to such lives as our own George Eliot—yes, there is that in the mere exercise of intellect which is intoxicating, which is consoling even to the highest degree. But intellect, after all, finds its frontier. I may say of it what I have said of the esthetic sentiment, what I have said of the active sentiment in man: it attracts, it delights—what is more, I think it even consoles; but the one thing I find about it that to me is perfectly appalling is that it does not satisfy.

There are many of you perhaps to-day who will demand that I should take my fourth instance, and will ask that that at least may do its duty. Will it? There is the region of the affections—that region wherein we stray in early spring days as pickers of the spring-flowers of our opening life, where suns are always glorious and sunsets only speak of brighter dawn, where poetry is in all ordinary conversation and hope springs to higher heights from hour to hour, where Mays are always Mays and Junes are always Junes, where flowers are ever bursting, and there seems no end to our nosegays, no limit to our imaginations, no fetter to our fancies, no restraint to our desires. There is the world, the vast, powerful world, of the passions, purified by exhaustive cultivation into what we call the affections of a higher life. By them we deal with our fellow-creatures; by them, when we are young, we form great friendships; by them, as we grow older, we form around us certain associations that we intend to support us as life goes off. We have all known it. There is the friend, there is the sweetheart, there is the wife, there is the child, there are the dear expressions of the strong heart that after all beats in Englishmen. But as life goes on, first in one object and then by anticipation and terror perhaps in others, we watch those who have been dear to us pass in dim procession to the grave, and we find, after all, that in the world of affections that old strange law that pervades one branch of the contrast prevails; it can stimulate, it can support, it can console, it can delight, it can lead to delirium at moments, but it does not satisfy. And, my brothers and sisters, because you and I are born not for a moment, but for infinite moments; not for the struggle of time, but for the great platform and career of eternity—because that is so, never, never, never, if we are true to ourselves, shall we pause in the midst of our mortal pilgrimage until we find, and grasp, and embrace, and love that which satisfies. When you awaken up a young heart to that truth, then that heart, as I hold it, is on the path of conversion. When amidst the struggle of sin you have determined the soul to strive after that truth, then that soul is in progress of solid conversion and final perfectibility. But, at any rate, all human nature joins that cry of the Christian, and the Bible speaks of it as it always does—its ultimate truth expressing what we need. No; there are many things given, there are many attractions to draw; they will stimulate, they will help, they will console, they will give pleasure; there is one thing that satisfies the immortal, there is one life that meets your need: "My soul is athirst for God, for the living God; when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?"

Why, dear friends, why is it that these things do not satisfy? There lies a city in the Volscian Hills, fair and beautiful, climbing in its peaks and pinnacles up little ledges of the rocks, and down into the depths of the valleys. And if you wander some two days from Rome, and gaze upon those mountains, historic in their memories and splendid in their beauty, you are struck by the tenderness and the attraction of that city. It is a city of flowers. The flowers stream up its streets in grave procession; they climb up the pillars of churches, embracing them and holding on with arms of deep affection; they laugh in the sunshine, they weep in the shadow, they are shrouded in the clouds of night, but they blaze again in the blaze of the morning. There is the dim funereal ivy, there is the brightness and glow of the purple convolvulus, there is the wild-rose clustering round the windows. They are lying asleep on the doorsteps, they gather themselves into knots as if to gossip and to talk in the language of flowers by the doorways—utterly beautiful! You look at the city with wonder and astonishment—with desire. How wonderful, you say, that church tower covered with its flowers; that altar covered with flowers not gathered and placed in vases, but with Nature's own hand arranging an offering to the living God. These streets that sound no footfall of an angry multitude, but that listen to the footfall of a quiet nature—yes, it is beautiful in the early morning. But stay there until the later afternoon, when the fog begins to gather; stay there until night-time, when the miasma begins to rise; stay there until morning, and you are in danger of destruction from poison. It is a land of flowery expression; but it is not a land of real life.

My friends, the activity of man, the poetic faculty of man, all the gifts and all the capacities of man—they are beautiful, they are touching, they are attractive; but if they are all, if they express all that you have to offer, and all that is in you to feel, then they are hollow, or they-are poisonous, and like that city of flowers. Why? Because there is in you and me a soul that lies behind our thought, altho there is more than feeling there—a soul that supports our will, and is more than our volition. It thinks, but is not thought; it feels, but is not feeling; it wills, but is not volition. There is something deeper in man than his esthetic desire or his active practise, something deeper beneath us all than anything that finds expression, certainly than anything that finds satisfaction. There is the self; there is myself, yourself; there is that strange, mysterious life of loneliness which stands, and thinks, and judges, and appraises. When, by divine grace, we escape from the voice of the crowd, and from the cry of custom, from the delirium of desire, that poor lonely self within us pleads to us in a cry like the call of the starveling crying to the rich man that passes by, "Oh, will you gratify desire? Oh, will you gratify pleasure? Oh, will you stimulate activity, and will you leave me alone? I, yourself, your very self, the foundation of your life, the permanent expression of your immortality—I must be satisfied, and being infinite and immortal, I know but one satisfaction: 'My soul is athirst for God, for the living God; when shall I come, and appear before the presence of God?'"

If that be true, or if it be approximately true, dear friends, let us ask ourselves this morning these questions. Let us be quite practical. What do you mean, you may say for a moment, by the thirst for God? I remember long ago in Paris, in conversation with one whom I deem one of the greatest modern statesmen, tho not one of the most successful—I remember, when a mere boy, talking to that thoughtful man just at the moment when he was standing amidst the ruins of his activity, and gazing with the placid spirit with which a good man gazes when he feels that he has done his duty, tho the world can see that he has failed—I remember talking to him on such questions as these, and what he said, among other things, was this: "In dealing with mankind and in dealing with yourself you must rise by degrees, you must advance from point to point; there is a point of achievement, but you cannot reach the point of achievement unless you have gone up the ladder of progress." I follow his advice. What do we mean by thirsting for God? My friends, on the lower round of that ladder, I mean thirsting for and desiring moral truth. I mean that the soul within you is thirsting and imploring for the satisfaction of its moral instincts. Turn for an instant to the ten commandments; they are trite, they are ordinary, they are placed before you in the east end of your church, after the old custom of your practical, unaesthetic, and undreaming England. Ask what they mean. Turn to the second table. You are to reverence your father and mother. Why? Because they are the instruments of life that God gives. You are to reverence life in others in the sixth commandment. Why? Because life is the deepest mystery that God can possibly exhibit to you. In the seventh commandment—I scarcely like to say, but yet it is wise to repeat, it is necessary to assert it—we are to remember, you and I, when we are young, when we are active, when we are passionate, the great responsibility of man; you are not to trifle with that awful mystery, the transmission of life, life which unites itself with eternal love. You are to remember respect for property, for that which divine providence has placed by wise laws in the hands of others. You are to remember that the best of properties is a good character. Finally, in the tenth commandment, you are not to forget that divine providence guides you, and you are not to murmur and be angry when He guides you who knows the best for you, and when you have done your best. And rising from the second table and coming to the first, you are not to forget that there is one object for every soul, as the text asserts. You are not to forget that a jealousy may be created, ought to be created, if you put anything before God. You are not to grudge God the restraint of speech, and—thank God, still it is possible to appeal to the wise instincts of England—you are not to grudge on your Sunday the gift of your time. These are the outlines of the grave moral law that runs deep into the heart of the Christian; and I answer, the thirst for God means the thirst within me to fulfil that grave moral law.

But, my friends, pause for a moment. After all, that would only be a skeleton. After all, simply to draw out the outlines of a picture is not the work of an artist. Suppose you ask a master in music, "How am I to produce the real result of stately sound?" He will tell you about the common cord; he will tell you about the result of its changes and its affinities, and will speak of those results as harmony; or he will tell you about the gamut of sounds—sounds found in the wind upon the mountains, found in the surging sea, found in the voice of childhood, found in the whisper of your dreams—sound that is everywhere, sound that wanders up and down this wild, wild universe. He will tell you all that, and explain how in proper steps, in wise modulations, that is melody, as the union of sounds is harmony. Is that enough? Would that produce "The Last Judgment" of Spohr, that made you dissolve in tears? Would that produce the chorus of Handel that made you almost rise and march in majesty? Would that fill you with deep thoughts in Beethoven, or fire you into joy in Mendelssohn? Oh, no! You have your skeleton, but you have not one thing, the deepest; genius has to touch with its fire the fact that is before you; you want the mystery of life. And then suppose you turn to an artist and ask him to guide you in painting, and he talks to you about light and shadow, about the laying of the color, about the drawing of lines, about the exact expression of the distant and the present, of the foreground and the background, and having learned it all, you produce what seems an abortion; you ask yourself, "What is the meaning of this?" Is this enough to make you quiver, in Dresden, before the San Sisto, carried away by those divine eyes of the "Mother of Eternity," or rent with sorrow before the solemn eyes of the Child? Is this enough to fill you with tears of delight when you enter the Sistine Chapel and see St. John as he kneels with his unshed tears about the dead Christ? What is there wanting in the touch of your artist? There is wanting genius; there is wanting life. Or to take one instance more. You ask somebody to teach you sculpture, to tell you how to make yourself master in the treatment of stone. He will tell you wise things about the plastic material that you have to mold with thumb and finger, and then about the use of the chisel and the hammer to produce the result in the stone, following the treatment of that plastic material. But when you have learned it all, can you really believe that you will produce the effect of that majestic manhood that you see in the David of Angelo in the Piazza of Florence, or that wise, determined progress that is exprest in Donatello's St. George? What is the difference between your failure and the results of those men? Genius—life. And when you turn to the moral law, and when you ask yourself, "How can I learn to be athirst for God?" the preachers say, "Accept the moral law; act exactly in distinct duty to your parents; say, 'Corban, it is a gift by whatsoever thou mayest be profited thereby'; do your duty strictly to the letter and nothing more; be conservative about your property; restrain yourself from desire of change; do not stimulate and do not satisfy your passions beyond what is exactly exprest in the moral law." But then, if you speak the truth, you say, "And in the end what am I? Why, after all, most commonplace, and, in truth, most sinful." What is the difference? This difference: there wants here the touch of genius; there wants the touch of life divine, grace that illuminates the moral law; there wants, my friends, the enthusiasm for goodness, the science of sciences, the art of arts, the delight and the desire of doing right because it is right, the great and splendid spirit that belongs to all of us; and yet it is the highest when the thirst of your soul is real. Certainly it is to know God's guidance in law; but what is law? It is to grasp that atmosphere of life and reality which comes out of the moral law to those who seek it in a living person first—the desire of goodness, the desire, the love, the enthusiasm, the ambition, cost what it may, of doing right because it is right. Oh, my friends, I submit—and I submit it without fear of contradiction—that is an ambition worthy of Englishmen. Certainly we are not dreamers; certainly God has given us practical activity; certainly, whatever we misunderstand, this we can understand, the thirst of the soul for God is the thirst to love goodness because it is right.

And then hastily to conclude, I would say that that thirst is exprest, that that thirst is satisfied, not only in moral law and in its atmosphere, but in one thing more that I think we can all understand. When we read the New Testament, so simple, so straightforward, so true, so beautiful, with some difficulties, but no difficulties that a true heart can find insuperable—when we read the New Testament we are brought face to face with the teachings of Christ. And there is this, my friends, more about these teachings, that if you are to follow them out you have not time enough in time; the teachings of our Master demand eternity—there is something about them infinite, so simple, so beautiful, and yet we feel that we are insufficient to fulfil them in this sphere of time. If my soul is athirst for God, it is athirst for the fulfilment of those great, splendid, practical teachings which remind me that I am to begin to learn my lesson in this narrow school, but that I shall fulfil my achievement in that great land beyond the grave. Is that enough? No; no, when the heart is lonely; no, when the sun is setting; no, when the clouds are gathering round us; no, when the storm is coming up. It is useless for the preacher, if he tries to be real, to talk about law, or the result of law, or the splendor of teaching; if we know the human heart in its width and its activity, if it is to find satisfaction it must find it in a personal life. You may say you cannot know God. That is the ordinary answer of the human sinning heart, which in modern times calls itself agnostic. Know God! Well, of course it is truly said that it is by mere license of speech when you talk of knowledge about human perceptions—it is wisely said. You perceive a fact, my friend; you must perceive it in itself, and as it is, and by an intellect that can infallibly state that it is so and in that manner. Knowledge like that is impossible, I grant; but between that scientific knowledge and utter unbelief there are shades, first of all of assent that shuts out doubt, and at last, at the other pole, of a doubt that almost shuts out assent. Between the two there are activities of life, and if you are to say, "I cannot know the personal God with scientific knowledge," I grant it; but you cannot know anything, not only in theology, but in politics, or social life, or moral conduct, or conduct that is not moral—you can know nothing, you can never act at all, because all our action is not on knowledge, but on belief, and therefore when we turn to a personal life that is not perceived by the activity of the senses we only demand that you are to accept that which it is possible to accept in any sphere of activity, and which you do accept. It is possible for you, according to the laws of your being, to accept a personal Christ. "But," you say—and I must remind you of it as I close—"a personal Christ, but still clothed in human lineaments, a personal Christ who is mysterious—how can you accept that?" How can you not? My friends, the human intellect is so framed that it acts habitually upon ideas that are true yet indistinct. You act on space, you act on time, you have infinity, you have in your mouth the word "cause." What do you know exactly about infinity, or space, or time, or cause? The human intellect, it is truly said, first by the greatest of the fathers, then repeated by modern thinkers—the human intellect is so great, first, that it can take exact ideas, and then, because it is infinite, that it can act instantly upon ideas that are real but indistinct. Christ—yes, first He is indistinct yet most real—real because He entered into history, real because He exprest the idea that is in the brain and heart of us all; indistinct because these little twenty centuries have separated us from His actual historic life; but a fact to those who seek Him, because His power is to make Himself an inward gift to the human soul, because His activity is such that He meets us on the altar of His sacred sacrament, that He meets us in the divine Word to express His thoughts, that He meets us in consolation, that He meets us in absolution, in moments of sorrow and of prayer. Oh, you are not driven to a distant infinity! Oh, you are not asked to rest upon a shadow I Oh, you are not besought to play the dreamer or the sentimentalist, when you think about God! Oh, you are asked to remember that fair, sweet vision—the vision of a Man so devoid of vulgarity, that whilst He loved the people He did not despise the great—the vision of a Man so strong that He could face a multitude, so tender that He could raise the lost woman, so gentle that the little children gathered their arms about His neck; the vision of a Man at home with fishermen, and at home with the high-born, with thoughts so deep that they permeate modern Christendom, with thoughts so simple that they taught truth to ancient Galilee; the vision of a Man who encouraged youth, the One on whom we rest, by whom we hang, in whom we hope, who sympathizes with all our best desires, who does not denounce us, but only intercedes and pities; the Man who never places Himself upon a Pharisaic pedestal, but feels with the child, with the boy, with the man, with the woman,—the Man of men, the crown of our humanity, the God in Man, the Man in God, the power of the sacraments, the force of prayer, the sweet, dear Friend who never misunderstands us, never forsakes us, never is hard upon us. My friends, it is your privilege, it is mine, beyond the privilege of the psalmist, to know in the gospel, to know in the Church, Christ, God exprest in humanity. Is your soul athirst for the highest? You may find it if you could come in repentance, if you come in desire, if you come in quiet determination to do your duty; you may find it satisfied—yes, now satisfied—in Christ.

÷09-00 **The World's Great Sermons**  
  
VOLUME IX  
  
CUYLER TO VAN DYKE

THE  
World's  
Great  
Sermons

COMPILED BY  
GRENVILLE KLEISER

Formerly of Yale Divinity School Faculty;  
Author of "How to Speak  
in Public," Etc.

With Assistance from Many of the Foremost  
Living Preachers and Other Theologians

INTRODUCTION BY  
LEWIS O. BRASTOW, D.D.  
Professor Emeritus of Practical Theology  
in Yale University

IN TEN VOLUMES

VOLUME IX—CUYLER TO VAN DYKE

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THE VALUE OF LIFE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Theodore Ledyard Cuyler, Presbyterian divine, was born at Aurora, New York, in 1822. He took his degree at Princeton in 1841, and studied theology in Princeton Seminary. He was ordained to the ministry in 1848, but after discharging the duties of three pastoral positions, took up the prosecution of more general activities, including temperance and philanthropic work. He has been a voluminous writer, having contributed some four thousand articles to leading religious organs. He died February 26, 1909.

[3]

CUYLER

1822-1909

THE VALUE OF LIFE

The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.—Job 33:4.

There are two conflicting theories, nowadays, as to the origin of man. One theory brings him upward from the brute, the other, downward from God; one gives him an ascent from the ape, the other a descent from the Almighty. I shall waste no time in refuting the first theory. The most profound physicist of Europe, Professor Virchow, of Berlin, has lately asserted that this theory of man's evolution from the brute has no solid scientific foundation. Why need you and I seek to disprove what no man has ever yet proved or will prove? The other theory of man's origin comes down to us in the oldest book in existence, the Book of Job, and tallies exactly with the narrative in the next oldest books, those compiled by Moses: "The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." That is the Bible account of your ancestry and mine.

We make a great deal of ancestry. The son[4] of a duke may become a duke; the child of a king has royal blood in his veins; and a vast deal of honor is supposed to descend with an honorable descent. Grant this true, it proves a great deal; it proves more than some of us imagine. It proves that there is something grander than for man to have for his sire a king or an emperor, a statesman or a conqueror, a poet or a philosopher. It looks to the grandest genealogy in the universe, the ancestry of a whole race; not a few favored individuals, but all humanity. My brethren, fellow sharers of immortality, open this family record. Trace your ancestry back to the most august parentage in the universe: One is our Father, God; One our elder brother, Jesus. We all draw lineage from the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Herein consists the value and dignity of human life. I go back to the origin of the globe. I find that for five days the creative hand of the Almighty is busy in fitting up an abode of palatial splendor. He adorns it; He hollows the seas for man's highway, rears the mountains for his observatories, stores the mines for his magazines, pours the streams to give him drink, and fertilizes the fields to give him daily bread. The mansion is carpeted with verdure, illuminated with the greater light by day, lesser lights by night. Then God comes up to the grandest work of all. When the earth is to be fashioned and the ocean to[5] be poured into its bed, God simply says, "Let them be," and they are. When man is to be created, the Godhead seems to make a solemn pause, retires into the recesses of His own tranquillity, looks for a model, and finds it in Himself. "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness.... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.... So God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul." No longer a beautiful model, no longer a speechless statue, but vivified. Life, that subtle, mysterious thing that no physicist can define, whose lurking place in the body no medical eye hath yet found out—life came into the clay structure. He began to breathe, to walk, to think, to feel in the body the "nephesh": the word in the Hebrew means, in the first place, the breath of life, then, finally, by that immortal essence called the soul.

Now, it is not my intention to enter into any analysis of this expression, "the spirit," but talk to you on life, its reach and its revenue, its preciousness and its power, its rewards and its retributions, life for this world and the far-reaching world beyond. Life is God's gift; your trust and mine. We are the trustees of the Giver, unto whom at last we shall render account for every thought, word and deed in the body.

[6]

I. In the first place, life, in its origin, is infinitely important. The birth of a babe is a mighty event. From the frequency of births, as well as the frequency of deaths, we are prone to set a very low estimate on the ushering into existence of an animate child, unless the child be born in a palace or a presidential mansion, or some other lofty station. Unless there be something extraordinary in the circumstances, we do not attach the importance we ought to the event itself. It is only noble birth, distinguished birth, that is chronicled in the journals or announced with salvos of artillery. I admit that the relations of a prince, of a president and statesman, are more important to their fellow men and touch them at more points than those of an obscure pauper; but when the events are weighed in the scales of eternity, the difference is scarcely perceptible. In the darkest hovel in Brooklyn, in the dingiest attic or cellar, or in any place in which a human being sees the first glimpse of light, the eye of the Omniscient beholds an occurrence of prodigious moment. A life is begun, a life that shall never end. A heart begins to throb that shall beat to the keenest delight or the acutest anguish. More than this—a soul commences a career that shall outlast the earth on which it moves. The soul enters upon an existence that shall be untouched by time, when the sun is extinguished like a taper in[7] the sky, the moon blotted out, and the heavens have been rolled together as a vesture and changed forever.

The Scandinavians have a very impressive allegory of human life. They represent it as a tree, the "Igdrasil" or the tree of existence, whose roots grow deep down in the soil of mystery; the trunk reaches above the clouds; its branches spread out over the globe. At the foot of it sit the Past, the Present, and the Future, watering the roots. Its boughs, with their unleafing, spread out through all lands and all time; every leaf of the tree is a biography, every fiber a word, a thought or a deed; its boughs are the histories of nations; the rustle of it is the noise of human existence onward from of old; it grows amid the howling of the hurricane, it is the great tree of humanity. Now in that conception of the half savage Norsemen, we learn how they estimated the grandeur of human life. It is a transcendent, momentous thing, this living, bare living, thinking, feeling, deciding. It comes from God; He is its Author; it should rise toward God, its Giver, who is alone worthy of being served; that with God it may live forever.

II. In the next place, human life is transcendently precious from the services it may render to God in the advancement of His glory. Man was not created as a piece of guesswork, flung into existence as a waif. There[8] is a purpose in the creation of every human being. God did not breathe the breath of life into you, my friend, that you might be a sensuous or a splendid animal. That soul was given you for a purpose worthy of yourself, still more of the Creator.

What is the purpose of life? Is it advancement? Is it promotion? Is it merely the pursuit of happiness? Man was created to be happy, but to be more—to be holy. The wisdom of those Westminster fathers that gathered in the Jerusalem chamber, wrought it into the well-known phrase, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." That is the double aim of life: duty first, then happiness as the consequence; to bring in revenues of honor to God, to build up His kingdom, spread His truth; to bring this whole world of His and lay it subject at the feet of the Son of God. That is the highest end and aim of existence, and every one here that has risen up to that purpose of life lives. He does not merely vegetate, he does not exist as a higher type of animal: he lives a man's life on earth, and when he dies he takes a man's life up to mingle with the loftier life of paradise. The highest style of manhood and womanhood is to be attained by consecration to the Son of God. That is the only right way, my friends, to employ these powers which you have brought back to your homes from your sanctuary. That is the only idea[9] of life which you are to take to-morrow into the toils and temptations of the week. That is the only idea of life that you are to carry unto God in your confessions and thanksgivings in the closet. That is the only idea of life on which you are to let the transcendent light of eternity fall. These powers, these gifts, the wealth earned, the influence imparted, all are to be laid at the feet of Him who gave His life for you. Life is real, momentous, clothed with an awful and an overwhelming responsibility to its possessor. Nay, I believe that life is the richest of boons, or the most intolerable of curses.

Setting before you the power of a well-spent life, I might of course point first to the radiant pathway that extended from Bethlehem's manger to the cross of Calvary. All along that path I read the single purpose of love, all embracing and undying: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me.... I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." Next to that life we place the life begun on the road to Damascus. In him Christ lived again, with wondrous power, present in the utterances and footsteps of the servant. "For me to live is Christ:" that is the master passion of Paul. Whether he ate or drank, gained or lost, wrought or suffered, Christ filled the eye and animated every step. The chief end of Paul was to glorify his Savior; and of the[10] winding-up of that many-sided term of existence he could exclaim, not boastfully, but gladly: "I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

I found myself lately studying with intense interest the biography of Baxter. For half a century that man gave himself to the service of Jesus with a perseverance and industry that shames such loiterers as you and I. Just think of a man that twice on every Lord's day proclaimed the gospel of his Master with most elaborate care and unflinching diligence; on the first two days of the week spent seven hours each day in instructing children of the parish, not omitting a single one on account of poverty or obscurity; think of him as devoting one whole day of each week to care for their bodily welfare, devoting three days to study, during which he prepared one hundred and sixty instructive volumes saturated with the spirit of the word, among them that immortal "Saints' Everlasting Rest," that has guided so many a believer up to glory. The influence of one such life as that changed the whole aspect of the town of Kidderminster. When he came to it, it swarmed with ignorance, profligacy, Sabbath-breaking, vice; when he left it the whole community had become sober and industrious, and a large portion converted and[11] godly. He says: "On the Lord's Day evening you may hear hundreds of families, in their doors singing psalms or reading the Bible, as you pass along the streets." Sixteen hundred sat down at one time to his communion-table. Nearly every house became a house of prayer. Such was one life, the life of a man much of the time an invalid, crying out often unto God for deliverance from the most excruciating bodily pains. Such was one life on which was a stamped "Holiness to Jesus," and out of which flowed the continual efflux of Christian power and beneficence. Such a man never dies. Good men live forever. Old Augustine lives to-day in the rich discourses inspired by his teachings. Lord Bacon lives in the ever-widening circles of engines, telegraph and telephones which he taught men how to invent. Elizabeth Fry lives in the prison reformers following her radiant and beneficial footsteps. Bunyan lies in Bunhill Fields, but his bright spirit walks on the earth in the "Pilgrim's Progress." Calvin sleeps at Geneva, and no man knoweth his sepulcher to this day, but his magnificent "Vindication of God's Sovereignty" will live forever. We hail him as in one sense an ancestor of our republic. Wesley slumbers beside the City Road Chapel; his dead hand rings ten thousand Methodist church bells round the globe. Isaac Watts is dead, but in[12] the chariot of his hymns tens of thousands of spirits ascend to-day in majestic devotion. Howard still keeps prisons clean. Franklin protects our dwellings from lightnings. Dr. Duncan guards the earnings of the poor in the savings-bank. For a hundred years Robert Raikes has gathered his Sunday-schools all over Christendom; and Abraham Lincoln's breath still breathes through the life of the nation to which, under God, he gave a new birth of freedom. The heart of a good man or a good woman never dies. Why, it is infamy to die and not be missed. Live, immortal friend, live as the brother of Jesus, live as a fellow workman with Christ in God's work. Phillips Brooks once said to his people: "I exhort you to pray for fulness of life—full red blood in the body, full and honest truth in the mind, fulness of consecrated love to the dying Savior in the heart."

III. In the next place, life is infinitely valuable, not only from the dignity of its origin and the results and revenues it may reach, but from the eternal consequences flowing from it. Ah, this world, with its curtaining of light, its embroideries of the heavens, and its carpeting of verdure, is a solemn vestibule to eternity. My hearer, this world on which you exhibit your nature this morning is the porch of heaven or the gateway of hell. Here you may be laying up treasures through Christ and for Christ, to make you a millionaire[13] to all eternity. Here, by simply refusing to hearken, by rejecting the cross, by grieving the Spirit, you may kindle a flame that shall consume and give birth to a worm of remorse that shall prey on your soul forever and ever. In this brief twenty years, thirty, or forty, you must, without mistake, settle a question, the decision of which shall lift you to the indescribable heights of rapture or plunge you to the depths of darkness and despair. I am a baby at the thought of the word "eternity"; I have racked this brain of mine, in its poverty and its weakness, and have not the faintest conception of it, any more than I have of the omnipresence of Jehovah; yet one is as real as the other, and you and I will go on in the continuation of an existence that outnumbers the years as the Atlantic drops outnumber the drops of a brook; an existence whose ages are more than the stars that twinkled last night in the firmament—an existence interminable, yet all swinging on the pivot of that life in that pew. It is overpowering.

How momentous, then, is life! How grand its possession! what responsibility in its very breath! what a crime to waste it! what a glory to consecrate it! what a magnificent outcome when it shall shuffle off the coil, and break itself free from its entanglements, and burst into the presence of its Giver, and rise into all the transcendent glories of its life everlasting!

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In view of that, what a solemn thing it is to preach God's word, and to stand between the living and the dead! And in view of life, its preciousness and power, its far-reaching rewards and punishments, let me say here, in closing, that there are three or four practical considerations that should be prest home upon us and carried out by us:

1. The first practical thought is, how careful you and I ought to be to husband it. The neglect of life is a sin; it is an insult to God; it is tampering with the most precious trust He bestows. The care of life is a religious duty. A great deal of your happiness depends on it, and I can tell you, my Christian brother, a great deal of your spiritual growth and capacity for usefulness depends on the manner in which you treat this marvelous mechanism of the body. Your religious life is affected by the condition of the body in which the spirit tabernacles. It is not only lying lips, it is "the wilful dyspeptic, that is an abomination to the Lord." Any one that recklessly impairs, imperils and weakens bodily powers by bad hours, unwholesome diet, poisonous stimulants or sensualities, is a suicide; and there are some men, I am afraid, in this congregation that yield themselves such unpitied bond-slaves to the claims of business, that they are shortening life by years and impairing its powers every day. Thousands of suicides are committed every year in[15] Brooklyn by a defiance of the simplest laws of self-preservation and health. What shall we say of him who opens a haunt of temptation, sets out his snares and deliberately deals out death by the dram? So many pieces of silver for so many ounces of blood, and an immortal soul tossed into the balance! If I could let one ray of eternity shine into every dramshop, methinks I could frighten the poison seller back from making his living at the mouth of the pit.

2. Again, in this view of the value of life, what a stupendous crime wanton war becomes—offensive war, such war as multitudes have dashed into from the lust of conquest or the greed of gold. When war is to be welcomed, rather than a nation should commit suicide and the hopes of men perish, then with prayers and self-consecration may the patriot go out to the battle and the sacrifice; but offensive war is a monster of hell. With all our admiration for Napoleon's brilliant and unsurpassed genius, there are passages in his life that make my blood sometimes tingle to the finger ends, and start the involuntary hiss at the very thought of such a gigantic butcher of his fellow creatures. If that man knew that a battery could be carried only at the cost of a legion of men, he never hesitated to order their sacrifice as lightly as he would the life of a gnat. I read that, after what is called his splendid victory of Austerlitz was[16] over and the triumph was won and the iron crown of empire was fixt on his brow, as he stood on the high ground he saw a portion of the defeated Russians making a slow, painful retreat over a frozen lake. They were in his power; he rode up to a battery, and said, "Men you are losing time! fire on those masses; they must be swallowed up! fire on that ice!" The order was executed. Shells were thrown, and went crashing through the brittle bridge of ice, and amid awful shrieks hundreds upon hundreds of poor wretches were buried in the frozen waters of that lake. I believe the dying shrieks of his fellow creatures will haunt the eternity of a man who prostituted the most magnificent powers the Creator fashioned in this our century of time to the awful work of shortening life, tormenting his fellow creatures and sending a million unbidden before God.

3. Once more I emphasize upon you, my beloved people, life, its preciousness and power, its rewards and its retributions. And yet, what a vapor, what a flight of an arrow, what a tale that is told! Short, yet infinite in its reach and its retribution! When life is represented as an arrow flight and a vapor, it is not that it may be underrated in its infinite importance, but only that we may be pushed up to the right sense of its brevity. Everything in God's world ennobles humanity and exhibits life as earnest, solemn, decisive,[17] momentous. The highest ends are proposed to it while it exists, the most magnificent rewards are held out at the termination of its consecrated vitalities. At the end of it is the great white throne, and the decisions of the judgment. Some of you, turning from this discourse this morning, may say it was nothing but sacred poetry because your life is only the steady, monotonous round of a mill-horse—to-morrow across the ferry, home at night—through its routine in the shop, in the counting-room, in the family, on the Sabbath in church—and say, "I see nothing in my life that thus sparkles or shines or has this sublime characteristic!" Ah, my friend, grant that your life may be the mill-round of the mill-horse; you turn a shaft that reaches through the wall into eternity, and the humblest life in this house sets in motion revolving wheels that shall at last grind out for God's garner the precious grain, or else the worthless chaff of a wasted existence. So again I say, life is the porch of eternity, the only one we shall ever have; and you are to decide now whether it shall be the uplift from strength to strength, from glory to glory, or the plunge downward and still downward and deeper downward to darkness and eternal death.

My friend, what sort of a life are you living? A really earnest, humble consecration to God? Go on. Live, as I mean to do, as long as God shall spare power and intellectual[18] faculty to serve Him. Live as long as you can, as largely as you can; and then carry all life's accumulation and lay it down at the feet of Him whose heart broke for you and me on the cross of Calvary, and say: "Master, here I am, and the life Thou hast given me."

**÷**09-02 BROADUS

LET US HAVE PEACE WITH GOD

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John A. Broadus was born in Virginia in 1827. His preeminence as a preacher was attained while he was chiefly occupied as professor of New Testament Interpretation and Homiletics in the Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky. (Originally established at Greenville, South Carolina.) For many years Dr. Broadus was regarded as the foremost preacher of the South, and was in demand on many important public occasions for sermons and addresses. It has been said that "the thought and the language of his sermons lingered in the mind like strains of melodious and inspiring music." The sermon here given is characteristic of the earnest simplicity of his style, and of the theological and philosophical bent of his homiletic methods. He died in 1895.

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BROADUS

1827-1895

LET US HAVE PEACE WITH GOD[1]

Therefore being justified by faith, let us have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.—Rom 5:1. (R. V.)

It is nearly four centuries ago now, that a young professor from the north of Germany went to Rome. He was a man of considerable learning and of versatile mind. Yet he did not go to Rome to survey the remains of antiquity or the treasures of modern art. He went to Rome because he was in trouble about his sins and could find no peace. Having been educated to regard Rome as the center of the Christian world, he thought he would go to the heart of things and see what he could there find. He had reflected somewhat at home, and had talked with other men more advanced than himself, on the thought that the just shall live by faith; but still that thought had never taken hold of him. We read—some of you remember the story quite[22] well—how one day, according to the strange ideas that prevailed and still prevail at Rome, he went climbing up a stairway on his knees, pausing to pray on every step, to see if that would not help him about his sins. Then, as he climbed slowly up, he seemed to hear a voice echoing down the stairway, "The just shall live by faith; the just shall live by faith." And so he left alone his dead works, he arose from his knees and went down the stairway to his home to think about that great saying, "The just shall live by faith."

It is no wonder that with such an experience, and such a nature, Martin Luther should have lived to shake the Christian world with the thought that justification by faith is the great doctrine of Christianity, "the article of a standing or a falling church." It is no wonder that John Wesley, rising up with living earnestness when England was covered with a pall of spiritual death, should have revived the same thought—justification by faith.

Yet it is not true that the doctrine of justification by faith is all of the gospel. It is true that the doctrine of justification by faith is simply one of the several ways by which the gospel takes hold of men. You do not hear anything of that doctrine in the Epistles of John. He has another way of presenting the gospel salvation, namely, that we must love Christ, and be like Him, and obey Him.[23] I think sometimes that Martin Luther made the world somewhat one-sided by his doctrine of justification by faith; that the great mass of the Protestant world are inclined to suppose there is no other way of looking on the gospel. There are very likely some here to-day who would be more imprest by John's way of presenting the matter; but probably the majority would be more imprest by Paul's way, and it is our business to present now this and now that, to present first one side and then the other. So we have here before us to-day Paul's great doctrine of justification by faith, in perhaps one of his most striking statements. "Therefore, being justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

My friends, we talk and hear about these gospel truths, and repeat these Scripture words, and never stop to ask ourselves whether we have a clear idea of what is meant. What does Paul mean when he talks about being justified? There has been a great deal of misapprehension as to his meaning. Martin Luther was all wrong in his early life, because he had been reared up in the idea that a justified man means simply a just man, a good man, and that he could not account himself justified or hope for salvation until he was a thoroughly good man. Now, the Latin word from which we borrow our word "justified" does not mean to make just, and as[24] the Romanists use the Latin, their error is natural. But Paul's Greek word means not to make just, but to regard as just, to treat as just. That is a very important difference—not to make just, but to regard and treat as just. How would God treat you, if you were a righteous man; if you had, through all your life, faithfully performed all your duties, conforming to all your relations to your fellow beings—how would He regard and treat you? He would look upon you with complacency. He would smile on you as one that was in His sight pleasing. He would bless you as long as you lived in this world, and, when you were done with this world, He would delight to take you home to His bosom, in another world, because you would deserve it.

And now as God would treat a man who was just because he deserved it, so the gospel proposes to treat men who are not just and who do not deserve it, if they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He will treat them as just, tho they are not just, if they believe in Christ; that is to say, he will look upon them with His favor; He will smile upon them in His love; He will bless them with every good as long as they live, and when they die He will delight to take them home to His own bosom, tho they never deserved it, through His Son, Jesus Christ. That is what Paul means by justification. And when Martin Luther found[25] that out he found peace. This Epistle to the Romans had always stopt his progress when reading the New Testament. He would read, in the Latin version, "For therein is revealed the justice of God," and he felt in his heart that God's justice must condemn him. But now he came to see what was really meant by the righteousness of God, the righteousness which God provides and bestows on the believer in Jesus. A sinful man, an undeserving man, may get God Almighty's forgiveness and favor and love, may be regarded with complacency and delight, tho he does not deserve it, if he believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is justification by faith.

It is one thing to take hold of this matter in the way of doctrinal conception and expression, and of course, God be thanked! it is another thing to receive it in the heart. There are many people who get hold of it all in the heart with trust and peace that never have a correct conception of it as a doctrine. Yet I suppose it is worth while that we should endeavor to see these things clearly. Other things being equal, they will be the holiest and most useful Christians who have the clearest perception of the great facts and truths of the gospel. So I recommend to you that whenever any one tries to explain to you one of these great doctrinal truths, you shall listen with fixt attention and see if you can not get a clearer view of the gospel[26] teachings on that subject, for it will do you good.

Now let us come to the second thought here, viz., being justified by faith. A man might say, if God proposes to deal with those who are not just, as if they were, why does He condition it upon believing in the gospel of Jesus Christ? Why can not God proclaim a universal amnesty at once, and be done with it, to all His sinful, weak children, and treat them all as if they were just, without their believing? I don't think this is hard to see. God does not merely propose to deal with us for the time being as if we were just, but He proposes in the end to make us actually just. It would be an unsatisfactory salvation to a right-minded man if God proposed merely to exempt us from the consequences of our sins and not to deliver us from our sins. You do not want merely to escape punishment for sin without ever becoming good; you want to be righteous and holy, you want to be delivered from sin itself as well as from the consequences of sin. And this gospel, which begins by its proclamation that God is willing to treat men as just, altho they are not just, does not stop there. It proposes to be the means by which God will take hold of men's characters and make them just, make them holy. You may, for the moment, conceive of such a thing as that God should make a proclamation of universal amnesty, and treat all[27] men as if they were just; but that would not make them any better. The gospel is not merely to deliver us from the consequence of sin, but to deliver us from the power of sin. You can conceive of an amnesty as to the consequence of sin, which should extend to persons that will not even believe there is such an amnesty; but you can not see how the gospel is to have any power in delivering us from the dominion of sin, unless we believe the gospel. It can do so only through belief. Therefore it is not possible that a man should be justified without belief. I think it is useful that we should thus try to see that this is not a matter of mere arbitrary appointment on the part of the sovereign Power of the universe, but that the condition is necessary—that it can not be otherwise. "Being justified by faith," it reads; and we can not be justified without faith, because the same gospel is also to take hold of us and make us just.

And now, some one who feels a little freshened interest in this subject, some man who has never got hold of the gospel faith, says to himself: "I wonder if the preacher is going to explain to me what believing is, what faith is. I never heard any one succeed in explaining faith." Well, if you will pardon me, the best explanation of faith I ever heard was given by a negro preacher in Virginia. As the story was told me, one Sunday afternoon,[28] a few years ago, some negroes were lying on the ground together, and one of them spoke and said, "Uncle Reuben, can you explain this: Faith in de Lord, and faith in de debbil?" "To be sure I can. There is two things: in de fust place, faith in de Lord, and then faith in de debbil. Now, in the fust place, fustly, there is faith. What is faith? Why, faith is jes faith. Faith ain't nothing less than faith. Faith ain't nothing more than faith. Faith is jest faith—now I done splain it." Really, that man was right, there is nothing to explain. Faith is as simple a conception as the human mind can have. How, then, can you explain faith? You are neither able to analyze it into parts, nor can you find anything simpler with which to compare it. So also as to some other things, that are perfectly easy and natural in practical exercise, and can not be explained. What is love? Well, I won't go into an elaborate metaphysical definition of love, but if I wanted a child to love me, I should try to exhibit myself in such a character to him and act in such ways that the little child would see in me something to love, and would feel like loving. There would then be no need of an explanation of what love is. Did you ever hear a satisfactory definition of laughter? If you wanted to make a man laugh, would you attempt to define laughter to him? You might possibly succeed in making a laughable[29] definition; but otherwise definitions won't make a man laugh. You would simply say or do something ludicrous, and he would laugh readily enough if he was so disposed; and if the man be not in a mood for laughing, all your explanations are utterly useless. And so what is faith? There is nothing to explain. Everybody knows what faith is. If you want to induce a man to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you must hold up the Lord to him in His true character, and then, if he is in a mood to believe, he will believe, and if he is disinclined to belief, all your explanations will be fruitless. The practical result may even be obstructed by attempts to explain. What is faith? You know what faith is. Every one knows.

Well, then, a man might say, "If you mean by faith in the Lord the simple idea of believing what the Scripture says concerning Him, the idea of believing its teachings about the Lord Jesus Christ to be true, if that is what faith means, then all of us are believers, all have faith." I am afraid not. I am afraid there are some here who have not faith. Has a man faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who simply does not disbelieve in him? I may not deny that what the gospel says is true, but is that believing? Yonder sits a gentleman; suppose some one should come hastily up the aisle, calling his name, and say, "Your house is afire." The gentleman sits perfectly[30] quiet and looks unconcerned, as people so often do when listening to preaching. The man repeats it: "I say your house is afire." But still he sits in his place. Some one near him says, "You hear what that man says. Do you believe it?" "Yes, I believe it," he carelessly replies, and does not stir. You would all say, "The man is insane, or certainly he does not believe it; for if he did, he would not sit perfectly still and remain perfectly unconcerned." Even so when the preacher speaks of sin and guilt and ruin, of God's wrath and the fire that is not quenched; or when he stands with joyful face and proclaims to his hearers that for their sin and ruin there is a Savior; and they say they believe, and yet look as if it were of no concern to them at all; then I say they do not believe it—the thing is not possible. They may not disbelieve it; they may not care to make an attempt to overturn it; they may be in a sort of negative mood; but they do not believe it.

With that statement I suppose there are a great many of us who concur and who will at once say, "Often I fear that I do not really believe it. If I did believe it, the gospel would have more power over my heart and more power over my life than it does have. And what, oh, what shall I do?" The preacher has to remind you of that father to whom the Savior came when the disciples[31] had tried in vain to heal his suffering child. Jesus said to him: "All things are possible to him that believeth;" and he replied: "I believe; help thou my unbelief." That should be your cry: "I believe; help thou my unbelief." The man would not deny that he believed, and yet felt bound to add that he knew he did not believe as he ought to. Now the comfort is, that He who sees all hearts accepted that man's confessedly imperfect faith, and granted his request. That has often been the preacher's comfort as he uttered the same cry, "I believe; help thou my unbelief"; and God give it as a comfort to you! But do not content yourself with such a state of things, with any such feeble, half-way believing. Nay, let us cherish all that tends to strengthen our faith in the gospel; let us read the Word of God, praying that we may be able to believe; let us say from day to day, as the disciples said: "Lord, increase our faith."

The text proceeds: "Therefore, being justified by faith, let us have peace with God." Instead of the declaration, "We have peace with God," the best authorities for the text make it an exhortation, "Let us have peace with God"; and so the revised version reads. Some critics admit that the documents require us so to read, but say that they can see no propriety in an exhortation at this point—that it seems much more appropriate to understand the apostle as asserting a fact. Yet[32] I think we can see meaning and fitness in the text as corrected: "Being justified by faith, let us have peace with God."

Let us have peace with God, notwithstanding our unworthiness. My friends, we can not have peace with God so long as we cling to the notion that we are going to deserve it. Just there is the difficulty with many of those who are trying to be at peace with God. They have been clinging to the thought that they must first become worthy, and then become reconciled to God; and they will have to see more clearly that they must come to Christ in order that, being reconciled, they may be made good, may become worthy. We may say there are two conceivable ways to have peace with God. It is conceivable to have peace with God through our worthiness, and it is conceivable and also practicable to have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, tho we be unworthy. Then let us have peace with Him, altho so unworthy, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, let us have peace with God, tho we are still sinful and unholy, tho we know we come far short in character and in life of what God's children ought to be. We must be, ought to be, intensely dissatisfied with ourselves; but let us be satisfied with our Savior, and have peace with God through Him; not content with the idea of remaining such as we are, but, seeing that the same gospel which[33] offers us forgiveness and acceptance offers us also a genuine renewal through our Lord Jesus Christ, and promises that finally we shall be made holy, as God is holy, shall indeed be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect. Let us rejoice in the gracious promise of that perfect life, and, while seeking to be what we ought to be, let us have peace with God. Our sanctification is still sadly imperfect—the best of us well know that, and probably the best of us feel it most deeply; but if we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, our justification is perfect. We can never be more justified than we are now justified, tho we shall be more and more made holy as long as we live, and at last made perfectly holy as we pass into the perfect world. My brethren, do think more and talk more of that. It is an intensely practical matter, not only for your comfort but for the strength of your life. If we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, altho we are painfully conscious that we are far from being in character and life what we ought to be, yet, through the perfect justification which we have at once, we shall in the end by His grace be made perfectly holy.

Let us have peace with God, tho we have perpetual conflict with sin. What a singular idea! Peace with God, and yet conflict, yes, perpetual conflict, with a thousand forms of temptation to sin, temptations springing from spiritual tempters—perpetual conflict, and yet[34] peace with God. Is not that conceivable? Is not that possible? In this conflict we are on the Lord's side; in this conflict the Lord is on our side; and so, tho the battle must be waged against every form of sin, we may have peace with God.

And finally, let us have peace with God tho He leaves us to suffer a thousand forms of distress and trial. "Let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have had access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and let us rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but let us also rejoice in our tribulations; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, proving; and proving, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us." Surely man may have peace with God, tho he be left to suffer. For none of these things can separate us from God's love. Who shall separate us from Christ's love? "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities nor powers, neither things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." When we are in trouble, let us take fast hold upon that great thought, that trouble does not divide us from the love of God. Yea,[35] God's peace can conquer trouble, and guard us, as in a fortress, against its assaults. "In nothing be anxious; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus."

**÷**09-03 WILBERFORCE

THE MOTHER CHURCH

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Ernest Roland Wilberforce, son of Samuel Wilberforce, bishop of Winchester, was born in 1840, and educated at Harrow and Oxford. He was appointed bishop of Newcastle in 1882, and thence translated to Chichester in 1895.

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WILBERFORCE

Born in 1840

THE MOTHER CHURCH[2]

Take up thy son.—2Ki 4:36.

There is a metallic sound about most missionary sermons which seems, at least to some, instinctively to harden the hearts and to invalidate the sympathies of the listeners. The jingle of the coming collection appears to be inextricably mixed up with the solemn truths and heartfelt appeals that flow so often from the preacher's lips, and we feel that at least we would rather separate the two by as wide a chasm of intervening time as may be possible consistently with the well-known cooling tendencies of all human emotions. I have no reason to think that this sermon will prove itself to be in any real sense an exception to this general rule, and yet, my brethren, I seek, as God may now enable me, to remind you very briefly of some of the deeper principles that underlie all missionary success, believing as I do that these are possest of a peculiar power of eliciting[40] enduring support, since they flow from the bosom of the Godhead itself.

"Take up thy son." God alone, it has been said, who Himself created it, can fully understand the infinite pathos of human nature. Certain it is that beneath the inspired record the histories of men and women of old begin to sparkle and to burn as, endowed with life and personality, they act anew their histories before us as we sympathize with their mistakes, wonder at their endurance, admire them for the traits of humanity they display, and feel drawn toward them by the attractive power of their love; we feel that we can be no longer really solitary here below, that, however tiresome may be our lot, we have friends who speak from those old records, friends who link yet living hands the closer round our hearts as we see much of our own life-history faithfully anticipated in theirs, and learn to read the solution of many of the struggles of the present in the difficulties of the past. "Take up thy son." From that old chamber, built originally to form a sanctuary for the honored servant of his God, where now the corpse of the only child of the household is lying, there seems to me to speak a voice of prophecy with regard to God's dealings with humanity at large.

It was a time of overshadowing and of darkness in that Eastern household. The death of her son, marvelously given in her[41] husband's old age, had left the mother's heart a thousand times more aching, crusht, and weary than before. Instinctively that heart reaches out toward the man of God. The mother's feet are turned to Carmel. She will accept no substitute; no wand of office, no symbol of authority will satisfy the eager cravings of her love. Drawn by the cords of that great, all-constraining power, at length the prophet stands within the darkened room, and through the personal contact of the prophet with the dead, the power of God revives the corpse. So both in the distance and within the darkened room, while anxious, expectant hearts keep watch below, do Elisha's actions typify the deeds of One Who within a thousand years will walk the streets and lanes of Eastern towns, and will be known by loving hearts throughout the countryside. Humanity had died by sin throughout all the bygone ages; the symbols of authority from the Carmel of God's presence had been reached down to men upon the Fall. On human nature, wrapt in the fell sleep of sin, the wand of office had been used, but there had been no bringing back to life. Messenger after messenger had come, men who had communed with their God, as undoubtedly as Gehazi had left the presence of Elisha to go that day to Shunem; but there was neither voice nor hearing, and sorrowfully still each servant witnessed in succession to his mission:[42] "The child is not awaked." Ah, who, my brethren, should venture to guess, still less to dogmatize, how prayer might be said to quicken the accomplishment of the counsels of the triune God? Yet had prayer no part in the plan of the Incarnation? If the love of the Shunammite mother compelled the presence of the prophet, could then one of the greatest moral forces known within the universe be purposely excluded from the great work of man's redemption by the God Who has caused it to be recorded of Himself, "Thou nearest prayer?" Could fervent prayer and mighty intercession that rolled upward from the breasts of so long a line of kings, and patriarchs, and prophets, and so many a lonely and unnoticed spot amid the hills and valleys of Judah, where Baal found seven thousand knees that were recalcitrant to his false and bloody worship, even when the great Elijah believed himself to be alone in the one worship of the true God of Israel; could the longings of the hearts that desired to behold the things that after-generations saw, could the cry of the souls from under the altar, "Oh, Lord, how long?" could, I ask, all these be fruitless and in vain? Or had each its own due place at least in hastening the coming of the kingdom, and in determining when the fulness of time had arrived?

This, at least, is sure. Constrained by the laws of an imperious love, God gave Himself[43] to bring what all His messengers had failed to convey. Clothed in that very flesh which once by sin had died, Christ stood in personal relations to mankind, His hand in theirs, His eyes to their eyes, His mouth to their mouth; and lo! beneath His personal contact there began to glow again the warmth of pristine life which once had burned in Eden, when God and man held free and undiverted commerce. And then Christ filled up full with all its spiritual meaning that final action of the Syrian prophet which had seemed to be so simple and so natural. For, ere He left the arena where He had proved Himself to be the Conqueror of death, Christ called forth the Church which He had formed, and He bade it tend the life which He had reimplanted in the hearts of men, accompanying the mighty commission with a plenary promise of abiding power: "Shepherd my sheep; feed my lambs: lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Uniformity of action in every position, mechanical exactness in every class of work, whether you evangelize under frozen climes or torrid zones, whether you preach to polished Eastern intellects or instruct the degraded savage, is neither to be expected nor yet to be desired. The religion that becomes mechanical always stops itself. But within the lines of her commission the Church of God is bound to show in practise that she can touch all hearts, enlist all sympathies,[44] influence all lives, gather up into her ample bosom all whom the Master loves; just as a mother folds to her heart the entire members of her family, irrespective of their diversity of tastes, habits, and mode of life, nay, even in spite of their failings, and often of their sins, and beneath the loving sympathy of that loving embrace all know instinctively that they have each their own peculiar place within the many mansions of the widely loving heart.

We are living in an age of development. Within old bottles it is certain new wine is beginning to ferment, and elemental forces gather for the strife. Life implies assimilation; assimilation means union of powers, or new energies rising out of such combinations. In early days the Church of Christ assimilated the life, the teachings, the powers around her, casting out the false, ennobling the true; and she became the living force to which the history of the world bears testimony. And what does all this teach us? Even that as a mother adapts herself to the varying characters displayed by her children in her wise government of the family, so must the Church of England in all her work take up her son into her bosom, teaching the good and enforcing the true, yet adapting her methods to win wisely, to win surely, to establish a lasting yet a spiritual dominion.

Here there is a real danger, one all[45] the more real because speciously veiled from our sight; philanthropy is busy around us—so much so that now it is almost a reproach not to be the instigator of half a dozen schemes for the elevation of this class or that people, or of some other country. But is not this far too often accompanied by a revolt from all dogmatic truth? Are not many of these schemes simply social and not religious, and, therefore, at best, temporary rather than eternal in their aims, since they are founded upon man, and not upon God?

Religious feeling, I fear, is dying. The past acquirements of man are ever laughed to scorn by the succeeding generation. These are not to be the standard to which all is to be referred. Utilitarian principles and emotional subjectivity seem now to go hand in hand; and the old formula, "Thus saith the Lord," is to be a formula no more amid the forces of the world; religious feeling, I say, I fear, is ebbing away, and with it goes infallibly all real missionary enterprise. These are inseparably linked. If it be true, as it is, that the spiritual life of a nation, a parish, or an individual be in danger of languishing unto death unless there be in it some manifestation of missionary zeal, so also is it true that unless there be some more powerful lever at work than mere desire for social reformation, unless God be the end and the object of life,[46] then no one will continue to spread God's teaching, or to carry far and wide the good news of the Son of man.

The first human mother came from out of the side of Adam at the call of God; our great spiritual mother came from the side of Christ our Lord. Oh, my brethren, we have so much to thank God for; so much that bids us now take courage, so much that ennobles our aims and helps to strengthen our objects. From all parts of the world, wherever the energy of Englishmen has penetrated, there now is coming the cry in gathering tones, "Take up thy son." Hearts are asking for the priceless boon of the gospel to be preached to them. Heathen tribes are looking wistfully across the waste of intervening waters, and rich England, rich in her transmitted treasure of dogmatic truth and revealed faith, rich in her dower of sons as well as in her possession of silver and gold, is giving as yet an insufficient answer, and has not as yet fully embraced her son. How long shall there be this suspense, as that of early dawn ere the sunshine fills the twilight? Let there be but more true love and warmth in the mother's heart, let there be, that is, a revival of spiritual life at home, and once more shall it be said, "Great was the company of preachers," as in the iron-clad armor of chastity, temperance, and righteousness, men go forth to work and win for Christ. Have[47] ye each made this yet sufficiently a matter of prayer, of self-denial, of deep, faithful trusting all to God? My brothers, in the kingdom and patience of our God already clarion notes are sounding out around us, and signs are but repeating notes of warning. Messages of deep importance seem to tremble in the air, forces to be gathering for some greater conflict than has been ever known before. Community of work is producing unity in thought; hands are clasping now that have been kept asunder far too long. The earth is being girdled gradually with spiritual fortresses, whence is flashed on and ever on the golden light till Christ shall come again and claim His bride. Can we then wonder at all forms of opposition meeting us? But gathering gradually is the mighty family which in the day of revelation shall call God their Father. Some time will the fellow soldiers know one another; some day shall the long muster roll be called. Then will the Captain of our salvation gather all His children round Him. Is it long to wait, hard to fight, difficult to keep up the spirit during the discouragements that beset all missionary life? Do they wear too dark a hue at times? Lo, the words of Revelation are now finding echo in the pages of science, and in unison these voices blend. Beneath us even now this solid orb begins to know fatigue and to slacken in its course. Remarkable words lately written are these: "Even[48] now as the earth circles on in her appointed orbit, the northern ice-cap slowly thickens, and the time gradually approaches when its glaciers will flow again, and austral seas, sweeping northward, bury the seeds of present civilization under ocean wastes, as it may be they now bury what once was as high a civilization as our own. And beyond these periods science discovers a dead earth, an exhausted sun, a time when, clashing together, the solar system shall resolve itself into a gaseous form, again to begin immeasurable mutations." What Revelation has loudly declared, that science is now at length beginning to understand. From both, I say, the voices call; they blend into a trumpet warning mellowed with unutterable pathos: "Work while it is day; take up thy son."

**÷**09-04 SPALDING

EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE OF RELIGION

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Lancaster Spalding, Roman Catholic bishop and author, was born in Lebanon, Kentucky, in 1840. He was educated at Mount St. Mary's College, and at the University of Louvain, Belgium. Ordained a priest in 1863, he was six years later chosen as secretary and chancellor of the diocese of Louisville. In 1877 he was appointed to similar offices in the diocese of Peoria. He is a typical modern bishop, of the Cardinal Manning type, and the activity which he displayed in recent social and educational movements was recognized by his appointment to serve on the President's commission to investigate strikes, in 1902. The trend of his literary work may be seen in his volumes on "Education and the Higher Life" (1890); "Socialism and Labor" (1902); "Religion, Agnosticism and Education" (1902).

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SPALDING

Born in 1840

EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE OF RELIGION[3]

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life.—Joh 6:63.

The greatest service we can do a human being is to give him a right education, physical, intellectual, moral and religious. If it is our duty to do good to all; as far as in us lies, it is our duty to labor for the education of all, that no child of God may live with an enfeebled body, or a darkened mind, or a callous heart, or a perverted conscience. Since it is our duty to educate, it is our duty to give the best education; and, first of all, to give the best education to woman; for she, as mother, is the aboriginal God-appointed educator. What hope is there of genuine progress, in the religious life especially, if we leave her uneducated? Where woman is ignorant, man is coarse and sensual; where her religion is but a superstition, he is skeptical and irreverent.

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If we are to have a race of enlightened, noble and brave men, we must give to woman the best education it is possible for her to receive. She has the same right as man to become all that she may be, to know whatever may be known, to do whatever is fair and just and good. In souls there is no sex. If we leave half the race in ignorance, how shall we hope to lift the other half into the light of truth and love? Let woman's mental power increase, let her influence grow, and more and more she will stand by the side of man as a helper in all his struggles to make the will of God prevail. From the time the virgin mother held the infant Savior in her arms to this hour, woman has been the great lover of Christ and the unwearying helper of His little ones; and the more we strengthen and illumine her, the more we add to her sublime faith and devotion the power of knowledge and culture, the more efficaciously will she work to purify life, to make justice, temperance, chastity, and love prevail. She is more unselfish, more capable of enthusiasm for spiritual ends, she has more sympathy with what is beautiful, noble and godlike than man; and the more her knowledge increases, the more shall she become a heavenly force to spread God's kingdom on earth. Doubtless our failure to win the hearts of all men is due in no slight degree to our indifference to the education of woman.

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The Church, in virtue of its divine institution, has the supreme and absolute right to teach Christian truth and thereby to influence all education. To her alone Christ gave the commission to teach whatsoever He had revealed and commanded; and none who believe that He speaks the words of the eternal Father may refuse to hearken to the voice of His historic Church uttering the things that appertain to religion and salvation. Christ did not send His apostles to teach all knowledge, but to teach His religion; to teach the worship of God in spirit and in truth, in lowliness of mind and purity of heart, as men who hunger and thirst for righteousness. In all that concerns the religious life the Church has the office of Christ, represents Him and speaks with His authority; and to enable her to do this with infallible certainty, the Holy Ghost was sent and abides with her. But Christ did not teach literature, philosophy, history, or science; and consequently He did not establish His Church to teach these things. He founded a Church, not an academy. Non in dialectica complacuit Deo salvum facere populum suum. He left natural knowledge where he found it; left it to grow by accretion and development, through the activity of special minds and races, with the process of the ages. He bade His apostles teach whatsoever things He had commanded them—the doctrines of salvation[54] and the principles of Christian living. These things He came to reveal; these He lived and died to plant in the minds and hearts of men as seeds of immortal life. God doubtless might have made known from the beginning all the truths of science; but this was not part of the divine economy. For thousands of years the race was left to make its way amid the darkness of universal ignorance; and when here and there a ray of light fell from some mind of genius, it seemed quickly to be extinguished amid the general obscurity. The philosophy and the science of Plato and Aristotle had been in the world for three centuries when Christ came, but He made no allusion whatever to them. He neither praised nor blamed these great masters of all who know. Those whom He denounced were not the teachers of wisdom, but the formalists, who, holding rigidly to the letter of the law, and adding observance to observance and rule to rule, had lost the spirit of religion, had apostatized from the infinite love, which is God.

Christ came to bring immortal faith and hope and love to man. He uttered no word which might lead us to suppose that He considered literature or philosophy or history or science as an obstacle to the worship of God in spirit and in truth. He denounces greed and lust and indifference and heartlessness; but He does not warn against the desire to[55] know, the desire to upbuild one's being on every side, to become more and more like unto God in power, in wisdom, in goodness, and in beauty. He lays the stress of His example and teaching upon religion, upon eternal things. He tells us that we can not serve God and Mammon, but He does not say that faith and reason conflict. We are human because God is present in the soul; we have reason because the divine light shines within us—the light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. There can be no real contradiction between God and His universe, between nature and the supernatural, between faith and knowledge. On the contrary, the universe is the manifestation of God's wisdom, goodness and power. Nature and the supernatural both come from Him; and in wider and deeper knowledge, we shall find a foundation for a mightier and more spiritual faith in the eternal Father and His divine Son. Truth can not contradict truth; for truth is true because it is enrooted in God, who is absolute truth and at one with Himself. Things are what they are, and God has given us reason, that we may see them as they are. The false can never be proven to be true, and the Author of truth can not teach error or give grace to believe error. All truth is orthodox, whether it come to us through revelation, reaffirmed by the voice of the Church, or whether it come in the form of[56] certain and scientific knowledge. Both the Church and the men of science must accept the validity of reason, and must therefore hold that reason can not contradict itself. Knowledge and faith both do God's work, both help to build man's being into ever-increasing likeness to Him. Let us not emphasize the opposition between the temporal and the eternal. God is even here, and even now we are immortal; and whatever helps us to do His will by serving more effectively our fellow men, is sacred and of priceless worth. The giving of a cup of water in the right spirit is divine service; and so is the patient research which leads to a knowledge of the causes of suffering and disease, and thereby enables us to shut out pestilence or to make uninhabitable regions wholesome.

How infinitely difficult it is to preach the gospel effectively to those who live in ignorance and poverty as in the shadow of the darkness of death! All who have striven and who strive to educate the whole people, to bring opportunity of a freer and more human life to all, have been and are, whether intentionally or not, workers in the cause of Christ for the salvation of men.

With what misgiving Catholics and Protestants regarded scientific astronomy when it first began to gain acceptance! And yet what has it done but make known to us a universe infinitely more wonderful and sublime than[57] men had ever dreamed of? So it is with all advancing knowledge. In widening our view of God's work, it gives us a more exalted conception of His absolute perfection; and at the same time it puts into our hands more efficient means of working for the good of man. A truly catholic spirit deems nothing that may be of service to man foreign to the will of God, as revealed in Christ. We hold fast to the principle of authority; and at the same time we believe that man's mind is free, and that he has the right to inquire into and learn whatever may be investigated and known. If the Church is to live and prosper in the modern world, Catholics must have not only freedom to learn, but also freedom to teach. The spirit is not a mechanism, and when it is made subject to mechanical rules and methods it loses self-activity, becomes dwarfed and formal, and little by little sinks into impotence. A servile mind can never know the truth which liberates. Christ did not found His Church to solve philosophic, scientific, or historic problems. These have been left to human research; but Catholics, if they hope to present effectively their supernatural beliefs to an age of civilization and culture, must not neglect the chief means by which the mind is made strong, supple, and luminous. Our men of ability, whether priests or laymen, must be encouraged to put to good use the talents with which the Creator has entrusted[58] them; and to prepare them for this all-important work we must leave nothing undone to provide them with schools equal to the best. If we isolate ourselves and fall out of the highest intellectual and moral life of the world around us, we shall fatally drift into a position of inferiority, and lose the power to make ourselves heard and understood. If in the early centuries of Christianity the Church was able to take to itself what was true and good in pagan philosophy and culture; if St. Augustine and St. Thomas of Aquino knew how to compel Plato and Aristotle to become helpers in the cause of Christ, why should we lose heart and imagine that the Church has lost the faculty of assimilation? She is old, indeed, but she is also young, having the promise of immortal life; and therefore she can never lack the power to adapt herself to the requirements of an ever-revolving environment.

Since Christ has made the success of His religion largely dependent on human effort, not annuling nature by grace, but heightening rather the play of free-will, we must know how to make use of our best and strongest men; for an institution which can not make use of its best and strongest men is decadent. What is there to fear? Is it conceivable that human error shall prevail against God's truth? Does the religion of Christ, the absolute and abiding faith, need the defense[59] of concealment, or of sophistical apology, or of lies? Truth is the supreme good of the mind, as holiness is that of the heart; and truthfulness is the foundation of righteousness. The most certain result of the philosophic thought of the last hundred years is that the primal cause and final end of all things is spiritual, not mechanical or material. If only we go deep enough, we never fail to find God and the soul. Shall we dread the results of historical research? In the Church, as in the world, good has been mingled with evil—the cockle with the wheat. What God has permitted to happen, man may be permitted to know; and if we are wise, we may glean, even from the least promising fields, fruits which shall nourish in us a higher wisdom and a nobler courage. A righteous cause can never be truly served either by the timid or the insincere. And what is true of the history of the Church, is true also of the history of the Bible. No facts connected with its composition can obscure the light of God's word which shines forever in its pages, to illumine the path that leads to a higher and more perfect life, and in the end to everlasting life.

Opinion rules men, and opinion is nourished by beliefs, and beliefs are created and sustained by ideas. If we permit ourselves to fall out of the intellectual movement of the age, we shall lose influence over the minds[60] that create opinion and shape the future. "One man of science," says von Hertling, "who works with success in the fields of research, whose name is written on the page of history in far-gleaming characters, and who at the same time leads the life of a true son of the Church, outweighs whole volumes of apologetics." The truths of salvation are doubtless infinitely more important than the truths of science; but this natural knowledge so attracts the attention and awakens the interest of the men of to-day, it so transforms and improves the methods and processes by which civilization is promoted, that it has created a new world-view, not only in the minds of the few profound thinkers and original investigators, but in the general public of intelligent men and women; and if our words are to awaken a response, we must be able to place ourselves at the standpoint of our hearers. The theologian, the apologist, the orator must be able to say to the children of this generation: "We see all that you see, and beyond we see yet diviner truth." Arguments and syllogisms have little power of persuasion. We win men by showing them the facts of life; and to do this we must be able to look at things from many points. This ability is precisely what the best education confers; for it renders the mind open, luminous, fair, supple, and many sided.

To live in the mind, to strive ceaselessly[61] to learn more of the infinite truth, is not easy for any one. It requires a discipline, a courage, a spirit of self-denial, which only the fewest ever acquire; and when men of this strength and excellence devote themselves to the elucidation and defense of the doctrines of religion, we must honor and trust them, or they will lose heart or turn to studies in which their labors will be appreciated. If mistrust of our ablest minds be permitted to exist, the inevitable result will be a lowering of the whole intellectual life of Catholics, and as a consequence a lowering of their moral and religious life. If we have no great masters, how shall we hope to have eager and loving disciples? If we have no men who write vital books—books of power, books which are literature and endure—how shall we expect to enter along an inner line into the higher life of the age, to quicken, purify, and exalt the hopes and thoughts of men? Is the Bible itself written with the rigid exactness of a mathematical treatise? Is it not rather a book of life, of literature, full of symbols and metaphors and poetry? What book has been so misunderstood, and misinterpreted, even by honest and enlightened minds, even by theologians themselves?

Since the inspired writers may thus easily be misunderstood, may we not conclude that it is our duty to treat with good will and loving kindness authors who, not being supernaturally[62] assisted, employ the talents which God has given them, and which their own tireless industry has cultivated to the highest point, to clothe the old truths with the light of the wider and more real knowledge of the universe and of human history, which the modern mind possesses? The new times demand new men; the ancient faith, if it is to be held vitally, must be commended with fresh vigor and defended with all the arguments which the best philosophy, science, and literature may suggest. Christ came to cast fire on earth, and what does He desire but that it be kindled? Currit verbum Dei, says St. Paul; and again: "Wo is me if I do not preach." He is debtor to all men. On Mars Hill he speaks to the most enlightened minds of his day. He is a reasoner as well as a preacher. He places the lines of a Greek poet among his own inspired words. To this intellectual, moral, and religious activity, heightened and intensified by supernatural faith, we owe the spread of Christianity throughout the Gentile world, more than to the zeal and labors of all the apostles. Is it credible that if St. Thomas of Aquino were now alive he would content himself with the philosophy and science of Aristotle, who knows nothing either of creation or of providence, and whose knowledge of nature, compared with our own, is as that of a child? St. Ignatius of Loyola says that to occupy oneself[63] with science, in a pure and religious spirit, is more pleasing to God than practises of penance, because it is more completely the work of the whole man. Is not theology, like the other sciences, bound to accept facts? To deny a fact is to stultify oneself. But how shall we know what is, if we are ignorant of the world-wide efforts of men of learning and intellectual power to get at the facts of the universe? The supreme fact is life; and only that is true, in the best sense of the word, which is favorable to life, to its growth, its joy, its strength, its freedom, its permanence. Whatever dwarfs, whatever arrests, whatever weakens life, is evil.

The great purpose of genuine education is not to store the memory or to accustom to observances, but to strengthen man with his own mind, to rouse him to higher self-activity, to vivify him, to give him fresh faith, hope, and courage, to deepen the foundations of his being, to cultivate his faculties, to give him a firmer grasp of truth and a clearer view of things as they are. Whatever narrows, whatever hardens, whatever enslaves is foreign to the purpose of education. We should dread nothing so much as what undermines spiritual energy; for unless man's highest powers are stimulated and kept active, he falls into sensual indulgence, or becomes the victim of a weak and skeptical temper, no longer able to believe anything, or to hope for anything,[64] or to love anything with all his heart. This is the temper of decadent races, of perishing civilizations, and of dying religions. Losing the power to believe with vital faith in God and in the soul, men cling to the fantom life of cheap and vulgar pleasures. They seek gold and position; they trust to mechanical devices, to political schemes; they worship the rising sun; their truth is what is popular, their good is what makes for present success. Having no firm hold of the eternal and infinite, they believe in human cunning, not in the might of divine truth. They forget that all truth is orthodox, and that behind all truth stand the veracity and the power of God, who makes Himself known in the laws of science, as in the majesty of the everlasting mountains and the starlit heavens. As a kind word spoken for the love of God and man becomes religious, so a right spirit consecrates human action in whatever sphere. "Whoever utters truth," says St. Augustine, "utters it by the aid of him who is truth itself." A devout and illumined spirit sees all things bound together in harmony and beauty about the feet of the eternal Father. Knowledge confirms faith, and faith impels to knowledge. Religion nourishes morality, and morality strengthens and purifies religion. Art, in reflecting some feeble rays of the infinite splendor, opens vistas of the diviner life. Science in showing that order[65] reigns everywhere, even in the midst of seeming discord, that all things are subject to law, gives us a clearer perception of God's infinite wisdom and power. Material progress itself in making earthly things subject to human knowledge and skill, fulfils the will of the Creator who made all things for man.

Thus science and art and progress all conspire with religion to upbuild man's being and to mold him into ever-increasing likeness to God. It is in religion, however, that the conquering might of the spirit is best revealed, and this of itself is sufficient to give it supremacy. It is not merely a world-view, a creed, and a worship; but an original and historic manifestation in human life of the primal power, which transforms and liberates. It is the breaking through of the inner source of being, of God, who reveals Himself to the lowly minded and the pure of heart, as the beginning and end of all that exists; as the one eternal Absolute, in whom and by whom and for whom all things are. The soul that is conscious that religion rests upon this everlasting foundation is not troubled by misgivings as to its truth or usefulness. It is God present in the innermost part of our being; it is Christ working with the almighty Father to redeem man from subjection to the transitory and apparent, from the lust of the flesh, from greed for what ministers to the senses alone. Thus it is an independent world, a[66] kingdom in itself, able to endure and to remain the same in the midst of an order of things that is forever changing and passing away. Whatever alteration may occur in the views of the intellectual, whatever decay or transformation of political and social institutions may take place, religion, the Catholic religion of Christ, shall abide, still endowed, after the lapse of however many ages, with its original freshness and vigor.

There was never yet genuine thinker, or poet, or artist whose work may not be brought, if we are strong and clear-sighted enough, to contribute to the cause of pure religion. The theologian, the preacher, and the apologist who are ignorant of the best that has been thought and said by the makers of the world's literature, can not have the culture, the intellectual vigor, the openness and pliability of mind, without which, short of miracle, it is not possible rightly to commend divine truth to an enlightened age. They whose vocation it is to be public teachers, to mold opinion, and to direct thought, must have more knowledge, a wider outlook, a firmer grasp of spiritual realities than those whom they seek to enlighten and guide. The deepest truth seems shallow when uttered by the frivolous; the holiest things seem to lose half their sacredness when they are entrusted to the coarse and ignorant. It is not enough that the minister of religion have a pure and loving heart, and[67] strong and disciplined mind: he must also have the breeding and culture of a gentleman. Manners are not idle; they spring from inner worth; they are the flower of high thinking and plain living. Christ, it has been said, was the world's first gentleman, and they who live and act in His spirit must be gentlemen. If we build majestic temples, if we construct our altars of costly marbles, if our sacred vessels and priestly vestments are made of gold and silk and studded with precious stones, why shall not they who offer sacrifice and who preach the gospel be required to be clean and decorous, fair and gracious? If it is vanity to speak with ease and elegance, to pronounce with correctness and distinctness, to read with right intonation and emphasis, then must we not say that it is vanity also to erect gorgeous edifices wherein to worship God, who, as St. Paul says, may not be shut in houses made by human hands? If the priest is to be educated at all, he must receive the most thorough and complete education. He must trust wholly to grace, or he must spare no pains whereby endowment may be developed into faculty.

The young, who are the hope of the future, can be won and held only by the highest ideals, in the light of which they may thrill with hope and feel that it is a blest thing to be alive and active, to fight the good fight and, if need be, to perish in a worthy cause. To speak to[68] them with contempt of what the nineteenth century has done, of its science and literature, of its truer knowledge of the past, its keener critical sense, its amazing progress in carrying out the divine command that all things be made subject to man, of the success with which it has battled against ignorance, poverty, and disease, would be to fill them with contempt for ourselves, as being men without understanding and without heart. We must indeed warn against pride and conceit and halfness and dilettanteism, against irreverence and knowingness; but it were a fatal mistake to imagine that we can do aught but harm by seeking to inspire them with a distrust of science and culture, or with a dread of the influence of such things on religious faith. We of all men should be able to walk with confidence in the paths of knowledge. Since we are glad to receive money and to have the favor of men in high places to assist us in our spiritual work, how shall we be willing to lack the help of thoroughly disciplined and enlightened minds, to lack the power of thought which is the most irresistible force God has given to man? If we look upon theology as merely a system of crystallized formulas, as a science which need take no cognizance of the general culture of the age, content with presenting the old truths in the old way, as merely a larger catechism, with a more detailed exposition of definitions and[69] refutations, we deprive it of power to influence men who are all alive with thoughts urgent as the growth of wings; who in the midst of problems which the new sciences raise and accentuate, have grown confused and begin to doubt whether human life shall not be emptied of its spiritual content. All knowledges are related, as all bodies attract and help to hold one another in place; and if we hope to commend and enforce revealed truth with efficacious power, we must be prepared to do so in the full blaze of the light which research and discovery have poured upon nature and the history of man. If, in consequence, we find it necessary to abandon positions which are no longer defensible, to assume new attitudes in the face of new conditions, we must remember that tho the Church is a divine institution, it is none the less subject to the law which makes human things mutable, that tho truth must remain the same, it is capable of receiving fresh illustration, and that if it is to be life-giving, it must be wrought anew into the constitution of each individual and of each age.

Is it possible to look on the great, eager, yearning, doubting, and suffering life of man, and not to feel infinite desire to be of help? Can we believe in our inmost being that we have the words of eternal life, and not be roused as by a voice from heaven from our indifference and somnolence, from our easy contentment[70] with formal education and half knowledge? We do not need new devotions and new shrines, but a new spirit, newness of life, a revivification of faith, hope and love, fresh courage and will to lay hold on the sources of power, that we may compel all knowledge and science to do homage to Christ, and to serve in the noblest way all God's children. We must be resolved to labor to see not only things as they are, but ourselves, too, as we are. Where self-criticism is lacking, whether in individuals or in social aggregates, decay and degeneracy inevitably set in. If there are true and wholesome developments of life and doctrine, there is also a false and morbid evolution, against which we must be ever watchful. Ceaseless vigilance is not the price of liberty alone, it is the price we must pay for all spiritual good; and how shall we be ever vigilant if we are forbidden to criticize ourselves and the environment by which our life is nourished and protected. As walking is a continuous falling and rising, so all progress is an upward movement through error and failure toward truth and victory. As the decay of races, the ruin of civilizations, the downfall of states are seen in the end to be helpful to the progress of mankind, since they do not perish, wholly, but contribute something of their vital substance to those that follow; so the history of human thought shows that while systems rise and pass away,[71] even the errors of sincere and original minds, associated as they are with truth, aid in some way the general advancement of knowledge and culture. All things work together for those who love God. Action may not be dissociated from thought, nor thought from action. Doubt is overcome, not by abstracting and arguing, but by doing the thing which is given us to do. The intellect is not the center and soul of life; and knowing is not the whole of being. Faith is not a conclusion from a line of reasoning. We can not bind our destiny to the conquests of the mind. We have power to think, but our chief business is to act; and therefore we must forever and forever fall back on faith, hope, and love, and on the conduct they inspire, or we shall be driven forth into the regions of mere speculation, into a dreary world of empty forms.

**÷**09-05 MACARTHUR

CHRIST—THE QUESTION OF THE CENTURIES

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Robert Stuart MacArthur was born at Dalesville, Quebec, in 1841, and graduated from the Rochester Theological Seminary in 1870. He has been pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, New York, continuously since 1870. From the very first he began to attract attention as pastor and preacher, and the success which has attended his ministry has been phenomenal. During his ministry his church has given for benevolent and missionary enterprises more than two million dollars.

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MACARTHUR

Born in 1841

CHRIST—THE QUESTION OF THE CENTURIES

What think ye of Christ.—Mat 22:42.

The ideal man has not yet been discovered. Humboldt, who traveled far, saw much and felt more, recorded in his diary this sentence, "The finest fruit earth holds up to its maker is a man." It is here implied that this finest fruit is the ideal man. But Humboldt did not affirm that he had ever found this man. The ideal man has not yet been discovered among those who were mere men. No one of our noblest men was a spotless sun; no one reached sinless perfection. From all our loftiest specimens of manhood I turn dissatisfied to Jesus Christ, and in Him I find the ideal becomes actual, the dream real, and the hope fruition. What Mount Tabor is, rising abruptly in its unique symmetry and beauty from the northeastern arm of the plain of Esdraelon, that Jesus Christ is, rising in insulated grandeur and spotless perfection above the plain reached by the noblest men of all the centuries.

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What Mount Blanc as the king of the Alps is, lifting its crystal domes and towers 15,781 feet above the level of the Mediterranean Sea, compared with the other snow-clad and cloud-kissed mountains of the Alps, that Jesus Christ is compared with the loftiest men who have risen as mountain heights above their fellows through all the ages. What the Himalaya range, the most elevated and stupendous mountain system on the globe, sweeping across historic lands as far as from New York to Chicago and back to New York, and rising so high that the superb Matterhorn, if lifted bodily and placed upon the Jungfrau, would not reach the glittering Himalaya heights, that and more Jesus Christ is to the long line of men who have risen highest in mortal grandeur in the history of the human race. Jesus Christ is the pearl and crown of humanity; He is the loftiest specimen of manhood the race has produced; he is the fullest manifestation of divinity God has given the world; He is the effulgence of God's glory, and the very image of His substance. He rises in unapproachable glory, not only above men, but also above saints and seraphs, and above angels and archangels. Gazing upon Him, we can exclaim with inexpressible enthusiasm and unutterable ecstasy, "Ecce Homo!" and with the same breadth and with equal truth we can also reverently exclaim, "Ecce Deus!"

The setting of this text is instructively suggestive.[77] For some time in His discussion with the Pharisees, our Lord had been acting on the defensive. Both Sadducees and Pharisees had been asking Him questions. His answers put the Sadducees to silence, and their confusion greatly gratified the Pharisees. It is now their turn to experience similar confusion from the celerity and dexterity of His replies. Never was there so skilful a debater as Jesus Christ. He was masterful in His clarity of thought, simplicity of speech, and purity of motive.

In the case before us, He passes from the defensive to the offensive, and he convicts Scribes and Pharisees of entertaining false views of the Messiah. They had disputed His claims as a spiritual Messiah, and He now shows the irreconcilable contradiction between their views of Him as a mere worldly Messiah, and the teaching of their own prophetic Scriptures. They were silenced and even stunned by His rapid, aggressive, and unanswerable attack. We are significantly told that "no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."

It must, doubtless, be admitted that there are men in every community, who have no definite convictions regarding Jesus Christ. It seems almost incredible that in a community of culture and Christianity men and women should be found who have not reached[78] definite conclusions regarding the person and character of Christ. I put then the question with the utmost directness, "What think ye of Christ?" This is the broadest, deepest, and loftiest question ever put to the human race. This is the question of all the ages. This question virtually engaged the thought of Abraham; it evoked a response from Moses; and it stirred the deepest emotions and loftiest praise of David, as he swept his lyre and sang his immortal songs....

In this congregation there are no hearers unwilling to admit that Jesus Christ is at least a great historic character. They frankly admit that He was born at Bethlehem, brought up at Nazareth, and crucified at Jerusalem. They are entirely correct in the outward features of His earthly career, but they have comparatively little conception of the spiritual significance of His wonderful life and His vicarious death.

They think of the historical elements of His Wonderful life as they would think of those of Buddha, Zoroaster, or Mohammed. Their conception of His earthly life has no power over the development of their own lives, except as a mere character of history. They fail to see that His was a unique life, and that it was lived on earth by Him, that it might be lived in some measure over again on earth by us. They fail to see that He became the Son of man, that we might become the sons[79] of God. They do not learn that He revealed the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man that we should sweetly experience the one and constantly illustrate the other. The historic Christ has no more power over the practical lives of some, than the traditional heroes of classic legend. Virtually for them there is no Christ or God. Practically for them there is no historic Christ. Until the historic Christ is translated into a personal Savior and Master, controlling our acts, our words, and our thoughts by His matchless example, His unique personality, and His spiritual purity, there is for us no historic Christ worthy the name.

There are those who think of the Christ as a dreamy, sentimental, and poetic character. They are charmed by the commendable characteristics of His remarkable life. They refer to Him in terms of soothing speech and of dreamy affection. There is an element of poesy in all their conceptions of the divine-human Christ. They think of Him in language which the robust Chalmers called, in his lofty scorn, "nursery endearments." They are ready to adopt the language of the renowned French theologian, eminent Orientalist, and brilliant rhetorician, Renan, when he speaks of the Christ of God as the "sweet Galilean." Such epithets must be utterly unwelcome to Christ. If He be not more than man, then He is less than man. If He be not worthy of[80] our loftiest devotion, He is certainly worthy of our severest reprehension. In a word, if He be not God, He is not a good man.

Carlyle described materialism as a "gospel of dirt"; we might fittingly describe this sweet and silly sentimentalism as a "gospel of gush." Only as we bow down at Christ's feet, and worship Him as the divine-human Man, can we give Him the honor which He merits and demands. Then we can employ and sanctify the loftiest poetry in chanting His praise, the noblest art in limning His person, and the profoundest logic in urging His claims upon men as the divine-human Savior. There are many who are willing to admit and who earnestly affirm that Jesus Christ is the ideal man of the human race. They are ready to declare that it was a glorious thing that man was originally made like God, and that it was a still more condescending thing that God was made like man. The Christ was indeed the ideal man of the human race. He was the great exemplar, the perfect model, the sublime original to be imitated by all true men and women. In Him, and in Him only, the plant of humanity blossomed and bloomed into a perfect flower.

But how can we account for the perfection of His humanity, if we deny the reality of His divinity? We ought, as students of literature and life, to account for Jesus the Christ. We strive to account for Socrates and[81] Plato, for David and Isaiah, for Paul and Luther, for Washington and Gladstone, for Lincoln and McKinley. Are we not under the strongest possible obligations to account for Jesus Christ? Men say that Jesus Christ was good, but that He was not God. Out of their own mouths these men convict themselves of inconsistency in their locutions and illogicality in their reasonings. If Jesus Christ be not God, He is not good. He is either an unpardonable egotist, or a hopeless lunatic, or he is the Christ of God, and God over all, blest forever more. He claimed to be God, and if His claim be not true, how can he be good? The stream of His life flowed through the human race on a higher level, and rose to a vastly higher point, than any other stream known to human history or divine revelation. How shall we account for the height to which that stream rose? Water can never rise higher than its source. If that source were simply human, how can we account for the superhuman height which it reached? If we admit the account given in the gospels of His virgin birth and divine origin, all His life is easily explicable.

But if we deny His unique origin, we can not logically account for His unique life. A life began as was never another life, we might expect to see continue as no other life continued. A naturally skeptical man finds it easier to admit the account of Christ's remarkable[82] birth than to attempt to explain His remarkable life if He deny the remarkable birth. The unicity of His birth we would naturally expect to eventuate in the unicity of His life. His life can not be explained on any principle of heredity. We readily admit the royal element in His blood, altho the fortunes of His family had fallen before His birth; but no law of heredity will account for the physical attractiveness, the mental superiority, and the moral purity of Jesus, the Christ. Neither will environment account for His marvelous career and character. What was there in the peasant conditions of His family life to produce the uniqueness of His manhood? Neither will education account for the Christ. He was never in school, in the technical sense of that term, altho He doubtless studied in the village synagog; and yet He rose above all the limitations, traditions, and bigotries by which He was surrounded. It is doubtful if He ever sat at the feet of the greatest rabbis of the time. It is certain that He never studied at the feet of the philosophers of Greece and Rome, nor of the dreamy Orient. He never traveled, except possibly barely across the confines of Palestine, a country about the size of the State of New Hampshire. How came He to emancipate Himself from the sectarianism and sectionalism of His country and century? How came He to be the contemporary of all the ages?[83] How came He to utter in the Sermon on the Mount truths which socially and religiously the foremost thinkers of to-day can barely understand, and dare not fully apply to the solution of the problems of the hour? No mere human thinker has ever approached the Sermon on the Mount. But in pure spirituality of thought, our Lord surpassed it in His last address to His disciples. This address bears the ineffaceable marks of His supreme divinity and absolute deity. O, ye critics, I ask you as a problem of literature and life to account for Jesus the Christ. I ask no favors for Him. It is you that need the favors, if you oppose the Christ. I demand for Him simple justice. "What think ye of the Christ?"

Dr. Geikie, in his "Life of Christ," calls attention to the fact that the Jews confess great admiration for the character and words of Jesus; that the Mohammedan world gives Him the high title of Messiah; that the myriad-minded Shakespeare paid Him lowly reverence, and that men like Galileo, Kepler, Bacon, Newton, and Milton set the name of Christ above every other name. He also reminds us that Jean Paul Richter, whom his countrymen call "Der Einzige," the unique, tells us that "the life of Christ concerns him who, being the holiest among the mighty, the mightiest among the holy, lifted with his pierced hands empires off their hinges, and turned[84] the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages." Spinoza, the great philosopher, son of Portuguese Jews, disciple of Aben-Ezra and Descartes, calls Christ the symbol of divine wisdom. Schelling and Hegel speak of Him as the union of the divine and human. The immortal Goethe, the acknowledged prince of German poets, and one of the most superbly accomplished men of the eighteenth century, says, "I esteem the gospels to be thoroughly genuine, for there shines forth from them the reflected splendor of a sublimity, proceeding from the person of Jesus Christ, of so divine a kind as only the divine could ever have manifested upon earth."

What thinkest thou of the Christ, O Jean Jacques Rousseau, with all the brilliancy of thy intellect, the singularity of thy character, and the enthusiasm of thy writings? Give place to the witness Rousseau; hear his testimony. Rousseau speaks: "How petty are the books of the philosophers, compared with the gospels! Can it be that writings at once so sublime and so simple are the work of men? Can He whose life they tell be Himself no more than a mere man?... Yes, if the death of Socrates be that of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God." What thinkest thou of the Christ, burly, brusk, brave, and heroic Thomas Carlyle, with all thy marvelous reading, thy profound thinking,[85] and thy contempt of cant and love of truth? Carlyle steps forward and speaks: "Jesus of Nazareth, our divinest symbol! Higher has the human thought not yet reached." Let us summon Dr. Channing, the cultured and eloquent preacher and writer, the foremost man among American Unitarians in his day. What thinkest thou, O Channing, of Jesus Christ? He makes reply: "The character of Jesus Christ is wholly inexplicable on human principles."

What thinkest thou, O Herder, illustrious German thinker, broad scholar, and exquisite genius, of Jesus, the Christ? Superb is his reply: "Jesus Christ is in the noblest and most perfect sense the realized ideal of humanity." What thinkest thou of the Christ, O Napoleon, mighty son of Mars, striding through the world like a Colossus, darkening the brightness of noonday with the smoke, and lighting the darkness at midnight with the fires of battle? Hear this man of gigantic intellect, whatever may be said of his moral motives: "I think I understand somewhat of human nature, and I tell you all these (the heroes of antiquity) were men, and I am a man, but not one is like Him; Jesus Christ was more than man. Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself founded great empires; but upon what did the creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to this very day[86] millions would die for him." Compared with such witnesses as these, the opponents of Jesus Christ of to-day are pigmies so contemptible in mentality and so questionable in morality as to be ruled out of every court of testimony, where intellectual ability and moral worth have weight.

I summon thee, O execrable Judas. Behold him flinging down the thirty pieces of silver before the chief priests and elders. Hear him speak in his agony of soul: "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." I summon thee, O Pontius Pilate, with thy immortality of shame in the creeds of the ages. The Roman Procurator washes his hands. Strange sight! He speaks: "I am innocent of the blood of this just person." He speaks again: "I find no fault in this man." I summon John, the heroic Baptist. Hear His testimony: "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." O loving and divine John, the Evangelist, what thinkest thou of the Christ? "He is the Vine, the Way, the Truth, the Light, and the Word, and the Word was God." I summon thee, O matchless Paul. What is thy testimony? "He is the image of the invisible God.... The blest and only Potentate, the King of kings, the Lord of lords." I summon thee, Apostle Peter, once confessor, then denier, but afterward penitent witness and heroic martyr. What is thy testimony? "He[87] is the Christ, the Son of the living God." I summon thee, O once doubting but always brave Thomas. Hear the testimony of this witness as he falls at the Master's feet and exclaims, "My Lord and my God!"

I summon thee, O John Bunyan, immortal tinker; thy glorious Pilgrim, marching through the ages, telling the story of redeeming love, is thy testimony to the character of thy Lord. I summon thee, O Charles Spurgeon, and the testimony of all thy volumes, of thy glorious life and of thy peerless ministry is that "Jesus Christ is the chiefest among ten thousand and the One altogether lovely." I summon thee, O De Wette, great Biblical critic of Germany: "This only I know, that there is salvation in no other name than in the name of Jesus Christ, the crucified." I summon thee, O scholarly, cultured MacIntosh; the attendants are watching thy last moments, they bend over thee to catch thy last whispers: "Jesus, love!—Jesus, love!—The same thing." I might summon ten thousand more, who from the Grassmarket in Edinburgh, and from a thousand racks and stakes went up to glory and to God, and their testimony would be, "None but Jesus, none but Jesus." I summon thee, Toplady, and hear thee sing this great hymn, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me."

I summon thee, O Tennyson, immortal laureate, thou who hast fought thy doubts[88] and found divine help. Let us hear the result of thy conflicts:

Strong Son of God, immortal love,  
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we can not prove.

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;  
Thou madest life in man and brute;  
Thou madest death; and lo! Thy foot  
Is on the skull which Thou hast made.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood Thou;  
Our wills are ours, we know not how;  
Our wills are ours to make them Thine.

I summon thee, O Browning, poet of divine optimism and interpreter of the deeper instincts of the human heart, let us hear the conclusion of thy philosophic mind:

I say the acknowledgment of God in Christ  
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee  
All questions in the world and out of it,  
And hath so far advanced thee to be wise.

I summon thee, O Gladstone, noblest of statesmen, uncrowned king of the world, thou who didst come in contact with the throbbing life of the world, of politics, letters, and religions, what sayst thou concerning humanity's greatest need? "I am asked what a man should chiefly look to in his progress through life as to the power that is to sustain him[89] under trials and enable him manfully to confront his afflictions. I must point to something which, in a well-known hymn is called, 'The old, old story,' and taught with an old, old teaching, which is the best gift ever given to mankind. The older I grow, the more confirmed I am in the belief that Jesus Christ is the only hope of humanity."

I summon Thyself, O Thou Christ of God, Thou holiest of the holy, Thou who art God of very God. What sayst Thou of Thyself? "Before Abraham was I am." "I and my Father are one." "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

**÷**09-06 CARPENTER

THE AGE OF PROGRESS

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Boyd Carpenter, English divine, was born in 1841 in Liverpool, educated at the Royal Institution and Cambridge University, where he was appointed Hulsean lecturer in 1878. After holding several curacies he was appointed vicar of Christ Church, Lancaster Gate, in 1879. He held also a canoncy of Windsor Until 1884, when he was consecrated bishop of Ripon. In 1887 he delivered the Bampton lectures. He has published a large number of works, among which may be reckoned "Commentary on Revelation" (1879); "Lectures on Preaching" (1895); and a "Popular History of the Church of England" (1900).

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CARPENTER

Born in 1841

THE AGE OF PROGRESS

And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make a place there where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye.—2Ki 6:1-2.

There are two conditions of real personal power in the world. One is that we should be able to look above this earth and see some heavenly light surrounding everything we meet. We call this, in ordinary language, asserting the power of insight, and it is that which redeems life from being regarded as commonplace. Everything is tinged with heavenliness for those who see heaven's light above all; and the possession of this power gives that dignity of conception to life which is one of the secrets of power. But there is another condition also, and that is that there shall be the strength of personal assertiveness. A man may be possest of never so much insight, and yet he may lack that robustness of personal character which can make itself felt among his fellows; he[94] may, in fact, be deficient in the powers of personal action.

Now these two gifts Elisha possest. He possest the loftiness of insight. He had seen when his master was taken up the glimpse of the fiery chariot which took him into the heavens, and from that time forward his life was tinged with the consciousness of heaven. Nothing could be mean or low to a man who had beheld that first vision of God. This was, as it were, an enduring and abiding background of all his after-conceptions. So in the hour when it seemed as tho beleagured by armies and enemies, that there was no power of release, his eyes, as it were, were still open to behold the heavenly brightness about him. He possest also that power of personal assertiveness. Standing in front of the Jordan, he smote aside every difficulty which hindered him commencing his career.

But there is a third qualification still which is needed, in order that these two powers may be brought, as it were, into practical contact with life. Great men, it has been said by one of our own great teachers, are men who live very largely in their own age; that is to say, they are persons the drift and set of whose mind does not belong to the generation before themselves exactly, altho they may be possest of powers of insight, nor to the generation after their own age, but have much power of sympathy and comprehensiveness[95] toward the interests and exigencies of their own time. They are men to use the phrase, who are in touch with their own age. And therefore it is, tho a man may be possest of so much insight that heavenly light breathes upon all things, tho he may have a certain robust assertiveness and energy of character, yet if he have no power of adjusting his capacities, so to speak, in language understood of the men among whom he moves, all that power will, for the practical purpose of life, be thrown away.

Elisha possest the two. Does he possess the third? Is he a man, in fact, who can make his influence felt among the men of his day? Is he in touch with his time? Can he be a man capable, not only of acting for himself, but capable, by that subtle and magical influence, of arousing the activity of others? For a man may, indeed, hold a position of isolated splendor, which may produce the admiration of the men of his day; but to be a real prophet, I take it, is to be able to merge largely our own individuality into the individualities of others, and to be not so much the cause of admiration as the cause of activity.

Now I think that the scene will explain to us that Elisha was largely possest of that gift. If you watch it you will see that here is a scene which has since then often been exhibited in the story of all great movements.[96] One of the great conditions of life is the capacity to expand. Dead things may indeed crystallize into a sort of cold uniformity, but that which has life in it is always possest of expansive energy. Here are these sons of the prophets becoming conscious that the place where they dwell is too strait for them. It is a movement which, as it were, arises outside the prophet's suggestion; he is not the one who tells them that the place is too strait. They gather themselves together and say, "The place is too strait for us; let us go and build a larger and ampler habitation for ourselves." And immediately you watch him in the midst of these men whose minds are alive to the spirit of progress. He identifies himself with their aspirations; he is one with them in the movement; he does not coldly frown upon their glorious aspirations, which are from the extension of their own institutions, but rather makes himself one with them. Not only so. See how he allies himself to their individual life. He does not even dictate to them the whole method of the movement; each man shall be free, he says, to choose his beam. When they say, Let us go and select our own beam for our own habitation, be it so. He is not to frown down their individual efforts, but, at the same time, by going with them he preserves the coherence, as it were, of their work. He allows the freest scope of individual activity, but yet[97] preserves them in the great unification of their work. And when the episode happens which often does happen in the story of great movements—when the hour comes when one man's heart is smitten through with despondency, when the work is still before him, but the power of carrying on the work has dropt from his hand, slipping into the stream which is ever ready to drown our best ambitions and endeavors—Elisha stands beside a man in despondency, cheers his spirit, which is overwhelmed by hopelessness, and restores to him hope, capacity, and power. I say this is a man who is, in a great sense, a true prophet of his day, not simply posing for personal admiration, not merely asserting himself and destroying the capabilities of those about him, but with that sweet flexibility and that wondrous firmness combined, which is capable of giving movement to the young life about him and at the same time drawing them into the one great purpose of existence.

And thus it seems to me that the scene spreads beyond its own age. It is a type of all great movements, and it gives us a fitting attitude of those who would direct and control such movements. Here is the prophet in relation to the idea of the age of progress. The place is too strait for us. It is not the cry of the Jewish Church only; it is the cry of all ages. "The place is too strait." You and I might say that is a vision of the growth[98] of Christendom; the place is too strait. The little upper chamber at Jerusalem did not suffice for the three thousand converts. "The place is too strait," they are forced to exclaim. The limits of Judea are too small for the ever-extending energy of Christianity. Every land and every nationality must be brought within its sway, and the workers shall be as the workers in this scene, manifold. Here shall be men like St. Paul, who shall go, with a strong forensic sense of what the gospel is, to speak it to the hearts of men who need it, and lift them high above commonplace things. Here shall be one like St. John, reposing upon the bosom of his Lord, and able to unfold to them heavenly visions and the anticipations of the outgrowth and development of the world. Here is one who, like Origen shall collate, like Jerome shall translate, like Augustine shall expound, like the men of later ages shall preach the spirit of reformation. The place is too strait, but given to each man his individual freedom, the power and the expansion of the Church goes on.

But is it not true that while, on the one side, we might say that this is a glorious picture, untouched and untinged by any dark lines, the moment that we begin to look at it in its practical form we begin to see the difficulties of its development? Let us go unto Jordan, and let us take each man our own beam. As long as the expansion of the Church is in the[99] direction of the increase of its numbers or accession of new territories, so long indeed the men who have had the spirit of zeal have been willing to sanction such extension. But there comes a time when the consciousness of its expansion does not move according to the line of numbers merely, but it moves according to the line of new institutions and of new thoughts. How, then, will it be received by those into whose hand is placed the responsibility of its guidance? "The place is too strait for us;" so they cried in the early Church when they found that Judaic institutions were too narrow for the spirit of Christianity. The new wine could not be left in old bottles. "The place is too strait for us;" so they cried when they found within the bosom of the medieval Church that there was not the opportunity for the expansion of their spiritual life and the development of their missionary energy. But has it always been true that the spirit of this religious zeal which longs for new developments and new departures has been received with the spirit of wisdom? You and I know full well that the history of the Church of Christ is the history of a thousand regrets. Did the medieval Church never regret the act by which it drove forth the Waldenses into schism? Has our Church never regretted the day when it looked askance at the work of John Wesley? You know full well, whatever might[100] have been the feeling of earlier times, there is growing up among us a larger and wider spirit, catching—shall I say?—the true directing spirit which shone thus in the life of Elisha; and believing that it is possible after all that each man may have his function in life, and each man, choosing his beam, may in bearing that beam be building up the temple of God. But, alas! it is hard for men to believe it. Still, even now, the spirit of prejudice surrounds every aspect with which we regard life and Church movement. It is difficult for a man bred in one communion, for example, to believe in the types of saintship which have become the favorites of another; harder, perhaps, for men bred in the very heart of Rome to believe in the spirit of saintship which dwelt in the breast of Molinos; hard for those dwelling in the heart of Protestantism to understand Bonaventura or Xavier; hard for one who has been taught in Presbyterian lines to believe in that sanctity which descends to us as an heritage from Cosin and Ken; and difficult, perhaps, for Episcopalians to recognize the sanctity which dwelt in Richard Baxter and John Bunyan....

You may believe that there is the danger of the Church—shall I say?—growing stereotyped in its forms, by checking the freedom of individual life. There is the danger, on the other side, of the Church, as it were, spreading itself in the aggregation of splendid individualities;[101] and because men believe intensely in their own mission, because they can not but see that the beam which they are hewing down is one of paramount importance to take some place in supporting the temple of God, they are inclined to prefer the attitude of isolation. Is this wise, and is it well? Pardon me if I ask you to say that this spirit, if allowed to grow, is a spirit which, from its various aspects, is one which, by all means in our power, we ought to set our faces against. Our own beam is not the temple of God. Each move and form of religious thought is not comprehensive of the whole; but it is here where men, choosing their own beam, begin to believe in their own, and their own alone, and seek to impose that little thing of their own as tho it were an absolute necessity of every portion of God's Church, that you get the spirit of actual division. "The whole is greater than its part." If we could only bring the aphorisms of ordinary life into the bearings of the Church of God we should be happier. But, let me assure you, when a man has his beam, and tells me that that beam will be built into the temple of God, will support its roof, and perhaps be the very thing which will add new dignity to the splendid arch which will spring from it, I am content to accept it. Let him believe anything that will beautify and extend. But when he tells me that it is catholicity to believe in his beam[102] being all, he simply, as it were, sins against the very thing he is seeking to maintain. It is a sign of intellectual mediocrity; it is the spirit of sectarianism; it is the spirit ultimately of skepticism. When a man believes that pious views, which have been found profitable to his own soul, are to be made the rule for the whole catholic Church; when he tells me that special hours for special services are essential for the well-being of all Christian souls; when he tells me that special attitudes in the house of God are essential to catholicity, it is intellectual mediocrity, as the brilliant French poet has written which can not comprehend anything beyond itself. It is a spirit of sectarianism; for what, I pray, do you mean by sectarianism, if it is not this spirit, that you exaggerate your own particular doctrine into such proportions as to make men feel that there is none other than that? You are of your own little Church, and you are doubtful of the rest of the world. That is the spirit of sectarianism, and that, if you understand it rightly, is the only fault of skepticism; for to believe that God is to be narrowed down to the conception of such a thing as that, to believe that God's temple is to be brought down to the measure of your own little beam, is to believe with such a stunted growth, such a stunted conception of God, that it is practically denying Him altogether.

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Sometimes I venture to think that we have lost faith in Christ altogether. We believe in a Church which can be manipulated by human wisdom, we believe in a Church which can be galvanized by organization, but we can not believe in a Church whose development is being overruled by the guiding spirit and eternal presence of Christ Himself. If you take a large view of Christianity the danger becomes yours. Some, indeed, hew down beams for the temple of God not themselves knowing of that temple into which they are placed; for I do believe that in the development of God's great world the efforts of earnest and honest men who know not indeed in what direction their efforts are tending will be found to have been real efforts for the promotion of something, for the bringing out of some truth, for the establishment of some truth by which the Church may live, on which the Church may build, of whom the whole building, fitly framed together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, shall thus grow into the holy temple of the Lord.

But the scene is not the scene merely of these activities uncrossed by a single reverse. Here is the accident, here is the time in which men begin to feel that their power has left them. One, in hewing down his beam, animated by a spirit of a little overeagerness, perhaps gifted with that egotism of his work which made him develop it more rapidly than[104] that of his fellows, strikes too hard a blow, and the loose ax-head slips off the haft and falls into the stream. Immediately he is face to face with, and conscious of, that most painful consciousness which can ever visit the heart of man—the contradiction between the grandness of the work and the ideal of the work which he has to achieve and his own impotence. There is the beam, and all about me are the workers, and the house is to be built for the sons of the prophets. But here, in my hand I hold this simple haft, bereft of the power of doing my share in that great work. It is a picture which has been repeated often and often. Does there not come a time when we feel that the power, as it were, of things has forsaken us? There was a time when our creeds afforded us great delight. We believed in God; we believed in redemption; we believed in the Spirit which could guide human affairs; we moved to our work full of the exuberance of confidence in that faith. But behold, there has come a time when we, perhaps almost unconsciously, lose the very thing which has given us hope.

Now whenever a new doctrine or new truth has come up in the history of the Church, it has been held, in the first instance, by men who lived by it and tied their own lives to it. No power of that ax-head slipt off into life's stream. They knew what they were doing. When men brought out the doctrine[105] of the inspiration of the Bible, they knew what they were doing; they hewed down the trees about them, and they really believed it. Their lives were created by this truth. So when they believed in the real presence of Christ, they believed that Christ was really present. It was no fiction. When they believed in the doctrine of justification by faith, they believed that God had taken them into His own hands, that God had grasped their lives, and God Himself was behind their lives. Truth was to them truth, and it was a consecrated thing; but remember that truth, which is a flower, has its roots there, and it is only as you grasp it by its roots it becomes true to you. Truth is not a thing of the intellect only; it descends into our moral nature, it grafts upon our affections and conscience; the moment I cut it away from it it ceases to be truth; it becomes dogma—for the sake of distinction. That is to say, the men of our age who do not live by that truth wish, as it were, to attach that truth to them; they wish to make it actually the cry of party. They stole the wand of the enchanter, but they had not the power of the enchanter. They knew that they had the flower, but the flower cut away from its moral root had no force and no vitality, and therefore it crystallizes it. Hence, the natural history of a doctrine is this: when men are taking it rightly, using it as for God, rightly handling it, it is a power[106] in their hands. Taken up for their own purposes, for the purpose of satisfying an indolent understanding, for the purpose of evading the claims of God which other truths may be making upon their minds, it then becomes evacuated of its power; it is impotent, it is buried underneath the stream of constantly changing time.

And, then, how shall it be restored? By again, I say, being taken up out of the stream by the true handle. If you wish to restore the power of truth, you must see that it is the truth which has a claim upon your moral being. For just as we are told that the sun may pour down its beams eternally upon the face of the moon, burning and blistering with its rays its surface, and that there everything remains cold and frozen underneath those beams, because no sweet atmosphere can hold the sunbeams in its fold, so it is true that when you take truth and use it from its false side, it shall pour its brightest rays into your intellect, not the dry light which Bacon meant, but the false light which some substitute for it. You receive a true light upon your understanding, and there is no moral atmosphere upon your nature to embrace those sunbeams, to keep them and make them your own, and make them your life blood by their presence. If thus we take truth it becomes false to us, a buried and useless thing. But if you take truth from its moral side, and approach it[107] from its moral and spiritual side, it shall again become a power in your nature.

When men believed in the inspiration of God and the Bible it was a power to them; but when this dropt down into a belief that every jot and tittle was part and parcel of God's inspiration, then they merely crystallized into a dogma what was a great and living truth. When men ask us, Are the doctrines of Christianity dead; are they played out? my answer is, They are dead to those who use them wrongly, as all truth is dead to those who have no moral love of truth—dead to those who will use them as charms and incantations, sewing them, as the Pharisees sewed some texts, into the border of their robes; dead, indeed, they are to those who are not making them part of their own life, but not dead to those who, tho they may not be able to formulate their view into any way that will satisfy a partizan section of Christianity, yet feel that to them the old inspiration is life. God's living voice will speak to them godlike in every line, to them because they believe in a Christ behind all these truths, and that these are but the endeavors of men to express the power of the living thought and voice of God. Then to them ordinances will live; a real presence will be about their path. Sacraments and ordinances will live because something lives behind them. They are not using them falsely but reverently, and truly God[108] has spoken to their souls; He has put back the truths into their hearts by the handle of some new-found life.

It is the same with our own lives; often and often it happens that you feel life has lost its power and charm; its vigor was once great. I came up, for instance, into the midst of my fellows here, with all the enthusiasms of university life, and I rejoiced in them; but now, somehow or other, the novelty has gone away, and the interest has palled, and I do not care. Life has lost its meaning to me, and I do not feel that life is worth living at all. Yes, it is a contradiction in your own mind between the conception of life as in your nobler moments you form it and your own impotence. Has the ax-head gone? Has it slipt into the water? How can it be restored? The first thing a man discovers in his own impotence, is that the power which was in his hands was not his own.

It is only when you and I see this that we can take it up again. Take life, and make it the reason for indulgence; take amusements, and make them the instruments for mere enjoyment; take study, and make it the reason for mere pride; and you will find the ax-head will slip off. All the knowledge you possess will be like blinded knowledge, capable of being applied to nothing. But believe it to be your own, given you of God—these hands, this brain, this heart, God's, not your own; these[109] ordinances of religion God's, not your own; these teachings of the Church in all ages God's varied voice, which, if heard aright, shall blend into one mold in your ears. Take it up as His, and not your own; lift up your life right reverently; bend as you receive it from His hand, who can alone give you the restored fulness of His powers. You are surrounded by workers; your mind is often disturbed among the many cries and many sounds; but believe it, each of you has your own beam, and God can put into your hand the weapon which you are to use in hewing it down. Go forward, and be not afraid.

**÷**09-07 PARKHURST

CONSTRUCTIVE FAITH

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Charles Henry Parkhurst was born at Framingham, Massachusetts, in 1842. Since 1880 he has been pastor of Madison Square Presbyterian Church, New York. He reads his sermons from a carefully prepared manuscript, from which he does not raise his eyes during the delivery. His English style is much admired for its force and compactness. His voice interests and impresses the hearer by its unusual depth and resonance. Dr. Parkhurst has taken a conspicuous part in the effort for civic purity and righteousness. He has published a number of books.

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PARKHURST

Born in 1842

CONSTRUCTIVE FAITH

Why is it thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?—Act 26:8.

Paul stood before Agrippa to answer to him for the things whereof he had been accused. And one of the charges of which he stood indicted was his belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the publicity with which he had proclaimed that belief.

Such resurrection was to Paul credible, to Agrippa apparently incredible. Why? Why credible to the one, but incredible to the other? Does the difficulty lie in the event or in the method of approaching it? In the event, or, perhaps, in the mental or moral constitution of the people who contemplate it?

The question is not one of mere academic interest. It is too deeply involved in the whole Christian scheme to have the door slammed in its face as a mere intellectual or scholastic intruder. The writer of the first Corinthian letter rather bruskly settled that[114] matter when he wrote, "If Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain." As Paul understood it, that was one of the fundamentals of the gospel, and he, if any one, was competent to judge what its fundamentals were.

And while there is an element of formality, ceremony and parade, in the way in which the Church, after nineteen hundred years, celebrates the event, yet the Church has a great deal of heart for the event, believes in it some and would like to believe in it more. Its attitude toward it to-day is, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." It is too deeply linked in with our thoughts of immortality for us to be able willingly to let go of it. One man slipping through the grave in an immortal way creates a chance for every other man. Even if Christ did not rise in the way predicated of Him, we may still be immortal; but the soul likes one good authenticated instance of a death that was not fatal as something definite to anchor itself upon, and is not always so sure of its anchorage grounds as to be able quite to rest in the hope it tries so hard to cherish. Aside from the fact that even if He did rise it was a great while ago—and the argumentative value of a fact tends to weaken with the centuries—there are other considerations that complicate the case, so that we always welcome whatever promises to relieve a little the strain of an unsettled confidence.

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It will be rather to our advantage then, I am sure, that we should distinctly face the fact that the event which the day celebrates is a somewhat severe tax upon that faculty of ours by means of which we are able to become convinced of what is unproved and perhaps unprovable. We can reason toward it a part of the way, but the reasons are all exhausted before we have arrived at an affirmative conclusion; and the gap that still remains we fill in with faith.

It is better to state the situation in that frank way, for then we know exactly what we have to deal with. We can in part attest the fact of Christ's resurrection, but in part we have to accept it by the exercise of faith. That may be a discouraging condition of things, and may not be—discouraging, perhaps, if we mean by it only that we know it in part, and guess or imagine the rest. But we ought to seek for faith a somewhat more dignified and constructive function than that.

There is this, at any rate, to be said about faith—that there is no faculty of which we make more constant use or that we use with greater effect when used wisely; and no faculty in which more of the richest contents of our personality admit of being concentrated. This faculty is going to be quite largely exercised by people to-day, and it is a favorable time to comment upon it. It is of great use in religious matters and the season an opportune[116] one for encouraging its use and stimulating it to more complete development. It may enable us in some measure to understand why what was incredible to Agrippa was credible to Paul.

While there is a larger field in religion for the exercise of faith than there is anywhere else, we ought to know that it is no more indispensable there than elsewhere. You, of course, are aware that there are very few things that can be absolutely proved—proved in such a way that something over and above is not required in order to insure a satisfactory conviction. Even if mathematical demonstrations seem to be an exception to that rule, you should remember that even there your demonstration has to start with something that is unproved and that can not be proved. As matter of fact, absolute demonstration is one of the rarities, whether in the intellectual, moral or spiritual world, and a man who is not so equipped as to be prepared to piece our logical proof with something else of a different complexion is in no condition to be confident of anything.

As a rule, our conclusions contain a good deal more than was comprised in the premises. Logic is well enough in the text-books, is, besides, of considerable practical account, and yet if we never decided to do a thing until we were satisfied of its logical accuracy, we should leave nearly everything undone.

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In framing our convictions we make some use of reason, but either because the reasoning faculty is weak in us, or still more because the situation is such with us that our convictions do not have to be altogether reasoned out, the conclusions at which we arrive are usually a great deal sounder than can be logically accounted for. There is some reason about us and a good deal of something else—has to be. Otherwise, whether individually or collectively, we should never get anywhere.

We trust people without being more than about half certain that it is safe to trust them, and usually discover in the end that we made no mistake in trusting them. We go aboard an express-train without having one syllable of information about the engineer, the engine, the track of the railroad, and nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of a thousand, and a good deal more, a ticket to Chicago will take us to Chicago. In the same way we talk confidently about the sun, but should make awkward work trying to prove that there is one—seeing that the little ethereal pulse-beat knocking just at the window of our own eye is the only direct information that we have of it.

The heroism that is in our conclusions is something tremendous, and we talk about all these matters as tho we were perfectly at home with and had intellectually penetrated to the heart of them. It is interesting, and[118] not only interesting but quite suggestive, the very slight degree to which ordinarily our confidence is discouraged by the small amount of distinct fact that we are able to adduce in justification of our confidence; how brave the steps are that we take upon ground that has never been accurately explored and of which, therefore, only the roughest outline map has been prepared. But at the same time how likely we are to find our way through and arrive safely at the terminal.

Such illustrations are sufficient to indicate that this faculty that we have of believing where we are not able perfectly to see is a respectable faculty, a faculty that we are all showing our respect for by the constancy with which we make use of it in all our ordinary modes of thought and usual methods of action.

So that when we talk about religious faith—faith in religious things, and in events of Christian history, we are dealing with an inner impulse that we depend upon every day, the only difference being a difference as to the field in which that impulse works; even as celestial gravity is the same as terrestrial gravity, only in the one case working among the stars, and in the other operating down here on the ground.

Now this faculty that in common affairs we call belief and in religious ones faith, is quite a distinct thing from a disposition to walk in the dark when there is no light. Faith[119] is not credulity. A fool can be credulous and certainly will be, but faith requires for its rooting and growth soil that is deep and strong. The men large enough to be great thinkers and immense workers were they whom the writer of the Hebrew letter describes as prophets of faith. There is a dignity and authority about the faith faculty poorly appreciated by people who give it a degraded position in the scale of human powers: the faculty of finding light enough to walk by when the light is only a twilight with no distinct sunbeams in reach to make the path brilliant.

If faith were simply a process of assumption, a matter of easily and perhaps shiftlessly taking things for granted, then the smaller a man's soul the greater would be the likelihood of the abundance of his faith. But that is not the case. The men of which Scripture history especially predicates faith are the intellectual and moral giants of history, the men who were virile and strongly chivalrous enough to make long excursions into the region of truth and to move out in a large and telling way upon the field of action. Credulousness will grow and blossom with its roots hidden only in dry sand, but it takes something quite different from a human sand-lot to propagate the sort of quality and the modes of thought and activity celebrated in the eleventh of Hebrews.

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All men or women who have shown themselves able to be anything or do anything in the world have owed this competence to the fact that they have felt the presence of objects that were too remote from the eye to be distinctly seen, too remote from the mind to be distinctly known. Their field of clear vision has been invariably girt about with an encompassing zone so dense as to be almost impenetrable, but too obvious to remain invisible. It is with them a faltering perception of what is almost altogether out of sight. It is what St. Paul expresses when he says of faith that, "it is the evidence of things not seen." It is that captivating apprehension of regions lying beyond the scope of definite vision that creates a sense of no end of great possibilities and so breaks down the obstinacy of antecedent objection.

This mysterious discernment that constitutes the genius of faith we see delicately illustrated even in the play of the bodily eye. However transparent the material atmosphere immediately about us, as the eye reaches forth into the distance the outlines become more and more obscure until the vision loses itself in the immensity of the prospect that it can only feel and scarcely distinguish. But even that makes the universe grow great before us as the little world we know is evidenced to be fringed with the bewitching margin of a world that is hardly in view.

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When, for instance, we look up into the sky on a starry night we are delighted, of course, by the stellar spots of distinct brightness, but after all, the charm unspeakable and almost crushing, of such a sky, is not the stars that we can distinctly see, but those whose edges are softened down into tantalizing obscurity, bits of nebulous uncertainty that leave us almost undecided whether they belong to the world of things visible or to the realm invisible; so that our sense of them becomes nearly as much a sense of the unseen as of the seen. And in the presence of celestial scenery in such manner stimulating to the mind and heart, any declaration in regard to the astronomic world, even fairly authenticated by competent authorities, would secure from us not only willing but eager acceptance.

There pertains thus to the eye a kind of advance-guard of discovery that gives us a feeling of the unknown wonders that are away in the corner of the sky, quite before the eye is able to take strong visual hold upon them. And, as I say, it makes the universe larger and richer, and not only that, it lays out for us a sort of shadowy avenue along which the eye is encouraged to let its vision run out on experimental and adventurous trips with at least some prospect of being able to return from such excursions laden with more or less of the products of discovery. To people who sometimes lift their eyes above the level of[122] the ground, such evasive hints as distant things give of themselves are very provocative; they tend to make the eye alert, to tax it to its utmost endeavor, to fill it with inquiry, and an interrogation is always the outrider of discovery.

And that is the way always that things of whatever kind become known to us, by standing as closely as ever we can to the edge of the known and then feeling our way—not seeing our way, but feeling our way—as far as we can over the edge of the known out into the vast space where, in almost, not quite, utter indistinctness, hovers the unknown. That was the process by which Columbus discovered America. He discovered it by sailing along the line of his presentiment. He reasoned toward it as far as he could and then supplemented the insufficiency of reason by a generous contribution of faith; possest, that is, of so long a reach of thought and so roomy a conception of God's world that there seemed space in it for another Europe, which ought somehow to be there in order to fill that space.

And the way in which the discoverer who sailed from Palos discovered a new geographical world is the way in which we have to approach the suspected contents of the religious world, suspected events of Christian history. The sense, the mastering sense, of outlying spiritual territory too obscure for us to say a great many definite things about it, but too[123] certainly there to be denied or ignored, is a necessary prerequisite to all successful use or observance of such a day as we are celebrating. A man whose thoughts stop short at the point where those thoughts cease to move in perfect light can celebrate Easter as a formality, but never as a reality.

The resurrection of Christ does not admit of absolute demonstration. Undoubtedly the testimony in favor of the event is strong. It was evidently unquestioned by a great number of intelligent people living at the time of its reputed occurrence. So much force as all such evidence has is to be estimated at its logical value. So Columbus estimated at its logical value all the indications that were afforded him of the existence of another continent. To most people of that generation those evidences appeared insufficient to warrant fitting out vessels of exploration, and it was long before funds requisite for the purpose could be secured. And the magnificent result and discovery was due to the fact that in Columbus' mind there was room for America and in the minds of other people there was not. His thought, or whatever you may call it, had in it a vitality that enabled it to move beyond the point where it could give a satisfactory account of itself. He could see beyond the point where he could see distinctly. The scheme of things as it lay drafted in his mind was drawn on a scale large enough to comprehend[124] everything that was already definitely known, everything that was indefinitely surmised, and a good deal beside that neither he nor any one else had ever conjectured.

Now what I want you to realize is that that is the kind of mind that does the world's work, the kind of mind that arrives, that kind of mind that is competent to come up close to the frontier, to venture across the frontier, to do some outside exploring, to bring back some of the products grown on ground newly explored, and thus practically to push forward the frontier and to add another lot of land to the world's geography, whether it be the geography of country, of thought, or of religious experience. And nothing more is asked for here than is demanded along every other line of life and expansion. It is only the men and women whose minds are sufficiently sensitive to the unknown to be able to take in more than has yet been definitely found that are ever the means by which anything new ever is found. That is true in the departments of astronomy and geology and in every other field of whatever sort in which thought has ever done any work. A presentiment of the undiscovered is the regular prelude to discovery, and to the extent that men, whether from intellectual contractedness or from moral aversion, have not that presentiment they will be unable to allow even the historic proofs of Christian events the[125] argumentative force that belongs to such proofs.

The convincing power of an argument depends quite as much upon the size, fiber, quality of the man addrest as upon the logical compulsions or the argument used in addressing him, which is to say that we are responsible for what we believe as well as for what we know, and that the machinery of faith operates inside the domain of ethics.

For example: standing on the basis of the harmonious testimony rendered by the intelligent authors of the gospel narratives, no one would dispute the truth of those narratives were there not in them references to events which lie out of line with things the scheme of which we happen to be familiar with, and which in the unblushing conceit of our unsophisticated humanness we dare to presume to be the whole of things; which means that people do not want the world to be any larger or any different from what they have already decided to have it; nor that any events should occur in it or occur anywhere but what are slow-paced enough to keep step with any most common thing that moves in our workaday life.

Thomas would not believe in the risen Christ because risen Christs were not a part of the universe as he had plotted it. The other disciples did believe in a risen Christ because they were large enough to be able to think[126] farther than they could think clearly, and because they were able to push the chariot of their convictions over a road that had not been logically paved. And undoubtedly when Thomas did finally accept Christ it was not because he had reasoned Him out in his mind nor fingered Him out by pressing his hands into the print of the nails, but because of having had divinely wrought in him a capacity for larger persuasions than his mental and moral contractedness had been hitherto able to accommodate.

And that is still the way in which we have to acquire the art of great believing, the art of immense assurance of faith and the triumphant joy that is bound to go along with it. A world that is only large enough to contain our petty employments, or to contain our small pleasures and paltry lusts, is not a world big enough to have room in it for a human Son of God or for His immortal escape from the tomb. We might convert our Church into an Easter conservatory and crowd floor, galleries and chancel with a chorus of as many angels as heralded the advent, and all of this be a splendid tribute to the Lord of the resurrection and a splendid memorial of the great Easter event, but the prime point of all is for us each inwardly to grow to the proportions of so august an event, to be inwardly equal to the cordial and settled entertainment of so thrilling a thought, to have created in us such[127] a sense of vast spiritual territory margining this small world of commonplace, as will give abundant space for transactions conducted on so large a scale as that of the marvelous birth, the death in whose presence the sun was darkened, and the great rising from the grave that broke down the walls between this world and the other, converted the coffin into a cradle of life eternal, and swung wide the doors of paradise.

It is our prayer that the wide view opened before us by this memorial season may stimulate us to higher levels of thought; create for us a world too large to be filled with the small and passing interests and commonplace incidents of life; destroy for us in that way the obstinacy of antecedent objection; mental reluctance and moral antagonism be dissolved in the warm light of the larger prospect, till we become able to recognize Jesus in the gracious face and scarred figure; and in the cordiality of complete conviction to echo the words of the persuaded Thomas, "My Lord and my God."

**÷**09-08 PATTON

GLORIFICATION THROUGH DEATH

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Francis Landey Patton, Presbyterian minister and educator, was born in Bermuda in 1843. He studied at Knox College, Toronto, and Princeton Seminary, New Jersey. From 1865 to 1871 he held many pastorates, but in the latter year his work as a controversialist and educator began. He took a prominent part in the ecclesiastical trials of Prof. David Swing and Dr. C. A. Briggs, and was elected to succeed Dr. McCosh in the presidency of Princeton in 1888, but resigned in 1902, after which he was elected president of the Princeton Seminary. He is a deep thinker and dialectician, and a vigorous speaker on the theological subjects in which he is interested.

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PATTON

Born in 1843

GLORIFICATION THROUGH DEATH[4]

Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.—Joh 12:24.

We all know that it was necessary for Christ to die, and that his path lay through the valley of the shadow of death. I do not take this text to illustrate this idea, but to concern myself with a line of illustration which has no reference to His death, and so will avoid the suggestion. We have here, in the first place, the enunciation of a principle which goes far toward unifying the moral and spiritual history of our world. Glorification through death is a principle that may be seen in various spheres of observation, and in the relation of the individual to the race. For instance, a man of ordinary education has a family of boys and girls. He has reached that time of life, the sure sign of middle age, perhaps a little beyond, when he ceased to raise the question that he has been raising about himself, How shall I make the best of myself? and he begins to raise the question-the only question he thinks of after[132] that—What shall I do for them? "Well," he says, "I had but a limited education; they shall have the best the country can give or they are willing to take. I had but few opportunities; there is no lack of opportunity for them. I had many a rough encounter when I first set out in the world; they shall have the advantage of my accumulated earnings to set them up in life."

Sure enough, the boys grow up and fill positions that the father and mother did not fill, and could not fill; and by and by they all come home again, and as they look on the dead man's face they say, or rather they seem to say, "Father did well by us," and they may very well say it. His hand had wrought for them; his head had thought for them; his heart had beat for them; this is the long result—the father lies in his coffin, and the children go their several ways in life, and repeat in their own experience the story; and so "the individual withers, and the world is more and more."

And this principle of glorification through death is illustrated further in the fact that, when the lower forms of life or civilization disappear to make room for the higher, the one dominating phase of the doctrine of evolution is the seeming unity with which it invests everything; because, imagine it true, and there at once you see how moving are the poet's words:

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I held it truth, with him who sings  
To one clear harp in divers tones,  
That men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.

This is the story not of the potential, but of the actual. And what is true of the material world is true of the spiritual world. The history of the spiritual world is a history of displacement. You may account for it by the love of glory or by the sentiment of revenge, but we know that God's glory is the final cause, and it is all explicable upon the great scale of divine providence. We all understand that there is a definite relationship between our present and the past, and that we to-day are the heirs of all that civilization that has gone. Our acts are the result of all that has gone before. They were the seed and we are the harvest: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The mass of this early civilization survives in the civilization of to-day. Where do you go to find the origin of the great principle of civil liberty? Where do you go, but to that crowd of sturdy peoples who lived along the banks of the Rhine, and whom Tacitus describes, or to those sturdy barons at Runnymede who extorted the Magna Charta from King John? It is just as true in the sphere of science or philosophy. It is a far cry back to Thales of Miletus, and yet our own boasted century, the[134] nineteenth, and this which may have boasts of its own, has a close relation to the civilization of the very far past. Our astronomy is different from their astrology, and our chemistry is different from their alchemy, but they are closely associated. We see further than they did sometimes, just because we are as pigmies borne on the shoulders of a giant.

This principle of glorification through death is illustrated once more in that a new and expanded form of life is the fruit of death. Take the railroad at the proper season of the year, and see the corn standing as a dazzling glory in the fertile fields of the golden West. Mark how towers herald the approach to the towns and cities, and ask what they stand there for? These are the nation's treasure-houses. These are the storehouses of the world. This is the annual coronation of nature, and simply so many illustrations of the text: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."

Change the illustration and borrow one from the humbler phases of the animal world, like the caterpillar, which eats up the floor of the leaf on which it creeps, until, by and by, as it begins to realize that its life is nearly done, it sets its house in order, turns undertaker, weaves itself a silken shroud, and awaits the dawning of its resurrection day, and soars away a bright-winged butterfly—a beautiful[135] illustration of the text: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." That is the story of our life. We are born, and we grow; we go on our way, renew our infancy with impaired faculties, and then we pass away. Life is a battle, and we win our greatest victory when we lie down on that battle-field and die. Life is a race, and the goal is at the grave. Life is a journey, and the path that we take lies straight for the valley of the shadow of death. The valley is dark, but beyond the darkness and across the river I see the lights of the celestial city; I get an echo of the angels' song, and the glimpse that I get tells me that it is worth all it costs to die.

The principle of glorification through death is illustrated in the death of Judaism. Judaism was a divinely founded institution—a theological seminary. The purpose of it was to disseminate the knowledge of the one living and true God. With the approach of the pagan world and Christianity it gathered up its energies to give birth to Jesus of Nazareth. That is what it existed for; and in the throes of the birth-struggle Judaism died. Let us not speak reproachfully of Judaism, for the glory of Christianity is the glory of Judaism with an added glory: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth fruit."

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Once more (for this is our Lord's own illustration concerning Himself), the principle of glorification through death is illustrated in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We see Jesus made a little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and honor. He suffered that we might conquer. He drank the bitter cup in order that we might taste something of the sweetness of the joys of His Father's house. He has settled the question of His own place, and of our place too, in the scale of being. The question whether the finite and the infinite can ever come together has been solved in the doctrine of the incarnation. We do not want any more to sing the old song, which never amounted to very much in the way of music or poetry:

I want to be an angel,  
And with the angels stand,  
A crown upon my forehead,  
A harp within my hand.

We do not want anything of the sort. Angels never rise so high nor stand so low as man. They know nothing about sin or repentance or salvation through Jesus Christ, and are not worthy to sit with Him who judges the ten tribes of Israel.

This text not only fastens on us this principle of glorification through death, but, in the second place, it gives us a twofold vindication of death, the first being the perils of[137] survivorship, and the second being the promise of grace. Death is one of the most philosophical things in the world; and if you put yourselves in the right attitude toward it, it is one of the kindest agencies in nature. There is such a thing as a time to die; for two reasons at least.

One is the solitude of old age—the peril of survivorship—"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone"; it abideth alone. You can imagine a person very old. His eyes have grown dim. Generations have grown old and died, but he still lives on. He is too old to take kindly to the new ideas, or to see much reason for the changes taking place. He is too old to have an interest in the present, too old to have any friends, and at last he lives, and lives, and lives, until he seems like a monumental intrusion into the present, an object that people stop to look at when they are in a reflective mood and wish to mark the flight of years. Who would not court a new-made grave rather than risk the perils of survivorship?

Then there is the promise of grace. Our blest Lord hallowed the grave by His presence, and left it upon the morning of the third day. The promise of Christ gives us a connection with His own glorious resurrection; and planted with Him in His death, we shall be with Him in His glory. And so the message comes to you and to me: Be not afraid.[138] Do not hesitate to go down, even into the grave. Our Lord has not made it unnecessary for us to die, but He has robbed death of its terrors. He has made easy the approach; He has festooned the entrance with flowers; and we ride through its portals, singing as we go, "O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" and we turn to discover that the door of death is the gate of heaven.

Again, this text teaches one other truth. As we read it, we can not very well help being imprest with the idea that there is embodied in it the thought that there are two contrasted modes of being: a fruitless conservation and a prolific decay. The seed corn is very tenacious of life, and there is a story that grains taken from an Egyptian mummy have been planted and have germinated in English gardens. I believe that this is not so, but the tenacity of wheat in respect to life is true. It abideth; but it abideth alone. Let it reproduce itself, and by and by there will be enough of harvest to feed a nation. We must make a choice between a fruitless conservation and prolific decay. And this choice comes to us in so many ways. We see it in the sphere of prejudice. Prejudice is often, but it is not always, right. It is very often misplaced or perpetuated beyond a time when it does any good. (You never find a man cherishing a prejudice, because he says he is "standing up for a principle.") It was good enough when[139] he started; it served its purpose at first; but it has outlived its usefulness, and is now just a prejudice. A good many years ago, at the foundation of the London Missionary Society, a speaker said, "We stand to-day at the funeral of bigotry." There is not a word of objection to that, except that these obsequies have been so unduly protracted. God send the day when men shall recognize the lineament of Jesus Christ in one another's face, whether they be Presbyterians, Episcopalians, or what! And this principle, this choice, whether there shall be a conservation that is fruitless, or an expenditure that is generous, meets us everywhere. It meets us in our relationship to the past. There is a sort of medievalism cherished and fostered by some people with an odor of sanctity—they love things which are old. And there is a vandalism that destroys the old, and worships the new, because it is new. My friends, they are both wrong. Let us look at our inheritance of the past in proof of this. Hold fast to that which is true, and do not hold anything that is not. Read the great formularies of worship with the critical light of modern thought, and hold on to that which is true. The Jerusalem Chamber is not holy ground, the Westminster divines were not inspired. If they said what was true, it is because of the truth of what they say that we hold on to it, not because they said it. And what is true in[140] regard to these formulas holds true in reference to our own individual life. But there are times, I suppose, when people who live in a city as busy as this is, and where the engagements of the week run over into two weeks, and where every hour has its own employment, there are times, I suppose, even here that people have leisure to sit still while the fire burns; and in these choice stolen hours, I suppose, figures of long ago come out upon the canvas, and stand there in bold relief; and we say that they were happy days. Imagine that dear old room, and those pictures of long ago coming before us, when our imagination was all aglow. I can imagine that the door-bell might ring, and that one of those that we have not seen for fifty years was announced. I can imagine the conversation that would ensue. We would talk excitedly for twenty minutes, and then the conversation would flag, and before the hour was up we would be completely disillusioned, and would see that our paths had diverged. All that sort of thing was good in its way and time, but it is not the time for it now. Of course, we must have a foundation for the house. Still we do not live in the cellar. We live upstairs in the sunlight, and experience says we do well. These past incidents of life are just the foundation, and it is the superstructure after all that you build upon; and unless a man is willing to part with the past, he is going to[141] make a mistake. Unless we learn to do better to-day the things that we did yesterday, and paint a better picture to-day, and write a better poem than the last, and are more proficient in our arts, we are just as good as dead. We are eternally improving and moving on. There is a conservation, stedfast and still; and there is a forgetfulness and a generous prodigality of past attainments that is prolific of vast results. There is your health. What are you going to do with it? You had better wear out than rust out any day. You can see people who make themselves obnoxious to you by their everlasting attitude of complaint. There is something better for a man to do than to take care of his health, and he will probably live longer if he does not. Is a man who has an intellect expected to have nothing better to do than to play nurse to his body that he has to summer in the North, and winter in the South, and to clothe with purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day, and give it now and then a trip to Europe—a body that is bound to die? There is your life. What are you going to do with it? There is your money. What are you going to do with it? Why, invest it, and be careful about your security, and don't be careful about the interest, and keep on investing and reinvesting, until it will take the figures of astronomy to count it. As fortunes go now, astronomy is not in it. Invest it, and[142] then what do you do? There are so many things that some people might do and do do, that so many more people might do. They might perpetuate their names by doing something for the Church, for education, and for the world, and its moral, spiritual, and intellectual advance. God be praised for this! You, who have cast your bread of benevolence upon the waters of Christian philanthropy hope that you will receive it after many days. This world's history shows that our forests have not been cleared by the brawn of men who lived in comfortable homes. How have our liberties been secured? By the blood of men who counted no service too great. Can we do that? William of Orange might have lived a long life, but he stript himself of land and fortune, and planted himself in deadly opposition to Alva, and died a monument to the fall of Spanish tyranny. Yes, my friends, in humbler spheres it is your privilege, and mine, in the house of this tabernacle, to choose between the alternative of a conservation which is fruitless and an expenditure that is substantial, generous, and prodigal. It is a choice for us to make. Wrap yourselves in your mummy folds, and live for yourself or, in generous forgetfulness, live for God and country, and for fellow men while you live, and when the hour comes, without fear, if need be, drop into the ground and die.

Help us, O Lord, to endure as good soldiers[143] of Jesus Christ. Help us to do our duty so completely that every day we do better and become better and be with Christ. Help us that we may be ready for death, and in that last encounter may be as brave as in all the other encounters of our lives. Give us this faith to the end. For Christ's sake. Amen.

**÷**09-09 SCOTT HOLLAND

THE STORY OF A DISCIPLE'S FAITH

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Henry Scott Holland, English clergyman and author, was born at Wimbledon in 1847. He was educated at Eton and Oxford, at which university he was distinguished for learning and character. In 1844 he was appointed Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral, London. He has published "Logic and Life"; "Creed and Character," and other volumes.

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SCOTT HOLLAND

Born in 1847

THE STORY OF A DISCIPLE'S FAITH

Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed.—Joh 20:8.

John, the beloved disciple, has given his witness, has made his confession. What he once touched, and tasted, and handled, that he has declared unto us. It was the shining, the epiphany of God the Father which he and the twelve had discovered, tabernacled close at their side in the body of Christ. "We saw his glory, the glory as of God himself." So he pronounces. Yet still his listeners sit on about his feet. They hear great words, but these words are the end of a long and anxious meditation. The apostle is giving us, is giving them his completed conclusions—yes, and they have accepted the conclusions; they hold them fast. But it is not enough to know what they ought to believe, tho that is much—they must also know the process by which the conclusion is to be reached. They must reproduce in themselves the living story of its formation. They[148] must be conscious of its stages, its degrees, and its growth. They can not surely be as reapers entering into the labors of others who went forth weeping with good seed. They must feel their own faith grow, first the blade, then the ear, and so at last, in ample richness, the full corn in the ear; and therefore they went on wondering. "Let us hear it all," they say; "tell us of that day when first it came to you that something wonderful was there. Tell us how you slowly learned the great mystery; and then tell us when and how it was that the full truth broke from your heart and from your lips. Tell us this, that so we, too, may say with you and with ten thousand times ten thousand: 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.'"

This is the question that St. John sets himself to answer; and you can see that it is so by this, that he begins his gospel, not with our Lord's own beginning, the baptism by John, but with the day on which the disciples began to believe on Him; and he ends it, not with our Lord's own ending, His ascension, but with the first completed confession of Jesus by an apostle—the confession of Thomas. This achieved, his gospel is done; he has nothing to add but one scene that to him was full of tender personal interest.

The Fourth Gospel tells us how the apostolic faith was built and established. Let us carefully turn to it, for it is a revelation of the[149] apostle's own heart. The old man himself is bidding us draw near and taste of his own experiences. He unlocks his soul to us that he may help us to mount up into his assured peace, so calm, so sure, so strong. He sits there murmuring always his: "Come, Lord Jesus, even come"; and round about him, enthroned in the majesty of age, is that mysterious silence in which the voices of the Spirit and the Bride say: "Come." And yet he can turn from that upward vision and bend his eyes back on us—on us, so perplexed, and troubled, and hesitating, and fearful, and bewildered. He can yearn to make us fellowship in his joy. "Little children, it is the last hour. Even now are there many antichrists. And now, my little children, abide in him. My little children, let no man lead you astray, for this is the true God and eternal life; and therefore, O my children, keep yourselves from idols." So tender, so beseeching, the fatherly love! And in the name of that love he sets himself to tell the story of his own conversion, how he had begun. He can recall every tiny detail of that first critical hour. It began on the day when John the Baptist cast off the hopes that were so eagerly bent upon him; for he it was, the Baptist, and not the Lord Jesus, who first woke in their hearts that spiritual movement which became Christianity. He roused first the cry of the new faith, and passionately they[150] had given him their souls—they and all who, seeing John, mused in their hearts what would be the Christ. Even the Pharisees of Jerusalem felt the excitement and shared the hope; and it was to their deputation that the Baptist made his great repudiation: "No; I am not it, not the Christ; no, nor Elias, nor a prophet. I am nought but a flying cry in the wilderness, a cry that floats by on the wind and perishes. Not I, but another—another who comes after me; yea, who is now standing among you, even tho you know it not." So he confest. He denied not, but confest; so brave a heart he had! All those hearts were at his service, a world of devotion all lying there at his feet; but he would not be tempted. He knew his own limits; he would have none of it. He confest, and denied not: "I am not the Christ."

And then came the great moment. It was the very next day after the great confession—so exact is the apostle's memory. The very day after, John saw Jesus coming toward him, and a wonderful word broke from him: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." Taketh away the sin! Oh, the peace of such a promise to those who had been washed in Jordan, and had repented, and had confest, and yet found their burden of sin as miserable, as intolerable as ever! The words haunted them; and when, the day following, John uttered them again,[151] two of them at least could not rest. Their hearts burned to know more. Who is this strange visitant—so quiet, so silent, so unobserved? He makes no sign. He says no word. He invites no attention. He does not even stop to look. He just passes by; and, lo! He is already passed—in another moment He will have gone. They must act for themselves then. They will force Him to stop and tell them the secret. So two of them that heard John speak followed Him—two of them, and John the beloved, who now tells us the story, was one of the two. And now that they followed, He, the Stranger, must turn and speak. For the first time, then, He looked upon them with that look which again and again had power to draw a soul, by one glance, out of the night of sin into the life of eternal light. He turned and saw them following, and it was then they heard His voice first speak—that voice which by its cry could raise the dead. "Whom seek ye?" That was all. And they—they hardly knew what to say—only they must see Him, must go with Him; and they stammered out: "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" And He said: "Come and see."

Come and see! It was all as quiet and natural and easy as any ordinary interview. No one could have seen anything unusual. Just a few words of salutation—just three short sentences that could be said in half a minute. And yet that sealed their lot for[152] eternity. That was the moment of decision. "Come and see." They went and saw. So intense is the apostle's memory of that blest hour that he can never forget the very hour of the day. It was just ten o'clock when he got to the house. They stopt there with Him that night; and in the morning they were sure of what they had found—so sure that neither of them could rest until he had hurried off with the good news to find and bring his brother. Andrew found his brother before John could find James; or else it was that both went at once to seek for Peter, and Andrew found him first. Anyhow, when Peter was found, both were prepared to assert, "We have found the Christ." And so they brought the great chief to his Master; and in a moment the Master knew what He had won in that loyal, loving soul, and He turned those deep eyes upon him, and named him by his new name. "Thou art Simon, the son of Jonas; thou shalt be called Cephas."

So it all began. The very next day after that the Master Himself added one other to the number—Philip a friend of Peter's and Andrew's—and Philip brought Nathaniel; and these were the little band whom the Master took with Him from Jordan to Cana—the seed of that great Church which now reigns from Babylon to Rome.

"And what next"—so the listeners ask—"what was the next step made?" Three days[153] later, at Cana, for the first time, came that strange secret of which the apostle had spoken. The glory shone out with a sudden flash from the deeps within Him; a word of power leapt out—very quietly. Very few saw or knew it. But as the few saw there the white water redden into wine, they knew, and felt the wonder of that change which had passed over their own being. That word of power was at its work within them, transforming them from out of sickly impotence into splendid energy. They saw now what it was that had happened when the Lord spoke, that it would have the same power whether He spoke to matter or spirit, to body or soul; whether He said: "Thy sins be forgiven thee," or "Rise up and walk." As water into wine, so the old into the new.

So the light flashed; so the secret made its first disclosure. It had vanished again, for His hour had not yet come; but they had seen it, and this is John's enduring record, remembered by us this day, that there first at Cana Jesus manifested His glory, and there His disciples first believed in Him.

And what next did they learn? It was at Jerusalem, the Passover feast. The Master made His first entry and startled them, for He who was so quiet and reserved burned with a sudden fury as He looked upon the temple of Jehovah. Very, very rarely did He show Himself excited or disturbed; but then He[154] was terrible. He bound together a scourge of small cords. He drove the cattle in front of Him; He dashed over the money-changers' tables. And John can recall still the look of the coins as they poured down upon the pavement. And they, the disciples, wondered at the violence of the emotion, until a word from an old Psalm came into their minds, and they remembered how it was written that the zeal of the Lord's house should be in a prophet's heart like a devouring fire.

At that time, too, the Lord Himself gave a sign and spoke a word, which at the time the disciples could make nothing of, and forgot. It was about the temple being destroyed and raised again in three days. They forgot it; but long after, when He had risen from the dead, the old words came back to them: "After three days I shall raise it again"; and they remembered then how He had spoken them two years before His death, and as they remembered, they believed....

And how can we stop to follow the apostle through all the wonderful story? Yet just one thing we can not pass over—the awful hours of crisis in Galilee. It came just when all looked brightest, when the people were rushing round Him, and would have made Him a king. They would have gone with Him to the death. But He—He threw it all away to the winds. He hurried off the twelve in a body across the lake, for they had caught[155] the crowd's enthusiasm, and could not be calmed. He scattered the crowd; He fled back Himself alone into the dark hills, and on the morrow at Capernaum, He broke it all down by a word which staggered the rising belief. It was a saying about His body and His blood—a very hard saying. Not only were the Pharisees furious, but His own followers were dumfounded. They could not bear it, could not believe. They fell away, and walked no more with Jesus.

"And you, O disciple dearly loved, what of you and your brethren?" "Most terrible, most bitter that hour, my children," the old man answers. "We walked trembling, quaking, behind him. We were cowed and disheartened, until he the Master felt himself the chill of our dismay, and He turned to us and challenged our failing faith. 'Will ye also go away?' Oh, the shame of being open to a charge of such meanness! The very tenderness of the question and of the reproach recalled and recovered us. We knew nothing. We could explain nothing. Every clue was lost. The darkness was thickening over our heads, our hearts were failing for fear, our souls were sinking in the great water-floods, earth was falling from us; struggle, and anguish, and doubt shook us with wild alarm; and yet, even so as he turned his eyes upon us, the old unconquerable faith woke, and stirred, and quickened; and with a rush, as[156] of a mighty wind, it lifted us; and out from Peter's lips broke the words which saved us—the words which sealed us to Him forever: 'Will we go away? Nay, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life!' So we spoke with burning hearts, and yet through and through us still those strange eyes of His pierced. Deep below all our emotion He penetrated. Quite calmly He weighed its worth; and in one of us even then He detected a flaw which would widen and worsen. One of us, He knew, hung back from echoing St. Peter's confession. One spirit there was there that could not throw off its dismay, one dark spirit in whom the hard saying was the seed of bitter and poisonous fruit. 'Have I not chosen you twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?' He spoke of Judas Iscariot, who should betray him."

So they followed and clung, the trembling band; clung through all the narrowing days in which the Jewish enmity hardened itself into the hate of hates; clung even tho their souls fell away from the rapture of St. Peter to the desperate wail of Thomas: "Let us go with him that at least we may die with him"; clung even through the terrors of that last evening, when they sat shaking with the very shudder of death, and the soul of the Master Himself was trouble-tossed, and there was the scent of treachery in the air, and the end was very near, and He spake dim, dark words[157] that they could not follow—only they knew one thing, that He was to be taken from them, and they sat shrouded in a mighty sorrow such as no assurances even of His could lessen or lift. One moment there was indeed even then in which they seemed suddenly to lay hold of His meaning. "Now we believe," they cried. "Now we are sure that thou camest forth from God." So they cried, and yet He met their professions with a sorrowful hesitation. "Do ye now believe? Yea; the hour is all but come when ye will all flee and leave me alone." How sad and cowed they felt at the rebuff! Were they then never to rise into the joy of clear and entire belief? Yes; it came at last. Blest assurance! Let John tell how it was reached by him.

Two points he singles out for himself as marking epochs of his own conviction, and in them both we are let inside the workings of his innermost mind. And how curious, yet how natural is the working! For in every hour of agony the mind becomes strangely and fearfully alert to very little things. It is sensitive to sudden and ineffaceable impressions. It is touched into the swiftest and subtlest activity by the tiniest touches of detail. Often in the supreme moment of a dark tragedy, the fibers of the imagination seem to close round some minute incident, like the ticking of a clock in the hush of a death-chamber; and never throughout the long years[158] that follow can it detach that tiny incident from its memory of the black hour. And so with St. John. He stood below the bitter cross, and he saw the nails beaten through the hands and feet, and he heard the last loud cry, and yet still his despair hung heavy as death upon his soul, until, just at the touch of the soldier's spear, there broke from the dead side a little jet of blood and water. What was it that he saw and felt? What was it that so startled him? Why could that little jet of blood and water never pass out of his sight? Why should it haunt him sixty years after, as still his heart wonders over the mysterious witness of the water and the blood? We can not tell. Perhaps he could never tell. Only his spirit woke with a start. Only a strange tremor shook him, and somehow just then, just at that little pivot moment, he must break off all his story, to declare with abrupt and quivering emphasis: "This is the disciple that wrote these things. He it is who saw the water and the blood, and he knows that his record is true."

And once again, in the haste of the resurrection morning, what was the moment and what was the scene which turned his despair into belief? It was the moment at which he stooped down and saw within the empty tomb the folded napkin and the linen clothes. What did he notice? Why, that the napkin that had been round the Master's head was not lying[159] with the linen clothes, but was rolled up in a place by itself. A tiny, tiny thing! Yet somehow it was that which he saw and never forgot. It was that which he could never omit from his story of the resurrection—the rolled-up napkin lying apart from the linen clothes. Was it the sudden sense that struck him of order and seemliness as of a thing premeditated, intended? Was it the reaction of detecting the quiet tokens of deliberate purpose there, where all had seemed to him a very chaos of confusion? Who can say? Only just then a key was somewhat turned and a bolt shot back somewhere within his breast, and a secret flashed in upon him, and a thrill of insight rushed over him, and his blindness fell off as it had been scales, and a quiver of hope shot up like a flame, and a new light broke over him, and he passed at one bound out of death into life. "Then entered in, therefore, that other disciple which came first to the tomb, and he saw and believed."

My brethren, where do you stand? How far have you come in this pathway of faith? Are you yet at the beginning, looking wistfully, with hungry eyes, after a hundred gallant human heroes who point you this way and that? Are you musing in your heart which of them may be your guide and master, which is the Christ? Good, and fair, and high they may be; but they must all confess it, they can not deny it—they are not the[160] Christ. And all of them who are honest will earnestly assure you, "It is not I, but another." Oh, and that other even now standeth among you, tho you know Him not yet; and there is a voice gone out upon Him which has gone out upon none other ever born of woman, with this witness, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

Consider it. What an assurance! Who is there that has ever been brave enough to accept such a salutation without a whisper of protest, without a shadow of a scruple? Who is this that dares to stand up before the entire mass of His fellows and say, "Come, all who are weary and heavy-laden—come, all who are burdened sorely with sin—come all to me—I will give you rest?" Who is He? Look at Him. He is passing even now before you. Follow Him. He is very quiet, and still, and silent; but follow Him. He will turn at last and speak, and invite you—invite you a little further. "Master, where dwellest thou?" "Come and see."

O Jesus, Lord and lover of souls, there are many of us laden with sickness and sin, so many that are sad with doubt and fear, that are asking: "Master, where dwellest thou?" Oh, let them even come home with Thee and see. Go and see. Abide with Him, talk with Him. Wait upon Him. Learn His words. Take up His gospels. Read them with care,[161] with silence to yourself, with thought and prayer. Abide with Him one night at least, that you may in the morning be able to tell your fellows: "I have found the Christ." And then suddenly, now and again, a light flashes, and a glory is made manifest to you. Some touch of Divine benediction will break out of the secret silence, some sudden joy, some gift of power. It is as at Cana with you when the water ran into wine.

Yet this when it comes, remember, is not the end. It is but a pledge. You may not cling to the blessings and the gifts of faith. They flash and disappear, and you will not be surprized to find that you have yet a long road to travel—a road of disappointment, of increasing failure, of gathering pain, of enlarging doubt—doubt! why not? Doubt of the ways and the methods of God. Doubt of the path as the darkness encompasses, doubt of Christ's meaning, of His wisdom, of His readiness, of His care, of His guidance. The obscurity may even deepen as you advance along the road of faith. The storm may grow blacker and fiercer, for the higher your faith in God, the darker will be your despair at His failure to make His name good. And you will find Him fail. He will seem to come so little way in the world; He will seem to miss opportunities. It is very hard to believe in One in whom others believe less and less every day. And then it is, when all are falling away and the[162] hard sayings of theology begin to harass and repel, then it is that you must call with all your might upon the St. Peter within you that you may have the heart of fire that will feel but one thing, will feel that if the world fell into ruins, and if the power of God Himself be hidden, yet there stands the Christ still facing you with the question: "Will you go away? Will you fail as others failed me?" Will you feel then but this, just that you must send out your faith in the one passionate cry: "Lord, thou art there, and that is all. Thou hast the words of eternal life. To whom can I go? Tho all men forsake thee yet will not I; and in spite of all, I believe, and am sure that thou art the Christ, the holy one of God?" That is the faith which is felt indeed as a rock under the feet, and to such faith the love of God will make itself more and more manifest. You will so trust Him in the black night, you who can walk on knowing nothing but that Christ goes before you, you who mutually cling with the violence of an ineradicable love to Him Who has enthralled you, you will find yourselves carried on day after day, you know not how, until at last you find yourselves enclosed in some upper chamber with the Master. Yes, and there the secrets of His love are disclosed, and the mysteries of His counsels, and the hidden wonder of His victory, and the strange glory of His consolation. You will not know or understand[163] all; you will feel yourselves held in the grasp of a wisdom that reaches far and away beyond your little day. You will inquire with stammering lips as Philip and Judas, not Iscariot, and Thomas stammered in the upper chamber before you, and the answer that He gives will be but dim; and yet you will know enough to make you absolutely sure that the truth as you hold it in Jesus is the truth that holds the world in one in God, and you will be able to cry in glimpses of peculiar manifestation: "Lord, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no parable. Now I believe, and have known, and am sure that thou camest forth from God." And yet even that faith, the faith of roused feelings, may lapse again; even that moment of blessing may lose its power over you. Yes, for only when you become convinced not only of your possession of a Teacher who once came on earth from God, but more, of a Lord living on the far side of death, living in the might of a resurrection life, able to stand by you in that life-giving might as you keep there with the faithful in the upper chamber—able to feed you with His life now from that home of His beyond the grave—only then, when you so receive Him, and take of Him, and taste Him, and know yourselves quickened in Him—only so will your last doubt pass away from you, only so will the close of the crown of your faith be obtained, and you will end—as the[164] story of St. John ends—with the cry of doubting Thomas, with his last doubt scattered—the cry in which the perfected apostolic faith at last saluted its rising Master—"Jesus Christ, my Lord and my God."

**÷**09-10 STALKER

TEMPTATION

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

James Stalker, professor of Church History in the United Free Church College, Aberdeen, was born at Crieff in 1848, and was educated at the universities of Edinburgh, Halle, and Berlin. He has been an incumbent of many pastorates in Scotland, and has published "Life of Jesus Christ"; "Life of St. Paul"; "The Preacher and His Models," etc. In 1891 he delivered the Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching, at Yale, and is examiner for the degree of B.D. in Aberdeen University.

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STALKER

Born in 1848

TEMPTATION

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to men; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.—1Co 10:13.

Once, when I was going to address a gathering of young men, I asked a friend what I should speak to them about. His answer was: There is only one subject worth speaking to young men about, and that is temptation.

Of course, he did not mean this literally: he only meant to emphasize the importance of this subject. Was he not right? You remember, in the story of the Garden of Eden, where the tree which represented temptation stood? It stood in the midst of the garden—just at the point where all the walks converged, where Adam and Eve had to pass it every day. This is a parable of human life. We are out of paradise now; but the tree of temptation still stands in our life where it stood then—in the midst; where all the roads meet; where we must pass it every day—and every man's weal[168] of wo depends on the attitude to it which he takes up.

There are six attitudes in any of which we may stand to temptation—first, we may be tempted; second, we may have fallen before temptation; third, we may be tempting others; or, fourth, we may be successfully resisting temptation; fifth, we may have outlived temptation; sixth, we may be assisting others to overcome their temptations.

As I should like these six attitudes to be remembered, let me give them names; and these I will borrow from the politics of the continent of Europe. Any of you who may glance at times into the politics of France or Germany will be aware that in their legislative assemblies there prevails a more minute division into parties, or groups as they are called, than we are accustomed to. In your politics you are content with two great historical parties—Republicans and Democrats. But, as I have said, in Continental parliaments the members are divided into groups. You read of the group of the left center, the group of the left, and the group of the extreme left; the group of the right center, the group of the right, and the group of the extreme right. I do not pretend that even these are all; but I will take these as the six names I need for characterizing the six attitudes in which men may stand to temptation.

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On the left there are three—first, the group of the left center, by which I mean those who are being tempted; second, the group of the left, by which are meant those who have fallen before temptation; third, the group of the extreme left, or those who are tempters of others. And on the right there are three groups—the fourth group, that of the right center, containing those who are successfully resisting temptation; the fifth, the group of the right, or those who have outlived their temptations; and the sixth and last, the group of the extreme right, that is to say, those who are helping others to resist their temptations.

Let me run rapidly over these six groups.

I. The group of the left center or those who are being tempted.

With this one I begin; because we have all been in it. Whether we have been in the other groups or not, we have all been in this one: we have all been tempted. One of the first things we were told when we were quite young was that we should be tempted—that we should have to beware of evil companions; and there is not one of us in whose case this prediction has not come true.

There is, indeed, no greater mystery of providence than to understand the unequal proportions in which temptation is distributed. Some are comparatively little tempted; others are thrown into a fiery furnace of it seven times heated. There are in the world[170] sheltered situations in which a man may be compared to a ship in the harbor, where the waves may sometimes heave a little, but a real storm never comes; there are other men like the vessel which has to sail the high seas and face the full force of the tempest. Many here must know well what this means. Perhaps you know it so well that you feel inclined to say to me, Preacher, you know nothing about it; if you had to live where we live—if you had to associate with the companions whom we have to work with, and hear the kind of language which we have to listen to every hour of the day—you would know better the truth of what you are saying. Do not be too sure of that. Perhaps I know as well about it as you do. Perhaps my library is as dangerous a place for me as your workshop is for you. Solitude has its temptations as well as society. St. Anthony, before his conversion, was a gay and fast young man of Alexandria; and, when he was converted, he found the temptations of the city so intolerable that he fled into the Egyptian desert and became a hermit; but he afterward confest that the temptations of a cell in the wilderness were worse than those of the city. It would not be safe to exchange our temptations for those of another man; every one has his own.

I believe, further, that every man has his own tempter or temptress. Every man on his journey through life meets with some one[171] who deliberately tries to ruin him. Have you met your tempter yet? Perhaps he is sitting by your side at this moment. Perhaps it is some one in whose society you delight to be, and of whose acquaintance you are proud; but the day may come when you will curse the hour in which you ever saw that face. Some of us, looking back, can remember well who our tempter was; and we tremble yet, sometimes, as we remember how nearly we were over the precipice.

One of the chief powers of temptation is the power of surprize. It comes when you are not looking for it; it comes from the person and from the quarter you least suspect. The day dawns which is to be the decisive one in our life; but it looks like any other day. No bell rings in the sky to give warning that the hour of destiny has come. But the good angel that watches over us is waiting and trembling. The fiery moment arrives; do we stand; do we fall? Oh, if we fall, that good angel goes flying away to heaven, crying, fallen, fallen!

II. The group of the left or those who have fallen before temptation.

Tho I do not know this audience, I know human nature well enough to be certain that there are some hearing me who are whispering sadly in their hearts, This is the group I belong to: I have fallen before temptation; it may not be known; it may not even be suspected; but it is true.

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To such I bear a message of hope to-day.

The great tempter of men has two lies with which he plies us at two different stages. Before we have fallen, he tells us that one fall does not matter; it is a trifle; we can easily recover ourselves again. And, after we have fallen, he tells us that it is hopeless: we are given over to sin, and need not attempt to rise.

Both are false.

It is a terrible falsehood to say that to fall once does not matter. Even by one fall there is something lost that can never be recovered again. It is like the breaking of an infinitely precious vessel, which may be mended, but will never again be as if it had not been broken. And, besides, one fall leads to others; it is like going upon very slippery ice on the face of a hill; even in the attempt to rise you are carried away again farther than ever. Moreover, we give others a hold over us. If we have not sinned alone, to have sinned once involves a tacit pledge that we will sin again; and it is often almost impossible to get out of such a false position. God keep us from believing the devil's lie, that to fall once does not matter.

But then, if we have fallen, he plies us with the other lie: It is of no use to attempt to rise; you can not overcome your besetting sin. But this is falser still. To those who feel themselves fallen I come, in Christ's name, to say,[173] Yes, you may rise. If we could ascend to heaven to-day and scan the ranks of the blest, should we not find multitudes among them who were once sunk low as man can fall? But they are washed, they are justified, they are sanctified, in the name of our Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. And so may you be.

It is, I know, a doctrine which may be abused; but I will not scruple to preach it to those who are fallen and sighing for deliverance. St. Augustine says that we may out of our dead sins make stepping-stones to rise to the heights of perfection. What did he mean by that? He meant that the memory of our falls may breed in us such a humility, such a distrust of self, such a constant clinging to Christ as we never could have had if we had not fallen.

Does not the Scripture itself go even further? David fell—deep as man can fall; but what does he say in that great fifty-first Psalm, in which he confesses his sin? Anticipating forgiveness, he says:

Then will I teach Thy ways unto  
Those that transgressors be,  
And those that sinners are, shall then  
Be turned unto Thee.

And what did our Lord Himself say to St. Peter about his fall? "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." A man may[174] derive strength to give to others from having fallen. He may have a sympathy with the erring; he may be able to describe the steps by which to rise, as no other can. Thus, by God's marvelous grace, out of the eater may come forth meat, and out of the strong may come forth sweetness.

III. The group of the extreme left or those who are tempters of others.

These three groups on the left form three stages of a natural descent. First, tempted; secondly, fallen; then, if we have fallen, we tempt others to fall.

This is quite natural. If we are down ourselves, we try to get others down beside us. There is a satisfaction in it. To a soul that has become black a soul that is still white is an offense. It is said of some, "They rest not except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away, except they cause some to fall." There is nothing else, I think, in human nature so diabolical as the delight which the wicked feel in making others like themselves. Have you never seen it? Have you never seen a group of evil-doers deliberately set themselves to ruin a newcomer, scoffing at his innocence and enticing him to their orgies? And, when they succeeded, they rejoiced over his fall as if they had won a great triumph. So low can human nature sink.

Sometimes it may be self-interest that makes man a tempter. The sin of another may be[175] necessary to secure some end of his own. The dishonest merchant, for his own gain, undermines the honesty of his apprentice; the employer, making haste to be rich, tempts his employees to break the Sabbath; the tyranical landlord forces his tenants to vote against their conscience. Why, there are trades which nourish on other people's sins.

But perhaps the commonest way to become a tempter is through thoughtlessness. I protest, we have no pity for each other's souls. We trample about among these most brittle and infinitely precious things, as if they were common ware, and we tempt one another and ruin one another without even being aware of it. Perhaps, indeed, no one who goes to the place of wo goes there alone; perhaps every one takes at least one with him. I hear it said nowadays that the fear of hell no longer moves men's minds; and that preachers ought no longer to make use of it as a motive in religion. Well, I confess, I fear it myself; it is a motive still to me. But I will tell you what I fear ten times more. What! is there anything which a man can fear ten times more than the fire that never shall be quenched? Yes! it is to meet there any one who will say, You have brought me here; you were my tempter; and but for you I might never have come to this place of torment. God forbid that this should ever be said to me by any one. Will it be said to any of you?

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But now let us turn away from this side of our subject and look at the bright side—at the three groups on the right.

IV. The group of the right center, or those who are successfully resisting temptation.

Not very long ago a letter chanced to come under my eye. It was by a young man attending one of the great English universities. One day two or three fellow students had come into his rooms and asked him to join them in some amusement of a questionable kind, which they were contemplating. On the spur of the moment he promised; but, when they had gone, he thought what his parents would say if they knew. It was a godly home he belonged to and a very happy one, in which the children were bound to the parents in such a way that they kept no secrets from them. He thought of his home, and he had doubts whether what he had promised to do might not cause pain there. He was afraid it would; and he promptly and frankly went and told his companions that his engagement was off till he should inquire. The letter I saw was the inquiry. It affected me deeply to read it; for it was easy to understand how much manliness was required to do that which might be interpreted as unmanly.

The memory of that man's home came to him in the hour of temptation and made him strong to resist. I wonder this influence does not prove a rescuing power oftener than it[177] does. Young men, when you are tempted, think of home. I have been a minister away in a provincial town; and, I think, if you could realize the mother's terror, and the father's stricken frame, and the silent tearful circle, as I have seen them—it would make you fling the cup of temptation from your lips, however persuasive was the hand that proffered it.

Yet this will not always be a strong enough motive in the struggle with temptation. There will come times when you are tempted to great sin which will appear to you absolutely safe from discovery and not likely to inflict the slightest injury on your fortunes. In such circumstances nothing will sustain you if you do not respect your own nature and stand in awe of your own conscience. Nay, even this is not enough; the only effective defense is that of one who was surely tempted in this very way, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

There are secret battles fought and victories won on this ground, never heard of on earth, but essentially more glorious than many victories which are trumpeted far and wide by the breath of fame. There is more of courage and manhood needed for them than for walking up to the cannon's mouth? Many a soldier could do that who could not say "No" to two or three companions pressing him to enter the canteen. Not long ago I was speaking to[178] a soldier who told me that many a time in the barracks he was the only man to go down on his knees out of twenty or thirty; and he did it among showers of oaths and derision. Do you think walking up to the cannon's mouth would have been difficult to that man? Such victories have no record on earth; but be sure of this, they are widely heard of in heaven, and there is One there who will not forget them.

V. The group of the right or those who have outlived their temptations.

On this point I do not mean to dwell; but I should like at least to mention it, as there is contained in it a great encouragement to some who may be enduring the very hottest fires of temptation. Perhaps your situation is so intolerable that you often say, I can not stand this much longer; if it lasts as it is, I must fall—"One day I shall fall into the hands of Saul."

No, you will not. I bid you take courage; and as one encouragement I say, you will yet outlive your temptation.

That which is a temptation at one period of life may be no temptation at all at another. To a child there may be an irresistible temptation in a sweetmeat which a man would take a good deal to touch; and some of the temptations which are now the most painful to you will in time be as completely outlived. God may lift you, by some turn of providence,[179] out of the position where your temptation lies; or the person from whom you chiefly suffer may be removed from your neighborhood. The unholy fire of passion, which now you must struggle to keep out of your heart, may, through the mercy of God who setteth men in families, be burnt away and replaced by the holy fire of love burning on the altar of a virtuous home. The laughter and scorn which you may now be bearing for your Christian profession will, if you only have patience, be changed into respect and veneration; for even the ungodly are forced at last to do honor to a consistent Christian life.

In these and other ways, if you only have patience, you will outlive temptation; tho I do not suppose we shall ever in this world be entirely out of its reach, or be beyond the need of these two admonitions: "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation," and, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

VI. The group of the extreme right, or those who are helping others to overcome temptation.

You see, on the right there is an upward progress, as on the left there was a downward one. The first step is to be successfully resisting temptation; a higher one is to have outlived temptation; the highest of all is to be helping others to resist it; tho I do not say that this must be the chronological order. It is the order of honor.

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This group of the extreme right is the exact opposite of the group of the extreme left. Those in the latter group are tempting others to fall; those in this one are encouraging and aiding others to stand fast. No man ought to be satisfied till he is in this noble group.

There are many ways in which we may assist others with their temptations. A big-hearted man will often be doing so without being aware of it. His very presence, his attractive manhood, his massive character act as an encouragement to younger men and hold them up. I do not know anything so much to be coveted as in old age to have men coming to say, Your example, your presence, your sympathy were like a protecting arm put round my stumbling youth and helped me over the perilous years. My brothers, if a few men can honestly say this to us in the future, will it not be better than Greek and Roman fame?

Many are helping the young against their temptations by providing them with means of spending their leisure innocently and profitably. Our leisure time is the problem. While we are at work, there is not so much fear of us; but it is in the hours of leisure—the hours between work and sleep—that temptation finds men, and they are lost; and therefore I say, there is no more Christian work than providing men with opportunities of spending leisure profitably.

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But by far the best way to help men with their temptations is to bring them to Christ. It may be of some service to a man if, in the time of trial, I put round him the sympathetic arm of a brother; but it is infinitely better if I can get him to allow Christ to put round him His strong arm. This is the effectual defense; and no other can be really depended on....

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**÷**09-11 BURRELL

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

David James Burrell was born at Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania, in 1849. He graduated from Yale College in 1867. Since 1891 he has been pastor of the Marble Collegiate Church, New York, which was founded in 1628. Dr. Burrell is unusually popular as a pulpit preacher, and attracts many young people to his evening services. His delivery is clear-cut and vigorous, and often he rises to dramatic heights of eloquence. His gesture is marked by grace and appropriateness, and his illustrations are always chosen with felicity. His sermons are stenographically reported and printed each week in pamphlets for wide distribution.

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BURRELL

Born in 1849

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN[5]

And there arose no small stir about that way. —Act 19:23.

The name by which the early Christians were familiarly known was "The people of that way." In the year 36 the Sanhedrin issued a commission to Saul of Tarsus authorizing him to arrest any whom he might find "of the way, whether they were men or women, and to bring them bound unto Jerusalem." (Acts ix., 2.) In the year 58, twenty-two years later, the same Saul, now an apostle of Christ, made a defense from the steps of the Castle of Antonia, in which he said, "I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prison both men and women" (Acts xxii., 4).

The name thus given to the followers of Christ is significant for many reasons. The question has been raised in some quarters as to whether religion is dogma or life. In fact, our religion in the last reduction is neither dogma nor life; it is a way from sin into the Kingdom of God. Its bed-rock is truth, its[186] pavement is character, its destination is eternal life.

It is a plain way; as indicated in the prophecy, "A highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the wayfaring man tho a fool shall not err therein." Nevertheless, to the unsaved no question is more bewildering than this: "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" In the Pocono Mountains, last summer, I found it very difficult to keep in the old Indian trail; tho it was easy enough for my comrade, who had been born and bred in the vicinity. A letter lies before me, written by a man of affairs, in which he says, "All my life I have been an attendant at church; I would like to be a Christian, but I confess that I have never yet learned how to set about it."

It is my present purpose to make this matter as clear as I can. Let it be said at the outset that one thing only is needful in order to become a follower of Christ—to wit, that one shall believe in Him, but, before we come to that, we must touch upon a matter of preliminary importance.

A man must repent before he believes in Christ (Mark i., 15). Now repentance is not a saving grace, having value only as it leads to something further on. The pain of a physical malady has no curative virtue; but it is this pain that inclines the patient to ring the[187] doctor's bell. So John the Baptist goes before Christ with his cry, "Repent ye!" Since without repentance there is no adequate sense of need, nor disposition to accept Christ.

Let us get a clear understanding of repentance. It suggests at the outset, an apprehension of sin as a fact; not a figment of the imagination, not "a belief of mortal mind"; not an infection due to environment, and therefore involving no personal accountability; but a distinct, flagrant violation of holy law, by which the sinner is brought into rebellion against God.

And sin must be apprehended, furthermore, as a calamitous fact, that is, involving an adequate penalty: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." A true penitent recognizes the justice of the punishment which is imposed upon him; as did the repentant thief, when he said to his comrade, "We indeed are condemned justly." One who spends his time in trying to explain away hell and "the unquenchable fire" and "the worm that dieth not," is not a penitent man.

And sin must be furthermore recognized as a concrete or personal fact. It is not enough to acknowledge the incontrovertible presence of sin in the world around us. The important thing is, that this sin inheres in me. So David prayed, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according unto thy loving kindness; for I have sinned and done this evil in thy sight." He[188] had always known, in general terms, that adultery was a fearful thing; but when it pointed its gaunt finger at him in the watches of the night and hissed, "Bathsheba!" it brought him to his knees.

And this conviction of sin must be followed by a resolution to forsake it. The true penitent fears his sin, hates it, loathes it, abhors it, and determines to quit it.

But observe, all this is merely preliminary to the one thing needful. There is no virtue in repentance per se. The penitent is not saved; he has only discovered his need of salvation. He knows his malady; now how shall he be cured of it? To pause here is death. One in a sinking boat must not be satisfied with stopping the leak; the boat must be baled out. A man head over ears in debt can not recover his credit by resolving to pay cash in the future; he must somehow cancel his past obligations. If a penitent were never to commit another sin, the "handwriting of ordinances" would still be against him. The record of the past remains; and it will confront him in the judgment unless it be disposed of. The past. The mislived past! What shall be done about it?

This brings us to the matter in hand: What shall I do to be saved? or How shall I become a Christian?

Our Lord at the beginning of His ministry said to Nicodemus, "God so loved the world,[189] that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." And to make the matter perfectly clear to this learned rabbi, He resorted to the kindergarten method, using an object-lesson: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up (that is, crucified), that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." So the one thing needful is to believe in Christ.

The same truth was repeated over and over in the teachings of Jesus and of His disciples as well. To the jailer of Philippi who, in sudden conviction, was moved to cry, "What shall I do?" the answer of Paul was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

But what is it to "believe in Christ?" It is easy to say, "Come to Christ" and "Accept Christ" and "Believe in Him"; but just here occurs the bewilderment. These are oftentimes mere shop-worn phrases to the unsaved, however simple they may appear to those who have entered on the Christian life.

To believe in Christ is, first, to credit the historic record of His life. Once on a time He lived among men, preached, wrought miracles, suffered and died on the accurst tree. So far all will agree; but there is clearly no saving virtue in an intellectual acceptance of an undisputed fact.

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It means, second, to believe that Jesus was what He claimed to be. And His claim is perfectly clear. To the woman of Samaria who sighed for the coming of Messiah He said, "I that speak unto thee am he." No reader of the Scripture could misunderstand His meaning, since the prophecy of the Messiah runs like a golden thread through all its pages from the protevangel, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," to the prediction of Malachi, "The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his beams."

But, more than this, Jesus claimed that as Messiah He was the only begotten and co-equal Son of God. He came forth from God and, after finishing His work, was to return to God and reassume "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was." It was this oft repeated assertion which so mortally offended the Jews as to occasion His arrest on the charge of blasphemy. He persisted in His claim, and was put to death for "making himself equal to God." It must be seen, therefore, that no man can be said to believe in Christ who is not prepared to affirm, without demur or qualification, that He was what He claimed to be.

It means, third, to believe that Jesus did what He said He came into the world to do. And here again there can be no doubt or peradventure. He said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and[191] to give his life a ransom for many." His death was to be the purchase price of redemption. In the wilderness He was tempted to turn aside from His great purpose. The adversary led Him to a high place, and with a wave of his hand, directed His thought to the kingdoms of this world, saying, "All these are mine. I know thy purpose: thou art come to win this world by dying for it. Why pay so great a price? I know thy fear and trembling—for thou art flesh—in view of the nails, the fever, and dreadful exposure, the long agony. Why pay so great a price? I am the prince of this world. One act of homage, and I will abdicate. Fall down and worship me!" Never before or since has there been such a temptation, so specious, so alluring. But Jesus had covenanted to die for sinners. He knew there was no other way of accomplishing salvation for them. He could not be turned aside from the work which He had volunteered to do. Therefore He put away the suggestion with the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan! I can not be moved! I know the necessity that is laid upon me. I know that my way to the kingdom is only by the cross. I am therefore resolved to suffer and die for the deliverance of men."

On a later occasion, on His way to Jerusalem—that memorable journey of which it is written. "He set his face stedfastly" to go toward the cross—He spoke to His disciples of[192] His death. He had been with them now three years, but had not been able fully to reveal His mission, because they were "not strong enough to bear it." A man with friends, yet friendless, lonely in the possession of His great secret, He had longed to give them His full confidence, but dared not. Now, as they journeyed southward through Cæsarea Philippi, He asked them, "Who do men say that I am?" And they answered, "Some say John the Baptist; others, Elias; others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." And he saith, "But who say ye that I am?" Then Peter—brave, impulsive, glorious Peter—witness his good confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" The hour had come. His disciples were beginning to know Him. He would give them His full confidence. So as they journeyed on toward Jerusalem He told them all how He had come to redeem the world by bearing its penalty of death; "He began to show them how he must suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed." At that point Peter could hold his peace no longer, but began to rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord! To suffer? To die? Nay, to reign in Messianic splendor!" And Jesus turning, said unto him, "Get thee behind me, Satan!"—the very words with which He had repelled the same suggestion in the wilderness. As He looked on His disciple, He saw not Peter, but Satan—perceived[193] how the adversary had for the moment taken possession, as it were, of this man's brain and conscience and lips. "Get thee behind me, Satan! I know thee! I recognize thy crafty suggestion; but I am not to be turned aside from my purpose. Get thee behind me! Thou art an offense unto me. Thy words are not of divine wisdom, but of human policy. Thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men!"

From this we conclude that the vicarious death of Jesus is the vital center of His gospel, and that any word which contravenes it is in the nature of a Satanic suggestion. It follows that no man can truly believe in Christ without assenting to the fact that the saving power is in His death; as it is written, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," and, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." He came into the world to die for sinners, that they by His death might enter into life; He came to take our place before the bar of the offended law, to be "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, that by his stripes we might be healed"; He came to "bear our sins in his own body on the tree"; and to believe in Christ is to believe that He did what He came to do.

It means, fourth—and now we come to the very heart of the matter—to believe that Christ means precisely what He says. He[194] says to the sinner, "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." He says, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." He says, "He that believeth in me hath everlasting life." At this point belief means personal appropriation; acceptance, immediate, here, now. It is to make an end of doubt and perplexity and all questionings, by closing in with the overtures of divine mercy. It is to lay down one's arms and make an unconditional surrender. It is to take the proffered hand of the Savior in an everlasting covenant of peace. It is to say, "My Lord, my life, my sacrifice, my Savior and my all!"

But just here is where many hesitate and fail. They do not "screw their courage to the sticking point." They come up to the line, but do not take the step that crosses it. They put away the outstretched hand, and so fall short of salvation.

The will must act. The prodigal in the far country will stay there forever unless his resolution cries, "I will arise and go!" The resolution is an appropriating act. It makes Christ mine; it links my soul with His, as the coupler binds the locomotive to the loaded train. It grasps His outstretched hand; it seals the compact and inspires the song:

'Tis done, the great transaction's done,  
I am my Lord's and He is mine!  
He drew me, and I followed on,  
Charmed to confess the voice divine.

[195]High heaven that hears the solemn vow,  
That vow renewed shall daily hear;  
Till in life's latest hour I bow  
And bless in death a bond so dear!

Now this is all. The man who really believes on Christ is saved by that alone. He can never be lost. As Wesley sang, "Christ and I are so joined, He can't go to heaven and leave me behind." But salvation from the penalty of sin is not the whole of salvation; only the beginning of it.

The sequel to "becoming a Christian" is following Christ. "Salvation" is a large word, including growth in character and usefulness and all the high attainments which are included in a genuine Christian life. This is what Paul means when he says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you." Work it out! Work your salvation out to its uttermost possibilities! Be a maximum Christian; not content with being saved "so as by fire," but craving "an abundant entrance" into the kingdom. All this is accomplished in the close and faithful following of Christ.

This "following" is the sure test and touchstone by which a man determines whether he has really come to Christ and believes in Him. Our "good works" are not meritorious as having any part in our deliverance from condemnation; but they are the acid test of our faith; and they also determine the quality of the[196] heaven that awaits us. And, in this sense, "they shall in no wise lose their reward." To use a rude figure; a man going to an entertainment gets a ticket of admission, but for his reserved seat he pays something more. "The just shall live by faith;" but the abundance of their life is determined by the product of their faith. Wherefore, he loses much who, while believing in Christ, follows Him afar off.

To follow Christ at the best, means to regard Him as our Priest, our only Priest, whose sacrifice is full and sufficient for us. We forsake all other plans of salvation and trust simply and solely to the merit of His atoning blood.

To follow Christ means to regard Him as our only Prophet or Teacher. All preachers, ecclesiastical councils, historic creeds and symbols are remanded to a subordinate place. His word is ultimate for us.

To follow Christ means to regard Him as our King. He reigns in us and over us. His love constrains us. His wish is our law. His authority is final. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

And to follow Christ means to do all this in the open. It may be that some who refuse to confess Christ are ultimately saved by Him; but the presumption is immensely against the man who lives that way. "Stand forth into the midst!" "Quit thyself like a man!"

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In closing, we return to iterate and reiterate the proposition that our salvation from sin and spiritual death is by faith in Christ and by that only. Let no side issues enter here to confuse and bewilder us. "He that believeth shall be saved."

That is final and conclusive. Our deliverance is wholly of grace: we do not earn it. "The wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life."

Long as I live, I'll still be crying  
Mercy's free!

And therefore all the glory is unto God: "Of whom are we in Christ Jesus, who is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption; that, according as it is written, if any man glory, let him glory in the Lord."

Nevertheless, the benefit of the gift is conditioned on our acceptance of it. The manna lies about our feet "white and plenteous as hoar frost," but it will not save us from famishing unless we gather it up and eat it. The water gushes from the rock, but we shall die of thirst unless we dip it up and drink it. Christ on the cross saves no man; it is only when Christ is appropriated that He saves us. We must make Him ours. We must grasp His extended hand. Luther said, "The important thing is the possessive pronoun, first[198] person singular." One of the fathers said, "It is the grip on the Blood that saves us." Christ stands waiting—he offers life for the taking. Who will have it? The worst of sinners can make it his very own by saying with all his heart, "I will! I do!"

**÷**09-12 WATSON

OPTIMISM

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Watson, widely known under his pen name of "Ian Maclaren," was born at Manningtree, Essex, England, in 1850. For many years he was pastor of Free St. Matthew's Church, Glasgow. He died at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, in 1907. He enjoyed unusual popularity, both as a preacher and as a lecturer. In 1896 he gave a course of lectures to the students of Yale. "The Bonnie Brier Bush" is his best-known book. Another volume of his, "The Cure of Souls," is full of splendid practical suggestions for the minister and divinity student. Here is a sample of his satire directed toward certain speakers: "It is said that there are ingenious books which contain extracts—very familiar as a rule—on every religious subject, so that the minister, having finished his sermon on faith or hope, has only to take down this pepper-caster and flavor his somewhat bare sentences with literature. If this ignominious tale be founded on fact, and be not a scandal of the enemy, then the Protestant Church ought also to have an 'Index Expurgatorius,' and its central authorities insert therein books which it is inexpedient for ministers to possess. In this class should be included 'The Garland of Quotations' and 'The Reservoir of Illustrations.'"

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WATSON

1850-1907

OPTIMISM[6]

Go ye therefore and teach all nations.—Mat 28:19.

Among the characteristics of Jesus' teaching which have passed into the higher consciousness of Christianity is an inextinguishable optimism. When He was only a village prophet, Jesus declared that the social Utopia of Isaiah was already being fulfilled; when He gave the Sermon on the Mount He spoke as a greater Moses, legislating not for a nation but for a race. If He called apostles, they were to disciple every creature, and if He died it was for a world. His generation might condemn Him, but they would see Him again on the clouds of heaven. His death would be celebrated in a sacrament unto every generation, and being lifted on a cross He would draw all men to Him. The apostles who failed in His lifetime would afterward do greater works than Himself, and He who departed from their sight would return in the Holy Ghost and be with them forever. He[202] looks beyond His own land, and embraces a race in His plans. He ignores the defeats of His own ministry, and discounts the victory of His disciples. He teaches, commands, arranges, prophesies with a universal and eternal accent. This was not because he made light of His task or of His enemies; no one ever had such a sense of the hideous tyranny of sin or passed through such a Gehenna, but Jesus believed with all His heart and mind in the kingdom of God, that it was coming and must come. He held that the age of gold was not behind, but before humanity.

The high spirit has passed into the souls of Christ's chief servants. The directors and pioneers, the martyrs and exemplars of our faith have had no misgivings; the light of hope has ever been shining on their faces. St. Paul boasted that he was a free-born Roman, but he was prouder to be a member of Christ's commonwealth, whose capital was in heaven and in which all nations were one. He was loyal subject of Cæsar, but he owned a more magnificent emperor at God's right hand. Above the forces of this present world he saw the principalities and powers in the heavenly places fighting for his faith. Scourged and imprisoned he burst into psalms, and he looked beyond his martyrdom to the crown of righteousness. Shackled to a soldier he wrote letters brimming over with joy, and confined to a barrack room he caught through a narrow[203] window the gleam of the eternal city. Never did he flinch before a hostile world, never was he browbeaten by numbers, never was he discouraged by failure or reverse. He knew that he was on the winning side, and that he was laying the foundation of an everlasting state. You catch the same grand note in St. Augustine with all his horror of prevailing iniquity; in the medieval hymn writers celebrating Jerusalem the Golden, when clouds of judgment hung over their heads; and in the missionaries of the faith who toiled their life through without a convert, and yet died in faith. They might be losing, but their commander was winning. The cross might be surrounded with the smoke of battle, it was being carried forward to victory.

They were right in this conviction, but do not let us make any mistake about the nature of this triumph, else we shall be caught by delusions, and in the end be discouraged. It will not be ecclesiastical, and by that one means that no single church, either the Church of Rome, or the Church of England, or the Church of Scotland will ever embrace the whole human race, or even its English-speaking province. One can not study church history since the Reformation, or examine the condition of the various religious denominations to-day without being convinced that there will always be diversity of organization, and any person who imagines the Church of[204] the East making her humble submission to Rome, or the various Protestant bodies of the Anglo-Saxon race trooping in their multitude to surrender their orders to the Anglican Church has really lost touch with the possibilities of life. Nor will the triumph be theological in the sense that all men will come to hold the same dogma whether it be that of Rome or Geneva. There will always be many schools of thought within the kingdom of God just as there will be many nations. Neither one Church nor one creed will swallow up the others and dominate the world. He who cherishes that idea is the victim of an optimism which is unreasonable and undesirable. The kingdom of God will come not through organization but through inspiration. Its sign will not be the domination of a Church, but the regeneration of humanity. When man shall be brother to man the world over, and war shall no longer drench cornfields with blood: when women are everywhere honored, and children are protected: when cities are full of health and holiness, and when the burden of misery has been lifted from the poor, then the world shall know Christ has not died in vain, and His vision shall be fulfilled.

A fond imagination which only tantalizes and disheartens! It is natural to say so, but magnificent dreams have come true. Suppose you had been on the sorrowful way when[205] Jesus was being led to His doom, and women were pitying this innocent prophet whose hopes had been so rudely dashed, and whose life had been so piteously wasted. "Ah!" they cry, "His illusions have been scattered, and His brief day is going down in darkness." It appeared so, but was it so?

Suppose while the kind-hearted people were talking, some one had prophesied the career of Jesus. They would have laughed and called him a visionary, yet which would have been right, the people who judged by Jesus' figure beneath the cross, or the man who judged Jesus' power through that cross? The people who looked at the mob of Jerusalem, or the man who saw the coming generations? There are two ideas of Christ's crucifixion in art, and each has its own place. There is the realistic scene with the cross raised only a few feet from the ground, a Jewish peasant hanging on it, a Roman guard keeping order, and a rabble of fanatical priests as spectators. That is a fact, if you please, down to the color of the people's garments and the shape of the Roman spears. Very likely that is how it looked and happened. There is also the idealistic scene with a cross high and majestic on which Christ is hanging with His face hidden. Behind there is an Italian landscape with a river running through a valley, trees against the sky, and the campanile of a village church. At the foot of the cross kneels[206] St. Mary Magdalene, on the right at a little distance are the Blest Virgin and St. Francis, on the left St. John and St. Jerome. The Roman soldiers and the Jewish crowd and that poor cross of Roman making have disappeared as a shadow. The great cross of the divine Passion is planted in the heart of the Church and of the race forever. Facts? Certainly, but which is the fact, that or this? Which is nearer to the truth, the Christ of the sorrowful way or the Christ at God's right hand?

Have there been no grounds for optimism? Has the splendid hope of Christ been falsified? One may complain that the centuries have gone slowly, and that the chariot of righteousness has dragged upon the road. But Christ has been coming and conquering. There is some difference between the statistics of the Upper Room, and the Christian Church to-day; between slavery in the Roman Empire and to-day; between the experience of women in the pre-Christian period and to-day; between the reward of labor in Elizabeth's England and to-day; between the use of riches in the eighteenth century, and the beginning of the twentieth; between pity for animals in the Georgian period and to-day. If we are not uplifted by this beneficent progress, it is because we have grown accustomed to the reign of Christianity, and are impatient for greater things. We are apt to be pessimists, not because the kingdom of God is halting,[207] but because it has not raced; not because the gospel has failed to build up native churches in the ends of the earth with their own forms, literature, martyrs, but because all men have not yet believed the joyful sound.

There are two grounds for the unbounded optimism of our faith, and the first is God. How did such ideas come into the human mind? Where did the imagination of the prophets and apostles catch fire? Where is the spring of the prayers and aspirations of the saints? Whence do all light and all love come? Surely from God. Can we imagine better than God can do? Can we demand a fairer world than God will make? Were not the Greek philosophers right in thinking that our ideals are eternal, and are kept with God? It is not a question of our imagining too much, but too little, of being too soon satisfied.

So soon made happy? Hadst thou learned  
What God accounteth happiness  
Thou wouldst not find it hard to guess  
What hell may be his punishment  
For those who doubt if God invent  
Better than they.

The other ground for optimism is Jesus Christ. Does it seem that the perfect life for the individual, and for the race, is too sublime, that it is a distant and unattainable ideal? It is well enough to give the Sermon on the Mount, and true enough that if it were[208] lived the world would be like heaven, but then has it ever been lived? Yes, once at least, and beyond all question. Christ lived as He taught. He bade men lose their lives and He lost His; He bade men trample the world underfoot and He trampled it; He commanded men to love, and He loved even unto death. This He did as the forerunner of the race. Why not again with Christ as Captain? Why not always, why not everywhere? Is not He the standard of humanity now, and is not He its Redeemer? Has He not been working in the saints who have reminded the world of God? Will He not continue to work till all men come to the stature of perfection?

Only one institution in human society carries the dew of its youth, and through the conflict of the centuries still chants its morning song. It is the religion of Jesus. I do not mean the Christianity which exhausts its energy in the criticism of documents or the discussion of ritual—the Christianity of scholasticism or ecclesiasticism, for there is no life in that pedantry. I do not mean the Christianity which busies itself with questions of labor and capital, meat and drink, votes and politics, for there is no lift in that machinery. I mean the Christianity which centers in the person of the Son of God, with His revelation of the Father, and His gospel of salvation, with His hope of immortality and His victory of soul. This Christianity endures[209] while civilizations exhaust themselves and pass away, and the face of the world changes. Its hymns, its prayers, its heroism, its virtues, are ever fresh and radiant. If a man desires to be young in his soul let him receive the spirit of Jesus, and bathe his soul in the Christian hope. Ah, pessimism is a heartless, helpless spirit. If one despairs of the future for himself and for his fellows, then he had better die at once. It is despair which cuts the sinews of a man's strength and leaves him at the mercy of temptation. Do you say, What can I do, because the light round me is like unto darkness? Climb the mast till you are above the fog which lies on the surface of the water, and you will see the sun shining on the spiritual world, and near at hand the harbor of sweet content. True, we must descend again to the travail of life, but we return assured that the sun is above the mist. Do you say, What is the use of fighting, for where I stand we have barely held our own? Courage! It was all you were expected to do, and while you stood fast the center has been won, and the issue of the battle has been decided. It was a poet who had his own experience of adversity, and was cut down in the midst of his days, who bade his comrades be of good cheer.

Say not, the struggle naught availeth,  
The labor and the wounds are vain,  
The enemy faints not nor faileth,  
And as things have been they remain.

[210]If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars.  
It may be in yon smoke concealed,  
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,  
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,  
Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,  
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,  
When daylight comes, comes in the light,  
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,  
But westward look, the land is bright.

**÷**09-13 NICOLL

GETHSEMANE, THE ROSE GARDEN OF GOD

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Robertson Nicoll, Presbyterian minister and author, was born at Lumsden, Aberdeenshire, 1851. He was educated at the University of Aberdeen, where he took his degree in 1870. He was Free Minister of Dufftown, 1874-1877; of Kelso, 1877-1885. In 1886 he became editor of British Weekly, Bookman, Expositor and Woman at Home, and is a prolific writer of books, mostly theological.

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NICOLL

Born in 1851

GETHSEMANE, THE ROSE GARDEN OF GOD[7]

Without shedding of blood is no—Heb 9:22.

I had a strange feeling, dear brethren, this morning, in busy London, on a week-day, in the sunshine, reading these words from the Epistle to the Hebrews; and it struck me that some few would think they were strangely antique, that they contrasted violently with your morning newspapers. And then it passed through my mind again that there could not be anything so vitally modern, so close and quick to the moment in London as just my text—"Without shedding of blood there is no"—no anything; nothing; no mighty result, no achievement, no triumph, no high thing accomplished without shedding of blood. That is just on the lowest plane what we are getting to know as a nation, and if we are taught it as Christians, then we shall come to know at last what Christianity means.

Dear brethren, life is just our chance of making this great and strange discovery, that without shedding of blood there is nothing, nothing at all. How do young people begin,[214] most of them? They begin by doing little or nothing; they begin by trifling. And then they begin to find that they are not making progress. And if so, they are wise, gradually they put more strength into it; and then more, till at last they have put all their strength into it. And then they say they have not succeeded, have not gained their point. And they say, What have we got to do now? You take off your coat to your work. A man may disrobe; what more can be done? What more have I got left? Left? You have got your blood left, and until you begin to part with that you will never do any great work at all. I mean by that, if you leave a mark in life; to fulfil a mission in life there is wanted something more than the concentration of life. I appeal to you, there is wanted, besides, the pruning of life, aye, and even the maiming of life. There must be for success, even in the business world, I say, in the world of commercial achievement, there must be more and more an actual parting with the life before it is reached. And we are being sternly taught this lesson as a nation. But I want to teach it this morning to the Church as Christians.

Well, let me go back to the very beginning. I find that there is in the primitive elemental religion a profound and solemn witness to this truth; "Without shedding of blood there is no remission," no peace with God, no life[215] in Christ. And I look upon these early and crude and distorted ideas as God's deep preparation of the mind and heart of man by the grand gospel of the substitution under the law of Jesus Christ for guilty sinners. And we can not get those thoughts out, they are embodied in our very language. Do you know what the word "bless" means, what it was derived from? The word "bless" comes from the Anglo-Saxon word for "blood." And the idea dimly aimed at is this: that before you can really bless a fellow creature you must part with your life, or part of your life, for him; shed blood. We can do a great deal by little things; our Lord said so—by smiles, by gifts, by kind words, by cups of cold water. Christ will never forget these things. But at the same time, if you are to bless a soul in the superlative sense, you can not do it in that easy way; you have to sprinkle the soul with blood, and with your own blood. You know what I mean. Oh, some of you know it who have labored for another soul for weary years; you know it too well. But part with your life and you will win a soul at last. It will cover a multitude of sins.

I wish I had time to quote from the primitive religions; but I would remind you of the old legend of the building of Copenhagen. The builders could not make progress with their work; the sea came in and took it away,[216] until at last they took a human life, and by the sacrifice of that human life they gave to the city stability. And you know the old idea of primitive religion, that the corn will not grow in the seed ground unless the body of a dead man is buried there—life coming out of death. Now, I say all these things point on to the supreme Author of the universe; Jesus died, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Now do you not think you can see how it is that the eternal Son shed His blood in Gethsemane, and offered Himself immaculate to God on Calvary?

But we shall never know quite—none of the ransomed ever know—how deep were the waters crost, or how dark was the night that the Lord passed through ere He found the sheep that was lost. But we read with hearts bowed the prayer offered up with strong crying and tears—the prayer, "If it be possible let this cup pass." There is no prayer like that, when you feel that a life is hanging in the balance, that the issues are not quite decided, that your prayer might turn it. Then you understand what prayer can be. And we hear those dim, overcome witnesses who heard afar the broken moaning, the long-drawn sighs, who saw the hard-won victory which seemed defeat, and we read—I love to read—about that all-pitying but undimmed angel who appeared to strengthen at last. God made His minister a flame of fire in the dark and[217] cold, else could Christ have conquered? His prayer was answered; the cup was not taken away, but His lips were made brave to drink it, and He drank it and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Some of my friends think that the real crowning-point in the suffering of Christ was Gethsemane, that it was over there that the cross was more the public and open manifestation which the world, passing by the wayside, could see. I do not know. Christ quivered a lament upon the cross too.

And now I come to the two thoughts of my sermon.

In the first place, partly from etymology, we learn that the shedding of our own blood is the condition of our blessing others. And then my second point is, that since bloom and blossom, the perfection of life, are also associated with the root, with the word blood, then I say that the bloom and perfection of our own lives depend upon our parting with the natural life and having it replaced by the resurrection life. I hope it is simple enough. Without shedding of blood there is no blessing to others; without shedding of blood there is no blessing to ourselves. Take these two great ruling missionary ideas.

I. Bloodshed for blessing others.

I spoke about Gethsemane because I wanted you to understand that I was referring not merely to absolute physical death, but to the death which leads a man to go on, and perhaps[218] to live more abundantly than before. But still, dear friends, we have been most solemnly and impressively reminded in these times, that, whatever has failed in the Church of Christ, the race of martyrs has not failed. Great names have been written there, the names of those who have been received in heaven. And, for my part, I love the way in which the Church of Rome reverences the martyrs. You know that that Church never prays for the martyrs, but makes requests for their prayers; you know that that Church pictures in the assembly of the redeemed before the throne the martyrs in their robes of crimson and the saints in white. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. We can not atone for others, but we can bless others. We can not, dear friends, have any part in the one perfect oblation and substitution in the sacrifice of the world, but we fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. We know Him and the fellowship of His sufferings as well as the power of His resurrection. And when Christ first laid His hand on His well-beloved He said: "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." This is the chief work of the martyr, to suffer; and it is the chief work of every Christian to suffer for Christ's name's sake. And I sometimes think the whole of Christianity, for the present generation, is summed up in this: fill up that which[219] is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for until that is filled up He can not have His triumph.

But, dear brethren, of course I do not confuse labor and suffering in the Christian servant's life. The labor is effective in proportion as there is suffering, and the suffering by itself is nothing without the labor. But, oh, how Christ's great servants have suffered! Have you ever thought how St. Paul was actually driven to use the awful language of the passion when he described his own life? He did not like to do it; he always drew the line sharp and clear between himself and the Master. He said, "Was Paul crucified for you?" Yes; but he was driven to say, "I am crucified with Christ"—always bearing about the body and its death—"I die daily." Oh, they have suffered by way of bloodshed. Yes; but, dear brethren, I think that in the lives of the great servants of Christ, the elect servants, there is always one Gethsemane above the rest, far above the rest; one shedding of blood, one parting with life which makes all the rest comparatively easy. We can not tell, I think, about other people's Gethsemane; and we can not tell, will not tell, nothing would make us tell, about our own.

How does the Gethsemane come? Often it is passed with very little sign or show. You have read in "The Bonny Brier Bush" that when George Howe came home to die, his mother hid herself beneath the laburnum, and[220] as the cat stood beneath the stile, it told the plain fact, as she had feared. And Margaret passed through her Gethsemane with the gold blossoms falling on her face. I believe there are some of you who are passing through your Gethsemane in this chapel while I am speaking to you now. There is little to show—some absence of manner, some twitching of the lips, some unwonted pallor, some strange abstraction, but no more. And you will never tell anybody about it, and nobody will discover it when you are dead. You sometimes suspect—do you not?—about another man what his Gethsemane has been. You are almost sure to be wrong. That surrender which you see was accomplished almost without murmur or reluctance. Sometimes in biographies I think I can see where the Gethsemane is. It may be, and often is, the rooting out of some cherished ambition that has filled the heart and occupied every thought, every dream for years and years. It may be the shattering of some song, the breaking of some dream. It may be, and often is, a great rending of the affections, the cutting the soul free from some detaining human tenderness. Well, we do not know—the real Gethsemane never lasts long. I think an hour is the longest that anybody could bear it—"Could ye not watch with me one hour?" True, the heartache may go on to the end, but the Gethsemane, that can not last a long time.

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We have in biographies some instances of Gethsemanes, and sometimes in very unexpected places. You would not imagine that a prosperous suburban minister, with a rich congregation, and every earthly ambition realized, would have his Gethsemane as a missionary far among the heathen has. But in the "Life of Dr. Raleigh," of Kensington, whom many of you remember, there is a significant passage. When he was at the zenith of his fame he said that ministers came and looked around at his crowded church and envied his position. "They do not know," he said, "what it has cost me to come to this." In the "Life" of the beloved James Hamilton, of Regent Square, there is a passage which always touches me. It shows how he parted, for Christ's sake, with the great ambition of his life. He longed to write a life of Erasmus, but other things came and he was balked of his desire. He says:

"So this day, with a certain touch of tenderness, I restored the eleven tone folios to the shelf and tied up my memoranda, and took leave of a project which has often cheered the hours of exhaustion, the mere thought of which has always been enough to overcome my natural indulgence. It is well. It is the only chance I ever had of attaining a small measure of literary distinction, and where there is so much pride and naughtiness of heart it is better to remain unknown."

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I think we may all easily see where the Gethsemane came in in Henry Martyn's life, and—I say it with great diffidence—I think we may see where the Gethsemane came in in John Wesley's life, tho I should not care to indicate it. But the heart knoweth its own bitterness. What we know is that the Gethsemanes in the Christian life are in the course of duty, and in obedience to God's will, as it is revealed from day to day.

Go back to John Wesley's Journal. On one occasion he had the claim of a reputed saint, and he rejected it, and said—mark these words: "No blood of the martyrs is here, no scandal of the cross, no persecution of them that love God." No blood is here, no saint. When Adam Clarke was speaking in the City-Road Chapel in 1816, at the establishment of a missionary society in London, he told the people about the Moravians. And I need not tell you how great the Moravian influence was on early Methodism. He told his hearers at that time that the Moravians, when all told, only numbered six hundred members, but they had missionaries in every part of the globe to which it was then possible to send them. Dr. Clarke told them of the beginning, which was in the far-away place of St. Thomas. A negro slave escaped from St. Thomas somehow, and he came into contact with Zinzendorf, and found the way of salvation, and rejoiced in Christ. Well, this[223] negro came to the Moravians, and he told them that among his fellow slaves in St. Thomas there were several—his own sister was one, I think—who were feeling after God. "But," he said, "nobody can go out to tell them the gospel unless they sell themselves as slaves and go out as slaves." Whereupon two brethren immediately offered themselves, and exprest their willingness to be sold as slaves, that they might preach Christ. Yes, we may be sure that no life will bring forth fruit to God if it is without its Gethsemane, with the great drops of blood in it; and I believe that just as the Savior's blood dropt in Gethsemane and the ground blest it, so the blood of the surrendered soul makes its Gethsemane a garden, if not now, then hereafter; but the time must be, whenever a martyr's blood has been shed, upon that ground the fruits of righteousness must spring.

II. Bloodshed for self-perfection.

I have just my other point. The second point is that there must be bloodshedding for the bloom and perfection of our own lives before they can come to their flower, to God's ideal beauty; there must be the expenditure of the natural life.

Now, what is it that should follow when we have parted with our life and lived our Gethsemane; what should be the effect upon our lives? Well, what ought to follow is, that the resurrection life, which the shedding of blood[224] has made room for, should take the place of the other. But what does follow? I think three things, often:

First, it often happens that a real Gethsemane of the soul means a brief tarrying in this world. It seems as if too much life had gone, as if the spirit could not recover its energies. There are a few books which the heart of the Church has always loved. I call them Gethsemane books. They are books about Gethsemane, about the bloodshedding in the early days and what was gone through. They are chiefly the lives of David Brainerd, Henry Martyn, and McCheyne. But there are many others that I have no time to name. All of these died young, not without signs of the divine blessing, but their rich, fervent natures were prematurely exhausted and burned out. Have you read the memoir of Brainerd? John Wesley published it, slightly abridged, for his people, and I have a copy. Read it, mark its reserved passion, its austere tenderness; read the story of young Miss Edwards, who followed her betrothed so soon. You will then feel that you have done business in great waters. The pages of this book are all spotted with blood. Read Brainerd's aspirations:

"Oh, that I might be a flaming fire in the service of my God! Here I am, Lord, send me; send me to the ends of the earth; send me to the rough and savage pagan, to the wilderness; send me from all that is called earthly[225] comfort; send me even to death itself if it be but in Thy service and to promote Thy Kingdom."

But sometimes the earthly life is parted with and not fully replaced by the resurrection life, and the long-drawn melancholy ensues. You really must not believe that I am speaking as an enemy of Methodism when I say I venture to think there is something of that in the life of that great saint and supreme Christian poet, Charles Wesley. I think it will be granted by his most ardent admirers that the last thirty years of his life will not compare with those of his mighty brother. They were sad years in the main, spent in comparative inaction, with many, many wearisome discontented days. Dear friends, there is no such thing as melancholy in the New Testament—nothing. And Charles Wesley's melancholy is the most attractive in the world—

Oh, when shall we sweetly move?  
Oh, when shall our souls be at rest?

And there is this view of life: "Suffer out my threescore years till the Deliverer come; and then this soul appeals to God to explain my life of misery with all Thy love's designs in Thee." Those are awful matters—"explain my life of misery with all Thy love's designs in Thee." But, dear friends, am I right in saying that this frame is a Christian[226] frame? When Charles Wesley was in his last years his favorite text was—and it is a text which will always go with his name—"I will bring the third part through the fire." That is, he thought that God would bring to glory one-third part of Methodists, that one-third of them would endure to the end. Compare that with "God is with us who seeth the end." Who is right? And he never sought an abundant entrance into the kingdom. What he used to say over and over again was: "Oh, that I might escape safe to land on a broken piece of the ship. This is my daily, hourly prayer, that I may escape safe to land." In his latter days he was always warning those about him that a flood was coming out over the country which would sweep much of this religion away. You know it was said on another death-bed, "Clouds drop fatness."

It is always necessary that the bloom of life should come out of death. What Christ means is that as the natural life goes, as the veins are depleted, there is the resurrection life which should fill them and pour into them to strengthen. There is no book in the world, I think, like John Wesley's "Journal," because it is the book of the resurrection life, and I do not know another in all literature; the resurrection life lived in this world almost as Christ might have gone on living it if the forty years had been prolonged into fifty years. As a book it[227] stands out solitary in all literature, clear, detached, columnar. It is a tree that is ever green before the Lord. It tells us of a heart that kept to the last its innocent pleasures, but held them so lightly, while its Christian renunciation and its passionate peace grew and grew to the end, the old wistfulness, the old calm fiery and revealed eloquence.

John Wesley was indeed one of those who had attained the inward stillness, who had entered the second rest, who, to use his own fine words, was "of those who are at rest before they go hence, possessors of that rest which remaineth even here"—even here—"for the people of God." With what emotion one comes to his closing days, and follows him to that last sermon at Leatherhead, on the word: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near!" And watch by his triumphant death-bed and hear him say, "The clouds drop fatness." The only one I can compare him with in all the history of the Church is the apostle Elliot, the missionary to the Indians, whose life was written by Cotton Mather. You know that in that day they had a tradition that the country was safe as long as the apostle was there. Some of you will remember that Nathaniel Hawthorne, in his great book, "The Scarlet Letter," tells us of how the poor children of Arthur Dimsdale pleaded to see the apostle Elliot, for the testimony is that there[228] was an unearthly light upon his face to the last of his long life. We read about that great apostle, fit to be named with Wesley, that he had his bitter sorrows. Two sons died before him, and Cotton Mather says they were desirable preachers of the gospel. But the old man sacrificed them. Now, note Cotton Mather's phrase, "sacrificed with such a sacred indifference." And he was so nailed to the cross and the Lord Jesus Christ that the grandeur of this world would seem to him just what it would be to a dying man, when at a great age and nearing the end he grew, with John Wesley, still more heavenly, more Saviorly, more divine and scented more and more of that spicy country at which he was ready to put ashore. His last words were, "Welcome, joy," and he died. Such a life of sacrifice is the gateway of the eternal city.

2. It is likewise necessary that the conversion of the world should come out of death. I for one believe in the ancient promise, "The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." Yes, but before the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, the earth must be covered with the blood falling upon it from faithful souls. "Without shedding of blood there is no—." Some young men whom I love have started societies for the evangelization of the world in the present generation. I love that; let us try.

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But what is evangelization? To send Bibles, to deliver the message to everybody? No, not that, but the shedding of the servants' blood on every field, with the world as one great Gethsemane. We shall see over it the flowers that grew only in the garden where Christ's brow dropt blood. At this meeting, in this chapel, there will be some sweet mother who is going through her Gethsemane. She is resolving to give up a son who has heard the call: "Depart, for I will send them far hence to the heathen." One in widow's weeds was asked if she had subscribed to the missionary society. She said: "Yes, I gave my only son, and he died in the field." That is my text: "Without shedding of blood there is no—."

Yes, and there is some young heart here that has a great deal to give up, a great deal at home. And he is hearing me, and he has made up his mind that he will make the sacrifice, too; that he will go forth to Christ. And what are the rest of us doing? Well, dear brethren, there is to be a collection, and we will put our hands in our pockets in the old way, half thinking what we will spend, and how we are to spend it before we go home; and select a coin and put it in. And then we shall go home and see a missionary magazine on the table, and express our regret that missionary magazines are not better edited and not more interesting. Of course, there[230] will be something for the collector when the collector goes round. It will not be much; and perhaps, owing to the war, you know, we can not give quite so much as last year.

And do you really think that the world will ever be converted in that way? Do you believe it? Have you any right to expect that it should be converted in that way? No right at all. The world will never be converted until the Church is in agony, and prays more earnestly, and sweats, as it were, great drops of blood; never, never! "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins."

**÷**09-14 VAN DYKE

THE MEANING OF MANHOOD

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Henry Van Dyke was born in Germantown, Pa., in 1852. He is a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary and of Berlin University. From 1882 to 1900 he was pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church, New York, since which time he has been Professor of English Literature in Princeton University. As a preacher he is generally regarded as a model, and as the author of many books he enjoys the highest literary reputation. Doctor Brastow calls him "the pulpit artist of his school," and adds: "In skilful handling of the manuscript, in clearness, force, chasteness, and felicity of diction, and in a directness and cogency of moral appeal which seemingly his later literary interests have not enhanced, he stands in the front line of American preachers."

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VAN DYKE

Born in 1852

THE MEANING OF MANHOOD[8]

How much, then, is a man better than a sheep!—Mat 12:12.

On the lips of Christ these noble words were an exclamation. He knew, as no one else has ever known, "what was in man." But to us who repeat them they often seem like a question. We are so ignorant of the deepest meaning of manhood, that we find ourselves at the point to ask in perplexity, how much, after all, is a man better than a sheep?

It is evident that the answer to this question must depend upon our general view of life. There are two very common ways of looking at existence that settle our judgment of the comparative value of a man and a sheep at once and inevitably.

Suppose, in the first place, that we take a materialistic view of life. Looking at the world from this standpoint, we shall see in[234] it a great mass of matter, curiously regulated by laws which have results, but no purposes, and agitated into various modes of motion by a secret force whose origin is, and forever must be, unknown. Life, in man as in other animals, is but one form of this force. Rising through many subtle gradations, from the first tremor that passes through the gastric nerve of a jellyfish to the most delicate vibration of gray matter in the brain of a Plato or a Shakespeare, it is really the same from the beginning to the end—physical in its birth among the kindred forces of heat and electricity, physical in its death in cold ashes and dust. The only difference between man and other animals is a difference of degree. The ape takes his place in our ancestral tree, and the sheep becomes our distant cousin.

It is true that we have somewhat the advantage of these poor relations. We belong to the more fortunate branch of the family, and have entered upon an inheritance considerably enlarged by the extinction of collateral branches. But, after all, it is the same inheritance, and there is nothing in humanity which is not derived from and destined to our mother earth.

If, then, we accept this view of life, what answer can we give to the question, how much is a man better than a sheep? We must say: He is a little better, but not much. In some things he has the advantage. He lives longer,[235] and has more powers of action and capacities of pleasure. He is more clever, and has succeeded in making the sheep subject to his domination. But the balance is not all on one side. The sheep has fewer pains as well as fewer pleasures, less care as well as less power. If it does not know how to make a coat, at least it succeeds in growing its own natural wool clothing, and that without taxation. Above all, the sheep is not troubled with any of those vain dreams of moral responsibility and future life which are the cause of such great and needless trouble to humanity. The flocks that fed in the pastures of Bethlehem got just as much physical happiness out of existence as the shepherd, David, who watched them, and, being natural agnostics, they were free from David's delusions in regard to religion. They could give all their attention to eating, drinking, and sleeping, which is the chief end of life. From the materialistic standpoint, a man may be a little better than a sheep, but not much.

Or suppose, in the second place, that we take the commercial view of life. We shall then say that all things must be measured by their money value, and that it is neither profitable nor necessary to inquire into their real nature or their essential worth. Men and sheep are worth what they will bring in the open market, and this depends upon the supply and demand. Sheep of a very rare breed[236] have been sold for as much as five or six thousand dollars. But men of common stock, in places where men are plenty and cheap (as, for example, in Central Africa), may be purchased for the price of a rusty musket or a piece of cotton cloth. According to this principle, we must admit that the comparative value of a man and a sheep fluctuates with the market, and that there are times when the dumb animal is much the more valuable of the two.

This view, carried out to its logical conclusion, led to slavery, and put up men and sheep at auction on the same block, to be disposed of to the highest bidder. We have gotten rid of the logical conclusion. But have we gotten rid entirely of the premise on which it rested? Does not the commercial view of life still prevail in civilized society?

There is a certain friend of mine who often entertains me with an account of the banquets which he has attended. On one occasion he told me that two great railroads and the major part of all the sugar and oil in the United States sat down at the same table with three gold-mines and a line of steamships.

"How much is that man worth?" asks the curious inquirer. "That man," answers some walking business directory, "is worth a million dollars; and the man sitting next to him is not worth a penny." What other answer can be given by one who judges everything[237] by a money standard? If wealth is really the measure of value, if the end of life is the production or the acquisition of riches, then humanity must take its place in the sliding scale of commodities. Its value is not fixt and certain. It depends upon accidents of trade. We must learn to look upon ourselves and our fellow men purely from a business point of view and to ask only: What can this man make? how much has that man made? how much can I get out of this man's labor? how much will that man pay for my services? Those little children that play in the squalid city streets—they are nothing to me or to the world; there are too many of them; they are worthless. Those long-fleeced, high-bred sheep that feed upon my pastures—they are among my most costly possessions; they will bring an enormous price; they are immensely valuable. How much is a man better than a sheep? What a foolish question! Sometimes the man is better; sometimes the sheep is better. It all depends upon the supply and demand.

Now these two views of life, the materialistic and the commercial, always have prevailed in the world. Men have held them consciously and unconsciously. At this very day there are some who profess them, and there are many who act upon them, altho they may not be willing to acknowledge them. They have been the parents of countless errors in philosophy and sociology; they have bred innumerable[238] and loathsome vices and shames and cruelties and oppressions in the human race. It was to shatter and destroy these falsehoods, to sweep them away from the mind and heart of humanity, that Jesus came into the world. We can not receive His gospel in any sense, we can not begin to understand its scope and purpose, unless we fully, freely, and sincerely accept His great revelation of the true meaning and value of man as man.

We say this was His revelation. Undoubtedly it is true that Christ came to reveal God to man. But undoubtedly it is just as true that He came to reveal man to himself. He called Himself the Son of God, but He called Himself also the Son of man. His nature was truly divine, but His nature was no less truly human. He became man. And what is the meaning of that lowly birth, in the most helpless form of infancy, if it be not to teach us that humanity is so related to Deity that it is capable of receiving and embodying God Himself? He died for man. And what is the meaning of that sacrifice, if it be not to teach us that God counts no price too great to pay for the redemption of the human soul? This gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ contains the highest, grandest, most ennobling doctrine of humanity that ever has been proclaimed on earth. It is the only certain cure for low and debasing views of life. It is the only doctrine from which we can learn to[239] think of ourselves and our fellow men as we ought to think. I ask you to consider for a little while the teachings of Jesus Christ in regard to what it means to be a man.

Suppose, then, that we come to Him with this question: How much is a man better than a sheep? He will tell us that a man is infinitely better, because he is the child of God, because he is capable of fellowship with God, and because he is made for an immortal life. And this threefold answer will shine out for us not only in the words, but also in the deeds, and above all in the death, of the Son of God and the Son of man.

1. Think, first of all, of the meaning of manhood in the light of the truth that man is the offspring and likeness of God. This was not a new doctrine first proclaimed by Christ. It was clearly taught in the magnificent imagery of the book of Genesis. The chief design of that great picture of the beginnings is to show that a personal Creator is the source and author of all things that are made. But next to that, and of equal importance, is the design to show that man is incalculably superior to all the other works of God—that the distance between him and the lower animals is not a difference in degree, but a difference in kind. Yes, the difference is so great that we must use a new word to describe the origin of humanity, and if we speak of the stars and the earth, the trees and[240] the flowers, the fishes, the birds, and the beasts, as "the works" of God, when man appears we must find a nobler name and say, "This is more than God's work; he is God's child."

Our human consciousness confirms this testimony and answers to it. We know that there is something in us which raises us infinitely above the things that we see and hear and touch, and the creatures that appear to spend their brief life in the automatic workings of sense and instinct. These powers of reason and affection and conscience, and above all this wonderful power of free will, the faculty of swift, sovereign, voluntary choice, belong to a higher being. We say not to corruption, "Thou art my father," nor to the worm, "Thou art my mother"; but to God, "Thou art my father," and to the great Spirit, "In thee was my life born."

Not only cunning casts in clay:  
Let science prove we are, and then  
What matters science unto men,  
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
Hereafter, up from childhood shape  
His action like the greater ape;  
But I was born to other things.

Frail as our physical existence may be, in some respects the most frail, the most defenseless among animals, we are yet conscious of[241] something that lifts us up and makes us supreme. "Man," says Pascal, "is but a reed, the feeblest thing in nature; but he is a reed that thinks. It needs not that the universe arm itself to crush him. An exhalation, a drop of water, suffice to destroy him. But were the universe to crush him, man is yet nobler than the universe; for he knows that he dies, and the universe, even in prevailing against him, knows not its power."

Now the beauty and strength of Christ's doctrine of man lie, not in the fact that He was at pains to explain and defend and justify this view of human nature, but in the fact that He assumed it with an unshaken conviction of its truth, and acted upon it always and everywhere. He spoke to man, not as the product of nature, but as the child of God. He took it for granted that we are different from plants and animals, and that we are conscious of the difference. "Consider the lilies," He says to us; "the lilies can not consider themselves: they know not what they are, nor what their life means; but you know, and you can draw the lesson of their lower beauty into your higher life. Regard the birds of the air; they are dumb and unconscious dependents upon the divine bounty, but you are conscious objects of the divine care. Are you not of more value than many sparrows?" Through all His words we feel the thrilling power of this high doctrine of[242] humanity. He is always appealing to reason, to conscience, to the power of choice between good and evil, to the noble and godlike faculties in man.

And now think for a moment of the fact that His life was voluntarily, and of set purpose, spent among the poorest and humblest of mankind. Remember that He spoke, not to philosophers and scholars, but to peasants and fishermen and the little children of the world. What did He mean by that? Surely it was to teach us that this doctrine of the meaning of manhood applies to man as man. It is not based upon considerations of wealth or learning or culture or eloquence. Those are the things of which the world takes account, and without which it refuses to pay any attention to us. A mere man, in the eyes of the world, is a nobody. But Christ comes to humanity in its poverty, in its ignorance, stript of all outward signs of power, destitute of all save that which belongs in common to mankind; to this lowly child, this very beggar-maid of human nature, comes the king, and speaks to her as a princess in disguise, and lifts her up and sets a crown upon her head. I ask you if this simple fact ought not to teach us how much a man is better than a sheep.

2. But Christ reveals to us another and a still higher element of the meaning of manhood by speaking to us as beings who are[243] capable of holding communion with God and reflecting the divine holiness in our hearts and lives. And here also His doctrine gains clearness and force when we bring it into close connection with His conduct. I suppose that there are few of us who would not be ready to admit at once that there are some men and women who have high spiritual capacities. For them, we say, religion is a possible thing. They can attain to the knowledge of God and fellowship with Him. They can pray, and sing praises, and do holy work. It is easy for them to be good. They are born good. They are saints by nature. But for the great mass of the human race this is out of the question, absurd, impossible. They must dwell in ignorance, in wickedness, in impiety.

But to all this Christ says, "No!" No, to our theory of perfection for the few. No, to our theory of hopeless degradation for the many. He takes His way straight to the outcasts of the world, the publicans and the harlots and sinners, and to them He speaks of the mercy and the love of God and the beauty of the heavenly life; not to cast them into black despair, not because it was impossible for them to be good and to find God, but because it was divinely possible. God was waiting for them, and something in them was waiting for God. They were lost. But surely they never could have been lost unless they had first of all belonged to God, and this made it[244] possible for them to be found again. They were prodigals. But surely the prodigal is also a child, and there is a place for him in the Father's house. He may dwell among the swine, but he is not one of them. He is capable of remembering his Father's love. He is capable of answering his Father's embrace. He is capable of dwelling in his Father's house in filial love and obedience.

This is the doctrine of Christ in regard to fallen and disordered and guilty human nature. It is fallen, it is disordered, it is guilty; but the capacity of reconciliation, of holiness, of love to God, still dwells in it, and may be quickened into a new life. That is God's work, but God Himself could not do it if man were not capable of it.

Do you remember the story of the portrait of Dante which is painted upon the walls of Bargello, at Florence? For many years it was supposed that the picture had utterly perished. Men had heard of it, but no one living had seen it. But presently came an artist who was determined to find it again. He went into the place where tradition said that it had been painted. The room was used as a storehouse for lumber and straw. The walls were covered with dirty whitewash. He had the heaps of rubbish carried away. Patiently and carefully he removed the whitewash from the wall. Lines and colors long hidden began to appear; and at last the grave,[245] lofty, noble face of the poet looked out again upon the world of light.

"That was wonderful," you say, "that was beautiful!" Not half so wonderful as the work which Christ came to do in the heart of man—to restore the forgotten likeness of God and bring the divine image to the light. He comes to us with the knowledge that God's image is there, tho concealed; He touches us with the faith that the likeness can be restored. To have upon our hearts the impress of the divine nature, to know that there is no human being in whom that treasure is not hidden and from whose stained and dusty soul Christ can not bring out that reflection of God's face—that, indeed, is to know the meaning of manhood, and to be sure that a man is better than a sheep!

3. There is yet one more element in Christ's teaching in regard to the meaning of manhood, and that is His doctrine of immortality. This truth springs inevitably out of His teaching in regard to the origin and capacity of human nature. A being formed in the divine image, a being capable of reflecting the divine holiness, is a being so lofty that he must have also the capacity of entering into a life which is spiritual and eternal, and which leads onward to perfection. All that Christ teaches about man, all that Christ offers to do for man, opens before him a vast and boundless future.

[246]

The idea of immortality runs through everything that Jesus says and does. Never for a moment does He speak to man as a creature who is bound to this present world. Never for a moment does He forget, or suffer us to forget, that our largest and most precious treasures may be laid up in the world to come. He would arouse our souls to perceive and contemplate the immense issues of life.

The perils that beset us here through sin are not brief and momentary dangers, possibilities of disgrace in the eyes of men, of suffering such limited pain as our bodies can endure in the disintegrating process of disease, of dying a temporal death, which at the worst can only cause us a few hours of anguish. A man might bear these things, and take the risk of this world's shame and sickness and death, for the sake of some darling sin. But the truth that flashes on us like lightning from the word of Christ is that the consequence of sin is the peril of losing our immortality. "Fear not them which kill the body," said he, "but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

On the other hand, the opportunities that come to us here through the grace of God are not merely opportunities of temporal peace and happiness. They are chances of securing endless and immeasurable felicity, wealth that can never be counted or lost, peace that[247] the world can neither give nor take away. We must understand that now the kingdom of God has come near unto us. It is a time when the doors of heaven are open. We may gain an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. We may lay hold not only on a present joy of holiness, but on an everlasting life with God.

It is thus that Christ looks upon the children of men: not as herds of dumb, driven cattle, but as living souls moving onward to eternity. It is thus that He dies for men: not to deliver them from brief sorrows, but to save them from final loss and to bring them into bliss that knows no end. It is thus that He speaks to us, in solemn words before which our dreams of earthly pleasure and power and fame and wealth are dissipated like unsubstantial vapors: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

There never was a time in which Christ's doctrine of the meaning of manhood was more needed than it is to-day. There is no truth more important and necessary for us to take into our hearts, and hold fast, and carry out in our lives. For here we stand in an age when the very throng and pressure and superfluity of human life lead us to set a low estimate upon its value. The air we breathe is heavy with materialism and commercialism.[248] The lowest and most debasing views of human nature are freely proclaimed and unconsciously accepted. There is no escape, no safety for us, save in coming back to Christ and learning from Him that man is the child of God, made in the divine image, capable of the divine fellowship, and destined to an immortal life. I want to tell you just three of the practical reasons why we must learn this.

(1) We need to learn it in order to understand the real meaning, and guilt, and danger, and hatefulness of sin.

Men are telling us nowadays that there is no such thing as sin. It is a dream, a delusion. It must be left out of account. All the evils in the world are natural and inevitable. They are simply the secretions of human nature. There is no more shame or guilt connected with them than with the malaria of the swamp or the poison of the nightshade.

But Christ tells us that sin is real, and that it is the enemy, the curse, the destroyer of mankind. It is not a part of man as God made him; it is a part of man as he has unmade and degraded himself. It is the marring of the divine image, the ruin of the glorious temple, the self-mutilation and suicide of the immortal soul. It is sin that casts man down into the mire. It is sin that drags him from the fellowship of God into the company of beasts. It is sin that leads him into the far country of famine, and leaves him among the[249] swine, and makes him fain to fill his belly with the husks that the swine do eat. Therefore we must hate sin, and fear it, and abhor it, always and everywhere. When we look into our own heart and find sin there, we must humble ourselves before God and repent in sackcloth and ashes. Every sin that whispers in our heart is an echo of the world's despair and misery. Every selfish desire that lies in our soul is a seed of that which has brought forth strife, and cruelty, and murder, and horrible torture, and bloody war among the children of men. Every lustful thought that defiles our imagination is an image of that which has begotten loathsome vices and crawling shames throughout the world. My brother-men, God hates sin because it ruins man. And when we know what that means, when we feel that same poison of evil within us, we must hate sin as He does, and bow in penitence before Him, crying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

(2) We need to learn Christ's doctrine of the meaning of manhood in order to help us to love our fellow men.

This is a thing that is easy to profess, but hard, bitterly hard, to do. The faults and follies of human nature are apparent. The unlovely and contemptible and offensive qualities of many people thrust themselves sharply upon our notice and repel us. We are tempted to shrink back, wounded and disappointed,[250] and to relapse into a life that is governed by disgusts. If we dwell in the atmosphere of a Christless world, if we read only those newspapers which chronicle the crimes and meannesses of men, or those realistic novels which deal with the secret vices and corruptions of humanity, and fill our souls with the unspoken conviction that virtue is an old-fashioned dream, and that there is no man good, no woman pure, I do not see how we can help despising and hating mankind. Who shall deliver us from this spirit of bitterness? Who shall lead us out of this heavy, fetid air of the lazar-house and the morgue?

None but Christ. If we will go with Him, He will teach us not to hate our fellow men for what they are, but to love them for what they may become. He will teach us to look, not for the evil which is manifest, but for the good which is hidden. He will teach us not to despair, but to hope, even for the most degraded of mankind. And so, perchance, as we keep company with Him, we shall learn the secret of that divine charity which fills the heart with peace and joy and quiet strength. We shall learn to do good unto all men as we have opportunity, not for the sake of gratitude or reward, but because they are the children of our Father and the brethren of our Savior. We shall learn the meaning of that blest death on Calvary, and be willing to give ourselves as a sacrifice for others,[251] knowing that he that turneth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

(3) Finally, we need to accept and believe Christ's doctrine of the meaning of manhood in order that it may lead us personally to God and a higher life.

You are infinitely better and more precious than the dumb beasts. You know it, you feel it; you are conscious that you belong to another world. And yet it may be that there are times when you forget it and live as if there was no God, no soul, no future life. Your ambitions are fixt upon the wealth that corrodes, the fame that fades. Your desires are toward the pleasures that pall upon the senses. You are bartering immortal treasure for the things which perish in the using. You are ignoring and despising the high meaning of your manhood. Who shall remind you of it, who shall bring you back to yourself, who shall lift you up to the level of your true being, unless it be the Teacher who spake as never man spake, the Master who brought life and immortality to light.

Come, then, to Christ, who can alone save you from the sin that defiles and destroys your manhood. Come, then, to Christ, who alone can make you good men and true, living in the power of an endless life. Come, then, to Christ, that you may have fellowship with Him and realize all it means to be a man.

END OF VOL. IX.

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IN TEN VOLUMES

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**÷**10-01 DRUMMOND

THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Henry Drummond, author and evangelist, was born at Stirling, Scotland, in 1851. His book, "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," caused much discussion and is still widely read. His "Ascent of Man" is regarded by many as his greatest work. The address reprinted here has appeared in hundreds of editions, and has been an inspiration to thousands of peoples all over the world. There is an interesting biography of Drummond by Professor George Adam Smith, his close friend and colaborer. He died in 1897.

DRUMMOND

1851—1897

THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD[1]

[Footnote 1: Reprinted by permission of James Pott & Co.]

*Tho I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love,& c.*—1Co 13:1-6

Everyone has asked himself the great question of antiquity as of the modern world: What is the *summum bonum*—the supreme good? You have life before you. Once only you can live it. What is the noblest object of desire, the supreme gift to covet?

We have been accustomed to be told that the greatest thing in the religious world is faith. That great word has been the key-note for centuries of the popular religion; and we have easily learned to look upon it as the greatest thing in the world. Well, we are wrong. If we have been told that, we may miss the mark. I have taken you, in the chapter which I have just read, to Christianity at its source; and there we have seen, "The greatest of these is love." It is not an oversight. Paul was speaking of faith just a moment before. He says, "If I have all faith, so that I can remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing." So far from forgetting, he deliberately contrasts them, "Now abideth faith, hope, love," and without a moment's hesitation the decision falls, "The greatest of these is love."

And it is not prejudice. A man is apt to recommend to others his own strong point. Love was not Paul's strong point. The observing student can detect a beautiful tenderness growing and ripening all through his character as Paul gets old; but the hand that wrote, "The greatest of these is love," when we meet it first, is stained with blood.

Nor is this letter to the Corinthians peculiar in singling out love as the *summum bonum*. The masterpieces of Christianity are agreed about it. Peter says, "Above all things have fervent love among yourselves." Above all things. And John goes further, "God is love." And you remember the profound remark which Paul makes elsewhere, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Did you ever think what he meant by that? In those days men were working their passage to heaven by keeping the ten commandments, and the hundred and ten other commandments which they had manufactured out of them. Christ said, I will show you a more simple way. If you do one thing, you will do these hundred and ten things, without ever thinking about them. If you love, you will unconsciously fulfil the whole law. And you can readily see for yourselves how that must be so. Take any of the commandments. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." If a man love God, you will not require to tell him that. Love is the fulfilling of that law. "Take not his name in vain." Would he ever dream of taking His name in vain if he loved Him? "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Would he not be too glad to have one day in seven to dedicate more exclusively to the object of his affection? Love would fulfil all these laws regarding God. And so, if he loved man, you would never think of telling him to honor his father and mother. He could not do anything else. It would be preposterous to tell him not to kill. You could only insult him if you suggested that he should not steal—how could he steal from those he loved? It would be superfluous to beg him not to bear false witness against his neighbor. If he loved him it would be the last thing he would do. And you would never dream of urging him not to covet what his neighbors had. He would rather that they possest it than himself. In this way "Love is the fulfilling of the law." It is the rule for fulfilling all rules, the new commandment for keeping all the old commandments, Christ's one secret of the Christian life.

Now, Paul had learned that; and in this noble eulogy he has given us the most wonderful and original account extant of the *summum bonum*. We may divide it into three parts. In the beginning of the short chapter, we have love contrasted; in the heart of it, we have love analyzed; toward the end, we have love defended as the supreme gift.

Paul begins contrasting love with other things that men in those days thought much of. I shall not attempt to go over those things in detail. Their inferiority is already obvious.

He contrasts it with eloquence. And what a noble gift it is, the power of playing upon the souls and wills of men, and rousing them to lofty purposes and holy deeds. Paul says, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." And we all know why. We have all felt the brazenness of words without emotion, the hollowness, the unaccountable unpersuasiveness, of eloquence behind which lies no love.

He contrasts it with prophecy. He contrasts it with mysteries. He contrasts it with faith. He contrasts it with charity. Why is love greater than faith? Because the end is greater than the means. And why is it greater than charity? Because the whole is greater than the part. Love is greater than faith, because the end is greater than the means. What is the use of having faith? It is to connect the soul with God. And what is the object of connecting man with God? That he may become like God. But God is love. Hence faith, the means, is in order to love, the end. Love, therefore, obviously is greater than faith. It is greater than charity, again, because the whole is greater than a part. Charity is only a little bit of love, one of the innumerable avenues of love, and there may even be, and there is, a great deal of charity without love. It is a very easy thing to toss a copper to a beggar on the street; it is generally an easier thing than not to do it. Yet love is just as often in the withholding. We purchase relief from the sympathetic feelings roused by the spectacle of misery, at the copper's cost. It is too cheap—too cheap for us, and often too dear for the beggar. If we really loved him we would either do more for him, or less.

Then Paul contrasts it with sacrifice and martyrdom. And I beg the little band of would-be missionaries—and I have the honor to call some of you by this name for the first time—to remember that tho you give your bodies to be burned, and have not love, it profits nothing—nothing! You can take nothing greater to the heathen world than the impress and reflection of the love of God upon your own character. That is the universal language. It will take you years to speak in Chinese; or in the dialects of India. From the day you land, that language of love, understood by all, will be pouring forth its unconscious eloquence. It is the man who is the missionary, it is not his words. His character is his message. In the heart of Africa, among the great lakes, I have come across black men and women who remembered the only white man they ever saw before—David Livingstone; and as you cross his footsteps in that dark continent, men's faces light up as they speak of the kind doctor who passed there years ago. They could not understand him; but they felt the love that beat in his heart. Take into your new sphere of labor, where you also mean to lay down your life, that simple charm, and your life-work must succeed. You can take nothing greater, you need take nothing less. It is not worth while going if you take anything less. You may take every accomplishment; you may be braced for every sacrifice; but if you give your body to be burned, and have not love, it will profit you and the cause of Christ nothing.

After contrasting love with these things, Paul, in three verses, very short, gives us an amazing analysis of what this supreme thing is. I ask you to look at it. It is a compound thing, he tells us. It is like light. As you have seen a man of science take a beam of light and pass it through a crystal prism, as you have seen it come out on the other side of the prism broken up into its component colors—red, and blue, and yellow, and violet, and orange, and all the colors of the rainbow—so Paul passes this thing, love, through the magnificent prism of his inspired intellect, and it comes out on the other side broken up into its elements. And in these few words we have what one might call the spectrum of love, the analysis of love. Will you observe what its elements are? Will you notice that they have common names; that they are virtues which we hear about every day, that they are things which can be practised by every man in every place in life; and how, by a multitude of small things and ordinary virtues, the supreme thing, the *summum bonum*, is made up?

The spectrum of love has nine ingredients:

Patience—"Love suffereth long."  
Kindness—"And is kind."  
Generosity—"Love envieth not."  
Humility—"Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."  
Courtesy—"Doth not behave itself unseemly."  
Unselfishness—"Seeketh not her own."  
Good temper—"Is not easily provoked."  
Guilelessness—"Thinketh no evil."  
Sincerity—"Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."

Patience, kindness, generosity, humility, courtesy, unselfishness, good temper, guilelessness, sincerity—these make up the supreme gift, the stature of the perfect man. You will observe that all are in relation to men, in relation to life, in relation to the known to-day and the near to-morrow, and not to the unknown eternity. We hear much of love to God; Christ spoke much of love to man. We make a great deal of peace with heaven; Christ made much of peace on earth. Religion is not a strange or added thing, but the inspiration of the secular life, the breathing of an eternal spirit through this temporal world. The supreme thing, in short, is not a thing at all, but the giving of a further finish to the multitudinous words and acts which make up the sum of every common day.

There is no time to do more than to make a passing note upon each of these ingredients. Love is patience. This is the normal attitude of love; love passive, love waiting to begin; not in a hurry; calm; ready to do its work when the summons comes, but meantime wearing the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Love suffers long; beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things. For love understands, and therefore waits.

Kindness. Love active. Have you ever noticed how much of Christ's life was spent in doing kind things—in merely doing kind things? Run over it with that in view, and you will find that He spent a great proportion of His time simply in making people happy, in doing good turns to people. There is only one thing greater than happiness in the world, and that is holiness; and it is not in our keeping; but what God has put in our power is the happiness of those about us, and that is largely to be secured by our being kind to them.

"The greatest thing," says some one, "a man can do for his Heavenly Father is to be kind to some of his other children." I wonder why it is that we are not all kinder than we are? How much the world needs it. How easily it is done. How instantaneously it acts. How infallibly it is remembered. How superabundantly it pays itself back—for there is no debtor in the world so honorable, so superbly honorable, as love. "Love never faileth." Love is success, love is happiness, love is life. "Love," I say, with Browning, "is energy of life."

For life, with all it yields of joy or wo  
And hope and fear,  
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love—  
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is.

Where love is, God is. He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God. God is love. Therefore love. Without distinction, without calculation, without procrastination, love. Lavish it upon the poor, where it is very easy; especially upon the rich, who often need it most; most of all upon our equals, where it is very difficult, and for whom perhaps we each do least of all. There is a difference between trying to please and giving pleasure. Give pleasure. Lose no chance of giving pleasure. For that is the ceaseless and anonymous triumph of a truly loving spirit. "I shall pass through this world but once. Any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

Generosity. "Love envieth not." This is love in competition with others. Whenever you attempt a good work you will find other men doing the same kind of work, and probably doing it better. Envy them not. Envy is a feeling of ill-will to those who are in the same line as ourselves, a spirit of covetousness and detraction. How little Christian work even is a protection against unchristian feeling! That most despicable of all the unworthy moods which cloud a Christian's soul assuredly waits for us on the threshold of every work, unless we are fortified with this grace of magnanimity. Only one thing truly needs the Christian envy, the large, rich, generous soul which "envieth not."

And then, after having learned all that, you have to learn this further thing, humility—to put a seal upon your lips and forget what you have done. After you have been kind, after love has stolen forth into the world and done its beautiful work, go back into the shade again and say nothing about it. Love hides even from itself. Love waives even self-satisfaction. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."

The fifth ingredient is a somewhat strange one to find in this *summum bonum*: Courtesy. This is love in society, love in relation to etiquette. "Love doth not behave itself unseemly." Politeness has been defined as love in trifles. Courtesy is said to be love in little things. And the one secret of politeness is to love. Love can not behave itself unseemly. You can put the most untutored persons into the highest society, and if they have a reservoir of love in their hearts, they will not behave themselves unseemly. They simply can not do it. Carlyle said of Robert Burns that there was no truer gentleman in Europe than the plowman-poet. It was because he loved everything—the mouse, the daisy, and all the things, great and small, that God had made. So with this simple passport he could mingle with any society, and enter courts and palaces from his little cottage on the banks of the Ayr. You know the meaning of the word "gentleman." It means a gentle man—a man who does things gently with love. And that is the whole art and mystery of it. The gentle man can not in the nature of things do an ungentle and ungentlemanly thing. The ungentle soul, the inconsiderate, unsympathetic nature can not do anything else. "Love doth not behave itself unseemly."

Unselfishness. "Love seeketh not her own." Observe: Seeketh not even that which is her own. In Britain the Englishman is devoted, and rightly, to his rights. But there come times when a man may exercise even the higher right of giving up his rights. Yet Paul does not summon us to give up our rights. Love strikes much deeper. It would have us not seek them at all, ignore them, eliminate the personal element altogether from our calculations. It is not hard to give up our rights. They are often external. The difficult thing is to give up ourselves. The more difficult thing still is not to seek things for ourselves at all. After we have sought them, bought them, won them, deserved them, we have taken the cream off them for ourselves already. Little cross then perhaps to give them up. But not to seek them, to look every man not on his own things, but on the things of others—*id opus est*. "Seekest thou great things for thyself?" said the prophet; "seek them not." Why? Because there is no greatness in things. Things can not be great. The only greatness is unselfish love. Even self-denial in itself is nothing, is almost a mistake. Only a great purpose or a mightier love can justify the waste. It is more difficult, I have said, not to seek our own at all, than, having sought it, to give it up. I must take that back. It is only true of a partly selfish heart. Nothing is a hardship to love, and nothing is hard. I believe that Christ's yoke is easy. Christ's "yoke" is just His way of taking life. And I believe it is an easier way than any other. I believe it is a happier way than any other. The most obvious lesson in Christ's teaching is that there is no happiness in having and getting anything, but only in giving. I repeat, there is no happiness in having or in getting, but only in giving. And half the world is on the wrong scent in the pursuit of happiness. They think it consists in having and getting, and in being served by others. It consists in giving and serving others. He that would be great among you, said Christ, let him serve. He that would be happy, let him remember that there is but one way—it is more blest, it is more happy, to give than to receive.

The next ingredient is a very remarkable one: good temper. "Love is not easily provoked." Nothing could be more striking than to find this here. We are inclined to look upon bad temper as a very harmless weakness. We speak of it as a mere infirmity of nature, a family failing, a matter of temperament, not a thing to take into very serious account in estimating a man's character. And yet here, right in the heart of this analysis of love, it finds a place; and the Bible again and again returns to condemn it as one of the most destructive elements in human nature.

The peculiarity of ill temper is that it is the vice of the virtuous. It is often the one blot on an otherwise noble character. You know men who are all but perfect, and women who would be entirely perfect, but for an easily ruffled, quick-tempered, or "touchy" disposition. This compatibility of ill temper with high moral character is one of the strangest and saddest problems of ethics. The truth is, there are two great classes of sins—sins of the body, and sins of the disposition. The Prodigal Son may be taken as a type of the first, the Elder Brother of the second. Now society has no doubt whatever as to which of these is the worse. Its brands fall without a challenge, upon the Prodigal. But are we right? We have no balance to weigh one another's sins, and coarser and finer are but human words; but faults in the higher nature may be less venial than those in the lower, and to the eye of Him who is love, a sin against love may seem a hundred times more base. No form of vice, not worldliness, not greed of gold, not drunkenness itself, does more to unchristianize society than evil temper. For embittering life, for breaking up communities, for destroying the most sacred relationships, for devastating homes, for withering up men and women, for taking the bloom off childhood, in short, for sheer gratuitous misery-producing power, this influence stands alone. Look at the Elder Brother, moral, hard-working, patient, dutiful—let him get all credit for his virtues—look at this man, this baby, sulking outside his own father's door. "He was angry," we read, "and would not go in." Look at the effect upon the father, upon the servants, upon the happiness of the guests. Judge of the effect upon the Prodigal—and how many prodigals are kept out of the kingdom of God by the unlovely character of those who profess to be inside? Analyze, as a study in temper, the thunder-cloud itself as it gathers upon the Elder Brother's brow. What is it made of? Jealousy, anger, pride, uncharity, cruelty, self-righteousness, touchiness, doggedness, sullenness—these are the ingredients of this dark and loveless soul. In varying proportions, also, these are the ingredients of all ill temper. Judge if such sins of the disposition are not worse to live in, and for others to live with, than sins of the body. Did Christ indeed not answer the question Himself when He said, "I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you." There is really no place in heaven for a disposition like this. A man with such a mood could only make heaven miserable for all the people in it. Except, therefore, such a man be born again, he can not, he simply can not, enter the kingdom of heaven. For it is perfectly certain—and you will not misunderstand me—that to enter heaven a man must take it with him.

You will see then why temper is significant It is not in what it is alone, but in what it reveals. This is why I take the liberty now of speaking of it with such unusual plainness. It is a test for love, a symptom, a revelation of an unloving nature at bottom. It is the intermittent fever which bespeaks unintermittent disease within; the occasional bubble escaping to the surface which betrays some rottenness underneath; a sample of the most hidden products of the soul dropt involuntarily when off one's guard; in a word, the lightning form of a hundred hideous and unchristian sins. For a want of patience, a want of kindness, a want of generosity, a want of courtesy, a want of unselfishness, are all instantaneously symbolized in one flash of temper.

Hence it is not enough to deal with the temper. We must go to the source, and change the inmost nature, and the angry humors will die away of themselves. Souls are made sweet not by taking the acid fluids out, but by putting something in—a great love, a new spirit, the spirit of Christ. Christ, the spirit of Christ, interpenetrating ours, sweetens, purifies, transforms all. This only can eradicate what is wrong, work a chemical change, renovate and regenerate, and rehabilitate the inner man. Will-power does not change men. Time does not change men. Christ does. Therefore, "Let that mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Some of us have not much time to lose. Remember, once more, that this is a matter of life or death. I can not help speaking urgently, for myself, for yourselves. "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." That is to say, it is the deliberate verdict of the Lord Jesus that it is better not to live than not to love. *It is better not to live than not to love.*

Guilelessness and sincerity may be dismissed almost without a word. Guilelessness is the grace for suspicious people. And the possession of it is the great secret of personal influence. You will find, if you think for a moment, that the people who influence you are people who believe in you. In an atmosphere of suspicion men shrivel up; but in that other atmosphere they expand, and find encouragement and educative fellowship. It is a wonderful thing that here and there in this hard, uncharitable world there should still be left a few rare souls who think no evil. This is the great unworldliness. Love "thinketh no evil," imputes no bad motive, sees the bright side, puts the best construction on every action. What a delightful state of mind to live in! What stimulus and benediction even to meet with it for a day! To be trusted is to be saved. And if we try to influence or elevate others, we shall soon see that success is in proportion to their belief of our belief in them. For the respect of another is the first restoration of the self-respect a man has lost; our ideal of what he is becomes to him the hope and pattern of what he may become.

"Love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." I have called this sincerity from the words rendered in the Authorized Version by "rejoiceth in the truth." And, certainly, were this the real translation, nothing could be more just. For he who loves will love truth not less than men. He will rejoice in the truth—rejoice not in what he has been taught to believe; not in this Church's doctrine or in that; not in this ism or in that ism; but "in the truth." He will accept only what is real; he will strive to get at facts; he will search for truth with an humble and unbiased mind, and cherish whatever he finds at any sacrifice. But the more literal translation of the Revised Version calls for just such a sacrifice for truth's sake here. For what Paul really meant is, as we there read, "Rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth," a quality which probably no one English word—and certainly not sincerity—adequately defines. It includes, perhaps more strictly, the self-restraint which refuses to make capital out of others' faults; the charity which delights not in exposing the weakness of others, but "covereth all things"; the sincerity of purpose which endeavors to see things as they are, and rejoices to find them better than suspicion feared or calumny denounced.

So much for the analysis of love. Now the business of our lives is to have these things in our characters. That is the supreme work to which we need to address ourselves in this world to learn love. Is life not full of opportunities for learning love? Every man and woman every day has a thousand of them. The world is not a playground; it is a schoolroom. Life is not a holiday, but an education. And the one eternal lesson for us all is how better we can love. What makes a man a good cricketer? Practise. What makes a man a good artist, a good sculptor, a good musician? Practise. What makes a man a good linguist, a good stenographer? Practise. What makes a man a good man. Practise. Nothing else. There is nothing capricious about religion. We do not get the soul in different ways, under different laws, from those in which we get the body and the mind. If a man does not exercise his arm he develops no biceps muscle; and if he does not exercise his soul, he acquires no muscle in his soul, no strength of character, no vigor of moral fiber nor beauty of spiritual growth. Love is not a thing of enthusiastic emotion. It is a rich, strong, manly, vigorous expression of the whole round Christian character—the Christlike nature in its fullest development. And the constituents of this great character are only to be built up by ceaseless practise.

What was Christ doing in the carpenter's shop? Practising. Tho perfect, we read that He learned obedience, and grew in wisdom and in favor with God. Do not quarrel, therefore, with your lot in life. Do not complain of its never-ceasing cares, its petty environment, the vexations you have to stand, the small and sordid souls you have to live and work with. Above all, do not resent temptation; do not be perplexed because it seems to thicken round you more and more, and ceases neither for effort nor for agony nor prayer. That is your practise. That is the practise which God appoints you; and it is having its work in making you patient, and humble, and generous, and unselfish, and kind, and courteous. Do not grudge the hand that is molding the still too shapeless image within you. It is growing more beautiful, tho you see it not, and every touch of temptation may add to its perfection. Therefore keep in the midst of life. Do not isolate yourself. Be among men, and among things, and among troubles, and difficulties, and obstacles. You remember Goethe's words: *Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille, Doch ein Character in dem Strom der Welt*. "Talent develops itself in solitude; character in the stream of life." Talent develops itself in solitude—the talent of prayer, of faith, of meditation, of seeing the unseen; character grows in the stream of the world's life. That chiefly is where men are to learn love.

How? Now how? To make it easier, I have named a few of the elements of love. But these are only elements. Love itself can never be defined. Light is a something more than the sum of its ingredients—a glowing, dazzling, tremulous ether. And love is something more than all its elements—a palpitating, quivering, sensitive, living thing. By synthesis of all the colors, men can make whiteness, they can not make light. By synthesis of all the virtues, men can make virtue, they can not make love. How then are we to have this transcendent living whole conveyed into our souls? We brace our wills to secure it. We try to copy those who have it. We lay down rules about it. We watch. We pray. But these things alone will not bring love into our nature. Love is an effect. And only as we fulfil the right condition can we have the effect produced. Shall I tell you what the cause is?

If you turn to the Revised Version of the First Epistle of John you will find these words: "We love because he first loved us." "We love," not "We love him." That is the way the old version has it, and it is quite wrong. "We love—because he first loved us." Look at that word "because." It is the cause of which I have spoken. "Because he first loved us," the effect follows that we love, we love Him, we love all men. We can not help it. Because He loved us, we love, we love everybody. Our heart is slowly changed. Contemplate the love of Christ, and you will love. Stand before that mirror, reflect Christ's character, and you will be changed into the same image from tenderness to tenderness. There is no other way. You can not love to order. You can only look at the lovely object, and fall in love with it, and grow into likeness to it. And so look at this perfect character, this perfect life. Look at the great sacrifice as He laid down Himself, all through life, and upon the cross of Calvary; and you must love Him. And loving Him, you must become like Him. Love begets love. It is a process of induction. Put a piece of iron in the presence of an electrified body, and that piece of iron for a time becomes electrified. It is changed into a temporary magnet in the mere presence of a permanent magnet, and as long as you leave the two side by side they are both magnets alike. Remain side by side with Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us, and you too will become a permanent magnet, a permanently attractive force; and like Him you will draw all men unto you; like Him you will be drawn unto all men. That is the inevitable effect of love. Any man who fulfils that cause must have that effect produced in him. Try to give up the idea that religion comes to us by chance, or by mystery, or by caprice. It comes to us by natural law, or by spiritual law, for all law is divine. Edward Irving went to see a dying boy once, and when he entered the room he just put his hand on the sufferer's head, and said, "My boy, God loves you," and went away. And the boy started from his bed, and called out to the people in the house, "God loves me! God loves me!" It changed that boy. The sense that God loved him overpowered him, melted him down, and began the creating of a new heart in him. And that is how the love of God melts down the unlovely heart in man, and begets in him the new creature, who is patient and humble and gentle and unselfish. And there is no other way to get it. There is no mystery about it. We love others, we love everybody, we love our enemies, because He first loved us.

Now I have a closing sentence or two to add about Paul's reason for singling out love as the supreme possession. It is a very remarkable reason. In a single word it is this: it lasts. "Love," urges Paul, "never faileth." Then he begins one of his marvelous lists of the great things of the day, and exposes them one by one. He runs over the things that men thought were going to last, and shows that they are all fleeting, temporary, passing away.

"Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail." It was the mother's ambition for her boy in those days that he should become a prophet. For hundreds of years God had never spoken by means of any prophet, and at that time the prophet was greater than the king. Men waited wistfully for another messenger to come, and hung upon his lips when he appeared as upon the very voice of God. Paul says, "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail." This book is full of prophecies. One by one they have "failed"; that is, having been fulfilled their work is finished; they have nothing more to do now in the world except to feed a devout man's faith.

Then Paul talks about tongues. That was another thing that was greatly coveted. "Whether there be tongues, they shall cease." As we all know, many, many centuries have passed since tongues have been known in this world. They have ceased. Take it in any sense you like. Take it, for illustration merely, as languages in general—a sense which was not in Paul's mind at all, and which tho it can not give us the specific lesson will point the general truth. Consider the words in which these chapters were written—Greek. It has gone. Take the Latin—the other great tongue of those days. It ceased long ago. Look at the Indian language. It is ceasing. The language of Wales, of Ireland, of the Scottish Highlands is dying before our eyes. The most popular book in the English tongue at the present time, except the Bible, is one of Dickens' works, his "Pickwick Papers." It is largely written in the language of London street-life, and experts assure us that in fifty years it will be unintelligible to the average English reader.

Then Paul goes further, and with even greater boldness adds, "Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." The wisdom of the ancients, where is it? It is wholly gone. A schoolboy today knows more than Sir Isaac Newton knew. His knowledge has vanished away. You put yesterday's newspaper in the fire. Its knowledge has vanished away. You buy the old editions of the great encyclopedias for a few cents. Their knowledge has vanished away. Look how the coach has been superseded by the use of steam. Look how electricity has superseded that, and swept a hundred almost new inventions into oblivion. One of the greatest living authorities, Sir William Thompson, said the other day, "The steam-engine is passing away." "Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." At every workshop you will see, in the back yard, a heap of old iron, a few wheels, a few levers, a few cranks, broken and eaten with rust. Twenty years ago that was the pride of the city. Men flocked in from the country to see the great invention; now it is superseded, its day is done. And all the boasted science and philosophy of this day will soon be old. But yesterday, in the University of Edinburgh, the greatest figure in the faculty was Sir James Simpson, the discoverer of chloroform. The other day his successor and nephew, Professor Simpson, was asked by the librarian of the university to go to the library and pick out the books on his subject that were no longer needed. And his reply to the librarian was this: "Take every textbook that is more than ten years old, and put it down in the cellar." Sir James Simpson was a great authority only a few years ago; men came from all parts of the earth to consult him; and almost the whole teaching of that time is consigned by the science of today to oblivion. And in every branch of science it is the same. "Now we know in part. We see through a glass darkly."

Can you tell me anything that is going to last? Many things Paul did not condescend to name. He did not mention money, fortune, fame; but he picked out the great things of his time, the things the best men thought had something in them, and brushed them peremptorily aside. Paul had no charge against these things in themselves. All he said about them was that they would not last. They were great things, but not supreme things. There were things beyond them. What we are stretches past what we do, beyond what we possess. Many things that men denounce as sins are not sins; but they are temporary. And that is a favorite argument of the New Testament. John says of the world, not that it is wrong, but simply that it "passeth away." There is a great deal in the world that is delightful and beautiful; there is a great deal in it that is great and engrossing; but it will not last. All that is in the world, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, are but for a little while. Love not the world therefore. Nothing that it contains is worth the life and consecration of an immortal soul. The immortal soul must give itself to something that is immortal. And the immortal things are: "Now abideth faith, hope, love, but the greatest of these is love."

Some think the time may come when two of these three things will also pass away—faith into sight, hope into fruition. Paul does not say so. We know but little now about the conditions of the life that is to come. But what is certain is that love must last. God, the eternal God, is love. Covet therefore that everlasting gift, that one thing which it is certain is going to stand, that one coinage which will be current in the universe when all the other coinages of all the nations of the world shall be useless and unhonored. You will give yourselves to many things, give yourselves first to love. Hold things in their proportion. *Hold things in their proportion.* Let at least the first great object of our lives be to achieve the character defended in these words, the character—and it is the character of Christ—which is built round love.

I have said this thing is eternal. Did you ever notice how continually John associates love and faith with eternal life? I was not told when I was a boy that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should have everlasting life." What I was told, I remember, was, that God so loved the world that, if I trusted in Him, I was to have a thing called peace, or I was to have rest, or I was to have joy, or I was to have safety. But I had to find out for myself that whosoever trusteth in Him—that is, whosoever loveth Him, for trust is only the avenue to love—hath everlasting life. The gospel offers a man life. Never offer men a thimbleful of gospel. Do not offer them merely joy, or merely peace, or merely rest, or merely safety; tell them how Christ came to give men a more abundant life than they have, a life abundant in love, and therefore abundant in salvation for themselves, and large in enterprise for the alleviation and redemption of the world. Then only can the gospel take hold of the whole of a man, body, soul, and spirit, and give to each part of his nature its exercise and reward. Many of the current gospels are addrest only to a part of man's nature. They offer peace, not life; faith, not love; justification, not regeneration. And men slip back again from such religion because it has never really held them. Their nature was not all in it. It offered no deeper and gladder life-current than the life that was lived before. Surely it stands to reason that only a fuller love can compete with the love of the world.

To love abundantly is to live abundantly, and to love forever is to live forever. Hence, eternal life is inextricably bound up with love. We want to live forever for the same reason that we want to live tomorrow. Why do we want to live tomorrow? It is because there is some one who loves you, and whom you want to see tomorrow, and be with, and love back. There is no other reason why we should live on than that we love and are beloved. It is when a man has no one to love him that he commits suicide. So long as he has friends, those who love him and whom he loves, he will live; because to live is to love. Be it but the love of a dog, it will keep him in life; but let that go and he has no contact with life, no reason to live. He dies by his own hand. Eternal life is to know God, and God is love. This is Christ's own definition. Ponder it. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Love must be eternal. It is what God is. On the last analysis, then, love is life. Love never faileth, and life never faileth, so long as there is love. That is the philosophy of what Paul is showing us; the reason why in the nature of things love should be the supreme thing—because it is going to last; because in the nature of things it is an eternal life. It is a thing that we are living now, not that we get when we die; that we shall have a poor chance of getting when we die unless we are living now. No worse fate can befall a man in this world than to live and grow old all alone, unloving and unloved. To be lost is to live in an unregenerate condition, loveless and unloved; and to be saved is to love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth already in God; for God is love.

Now I have all but finished. How many of you will join me in reading this chapter once a week for the next three months? A man did that once and it changed his whole life. You might begin by reading it every day, especially the verses which describe the perfect character. "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself." Get these ingredients into your life. Then everything that you do is eternal. It is worth doing. It is worth giving time to. No man can become a saint in his sleep; and to fulfil the condition required demands a certain amount of prayer and meditation and time, just as improvement in any direction, bodily or mental, requires preparation and care. Address yourselves to that one thing; at any cost have this transcendent character exchanged for yours. You will find as you look back upon your life that the moments that stand out, the moments when you have really lived, are the moments when you have done things in a spirit of love. As memory scans the past, above and beyond all the transitory pleasures of life, there leap forward those supreme hours when you have been enabled to do unnoticed kindnesses to those around about you, things too trifling to speak about, but which you feel have entered into your eternal life. I have seen almost all the beautiful things God has made; I have enjoyed almost every pleasure that He has planned for man; and yet as I look back I see standing out above all the life that has gone four or five short experiences when the love of God reflected itself in some poor imitation, some small act of love of mine, and these seem to be the things which alone of all one's life abide. Everything else in all our lives is transitory. Every other good is visionary. But the acts of love which no man knows about, or can ever know about, they never fail.

In the Book of Matthew, where the judgment day is depicted for us in the imagery of One seated upon a throne and dividing the sheep from the goats, the test of a man then is not, "How have I believed?" but "How have I loved?" The test of religion, the final test of religion, is not religiousness, but love. I say the final test of religion at that great day is not religiousness, but love; not what I have done, not what I have believed; not what I have achieved, but how I have discharged the common charities of life. Sins of commission in that awful indictment are not even referred to. By what we have not done, by sins of omission, we are judged. It could not be otherwise. For the withholding of love is the negation of the spirit of Christ, the proof that we never knew Him, that for us He lived in vain. It means that He suggested nothing in all our thoughts, that He inspired nothing in all our lives, that we were not once near enough to Him to be seized with the spell of His compassion for the world. It means that

I lived for myself, I thought for myself,  
For myself, and none beside—  
Just as if Jesus had never lived,  
As if He had never died.

It is the Son of Man before whom the nations of the world shall be gathered. It is in the presence of humanity that we shall be charged. And the spectacle itself, the mere sight of it, will silently judge each one. Those will be there whom we have met and helped; or there, the unpitied multitude whom we neglected or despised. No other witness need be summoned. No other charge than lovelessness shall be preferred. Be not deceived. The words which all of us shall one day hear sound not of theology but of life, not of churches and saints but of the hungry and the poor, not of creeds and doctrines but of shelter and clothing, not of Bibles and prayer-books but of cups of cold water in the name of Christ. Thank God the Christianity of today is coming nearer the world's need. Live to help that on. Thank God men know better, by a hairbreadth, what religion is, what God is, who Christ is, where Christ is. Who is Christ? He who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick. And where is Christ? Where?—Whoso shall receive a little child in My name receiveth Me. And who are Christ's? Every one that loveth is born of God.

**÷**10-02 WAGNER

I AM A VOICE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Charles Wagner, French Protestant pastor and moral essayist, was born in 1851 in Alsace. He is at present rector of the Reformed Church in Fontenay-Lous-Bois, in the Department of Seine. He received a comprehensive education at the universities of Paris, Strasburg and Goettingen, and after undertaking many cures in the provinces he went to Paris in 1882, where he occupied himself in a crusade against the degrading tendency of life, art and literature in certain of their Parisian phases. He has been a founder of several popular universities under the auspices of the Society for the Promotion of Morality. He has published many books, and "La Vie Simple" ("The Simple Life") was crowned by the French Academy and has been translated into many European languages, as well as into Japanese. Wagner has been styled the French Tolstoy, but he is less visionary and much more popular and practical in his views than the Russian mystic. The author of "The Simple Life" was greeted with many expressions of warm appreciation on his visit to the United States a few years ago. He was a guest at the Presidential mansion by invitation of President Roosevelt, who has highly commended "The Simple Life."

WAGNER

Born in 1851

I AM A VOICE[1]

[Footnote 1: From "The Gospel of Life," by Charles Wagner, by permission of the McClure Company, publishers. Copyright, 1905, by McClure, Phillips & Co.]

*I am the voice[2] of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord*.—Joh 1:23.

[Footnote 2: In the French version of the Scriptures it is "*a* voice," and it is necessary to retain this reading in order to render precisely Pastor Wagner's thought.—*Translator*.]

Nothing is rarer than a personality. So many causes, both interior and exterior, hinder the normal development of human beings, so many hostile forces crush them, so many illusions lead them astray, that there is required a concurrence of extraordinary circumstances to render possible the existence of an independent character. But when, God alone knows at the cost of what efforts and of what happy accidents, a vigorous and original personality has been able to unfold, nothing is rarer than not to see it degenerate into a mere personage. History teaches us that men exceptional in will and energy almost always become obstructive and mischievous. They commence by serving a cause and end by taking possession of it so completely that, from being its servants, they become its masters. Instead of being men of a cause, they make the cause that of a man, and they degrade the most sacred realities to the paltry level of their ambitious egoism.

Thus, when we meet with strong natures, endowed with the secret of leadership and command, yet able to resist the subtle temptation to which so many of the finer spirits have succumbed, it behooves us to bow and to salute in them a greatness before which all that it is customary to call by that name fades into nothingness.

If ever soul encompassed this greatness, it was that of John the Baptist. John is little known. Of him there remain only a few traits of physiognomy and a few snatches of discourse. But these snatches are full of character, these traits possess a sculptural relief; just as with broken trunks of columns, with fragments of stones, all that is left of temples that were once the marvels of ancient art, they enable us to conceive of the grandeur of the whole edifice to which they once belonged. John was at once strong and humble, energetic and self-detached. Never has an individuality so well-tempered been less personal. Identifying himself completely with his rôle as precursor, he found perfect happiness in effacing himself in the glory of Christ, just as the dawn disappears in the splendors of the morning.

History is full of precursors who impede and withstand those whom they had first announced. When the time comes to retire and to give way to those for whom they have prepared the way, they do not have the courage to sacrifice themselves. They go on forever, and often become the worst enemies of the cause they have defended. John knew nothing of these failings which are the perpetual scandal in the development of the kingdom of God. Not only did he say, speaking of Jesus: "He must increase, but I must decrease," but he made all his acts conform to these words.

"This my joy is therefore fulfilled," he said, as he dwelt upon the first advances of the gospel, and he exprest thus a sweetness of sacrifice forever unknown to personal souls that remain vulgar in spite of their genius.

Finally, John described himself metaphorically in that inimitable prophetic speech which explains in full the idea that he formed for himself of his ministry. Under the sway of a morbid curiosity, the crowd, more perplexed by the appearance of the worker than attentive to the work, prest him with questions. Who then art thou, mysterious preacher? Art thou one of the old prophets of Israel, escaped from his rocky tomb? Or art thou perchance He whom we await? No, answered John, I am neither one of the prophets nor the Messiah himself, I am no one: I am a voice!

I am a voice! This is not a formula that sums up the vocation of the prophets solely, or of all those who, in the pulpit or in the tribune, by the pen or by the public discourse, exert an influence upon their contemporaries. These words are addrest to every one. They define for every man, the humble yet great duty of truth that he is called to fulfil in his sphere and according to the measure of his ability. At the epoch in which we live, such a device is so applicable to the time being, so pressing, so needful for us to hear, that it is wise to engrave it in the very foreground of our consciousness.

To become a voice we must begin by keeping still. We must listen. The whole world is a tongue of which the spirit is the meaning. God engraved its fiery capitals in the immensity of the heavens, and traced its delicate smaller letters on the flower, on the grass, on the human soul, as rich, as incommensurable as the abysses of space. Whosoever you are, brother, before letting yourself utter one word, lend your ear to that voice that seeks you, I might almost add, that implores you. Listen!—Listen to the confused murmur that arises from the human depths, and that, comprising in it all tears, all torments, as well as all joys, becomes the sigh of creation.

Listen in your heart to remorse, the sad and poignant echo that sin, traversing life, leaves everywhere upon its passage. Shut your ear to no sound, however unobtrusive, however sad, it may be. There are voices that issue from the tombs, others that call to you from out the abyss of past ages; repel them not, listen! One and all, they have something to say to you.

But do not be content with listening to man. Pierce nature, and, in visible creation as in the invisible sanctuary of souls, watch attentively for the revelation of Him whose eternal thought every living thing, humble or sublime, translates after its own fashion. He speaks to you in the dark nights and in the bright light of dawn, in the infinite radiance of the worlds beyond all reckoning, and in the humble stalk that awaits, in the valley bottom, its ray of light and its drop of dew. Listen!—If there is anguish in the voice of poor humanity, there are in great nature profound words of soothing, of hope. Look at the flower in the fields, listen to the birds in the skies! After the distrest voices that perturb you, you shall know the voices that relieve and console. There shall befall you that which befell the nun whose memory is preserved for us in the old legends. Listening to the forest voices she had gone, following them always, as far as the thick solitudes where nothing any longer comes to trouble the collected soul. There, in the shade of a tree where she had seated herself, she heard a song till then unknown to her ears. It was the song of the mystic bird. This song said, in marvelous modulations, all that man thinks and feels, all that he suffers, all that he seeks, all that falls short of fulfilment for him. It summed up in harmonies the destinies of living beings and the immense pity that is at the root of things. Softly, on light, strong wings, it lifted the soul to the heights where it looks upon reality. And the nun, her hands clasped, listened, listened without end, forgetting earth, sky, time, forgetting herself. She listened for centuries without ever growing tired, finding in the song that charmed her a sweetness forever new. Dear and truthful image of what the soul experiences when, mute, as respectful as a child and as ready of belief, it listens in the universal silence to the voices that translate for it the things that are eternal!

All those who have become voices have traveled this way. At Patmos or in the desert, on Horeb or on Sinai, they have trembled with fright or started with joy. But everything has its time. There comes a day when all voices, soft or terrible, that man has heard, grow still, to let henceforth only one be heard, which cries to him: "Go! go now and be a witness of the things you have heard! Go! I send you forth as lambs among wolves! Go! I send you toward men whose brow is harsh, whose heart is wicked, but fear nothing, I shall embolden your face, I shall give you a heart of brass and a forehead of diamond."

When that moment has come, one must, in order to remain faithful to his mission, remember that after all he is only a voice. Truth does not belong to us, it is we who belong to truth! Wo to him who possesses it and treats it as something that belongs to himself. Happy is he who is possest by it! No preference, no kinship, no sympathy counts here. Alas! it is not thus that men understand it. It is for this reason that they degrade truth and that it becomes without power in their hands. Instead of winging its way heavenward in vigorous flight, it crawls along the earth, like an eagle whose wings have been broken. Nothing is sadder than to see how those who ought to lend their voice to truth, turn it to their own uses and play with it. The voice, human speech, that sacred organ, whose whole worth lies in sincerity, has in all ages been the victim of odious profanations. But in this age it is more than ever attainted. The evil from which it suffers is defilement.

At certain epochs a word was as good as a man. It was an act total, supreme, guaranteed by the whole of life. There was no need to sign, to stamp, to legalize. Speech was held between friends and enemies alike, more sacred than any sanctuary, and man maintained it, with the obscure but just sentiment that it is at the base of society, and that if words lose their value, there is no longer any society possible. Later the written word was considered sacred. And coming nearer to our own day, we have been able to see the masses, guided ever by that quite legitimate sentiment of the holiness of speech, regard everything printed as gospel truth. Those times are no more. We have lied too much, by the living word, the pen, and the press. We have said and printed too much that is light, false, wittingly disfigured. Armed with an instrumentality that multiplies thought and spreads it broadcast to the four corners of the earth with a rapidity unknown to our fathers, we have made use of it, for the most part, to extend slander more widely and to cause a greater amount of doubtful intelligence to swarm upon the earth. So well have we spun speech out in all our mouths, so thoroughly have we deprived it of its proper nature and caused it to become sophisticated, that it is no longer of the least value. The confidence of the masses in authority, which is one of the slowest and most difficult conquests of humanity, we have lost like a thing of no worth. They no longer say to any one who now lifts up his voice: Who are you? But: What end have you in view? What party do you serve? By what interest are you led? By whom have you been bought? That there may be a sacred truth, loved, respected, adored; a truth that is worth more than life, to which one may give himself wholly and with happiness—this idea diverts the cynics and makes those whom the cruel experiences of life have rendered distrustful, shake their heads. If ever an epoch has needed to rehabilitate human speech, it is our own. What good are we if it is good for nothing, since it is at the root of all our institutions?

Who will give it back its potency?—They who will know how to resign themselves to being but a voice!

Permit me to bring home to you, by means of a very modest example, what man may gain in force by being but a voice. Look at that clock. When the hour has come, it marks it. Whether it be the hour of birth or of death, the hour of joy or of sorrow, the hour of longed-for meetings, or of heart-breaking farewells, the clock strikes that hour. It is only a mechanism, but it is scrupulously exact, it measures that time which descends to us drop by drop from the bosom of eternity, and when the hammer falls on the brazen bell, the entire universe confirms what it announces. The suns and the worlds mark at this very moment, in the immortal light, the same point of time that is indicated below on earth, some starless night, by the humblest village clock. We must imitate the clock. In full consciousness, through absolute submission, man should make himself the humble instrument of truth, and go through supreme servitude to supreme power. When he does not do this, he is only an imperfect timepiece. But when, bound by his word, chained to the truth that he serves, he has become its slave, and when, without hate, without preference, without human fear, without other desire than that of being faithful, he proclaims what is just, true, right, good, the rocks are less firm on their base than this man: for he is a voice!

A voice is, if you like, a slight thing. Stilled as soon as it awakened, it is heard only by a few and for a little while. It is said that singers are greatly to be pitied, since posterity can not hear them. Nothing of them remains. And yet how many marvelous forces underlie this apparent fragility! The thunder has its roar, the breeze has its tenderness, but their power is transitory; they are sounds and not voices. A voice is a living sound, it is the vibrant echo of a soul. It is doubtless that most fragile thing, a breath, but joined to that which is most durable, spirit. And it is for this reason that, if the instant when it is born sees it die, centuries of centuries can not destroy its effect. The truth which is in it confers immortality upon it, and when this voice escapes from a human breast, he who speaks, sings or weeps, feels indeed that eternity has concluded an alliance with him. Peeling his fragile testimony confirmed by all that endures and can not die, he says with Christ: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away!"

The holy labors entrusted to the voice can never be counted. Because of the very fact that it lives and that it contains a soul, it is the great awakener, the incomparable evoker. When, obscure still and unknown, a thought distracts us and slumbers at the bottom of our being, a voice is all that is needed to make it emerge into the light. With maternal tenderness, the voice borrows all the energies of incubation, to infuse with warmth, to fortify, the nascent germs of spiritual life. In it lives and breaks forth what, in the evolving soul, tends feebly and furtively toward the flowering. In short, the voice, speech, the tongue, condenses in a single focus incalculable quantities of rays.

Only think of the efforts that human thought must have made to reach that clearness that enables it to become speech. Every word that you utter without giving it a thought is a monument toward which centuries and multitudes of minds have wrought. A world is contained in it. Poor words! one man decks himself out in them, another wraps himself up in them, but how few know of the warmth of life and love that has put them into the world that they may be forever the witnesses of the past for posterity! No matter, for when they have been made sufficiently to resound like an inanimate cymbal, there comes an hour when they revive under the breath of a true and living being, and they depart to spread life. Then they fulfil their rôle as educators. To educate is to explain a being to itself. And this is the benign service that the voice performs. It tells us what we think better than we can ourselves. It unbinds the chains of the captive soul and permits it to take its flight. Happy the child, happy the young man who meets with a voice to decipher him to himself! This is what Christ did in those blest hours when He reunited the children of His people, as a bird reunites its brood under its wings!

What the voice does in detail, it continues to accomplish on the larger scale. At certain moments societies seem a prey to a sort of chaos. A number of contrary forces clash and perturb them, as they perturb and rend individual souls. Men seek, feeling their way, a road that seems to elude them. A crowd of spirits, by the very fact of their contemporaneity, feel themselves distracted and agitated all in the same way. Confusedly and provoked by the same sufferings they elaborate the same ideal and formulate the same desires. But they all wander along twilit paths on the side of the night where the light seems to be breaking through, without, however, being able to pierce the darkness. These are the preliminary agonies of the great historical epochs. Then let a being more powerful, more vital, an elect soul that has passed through this phase and conquered these shadows, become incarnate in a voice! That is enough. The personal word which expresses the soul of that epoch and responds to its needs, is found. It sounds through the world like a new *fiat lux*! Everywhere, in those who listen to it and feel secret affinities with it in themselves, it constitutes a magnificent revelation of light and life. All these hearts vibrate in unison with one; and, gathering up all these scattered notes into a single harmony, he who expresses the sentiments of all, renders an account of the wonderful power of which he is the instrument. No, it is no longer a man that speaks: what sounds upon his lips, is the whole soul of a people, is a whole epoch, is a new world.

A voice is also that inimitable sigh, that pure sob which tells of grief because it issues from a suffering heart. It is pity and compassion, it is the angel of God arriving among us on the caressing breath, a messenger of mercy, and pouring into the tortured depths of our poor heart its healing dew. It is Jesus saying to Mary, and, in her, to all those whom grief afflicts: "Why weepest thou?" It is David singing: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" It is Isaiah crying: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem!"

A voice is, on the solitary path where our will strays, the faithful shepherd calling his sheep; it is every sign, even tho it be made by the hand of a child, which in the days of forgetfulness and unrestraint, suddenly wakes us and warns us that our feet skirt the abysses.

Then, after the work of education, of creation, of pity, comes the work of severity, of punishment, of destruction. The voice has been compared to a sword. Like it, it flames and punishes. A voice is Nathan rising up before the criminal king and calling down upon his head the avenging lightning of this word: "Thou art the man!" The sword attacks, destroys, but it defends, also, and this is its fairest work. Never is the voice more touching than when it is lifted in favor of the weak, and, when, suddenly, in the midst of the iniquities of brute force that it denounces, marks with its stigma, it causes justice to shine forth and the truth to be felt, in the holy soul-traversing thrill, that God Himself is there and that His hour has come!

A voice has its echo. When this echo is sympathetic, it is endowed with the sweetest recompense and obliterates the memory of many sorrows. But this echo is often hostile. It arises from wrath and is increased by hatred. Then it is resistance, riot, that rumbles. It is the passions and the scourged vices that twist and bellow like deer under the lash of the trainer. How many times, O, faithful voices, souls of peace and truth, has the spirit that animates you driven you to these fearful encounters—you who have heard in the silence of your hearts the holy verities and who know their worth, you are obliged to go bearing them in the face of menace, of mockery, of trembling rage where they seem to us like Daniel in the lion's den! A terrible ordeal! but one before which the testifying voices have never recoiled. Luther, who knew the emotions of the great battles of the spirit where one man is alone in the face of a thousand, where tinder the growing clamors and the cries of death … a voice struggles like a torch in a tempest, has given to the servants of truth a counsel that is the alpha and omega of their austere mission. When they have said all, done all, essayed all, put all their being and all their love into the proclamation of what they have to announce, then, he says, "let them be ready to be hooted at and spat upon!" And not only should they be ready but they should accept this lot with happiness. Christ says to them: "Happy are they that are outraged and persecuted for the sake of justice!"

Alas, the rudest proof for him who speaks the truth is not to arouse indignation. That, at least, is a result, and however sad it may be, it bears witness to him who has spoken. Certain protests, despite their fury, are a sort of involuntary homage. The supreme trial for a voice is indifference. When John called himself a voice in the wilderness, he alluded to that external solitude where his voice was raised. But this solitude, on certain days was full of life and the gospel cites for our benefit certain facts which prove that the words with which it resounded were not lost in the empty spaces. They moved and struck home from the humblest regions of society to the exalted spheres, to the royal throne itself. John garnered love and hate, blessing and curse, the desirable fruits of all energetic action. Since that time and before, more than one voice has been able, applying them to itself, to give to those prophetic words, "voices in the wilderness," another very melancholy significance. The supreme image of despair is a voice that is lost in the silence, as is lost, in the bosom of dead solitudes, the call that no one hears, for succor that will never come.

After having spoken of the different voices, of their power, of their effects, let us bestow a compassionate remembrance upon the lost voices, on those who were or who are still, in the most lamentable sense of that word, voices in the wilderness.—To be a man, a soul, to have felt the lighting of a holy flame within oneself; to love truth and justice; to feel the pain of contact with a life ruled over by falsehood and violence; at the heart of this poignant contrast between a divine ideal and a heart-rending reality, to receive from his conscience, from God himself, the command to speak; to put his life into this work, to renounce everything to be only a voice … and after all this to see himself forsaken, neglected, despised! To wear oneself out slowly in a strife obscure and without issue; to perish without having aroused either sympathy or opposition, to disappear into oblivion before disappearing in the tomb … ah! all the furies, all the bloody reprisals, the dungeons, the gibbets, the massacres, all the martyrdoms by which human wickedness strove to stifle the voice of the just, are less horrible than this extermination by apathy.

And yet, not to press things to this cruel extremity, but remembering the parable of the sower, where so many seeds are lost for the few that take root and flourish, ought we not be willing to be, in the greatest number of cases, voices in the wilderness, only too happy if our thankless labors are recompensed elsewhere by an encouraging echo? Have we not here, on the contrary, the image of human life? we are always aspiring toward an ideal more elevated than that which we realize. We are always precursors, and it becomes us to accept humbly what that destiny holds both of pain and of beauty.

Besides, do we know whether voices that seem to be lost, are so in reality? Are the stones that are hidden in the foundations of a beautiful edifice, and thanks to which the whole fabric is supported, lost because no one sees them? In the same way it must be that many voices are forgotten apparently, until such time as, added together and finding in each other mutual support, they end by emerging into the full light of day.

To wait and to work; to do his duty, and leave the rest to God; to journey through life, gathering truth into his heart, and then into the family, the Church, the city; to be its faithful voice; this is the best use a man can make of his mortal days. And should it be your lot to be voices in the wilderness; among your children deaf to your cries; among your compatriots insensible to your warnings, console yourselves. Greater than you have suffered the same fate. Unite yourself in spirit to their company and be happy to suffer with them. At least as you come to understand more and more from day to day that truth can not perish, and that it is potent even on feeble lips; you will establish in your hearts faith in the world that endures, and you will be less astonished and less disconcerted when you see the face of this world pass away. You will live by the sacred fire cherished in your souls. Let your furrow close, your hope will not perish! Like Moses on Nebo, you will enter into the silence, having filled your dying eyes with the spectacle of the promised land!

**÷**10-03 GORDON

MAN IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

George Angier Gordon, Congregational divine, was born in Scotland, 1853. He was educated at Harvard, and has been minister of Old South Church, Boston, Massachusetts, since 1884. His pulpit style is conspicuous for its directness and forcefulness, and he is considered in a high sense the successor of Philip Brooks. He was lecturer in the Lowell Institute Course, 1900; Lyman Beecher Lecturer, Yale, 1901; university preacher to Harvard, 1886-1890; to Yale, 1888-1901; Harvard overseer. He is the author of "The Witness to Immortality" (1897), and many other works.

GORDON

Born in 1853

MAN IN THE IMAGE OF GOD[1]

[Footnote 1: Printed here by kind permission of Dr. Gordon.]

*And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him*.—Gen 1:27.

It must never be forgotten that all truth lies in the order of life itself. There is a natural environment, and in it have been, real and mighty from the beginning, the laws and forces which science has but recently discovered. Copernicus discovered the true order of the solar system; but the order itself has been there from the morning of time. Newton discovered the force of gravity, but that force has been in the natural situation since creation. Chemists have been able to make out sixty-five or sixty-six irreducible elements; but while chemistry is young, the elements are everlasting. Electricity is the discovery of yesterday, and yet it has been at play in man's environment from the foundation of the world. The continuity of life, from the lowest forms of it up to man, has been a fact from the first; but not until this century has the fact meant anything. Few things impress the imagination more powerfully than the sense of the forces that have surrounded man from his first appearance on the earth, and that have been noted and utilized only in recent times. There stands the immemorial force, and men have had no eyes for it till yesterday. Thoughtful men begin to look upon the environment in a new spirit. They begin to walk within it in amazement and hope. All the forces of the material universe are here, and only a few things about them have been discovered. The natural environment is rich beyond all calculation or dream; it is exhaustless. Here in the field of man's life is the alluring object of science. Here in the natural situation are the everlasting and benign energies that wait to be discovered and prest into human service. There is a human environment, and all the fundamental truth about man has been present in it from the start. Moses gave his nomadic brethren the ten words; but they were written in the human heart ages before they were inscribed upon stone. The great Hebrew prophets gave to the world the vision of one God, His righteous government of the world, and His election of a single race for the service of all the races; but God and His government and His method in the education of man were real and mighty before Amos, and Hosea, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah beheld them. Christ revealed the Father through His own divine Sonhood; but the Fatherhood of God is an eternal truth. Nowhere is the divineness of Christ more obvious than in the ease and adequacy with which He, and He alone, is able to read the meaning of the human situation. Christ as Prophet, as Seer and Discoverer, is most amazing to the most gifted. His eye for fact is divine. He notes the falling sparrow, and at once reaches the universal fatherly foresight and control of God. His consuming vision goes everywhere, turning the hidden truth of life into light and joy in His parables. His teaching is revelation, the unveiling of the aboriginal divine order. He makes nothing; He reveals what God made. And when He increases life it is by showing the path to that increase ordained of God, insight and obedience. The will of God is the final law for heaven and earth; the vision of it and surrender to it are the path of life. Here we touch the depth of the old faith. God the Father creates, and the Son reveals. The order of the Spirit is eternal; the revelation of it is in time and for sense-bound men. Here we see in a mirror and dimly; there they behold face to face. And Christ drew forth into light the divine significance of man's life, as God originally made it; and that divine meaning of existence thus drawn out is the gospel of Christ.

In the text we are carried by a true seer back of all traditions, behind all conventions, beyond all beliefs about life to life itself as it lies in its own freshness and fulness. We are led to look upon human life newly made, still warm with the touch of the creative hand, and yet containing in it that very hour all that the Lord eventually drew out of it. If the first man had understood himself he would have been essentially a Christian. And therefore I propose to evolve from the original human situation, as described in the text, the outline of what I take to be a great faith.

I. If the first man had understood himself, he would have seen in himself the interpreter of nature. From the first command, "Let there be light," to the final, "Let us make man in our image," there are two things to be noted. There is continuity in the creative process, and there is an ascension from the lower to the higher. The first duty of our self-comprehending Adam will be to look backward. He will look across the wide field whose farther limit lies in cloud and whose hither border touches his feet. He will survey the creative process that has led up to and that has come to its climax in him. And as he thinks of himself as the product of nature, must he not conclude that as reason is the result, reason must have preceded the process and governed it? Humanity is the issue; therefore humanity must have planned the issue and secured it. Back of this march of life, behind this developing and ascending order, out in the darkness, before the light was created, there was the Mind that accounts for man. Thus the last becomes the first, the man that ends the creative process sees that a human God must have preceded the process.

This truth is one of the greater insights of the time. The continuity of life, from the lowest forms to the highest, has received during the last fifty years an unparalleled recognition. So, too, with the fact of the steady ascent of life. Not indeed in a literal and yet in a true way, the modern scientific conception is a wonderful parallel to the sublime hymn with which the Bible opens. In the beginning was the fire-mist. In that fire-mist began the process of development. It became worlds, systems innumerable, a stellar universe, and within this whole a solar order, an earth beating forward in preparation for the advent of life. Life when it came flowed into countless forms. From the shapeless mass it pushed on upward into successively higher and finer structures, ever aspiring toward man. Ages preceded the advent of man. There were upon the part of life ages of preparation, ages of climbing. Before life rose the mountain of the Lord; it must be scaled and its summit reached before man could put in an appearance. But the hour for which the whole cosmos had been travailing in pain could not be indefinitely delayed. In the fulness of time, as the tree bursts into bloom, as the tide rolls to the flood, as the light breaks in through the gates of morning, nature came to her supreme expression in man. Man is not here on his own strength. He is not in the bosom of things unaccounted for. He is the child of nature; her last act, her highest product, the best that is in her power to bring forth, the son in whose wondrous being her own motherhood is to undergo total transformation.

That is the modern scientific conception; look for a moment at its greatness. Man as final issue of nature must turn round and look backward. He must look down the long line of life to the far-off first beginning. He must pass beyond the earliest forms in which the vital movement began to the mysterious, formless, eternal power behind all. And it is here that nature is lifted into a new character by her human product. In that eternal power there must be a reason to account for man's reason, conscience to account for his conscience, love to account for his love, spirit to explain his spirit. Nature as mother must become spirit to account for the soul of her son. The flower shows what was in the seed, the oak is the revelation of what was in the heart of the acorn; and man as the last and best outcome of nature is the authoritative expression of the power that is behind nature. Thus the mind that is the final product of nature discovers the mind that is the source of nature. Man seeking the origin of his being finds it on the farther side of nature in One like unto a son of man. He learns later to distinguish between the reality and the image, between God and godlike man. And then a wireless telegraphy is established between them across the vast untraveled distances of nature. The life near to God can not send the tokens of His inmost character upward to man; the brute life near to man can not carry downward to God man's thoughts and hopes. The animal life that stretches in an expanse so wide between the Creator and His best work can not connect the human and the divine. But when the spirit to which nature comes in man has once seen the Spirit in which nature must begin, then the wireless telegraphy comes into play. The heart, that is the last product of life, sends out its mysterious currents, its aspirations, its gladness, its grief, and its hope; and these repeat themselves in the great heart of God. And forth from the Spirit behind nature issue the messages of recognition, of sympathy, of intimated ideals and endless incentive, that register themselves in the soul of man. Nature is a solid, sympathetic, and now and then glorified, and yet dumb, highway between God and man. Her beauty belongs to the Spirit that she does not know, and it speaks to the Spirit that is older than her child. She is a mute, unconscious sacrament between the infinite reason and the finite, a path for the lightning that plays backward and forward between the soul of man and the soul of God. The great primal fact in the human environment is that man is the interpreter of nature. In this character of interpreter of nature he receives his first message from God, and makes his first response.

II. The second fact in the human situation is that religion is the interpreter of man. As man looks backward he beholds beyond nature a face like his own, only diviner; and ever afterward the noblest aspiration of his soul is to win the smile of that face and to escape its frown. Our self-comprehending Adam would confess that he knew himself only when he noted within him the lover of the infinite. And here history leads the way. You look into "The Book of the Dead," and you see what high and serious things religion meant for the early Egyptian. The pyramids are monuments to religion. The art of the ancient races was chiefly homage to the divine. The Athenian Parthenon would never have been but for faith in the goddess that shielded the city. Greek art, the greatest art in the world, is primarily a tribute to faith. Those marvelous statues were likenesses of the gods; those incomparable temples were dwelling-places for the gods. Religion is in the warp and woof of the world's love and sorrow, its art and literature, its patriotism and history. The life of man is the cathedral window, and religion is the colored figure that stands in it. The two are inseparable. You can not abolish the figure without breaking the window; you can not banish religion without destroying humanity. Try to explain Homer's world without Olympus; account for Mohammedanism and make no reference to faith; write the history of the Middle Ages and take no note of the "Divine Comedy"; sum up the meaning of Persian and Indian civilization and pay no heed to religion; show what Hebraism is and leave unnoticed its consciousness of God, and you will create a parallel to the philosopher who should endeavor to trace the significance of human life apart from man's passion for the infinite.

Here then is the key to manhood. He is a being over whom the unseen wields an endless fascination. There is in him a thirst that nothing can quench save the living God. His chief attribute is an attribute of wo, an incapacity for content within the limits of the visible and temporal. His differentiation from the brute is at this point absolute. Between man and the lower orders of life there is a line of likeness; there is also from the beginning a line of unlikeness. In physical structure man is both similar and dissimilar to the animal. As bread-winner and economist he is kindred and he is in contrast to the creatures below him. In the home, in society, and in the state in which both home and society are set and protected, the line of likeness grows less and less distinct, while the line of unlikeness becomes bolder and plainer. It is impossible to deny observation to the dog and impossible to grant to it science. The instinct for beauty belongs to the bird, but art in the full sense of the word, as the self-conscious expression of beautiful ideas, is no part of its life. One can not decline to note method in the existence of the brute, and one is compelled to withold from it philosophy. In these higher activities the line of likeness between man and the animal is of the faintest description; while the line of contrast becomes more and more pronounced and significant. When we come to the summit of man the likeness vanishes utterly. Among the lower life of the world there is no *Magnificat*, there is no *Nunc Dimittis*; the beginning and the end do not link themselves to the Eternal. The brute has no religion, no temple, no priest, no Bible, no sacrament of love between itself and the invisible. The tower of this church tells at once, and from afar, that it is a church. Near at hand, much besides the tower tells the same story. There is the cruciform foundation; there is the structure of its walls. There is the outside with distinct note; there is the inside with its joyous beauty. Look at the church closely and you need no tower to proclaim what it is. And yet the tower is its most conspicuous witness: at a distance it is the sole witness. Religion is similarly the eminent token that man belongs to a divine order. The basis of his being in sacrifice should repeat the same tale. Civilization as a struggle after social righteousness should announce the same fact. Man's thoughts and feelings, and their manifold and marvelous expression in art, in institutions, and in systems of opinion, utter the same testimony. And yet the tower of his being, high soaring and far seen, is his feeling for the invisible. You do not know man until you behold him worshiping.

III. The third fact in our human situation is that Christianity is the interpretation of religion. You see the devout old Jew, Simeon, who met Jesus as His mother brought Him for the first time into the temple; and there you behold the old faith interpreted by the new. All that was best in the Hebrew religion is conserved and carried higher in the Christian religion. Everywhere the devoutest Jews were conscious of wants which the national faith did not meet. They waited for the consolation of Israel, and when Christ came he supplied satisfactions which Hebraism could not supply. Christianity commended itself to the disciples of Christ because it seemed to be their own faith at its best. They were carried over into it by the logic of their previous belief and their deep human need. Paul sought righteousness as a Jew; when he became a Christian, righteousness was still his great quest. And Christianity commended itself to him because the national ideal of righteousness was set before him in a sublimer form, and because a new inspiration came to him in his pursuit of it. The old immemorial goal of human endeavor was exalted, and the everlasting incentives were filled with the freshness of a divine life. Thus the religious Jew, when Christ came, was like a convalescent patient. The process of recovery was going on, but in a way that was discouragingly slow. The longing was for the higher altitudes of the spirit, for the pure and bracing atmosphere of some exalted leader, for an environment richer in healing ministry and in restoring power. That longing Christ met. He carried His believing countrymen on to the heights. He surrounded them with the freshness of His own spirit. He put over them a new sky. He took them into a new environment, rich with His truth and grace, tender with infinite sympathy, stored with the forces that work for spiritual vigor, filled with the love of His Father. Ask Peter or James or John or Paul, ask any believing Jew and he will tell you that Christianity is simply the consummation of his faith as a Jew.

The gospel moves along the same line of self-verification with reference to all the great religions. The Persian believes in eternal light, and he hates the contending darkness. Christianity says that God is light, and that in Him is no darkness at all; that Jesus is the Light of the world, and that whosoever followeth Him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The Greek was full of humanity, and he could not help making his gods and goddesses simply larger and more beautiful men and women. What is the soul of that amazingly beautiful and seemingly fantastic mythology of the Greeks? Why do they worship Apollo and Aphrodite, Hermes and Athene? Because they can think of nothing higher than ideal humanity. And Christ comes, the ideal man. The beauty of the Lord is upon Him. His thoughts and feelings and purpose and character are the most perfect things in the world. He identifies Himself with man, and He identifies Himself with God. He is the Son of man, and as such He is the Son of God. And thus a human. God, a human universe, a human religion is offered to the Greek, and in place of the wonderful mythology the clear, warm, divine fact. The Mohammedan believes in will; and the gospel puts before him that ultimate irresistible Will as a Will to all good, eternally burdened with love, and nothing but love, for man. The Hindu is smitten with an endless craving after rest, and he thinks the path to peace lies in the diminution and final extinction of being. Christ goes to the Hindu and says: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

He sets before the Hindu an infinite social peace; he calls into play the moral will that for ages has been allowed to slumber. The goal is high social harmony; the path to it is the intelligent will in faithful, inspired, victorious obedience. The need of the Hindu is not less but more and better existence. The way out of his despair is through fulness of life. His misery is but the dumb prayer for eternal life, that is, for existence supreme in its character and in its volume.

Thus Christianity is everywhere the interpreter of religion. Everywhere it carries the world's faith to its best. It is the consummation both of the human need and the divine answer. And to-day, in our own world, it goes on the same high errand. The intuitions of righteousness, the sympathies with goodness, the wish for the more abundant life, the ideals and the struggles, the hope and the fear, without which man would not be man, find their interpreter in Christianity. It is the soul carried to the utmost depth of its need and the loftiest height of its desire, and then made conscious that below its profoundest weakness and above its highest dream is the infinite Love that is educating its life. It is the best wisdom of history speaking to the highest interests of man. As mothers brought their children to Jesus that He might reveal the inmost meaning of childhood, open its treasure to the hearts that loved it, and by His consecrating touch assure it of perpetual increase; so are the nations bringing their religions to Him, and the noble among men their uncomprehended longing and hope. He walks among us still as the Revealer, the Conserver, and the Consummator of life.

IV. Lastly, Christianity finds it own interpretation in God. We have seen man looking backward and finding the origin of his soul in the Soul that is behind nature. We have seen his religion telling him that he can not live by bread alone, that he can rest only under the shelter of the unseen, that he is infinitely more akin to the invisible than to the visible, that he has a spirit and must therefore hunger for the fellowship of the eternal Spirit. We see Christianity lifting this religious capacity to its highest, and bringing in the divine appeal in its sublimest form. We behold the earth transfigured in this Christian dream, the ladder set that reaches from the dreamer to heaven, and upon it, going up and coming down, the great prayers of the soul and the tender responses of the Most High. To what shall we refer this sublime, transfiguring dream? Is it the delusion of the sleeper, or the whisper of God? Is the ladder set up from the earth, or is it let down from above? Did man shape it out of his abysmal desire, or did God make and establish it out of His love. What can we say of that which is the highest wisdom, the widest sympathy, the divinest love, and the mightiest power in human history? What can we do with that which is the true life of man? Can the trees of the field, as they clap their hands and sing in the freshening breeze, do other than refer it to heaven? And man, as he sees the light of Christ upon the Spirit behind nature, beholds in the gospel that which interprets his highest dreams, feels in Christianity the power to understand and to become his own best self—can he do other than say that his Christian faith is the gift of God? The star in the brook refers you for the explanation of its being to the star in the sky; and the glory of the gospel living in the depths of man's soul has no other origin than the love of God.

The hope of science lies in exploring the natural environment. All material reality is here, and here science has found all her truth, and every season reminds her that inexpressible wonders still wait her search. In the heavens above, and in the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth are hidden the treasure for which she is to toil. Earth and sea and sky; the waveless depths and the windless heights, and the wide expanse between, now sunlit and again stormswept, are the field of her enterprise and hope. And in the same way the human environment is the region that the spirit must explore. The meaning of humanity must be found in and through humanity. "Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down; or who shall descend into the abyss? that is, to bring Christ up from the dead. The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart." The divine reality offers itself to faith in and through the scope and sweep of life. The order of God is in the life of society. The ideal for man, the method by which it is realized, and the power, are set in the spiritual tissues of the race. If you see no God, no soul, no genuine religion, believe rather that you are blind than that your human environment does not contain them. You are the product of nature. It follows that nature must be great enough to account for you and your race and the Christ who is your race at its best. Back of the nature that gave birth to you, that bore your kind, and brought forth Christ, there must be the sufficient Spirit. You are sure that you can not live by bread alone. You have thoughts that wander through eternity. You can not rest until you rest in God. You are a being made for religion, and again here is the gospel that meets your intelligence with its wisdom, your heart with its love, your will with its moral authority. Nothing puts your being in tune, and nothing rings out the best music that is in you, as the gospel does. It is omnipresent in our civilization, working everywhere to crush the beast and to free the man. It is in a mother's love, the soul of its tenderness; it is in a father's heart as ideal and incentive. The history and the experience and the hope of our homes are transfigured in its light, as if the earth should repose in an everlasting evening glow. Patriotism is alive with its fire, and the new and growing passion for humanity is the great token of its quickening spirit. It is the box of ointment, very precious, which has been broken in society and all Christendom is filled with its perfume. Birth and death, love and sorrow, achievement and failure, human life and its immemorial content, the old room and the dear and dreary things in it, take on new dignity and grace. To detect the new spirit in the old dwelling is the best and most rewarding of all intuitions. To live in the human homestead consecrated by the diffusion of Christ's gospel is to undergo an unconscious conformation to exalted ideals. Because of our Christian civilization, behind every morning is the Father, who makes His sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and who sends His rain upon the just and the unjust. Nature has been lifted into a servant of the divine beneficence. And man's wild but imperishable passion for the unseen has been brought to see its last and best self in the love of Christ. Wherever we look, this gospel is the master light of all our seeing; and once more, is it not light from heaven? We know where to look for the belt of Orion, and clear and grand as the stars that constitute it are the great saving truths which are set in the human sky. There is nothing arbitrary in this sublime faith, nothing that does not rise out of the human order, nothing that is a mere import from the world of fancy or wild belief. The faith is the translation of fact into thought and speech. The eyes of Christ pass over and through the order of the universe, and His vision is our faith. Man is the interpreter of nature; religion is the interpreter of man; Christianity is the interpreter of religion; and God the Father is the interpreter of Christianity.

**÷**10-04 DAWSON

CHRIST AMONG THE COMMON THINGS OF LIFE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William James Dawson, Congregational preacher and evangelist, was born in Towcester, Northamptonshire, in 1854. He was educated at Kingswood School, Bath, and Didsbury College, Manchester. He has long been known as an author of originality and pure literary style. In 1906 he received the pastorate of Highbury Quadrant Congregational Church, London, and accepted an invitation to do general evangelistic work under the auspices of the National Council of the Congregational churches of the United States. He now resides in this country.

DAWSON

Born in 1854:

CHRIST AMONG THE COMMON THINGS OF LIFE[1]

[Footnote 1: Reprinted by kind permission of Messrs. Fleming H. Revell& Co., New York.]

*As soon then as they were come to land they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine*.—Joh 21:9; Joh 21:12.

I can not read these words without indulging for a moment in a reminiscence. Not long ago, in the early morning, while all the world slept, I stood beside the Sea of Tiberias, just as the morning mist lifted, and watched a single brown-sailed fishing-boat making for the shore, and the tired fishermen dragging their net to land. In that moment it seemed to me as if more than the morning mist lifted—twenty centuries seemed to melt like mist, and the last chapter of St. John's gospel seemed to enact itself before my eyes. For so vivid was the sense of something familiar in the scene, so mystic was the hour, that I should scarce have been surprized had I seen a fire of coals burning on the shore, and heard the voice of Jesus inviting these tired fishermen to come and dine.

Now if I felt that, if I was sensible of the haunting presence of Christ by that Galilean shore, how much more these disciples, in whose minds every aspect of the Galilean lake was connected with some intimate and thrilling memory of the ministry of Jesus.

Christ once more stands among the common things of life; the fire, the fish, the bread—all common things; a group of tired, hungry fishers—all common men; and He is there to affirm that in His resurrection He had not broken His bond with men, but strengthened it—wherever common life goes on there is Jesus still.

I. Notice the words with which the story opens, and you will see at once that this is the real clue to its interpretation. "When morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus." A strange thing that! Why did they not know Him? Because they were not looking for Him in such a scene. It had seemed a natural thing, if Jesus should appear at all, that He should appear in the garden, a vision of life at the very altar of death. It seemed yet more probable and appropriate that He should appear in the upper room, that room made sacred by holiest love and memory. If any words of Christ yet lingered in the mind and had power to thrill them, they were surely these words, "Ye shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven," glorified, triumphant, lifted far above the earth and its humble life. And so, if they were looking for Christ at all that morning, I think they watched the morning clouds, expecting Him to come down the resplendent staircase of the sunbeams to call the nations together and vindicate Himself in acts of universal judgment. And behold! Jesus comes as a fisherman standing on the lakeside, busy over a little fire, where the morning meal is cooking; and behold! Jesus speaks, and it is not of the eternal mysteries of God, not of the solemn secrets of the grave, but of nets and fishing and how to cast the nets—the simple concerns of simple men engaged in humble tasks.

No wonder they did not recognize Him. Once more the Son of Man comes eating and drinking, and even the eyes that knew Him best can not see in this human figure by the lakeside the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. They looked and saw but a fellow fisherman, cooking his meal upon the shore, and they knew not that it was Jesus.

II. Think for a moment of the earthly life of Christ, and you will see that it was designedly linked with all the common and even the commonest things of life.

If you or I could have conceived the great thought of some human creature that should be the very incarnation of God, what would have been the shape of our imaginings? Surely we should have chosen for this earthly temple of the Highest some human form perfected in grace and beauty by the long refinements of exalted ancestry; the child of kings or scholars; the delicate flower of life, in whom the elements were so subtly mixed that we should recognize them as special and miraculous—so we might think of God manifest in man. But God chooses for the habitation of His Spirit a peasant woman of Nazareth, humble, poor, unconsidered.

If we could have forecast the training of such a life, how should we have pictured it? Surely as sheltered from the coarseness of the world, delicately nourished, sedulously cultured; but God orders that this life should manifest itself in the house of the village carpenter, out of reach of schools, in a little wicked town, under the commonest conditions of poverty, obscurity, and toil.

If you and I could have imagined the introduction of this life of lives to the world, how should we picture that? Surely we should have pictured it coming with pomp and display that would at once have attracted all eyes; but God orders that it shall come without observation, unfolding its quiet beauty like the wayside flower, which there are few to see and very few to love. Commonness: that is the great note of the incarnation and the purposed feature of Christ's earthly life.

He reaffirms His fraternity in common life. The disciples could not imagine that as possible; nor can we. And why not? For two reasons, one of which is that we have forgotten the dignity of common life.

1. Dignity is for us almost synonymous with some kind of separation from common life; it dwells in palaces, not in cottages; it inheres in culture, but is inconceivable in narrow knowledge; and to the great mass of men it is, alas! the attribute of wealth, of fine raiment, of social isolation. But we have not learned even the alphabet of Christ's gospel unless we have come to see that the only true in dignity in human life is sin, meanness, malevolence, and small-heartedness; and that all life is dignified where there are love, purity, and piety in it, whatever be its social category.

I read the other day that it is probable that the very mire of the London streets contains that mysterious substance known as radium, the most tremendous agent of light and heat ever yet discovered by man; so in man himself, however low his state, there is the spark of God, an ember lit at the altar fires of the Eternal, and it is because we forget this that we forget the dignity of common life. For we do forget it. We may make our boast that a single human soul is of more value than all the splendors and immensities of matter; but in our actions we treat the boast as a mere rhetorical expression. There is nothing so cheap as men and women—let the lords of commerce answer if it be not so. But Christ acted as tho the boast were true. He deliberately inwove His life into all that is commonest in life. He has made it impossible for us, if indeed we have His spirit, to think of any salient aspect of human life without thinking of Him. Where childhood is, there is Bethlehem; where sorrow is, there is Gethsemane; where death is, there is Calvary; where the toiler is, there is the poor man of Nazareth; and where the beggar is, there is He who had no place where to lay His head. There is not a drop of blood of Christ, nor a throb of thought in our brains that is not thrilling with the impact of this divine life of lives. And so the true dignity of life is this, that Christ is in all men, faintly outlined it may be, defaced, half-obliterated, but there, and the Church that forgets this has neither impulse nor mandate for Christ's work among men.

2. And then, again, there is a second reason: we have not learned to look for Christ among the common things of life.

"Let us build three tabernacles," said the wondering disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the speech betrayed a tendency of thought which was in time to prove fatal to the Church.

The Christ without a tabernacle, the free, familiar Christ of the lake or the wayside was everybody's Christ; but the moment Christ is shut up in a church or a tabernacle He becomes the priest's Christ, the thinker's Christ, the devotee's Christ, but He ceases to be the people's Christ.

I remember five years ago standing in the great church of Assisi, which has been erected over and encloses the little humble chapel where Francis first received his call. You will scarcely be surprized if I confess that I turned with a sense of heart-sick indignation from the pomp of that splendid service in the gorgeous church to the thought of Francis, in his worn robe, going up and down these neighboring roads, touching the lepers, calling them "God's patients," pouring out his life for the poor; and I knew Christ nearer to me on the roads that Francis trod than in that church, which is his mausoleum rather than his monument. And as I felt that day in far-off Umbria, so I have felt to-day in England; my heart goes out to Catherine Booth; to Father Dolling, to these Christs of the wayside, and it turns more and more from the kind of Christ who lives in churches and nowhere else. My brethren, you will let me say that we do but make the church Christ's prison when we forget that all the realm of life is His. Oh, you good people, you do love your church, but often think and act as tho the presence of Christ can be found nowhere else. Lift up your eyes and see this risen Christ, a fisherman upon the shore, busy in no loftier task than to have a meal prepared for hungry fishermen. Unlock your church doors, let Christ go out among common people; nay, go yourselves, for it is here that He would have you be. Remember that wherever there is toil, there is the Christ who toiled; and there you should be, with the kind glance, the warm hand-grasp, and the loving warmth of brotherhood.

Christ stands amid the common things of life; where the fire is lit, there is He; where the bread is broken, there is He; where the net of business gain is drawn, there is He; and only as we learn to see Him everywhere shall we understand the dignity and the divinity of human life.

III. "And Jesus said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes."

Here is another strange thing. Christ knows more about the management of their own business than they do. They had toiled all night and caught nothing; is not that a significant description of many human lives? "Children, have ye any meat?" asks that quiet Voice from the shore, and they answer "No." Is not that yet more pathetically significant? All the heartbreak and disappointment of the world cry aloud in that confession. Oh, I could fill an hour with the mere recital of the names of great and famous people who have toiled through a long life, and as the last gray hour came over their dim sea of life, "brackish with the salt of human tears," have acknowledged with infinite bitterness that they have caught nothing. Listen to the voice of Goethe, "In all my seventy-five years I have not had four weeks of genuine well-being;" to the confession of our own famous poet,

My life is in the yellow leaf,  
The flowers, the fruits of love are gone;  
The worm, the canker, and the grief  
Are mine alone.

to the ambitious and successful statesman who says, "Youth is folly, manhood is struggle, old age regret"; to one of our most brilliant women of genius in our own generation, wife of a still more brilliant husband, who cries, "I married for ambition, and I am miserable." Surely there is some tragic mismanagement of the great business of living here. Oh, brother, is it true of you, that after all the painful years happiness is not yours? You have no meat, no food on which the heart feeds, no green pasture in the soul, no table in the wilderness, and the last gray day draws near and will find you still hungering for what life Has never given you.

Learn, then, that Christ knows more about the proper management of your life than you do. "Cast your net on the right side of the ship," speaks that quiet Voice from the shore. And you know what happened. And it is so still. Just because Christ stands among the common things of life, He knows most about life, and, above all, He knows where the golden fruit of happiness is found and where the secret wells of peace.

And to some of us whom God has called to be fishers of men the issue is yet more solemn. We have the boat and the nets, all this elaborate organization of the Church, but have we caught anything this year? Where is the draft of fishes? Where are the men and women saved by our triumphant effort? I will make my humble confession this morning, that for five-and-twenty years I have cast the net, but only lately have I found the right side of the ship; only lately have I discovered how easy it is to get the great draft of fishes by simply going to work in Christ's way. I do not believe in the indifference of the masses in religion; the indifference is not in the masses, but in the churches. You will never catch many fish if you stand upon the shore of cold respectability and wait for them to come; launch out into the deep and you will find them. Go for them—that is Christ's method. Compel them to come in, for remember Christ's ideal was, as Bishop Lightfoot so nobly put it, "the universal compulsion of the souls of men." And if your experience is like mine, you will find that there is strangely little compulsion needed to bring men and women to Christ. I stood but lately in a house where fifty fallen women lived; I went there to rescue three of its unhappy inmates. When the moment came to take these three women from their life of sin, their comrades lined the passage to shake my hand; there were tears and prayers, and messages like these, "Be good. You'll be a good woman," "We wish we had your chance"; and these poor souls in their inferno wished me "a happy New-year." Compulsion! There was small need for compulsion there! I believe I could have rescued all of these fifty women at one stroke had I known where to take them. But to the shame of the Free Churches in London I confess that, with the exception of the Wesleyans and the Salvation Army, I do not know a single Free Church Rescue Home in London. And I put it to you this morning whether you can any longer tolerate that omission? I ask you whether you really want a great draft of fishes, for you can have them if you want them. Christ knows the business better than you do; and if you will come out of the cloister of the church and seek the people in His spirit, I promise you that very soon you will not be able to drag the net for the multitude of fishes.

IV. "And Jesus said unto them, Come and dine."

Dine on what? Not the fish which they had caught. They had caught one hundred and fifty-three great fishes; but notice Christ's fire was kindled before they came. Christ's fish was already laid thereon, and all they had to do was to come and dine. It is all you have to do, all the churches have to do. Did not Christ so put it in the parable of the Great Supper?—"Come, for all things are ready." Is not the last word of Scripture the great invitation?—"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." Many a church can not say to a hungry world, "Come and dine," because it will not let Christ prepare the meal. It will not live in His spirit, it has no real faith in His gospel, it does not understand that its true strength is not in elaborate organization or worship, but in simple reliance on His grace. And so there is the table covered with elaborate confections, which are not bread, and when it says, "Come and dine," men will not come, for they know that there is nothing there for them. Let Christ prepare the meal and all is different then. When He says, "Come and dine," there is "enough for each, enough for all, enough for evermore." And as Jesus spoke, I think there flashed upon the memory of these men the scene when Jesus fed the five thousand, and by that memory they knew their Jesus. No one else ever spoke like that, with such certainty and such authority. And the same Voice speaks even now to your hunger-bitten soul, to your famished heart, "Come and dine."

V. "Then Jesus taketh bread and giveth them, and fish likewise."

There is no mistaking the act; it was a sacramental act. Here, upon the lake shore, without a church, without an altar, the true feast of the Lord was observed. For what does the Holy Supper, which is the bond and seal of the Church's fellowship, stand for, if it is not for this, the sanctification of the common life? Bread and wine, the commonest of all foods to an Oriental, are elements indeed, because they are necessary to the most elementary form of physical life, things used daily in the humblest home. By linking Himself imperishably with these commonest elements of life, Christ makes it impossible to forget Him. Once more the thought shines clear, Jesus among the common things of life.

And then there comes one last touch in the beautiful story. While these things happened, the day was breaking. Is there one of us long tossed on sunless seas of doubt, long conscious of failure and disappointment in life? Are there those of us whose sorrow lies deeper than that which is personal—sorrow over our failure in Christ's work, pain over a life's ministry for Christ that has known no victorious evangel? Turn your eyes from that barren sea to Him who stands upon the shore; He shall yet make you a fisher of men. Turn your eyes from that bleak, dark sea of wasted effort where you have fared so ill; it is always dark till Jesus comes, it is always light when He has come. There is a new day breaking for the churches—a day of widespread evangelistic triumphs that shall eclipse all the greatest triumphs of the past, if we will but go back to Christ's school and learn of Him how to save the people. And to each of us He says to-day: "I am the living bread; I am the bread of life come down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." "Come and dine." Will you come?

÷10-05 SMITH

ASSURANCE IN GOD

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

GEORGE ADAM SMITH, divine, educator and author, was born at Calcutta in 1856, and educated at New College, Edinburgh, Scotland. He is at present professor of Old Testament Language, Literature and Theology in the United Free Church College, Glasgow. He is author of "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," "Jerusalem, the Topography, Economics and History from the Earliest Time to A.D. 70" (1908). He is generally regarded as one of the most gifted preachers of Scotland.

SMITH

Born in 1856

ASSURANCE IN GOD

*Preserve me, O God.*—Psa 16:1.

The psalmist lived in a period when belief in the reality of many gods was still strong, and when a man who would follow the one true God had to prefer to do so against the attractions of other deities and against the convictions of a great number of his fellow countrymen that these deities were living and powerful. That stage of religion is so distant from ourselves that we may imagine the psalmist's example to be of no practical value for our faith, yet in such an imagination we should be very much mistaken indeed, for, to begin with, consider how much you and I to-day owe to those believers who so many centuries ago rejected all the gods that offered themselves to the hearts of men except the true God, and who chose to cleave to Him alone with all that passionate loyalty which breathes through these verses. But for them you and I could not be standing where we are in religion to-day. As the eleventh of Hebrews reminds us, we are the spiritual heir of such believers. It is to their struggles and their faith and their victories that we greatly owe it that we have been born into an atmosphere in which no religious belief is possible to us save in one God who is Spirit and Righteousness and all Truth.

That, then, was the great choice that the psalmist's faith was turning to—a choice that was no mere assent to a creed that had been fought for and established by previous generations of believers. It was the man's own proving of things unseen and his own preference of those against the crowd and a system of things seen, palpable, and very powerful in their attraction for the senses of humanity. But we are not to suppose that the rival deities, from which this man turned to the unseen God, were to his mind or to the mind of his day the heap of dead and ugly idols which we know them to be. They were not dead things that he could kick away with his feet that these believers had to reject when they sought the living God, but things which he and his contemporaries felt to be alive and powerful; powerful alike in their seduction and in their vengeance. They were believed to be identical, as you know, with the forces of nature; they were supposed to be indispensable to the welfare of the individual and of society, and they were fanatically supported at the time by the mass of this man's own countrymen; so that to break from them in those days meant to abandon ancient opinions and habits, to resist many pleasant and natural temptations and to incur the hostility, as was believed, of the powers of nature, to break with customs and with rites that had fortified and consoled the individual heart for generations and been the support and sanction of society and of the state as well. Yet this man did it. From all that living crowd and system, from all those visible temptations and terrors he turned to the unseen, fully conscious of his danger, for he opens his Psalm with a great cry, "Preserve me, preserve me, O God!" but yet deliberately, and with all his heart: "I have said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord." I have no goodness, no happiness, that is outside Thee or outside the saints that are in the land, "the excellent in whom is all my delight." Here we touch another great characteristic of all true faith which is full of example to ourselves. It is remarkable how, when a man really turns to God, he turns to God's people as well, and how he includes them in the loyalty and in the devotion which he feels toward his Redeemer. His confidence and the sensitiveness of his faith in and toward God become almost an equal confidence and an equal sensitiveness toward his fellow believers. So it is throughout Scripture; you remember that other psalmist who tells us how he had been tempted to doubt God's providence and God's power to help the good man—"does God know and is there knowledge in the Most High? Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocency." The psalmist immediately adds: "If I had spoken thus, behold I had dealt treacherously with the generation of God's children." If I had spoken thus, denying God, I had dealt treacherously with the generation of God's children. Unbelief toward God meant to him treason toward God's people; and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews affirms the same double character of true faith when he emphasizes just these two points in the faith of Moses: "choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God," and "enduring as seeing Him who is invisible," and God Himself through Jesus Christ has accepted this partnership of His people in our loyalty—"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me." I do not believe in the full faith of any man who does not extend the loyalty he professes to God to God's people as well, who does not feel as sensitive to his brethren on earth as he does to his Father in heaven, who does not practise piety toward the Church as he does toward her Head, or find in her fellowship and her service a joy and a gladness which is one with his deep joy in God, his Redeemer. Nay, is it not just in loving people who are still imperfect, often disappointing, and far from their ideal it may be, that in our relations to them we are to find the greater proof and test of our religious faith? In these days such a duty is unfortunately more complicated than with the psalmist. The lines between God's Church and the world is not so clear as it was to him, and the Church is divided into many and often hostile factions. All the more it becomes the test of our religion if our hearts feel and rejoice in the fellowship of God's simpler and more needy and more devoted believers, however unattractive they may otherwise be.

Consider the way in which the psalmist reached this pure faith in God and in His people. A factor in the process was distaste for the ugly rites of idolatry—"Their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer." Idolatry always develops a loathsome ritual. Sometimes it is cruel and sometimes it is horribly unclean, but it always debases the worshiper's mind, confuses his conscience, and hampers his freedom and energy by the burdensome ceremonies it imposes upon them. Standing afar off from them as we do, and knowing that there is no heathen religion but has something good in it, we are apt to think that it does not in the least matter how crude or how material a nation's faith be if only it be faith in something more powerful than themselves, if it satisfy their consciences and have some influence in disciplining society and helping the individual to control himself. But you have only to see idolatry at work, and at work with the habits of ages upon it, to recognize how terrible it can be in its identification of sheer filth and cruelty with the interests of religion, and how it at once demoralizes and paralyzes its adherents. To see it thus is to understand the passionate horror of these words: "Their drink-offering of blood will I not offer."

It is, however, no mere recoil from the immoral which started the spring of this psalmists's faith in God. That faith was formed on personal experience of God Himself. In simple but pregnant phrases the psalmist tells us how sure he has become, first, of God's providence in his life; secondly, of God's intimate communion with his soul. God, he says, had been everything in his life. One does not know whether the psalmist was a prosperous man or a poor one; the inference that he was prosperous and rich has sometimes been drawn, but wrongly drawn, from one of the verses of the Psalm. His indifference to that is clear, but what he did have he knew he had from God. God, he says, is all his happiness and all his strength—"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot." Whether poor or prosperous he could say: "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." Now that assurance of divine leading is not analyzable, but we know that it does grow up solid and sure in the experience of simple men who have put their trust in God, who have felt life to be a commission from Him and who have done their duty obeying His call. With such men "all things work together for good." Tho life about them shake and darken, they feel their own solidity and have light enough to read the future. Tho stript and stark, they feel the Lord Himself to be the portion of their inheritance and of their cup. The portion of my inheritance the Lord is, i.e., the little bit of land that fell to each Israelite as his share in the promised inheritance of the nation. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance," as we might say in our Scotch language, "The Lord is my croft and my cup," so they find in Him all the ground and the freedom they need to do their work, fulfil their relationships, and develop their manhood.

It is, however, with the psalmist's second reason for his faith we have most to do. "I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons." This man held close communion with God. Is it not great to find the testimony of a brother man coming down all through those ages, from that dim and distant past, clear and sure as to this, that he had God's counsel and that God kept communion with him? God had spoken to this man and shown him His will. Yes, he had received what we call inspiration and revelation, and had proved the truth of these in his life. They had led and they had lifted him. Nor had they come to him as many men falsely suppose revelation and inspiration exclusively have come to mankind, by means, namely, that were extraordinary and miraculous. The psalmist tells us of no vision of angels, of no voice from heaven. The Lord had not appeared to him in dreams nor by any marvelous signs; on the other hand, he tells us simply that the divine counsel of which he was so sure, and which he passes on to us, came to him through the workings of his inner spiritual life. That is what he means by the emphatic statement "yea, my reins instruct me in the night seasons," which he adds parallel with the thought, "I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel." According to the primitive physiology of this man's nation and times, the reins of a man fulfil the same intellectual function which we, with our larger knowledge, know are discharged by the brain. This was how God's revelation came to this brother of ours, through the working of his mind and conscience, but it was in the night seasons that they worked, not in the day and in the sunshine, but in the night when a man is left to himself with only this advantage to his thought: that like the blind he is yet undistracted by the influences which are seen. When he lies down he thinks soberly and quietly about himself and about life and about God, and about the great hidden future that is waiting for him. He was communing with God, who had made his brain and used it as an instrument of revelation. In these thoughts God was communing with man through his reason and through his conscience. You and I are always contrasting God's providence and His grace. We are always attempting to oppose reason and revelation; to this man they were one. God's great grace had come to him through God's own providence, and God's revelation was ministered to him through the reason with which he had endowed the creature He had made in His own image. This psalmist's chief and practical help to us men and women today is that he became sure of God not because of any miracle or supernatural sign, on his report of which we might be content indolently to rest our faith, but in God's own providence in his life and in God's quiet communion with him through the organs God Himself has created in every one of us. For all time, whether before or after Christ, these are the chief grounds and foundations of faith in God. So it was in the Old Testament—"stand in awe and sin not," "commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still," "be still and know that I am God." So with Christ, "for the kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation, but the kingdom of heaven is within you," and so with Paul, "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, and if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, … that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, to the end that ye being rooted and grounded in love may come to apprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know the love of Christ."

God's guidance of his life, first of all, produces in a man a great sense of stability. "I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved." He who has found God so careful of him, he whom God hath regarded as worth speaking to and counseling and disciplining, will be certain that he shall endure, provided he is sure of his own loyalty. The life so loved of God, so provided for, and in such close communion with the Eternal is not, can not be the creature of the day, and this assurance stands firm in face of even death and the horrible corruption of the body. The psalmist refuses to believe that he is to dwell in the horrible under-world forever—either himself or any of God's believers. "Thou must not, thou wilt not leave my soul in sheol, thou must not, thou wilt not suffer thy loved ones to see the pit." To this man it is incredible, and our hearts bear witness to the truth if we have had any experience of God's blessing and guidance. To this man it is incredible that the life God has cared for and guided and spoken to and brought into such intimate communion with himself can find its end in death. Those whom God has loyally loved and who have loyally loved God—for this word badly translated "holy" in the psalms really has that actual significance—those whom God has loyally loved and who have loyally loved God shall never die. As He lives so shall they; they shall never be absent from His presence. Be the future unknown and unknowable, be we ourselves incapable of conceiving the processes by which this mortal shall put on immortality, or where heaven is, or what eternity can possibly be to those who have never lived outside time, yet that future is secure and its immortal character is indubitable—where God is there shall His servants be, and because He is there their life shall be peace and joy, and because He is eternal it shall last forevermore. That thought is the whole of the hope and argument. We are assured of the future life because we have known God, and as we have found Him to be true to us and proved ourselves true to Him.

÷10-06 GUNSAULUS

THE BIBLE VS. INFIDELITY

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Frank Wakely Gunsaulus was born at Chesterville, Ohio, in 1856. He graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University in 1875. For some years he was pastor of Plymouth Church, Chicago, and since 1899 pastor of Central Church, Chicago. He is also president of the Armour Institute of Technology. He is a fascinating speaker, having a clear, resonant voice, and a dignified presence. His mind is a storehouse of the best literature, and his English style is noteworthy for its purity and richness. He is the author of several books and is in popular demand as a lecturer.

GUNSAULUS

Born in 1856

THE BIBLE VS. INFIDELITY[1]

[Footnote 1: Preached as an impromptu reply to R.G. Ingersoll. Printed from an unrevised stenographic report.]

*There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification*.—1Co 14:10.

Ours is a voiceful era. Perhaps, as the ages come and go and man's life grows richer, its questions more restless for answer, its moral supports called upon to bear heavier interests of faith, its enterprises more often and searchingly compelled to defend themselves, the voices of time will be increasingly potent and worthy of his attention. A singularly suggestive collection of messages fills the air today, and all of these voices speak of one theme—the Bible.

Anarchy, which is always atheistic, holds its converse in the places of evil which this book's message would close forever; the foes of that civilization builded on its laws and stimulated by its hopes asks us to condemn it as worthy only of caricature, vituperation, and hate. Let us find a path of duty today, not refusing to listen to any of these voices, but asking that other voices also may help us to the truth.

The preacher's message is a book called the Bible. That is only the literary form of his message—telling its history. Even that form, which is much less divine as paper and ink are less lofty in the scale than humanity, has worked wonders. To-day, the Bible offers the nineteenth-century infidel as testimony of the influence it has. It has force enough to make infidelity preach tearfully and well about man, woman, and child. Skepticism did not do so well until the Bible came. The Bible has furnished the eloquence of infidelity with such a man as Shakespeare to talk about; no student of literature could imagine Shakespeare without the Bible and the Bible's influence upon him as he created his dreams. It furnished an Abraham Lincoln for an orator to compare favorably with incomplete ideas of Almighty God; but it seems to have been unable to show the critic that Christian ideas of Almighty God made Lincoln so love the Lord's Prayer that he wanted a church builded with this as its creed. It would seem that any general denunciation or humorous caricature of a book which has worked such an amazing effect in literature as has the Bible would be tempered by some recognition of the fact that these other minds—poets, orators, sages, and scientists—have found illumination and help in its pages. Liberal Christianity will be intellectually broad. Certainly the greatest of modern pagans, Goethe, will not be accused of favoritism toward the Bible, yet he said: "I esteem the gospels to be thoroughly genuine, for there shines forth from them the reflected splendor of a sublimity, proceeding from the person of Jesus Christ, of so divine a kind as only the divine could ever have manifested upon earth." The Earl of Rochester saw that the only liberalism which objects to the Bible, in its true uses, is the liberalism of licentiousness; and he left this saying: "A bad heart is the great argument against this holy book." And Faraday, weeping, said: "Why will people go astray when they have this blest book to guide them?"

If we turn to literature we encounter many such liberal thinkers as Theodore Parker, who calmly informs us: "This collection of books has taken such a hold upon the world as has no other. The literature of Greece, which goes up like incense from that land of temples and heroic deeds, has not half the influence of this book. It goes equally to the cottage of the plain man and the palace of the king. It is woven into the literature of the scholar and colors the talk of the street." That is the voice of the liberalism which includes rather than excludes.

These were men not of the band of evangelical Christian preachers, who are roughly classed as a set of persons unable to tell the truth about the Bible, for fear they may lose their means of subsistence; these are men who know the true mission of the Bible. It is not to furnish a picture of life in the time of Moses such as life ought to be, a portrait of a David for the imitation of men, a statue of a warrior in a time of barbarism who shall command my obedience to his commands now, an idea of God wrought out in ignorance and darkness, which has no self-development within it. The mission of the Bible is to furnish a humanly written account of a people, just as human as we, in whom, by divine inspiration, the soul of truth so lived and worked as to develop, in gradual course, by laws, by hopes, by loves, by life, a living, and, at last, perfectly authoritative ideal of righteousness, but more than all a gradual growth of such moral power as would be commanding in the redeeming self-sacrifice and love of Jesus Christ. Every page of the Old Testament was only preparatory, as the thorny bush is preparatory for the rose. Christ is the end of the long, weary human history that leads to Him. If the laws of Sinai had been enough, there never would have been a Calvary. No one for a moment dreams that the God of nature could have brought forth such a fruit as the life and ideas of Jesus without a tree of such a history, a tree rooted in the ground, storm-twisted, gnarled, and valuable only for its fruit. We are not asked to eat the roots and bark and branches; only the fruit has an appeal to us. Its appeal is to our hunger, its authority lies in the fact that it satisfies our hunger.

It has satisfied the hunger of men whose liberalism came from their being made liberally. Large and capacious souls of mighty yearnings are they. They stand in contrast with the puny critics who assert that the Bible fails to feed them, because they have never tasted its nourishment.

Liberal Christianity, separating itself from the dogmatism which would make Christianity a book religion, worshiping a literary idol rather than loving a human revelation of the divine, knows it is not an ignorant lot of men and women who have received most from the Bible and spoken most gratefully of its message. When we think of sending the Bible to barbarism, with the hope of creating in its stead civilization, we can look into the face of John Selden, one of the most illustrious of English lawyers, when he says: "I have surveyed most of the learning that is among the sons of men, yet at this moment I can recall nothing in them on which to rest my soul, save one from the sacred Scriptures, which rises much on my mind. It is this: 'The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blest hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us unto himself, a peculiar people zealous of good works.'" Liberal religion must include Selden. We will not be deterred from giving the Bible to heathenism of any kind when we remember that Sir William Jones has left these words: "The Scriptures contain more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence than could be collected from all other books that were ever composed in any age or in any idiom." Liberal religion must be as broad as Sir William Jones.

This is a very needy world, and many are the institutions of evil that need to be changed for institutions of goodness. If we are to believe the eloquence of hopeless unbelief, we ourselves will only be the slaves of a fatalism which says that man is but a result of forces; that what we call crime is but a part of the necessary course of things, and that there is no such thing as moral responsibility. This makes all reform or efforts at staying the tide of evil useless. Oftentimes the heart of the man who has ceased to read his Bible gets the victory over this dreadful philosophy, and it is not remarkable that the skeptic becomes the exponent of freedom, charging like a host of war upon all institutions of slavery. Liberal theology puts its one hand on the dogmatist who tells him to accept literal infallibility, and its other on the sincere lover of men who has lost his Bible entirely. And liberalism says: It is in just such moments that we trust our Bible the most, and we remember that William Wilberforce, who lifted the chains from the bondmen, has said: "I never knew happiness until I found Christ as a Savior. Read the Bible! Bead the Bible! Through all my perplexities and distresses I never read any other book, I never knew the want of any other." We are certainly not despising the science which is worthy of a name, nor are we forgetting any proposition which has found a place in the world's thought, if we look into the face of Sir John Herschel, who tells us that "all human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truths contained in the holy Scriptures." It is truly no part of wisdom for us to conclude that for scientific reasons we ought to forsake our Bible when Professor Dana avers: "The grand old book of God still stands; and this old earth, the more its leaves are turned and pondered, the more will it sustain and illustrate the sacred Word."

Surely it is not the hour dogmatically to withdraw this book, which has proved the basis of civilization. Professor Lyell, the great English geologist, tells us: "In the year 1806 the French Institute enumerated no less than eighty geological theories which were hostile to the Scriptures, but not one of these theories is held today." Bacon's remark is still true: "There never was found in any age of the world either religion or law that did so highly exalt the public good as the Bible." And John Marshall and Prince Bismarck agree with Daniel Webster when he says: "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity." There is not an anarchist in America who does not clap his hands when he hears a Bible with the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount denounced. Indeed, the civilization in which we stand, as compared with the barbarism out of which we have been led by the Bible, would make William Henry Seward's assertion only a mild statement of the truth when he says: "The whole hope of human progress is suspended on the ever-growing influence of the Bible." I prefer lawyers like these to lead American public opinion. Part of the service of these men has been that they have shown theology that the Bible is not a set of texts on a dead level of authority and equal value, but the revealing, slow and sure, of an inspiration obeyed by a certain people in the realm of morals like that inspiration obeyed by another people in the realm of art, and its test is: Does the Bible's ultimate message, its crowning commandment of Christ's life and love, produce goodness in morals? just as the test of the long revelation of beauty in his ancestors and the Greek is, does its ultimate commandment produce goodness in art.

Christianity does not ask: "What think ye of the Bible?" It asks: "What think ye of Christ?" There the throne is set, and so majestic is His glory that the moment we come into His presence we are judged. The Judge of the earth has taken His place in thought, history and hope. He is not on trial, and He asks no question as to what man thinks of the book which has enthroned Him in literature. The test is placed in my conduct and yours; each may say with Michael Bruce, who left these words on the fly-leaf of his Bible:

'Tis very vain of me to boast  
How small a price this Bible cost;  
The day of judgment will make clear  
'Twas very cheap or very dear.

Shall we go forward with our Bible or backward without it? Infidelity has always forgotten that, so far as it has an eye for liberty and humanity, the Christianity not of sects but of the Bible has furnished it and trained it. The liberalism which puts its Bible aside will acknowledge that a Christless humanity culminated in Rome. Skepticism is often eloquent when it tries to show how much "fragments of Roman art" had to do with the making of modern civilization. Now, as Rome marks the height to which humanity without a Bible ascended, it would seem that this would be just the point where free and untrammeled thought and the fullest intellectual liberty would be found. Right there, where a Christless race was supreme, ought to be the place where the liberty abounded which the religion of Christ is said to destroy.

Whose program for the production of intellectual and spiritual liberty can liberals accept? Hoarse is the cry: The Bible is to be cast out. We look and behold men who have these opinions sitting on the throne of the Caesars. Now, one would suppose the intellect of that whole realm would have fair play. There was no Bible there to fetter or to annoy. This ought to be the halcyon age for "the liberty of man, woman and child." These rulers have the same dignified abhorrence for all kinds of religion. The skeptic Lucretius says: "The fear of the lower world must be sent headlong forth. It poisons life to its lowest depths; it spreads over all things the blackness of death; it leaves no pleasure unalloyed." I match the Roman with the phrase of a recent orator of this school who spoke of the soldiers dead, as now "sleeping beneath the shadows of the clouds, careless alike of sunshine or of storm, each in the windowless palace of rest." There was no window in the grave when more illustrious and original skeptics talked about it. Modern infidelity has many expressions on the future after death which sound like the old Roman distich, "I was not, and became; I was, and am no more."

Its orator, bending over the body of his dear brother, said nothing more touching than did Tacitus over the grave of Agricola, as he wrote: "If there is a place for the spirits of the pious; if, as the wise suppose, great souls do not become extinct with their bodies; if"—oh, that age of "if" ought to have been an age when every brain was free and no thought or sentiment were a chain. The Bible of Christianity was not powerful enough to throttle anybody. Its pages were not all written; its authors were hunted and outcast. Morals, too, ought to have been all right, for we are told that they are independent of God and Christ.

But what is the fact? Strangely enough, in that age, when nearly every monarch, or poet, or philosopher was a humorous skeptic and they had no Christian religion to "bind their hands," in an age when nothing but this sort of infidelity was supreme, Seneca, to whom connoisseurs in ethics blandly turn when they grow weary of the strenuous Paul or the pensive John, Seneca, while he wrote a book on poverty, has a fortune of $15,000,000, with a house full of citrus tables made of veined wood brought from Mount Atlas. While he framed moral precepts which we are besought to substitute for the Sermon on the Mount, he was openly accused of constant and shameless iniquity, and was leading his distinguished and tender pupil, Nero, into those practises and preparing him for those atrocities which Seneca himself had upon his own soul while he wrote his book on clemency. At that hour the Bible Christianity offered to the world's heart and aspiration, not a book, not a theorist of morals, but a man for the leadership of humanity, and, of that Man the literary and calm French skeptic says: "Jesus will never be surpassed." In the age of Rome, when people were not burdened by churches or Bibles, Lucian says: "If any one loves wealth and is dazed by gold; if any one measures happiness by purple and power; if any one brought up among flatterers and slaves has never had a conception of liberty, frankness and truth; if any one has wholly surrendered himself to pleasure, full tables, carousals, lewdness, sorcery, and deceit, let him go to Rome." There was no Bible either to preach against it or to interfere with it. These things were the product then, as they are now, of infidelity. Whenever the world wishes a civilization so barbarous as that, the reviler of the Bible must create it, for they have the applause of evil and the good-will of crime. In the age of Rome, when this skepticism was the creed of the State, Nero got tired of the goddess Astarte, and murdered his own brother, his wife, and his mother, and the senate was so affected with the same opinion that they heard his justification and proceeded to heap new honors upon him. He threw the preacher Paul into jail, but there Paul wrought out the impulse of Europe. In the age when the great Livy said that "neglect of gods" had come, Caligula let loose his imperial frenzy, and every stream of blood that could be sent toward the sea carried its red tide. In that age when, like later eloquent critics, Ennius said that he did not believe that the gods thought of human beings, "for if the gods concerned themselves about the human race the good would prosper and the bad suffer," the courtesan was kept for pleasure and the wife for domestic slavery. In that happy age of unbelief, when Menander sung "the gods do not care for men," "the homes were," according to Juvenal, "broken up before the nuptial garland faded"; and according to Tertullian, "they married only to be divorced." Friends exchanged wives; infanticide and other hellish crimes were common. This is what that spirit, in its purity, did for the home, when there was no Bible to read at its hearthstone and no New Testament to put into the hands of young lovers departing to make a new rooftree.

Labor will some day be too liberal to give up its Bible. In that age, when "God was dead"; in that age, when "the gods had abdicated"; they said, "the mechanic's occupation is degrading. A workshop is incompatible with anything noble." The curse of slavery had blotted the name of labor, and they agreed that "a purchased laborer is better than a hired one," and thousands of prison-like dwellings rose to conceal the myriads of slaves. In that age Nero, who had the same opinion about God which the vaunting spirit which calls itself liberal has today, had a "golden house" as large as a city, with colonnades a mile long, and within it a statue of Nero 120 feet high. That is what the theory of infidelity did for labor and the working man when it was on the throne. Do you wonder that from that day to this the "carpenter's son" of the Bible has been scoffed at by this infidelity?

In that age, when the theories of infidelity ruled, the gladiators made wet with their blood the great enclosure of the arena. The women and timid girls of Rome gave lightly the sign of death. The crowd shook the building with applause as the palpitating body was dragged by a hook into the death-chamber, and slaves turned up the bloody soil and covered the blood-dabbled earth with sand that the awful amusement might go on. All this was allowed by infidelity in its purity, before it had been influenced by the Christian's Bible into believing that such things are atrocious.

Oh, when I hear infidelity prate of the horrors of slavery and defend a Godless theory of the State, I remember that those who had it in its purity did not regard the slave as a man. When I read the story of slavery and hear an exponent of free thought say, "The doctrine that woman is a slave or serf of man—whether it comes from hell or heaven, from God or demon, from the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, or the very Sodom of perdition—is savagery pure and simple," I say, "That is so, but just that was the ruling idea when infidelity was on the throne of Rome." And only where the Bible has gone and triumphed has woman the privileges which are thus praised.

When I hear it said: "Slavery includes all other crimes. It is the joint product of the kidnaper, pirate, thief, murderer, and hypocrite. It degrades labor and corrupts leisure. To lacerate the naked back, to sell wives, to steal babes, to debauch your soul—this is slavery," I answer: "That is so," and I add that all these and a thousand other damnable features of slavery were seen in Rome when the whole Roman people felt and spoke about the message of the Bible just as your type of liberalism does today.

To all this wretched state of man what offers came from Seneca, whom skepticism quotes as a moralist? Why, he said: "Admire only thyself"; and when he saw that a man must get out of himself, he said: "Give thyself to philosophy." Not philosophy, but the power of the Bible's Christ has lifted man upward to his highest life.

If ever anti-Christianity had a chance to show its beauty, it was when it was at its supreme strength, and when Christianity was a babe in the manger; and these are only suggestions of the hell it dug for man at Rome. You say that it was not what skepticism is at the present day, and I acknowledge that it is so. Why? Because nineteen centuries have rolled like waves of light between, and Christ has improved it in spite of itself. Never had the world so good a chance to see what almost absolute skepticism and unbelief could and would do for the liberty of the human soul as then. But when the thrones of Rome were occupied with men who held the same opinion of the Bible as he does today, what was the freedom of the race?

The scene all comes back. Here is a little, obscure set of poor people who follow the words and life of the son of a carpenter. They are powerful in nothing that Rome calls power. But Rome says that they shall not think that way. Celsus, from whom our less scholarly skepticism is ready to borrow arguments, was not enough for the new thought in the arena of debate, and they cried for another arena. Let us remember that unbelief, in its purity at that date, was so offended at nothing as at the fact that the Church said: "Christian justice makes all equal who bear the name of man," and that Paul said: "There is neither bond nor free, but ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Nothing so offended the representative of free thought in that period as the fact that a rich Roman, in the time of Trajan, having become a Christian, presented freedom to his 1,250 slaves on an Easter day. And, in all that time, when poor Christians with the funds of the Church were privately buying the freedom of slaves, I do not find that a base liberalism believed in liberty. Neither did it believe in freedom of thought. It is the blossom of egotism; it has nothing to which it bows; it beholds no majesty to which it can look up. It is sublime self-conceit, and it has no hesitancy in telling the whole human race that at its grandest moments it has been wrong. This egotism dared to become active in Rome, and it asked the Christians, in the person of the Emperor, to worship him, and to strew incense about him. "I will honor the Emperor," said Theophilus, "not by worshiping him, but by praying for him." Such men as that infidelity kindly put to death. Around their quivering limbs the infidelity of that day made the fagots to flame, and it taught the red tongues of cruel death to creep about their smoking bodies.

Men who believed that the Bible's influence was what infidelity says it is, made the funeral pyre for Polycarp, the populace bringing fuel for the fire, and while the flames made a glory of their lambent glare, he cried out: "Six and eighty years have I served him and he has done me nothing but good, and how could I curse him, my Lord and Savior. If you would know what I am, I tell you frankly, I am a Christian." He did his own thinking, and was brave enough to avow his opinion, for which hate of Christianity duly burned him. This was the way infidelity treated free speech. In that way it unchained the soul of Polycarp. Infidelity's idea of Christianity sent the martyrs of Numidia and Paulus out of the world while they were praying for their murderers. Who believed in freedom then? Infidelity's idea of the message of the Bible followed the Christian like a wild beast, and in the catacomb of Calixtus drew from the pursued soul the pathetic exclamation: "Oh, sorrowful times, when we can not even in caves escape our foes!" And all this was true, because they said, "Recompense to no man evil for evil"; "Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

This spirit of hate has had at least one holiday at the expense of Christian faith. On the night of the 18th of July, 64, Rome was swept with fire. Six days and nights it raged. Ruined was the world's metropolis and excited were the wo-stricken people. Nero, whose opinions of Christianity, by the way, were wonderfully like the orator's, was king, and the people suspected that this royal monster did it. Men told of how he exulted over the sea of flame as he watched it from the tower of Maecenas; and whatever the truth of this may be, it is certain that for the rage of the people Nero must have a victim, and Tacitus tells us that he charged the Christians with the crime. Then opened in Rome the awful carnival of bloodshed that the orator never mentions, in which horrible modes of torture and excruciating methods of producing pain vied with each other in satisfying the demands of death. Women bound to raging bulls and dragged to death were not without the companionship of others who, in the evening, in Nero's garden, were coated with pitch, covered with tar, bound to stakes of pine, lighted with fire, and sent to run aflame with the hatred of Christianity. Through the crowd of sufferers a gentleman, who was ultra-liberal as the orator, drove about, fantastically attired as a charioteer, and the people were wild with delight. Domitian had the same ideas, and severe were his persecutions of the new heresy. This was the day on which infidelity was so full of the love of freedom that it cried: "The Christians to the lions!"

And so I might recount to you how for hundreds of years the Church found out how early and unchristianized infidelity loved freedom of thought. To a type of liberals, it has for years seemed a joy to go to the places in the old world and note how intolerant the Church has been. Now I suggest to any one that he go and visit some of the places where men who thought of Christianity as negativism thinks showed their faith and its fruits. Let him go to the Colosseum and ask the winds that moan over its ruins what they know of the history of infidelity. The winds will hush in that wreck of stupendous magnificence, and with an eloquence gathered from seventeen centuries they will tell him a story that will cause a flow of tears, for much of infidelity is of noble heart. They will tell him how the marble seats were crowded with thousands; again will sweep upward the shout of the excited throng; before him there will lie a half-dead Christian martyr, and near that pool of blood will stand a lion who has satiated his horrid thirst.

They will tell him how infidelity made that splendid place a temple of the furies, how it laughed and yelled and applauded, as it amused itself with that spectacle of horror. They will tell him how the underground passages served to keep and cage wild beasts, and how those who then hated Christianity starved the fierce lion until his eyes rolled in hot hunger and his teeth were sharpened with its agony. They will tell him how the infidelity of that day put balls of fire on the backs of the lions, and how the madness of their passion was increased by scattering hated colors about, tearing the beasts with iron hooks and beating them with cruel whips. They will tell how the Christian was made to fight these infuriated beasts without weapons, while infidelity was frantic with applause. It said "no" to the torn body yonder, that was mangled and supplicating in blood for life. I would have him stand there until, in after years, in a nobler strain than that of Byron, he could say:

And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon  
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,  
Which softened down the hoar austerity  
Of rugged desolation.

\* \* \* \* \*

Till the place  
Became religion, and the heart ran o'er  
With silent worship of the great of old!  
The dead but sceptered sovereigns who still rule  
Our spirits from their urns.

So long as I know what this book has been and done, so long as man's history will not allow me to risk the interests of society with the infidelity which has so often demoralized it, so long will I yearn to get the Bible and its message to all men. It has been our world's best book. With this book as inspiration and resource, William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale were so to continue and complete the task of The Venerable Bede and John Wyclif as to make an epoch in the history of that language to be used by Shakespeare and Burke—an era as distinct as that which Luther's Bible so soon should mark in the history of a language to be such a potent instrument in the hands of Goethe and Hegel. For this very act of heresy, Tyndale was to be called "a full-grown Wyclif," and Luther "the redeemer of his mother-tongue." With the Bible, Calvin was to conceive republics at Geneva, and Holbein to paint, in spite of the iconoclasm of the Reformation, the faces of Holy Mother and Saint, and in spite of the cruelty of the Church, scripturally conceived satires illustrating the sale of indulgences. With that book Gustavus Vasa was to protect and nurture the freedom of the land of flowing splendors, while Angelo was transcribing sacred scenes upon the Sistine vault or fixing them in stone. Reading this book, More was to die with a smile; Latimer, Cranmer, and Ridley to perish while illuminating with living torches, and the Anabaptist to arouse the sympathies of Christendom by his agonies. With this book in hand, Shakespeare was to write his plays; Raleigh was to die, knight, discoverer, thinker, statesman, martyr; Bacon to lay the foundation of modern scientific research—three stars in the majestic constellation about Henry's daughter. With this Bible open before them the English nation would behold the Spanish Armada dashed to pieces upon the rocks, while Edmund Spenser mingled his delicious notes with the tumult of that awful wreck.

This book was to produce the edict of Nantes, while John of Barneveld would give new life to the command of William the Silent—"Level the dikes; give Holland back to the ocean, if need be," thus making preparation for the visit of the Mayflower pilgrims to Leyden or Delfthaven. Their eyes resting upon its pages, Selden and Pym were to go to prison, while Grotius dreamed of the rights of man in peace and war, and Guido and Rubens were painting the joys of the manger or the sorrows of Calvary. His hand resting upon this book, Oliver Cromwell would consolidate the hopes and convictions of Puritanism into a sword which should conquer at Nasby, Marston Moor and Dunbar, leave to the throne of Charles I, a headless corpse, and create, if only for an hour's prophecy, a commonwealth of unbending righteousness. With that volume in their homes, the Swede and the Huguenot, the Scotch-Irishman and the Quaker, the Dutchman and the freedom-loving cavalier, were to plan pilgrimages to the West, and establish new homes in America. With that book in the cabin of the *Mayflower*, venerated and obeyed by sea-tossed exiles, was to be born a compact from which should spring a constitution and a government for the life of which all these nationalities should willingly bleed and struggle, under a conqueror who should rise from the soil of the cavaliers, and unsheath his sword in the colony of the Puritans.

Out of that Bible were to come the "Petition of Right," the national anthem of 1628, the "Grand Remonstrance," and "Paradise Lost." With it, Blake and Pascal should voyage heroically in diverse seas. In its influence Jeremy Taylor should write his "Liberty of Prophesying," Sir Matthew Hale his fearless replies, while Rembrandt was placing on canvas little Dutch children, with wooden shoes, crowding to the feet of a Jewish Messiah.

Its lines, breathing life, order, and freedom, would inspire John Bunyan's dream, Algernon Sidney's fatal republicanism, and Puffendorf's judicature. With them, William Penn would meet the Indian of the forest, and Fénelon, the philosopher, in his meditative solitude. Locke and Newton and Leibnitz would carry it with them in pathless fields of speculation, while Peter the Great was smiting an arrogant priest in Russia, and William was ascending the English throne. From its poetry Cowper, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning would catch the divine afflatus; from its statesmanship Burke, Romilly, and Bright would learn how to create and redeem institutions; from its melodies Handel, Bach, Mendelssohn, and Beethoven would write oratorios, masses, and symphonies; from its declaration of divine sympathy Wilberforce, Howard, and Florence Nightingale were to emancipate slaves, reform prisons, and mitigate the cruelties of war; from its prophecies Dante's hope of a united Italy was to be realized by Cavour, Garibaldi, and Victor Emmanuel. Looking upon the family Bible as he was dying, Andrew Jackson said: "That book, sir, is the rock on which the Republic rests"; and with her hand upon that book, Victoria, England's queen, was to sum up her history as a power amid the nations of the earth, when, replying to the question of an ambassador: "What is the secret of England's superiority among the nations?" she would say: "Go tell your prince that this is the secret of England's political greatness,"

Beloved friends, when spurious liberalism, with all her literature, produces such a roll-call as this; when out of her pages I may see coming a nobler set of forces for the making of manhood, then, and only then, will I give up my Bible; then, and only then, will I cease to pray and labor that it may be given to all the world.

**÷**10-07 HILLIS

GOD THE UNWEARIED GUIDE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Newell Dwight Hillis was born at Magnolia, Iowa, in 1858. He first became known as a preacher of the first rank during his pastorate over the large Presbyterian church in Evanston, Illinois. This reputation led to his being called to the Central Church, Chicago, in which he succeeded Dr. David Swing, and where from the first he attracted audiences completely filling one of the largest auditoriums in Chicago. In 1899 he was called to Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, to succeed Dr. Lyman Abbott in the pulpit made famous by the ministry of Henry Ward Beecher. By his strong personality and mental gifts he draws to his church a large and eager following. His best known books are "A Man's Value to Society," and "The Investment of Influence."

HILLIS

Born in 1858

GOD THE UNWEARIED GUIDE[1]

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*Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God, &c.*—Isa 40:1-31. *He shall not fail, nor be discouraged*.—Isa 44:4.

This is an epic of the unwearied God, and the fainting strength of man. For splendor of imagery, for majesty and elevation, it is one of the supreme things in literature. Perhaps no other Scripture has exerted so profound an influence upon the world's leaders. Luther read it in the fortress of Salzburg, John Brown read it in the prison at Harper's Ferry. Webster made it the model of his eloquence, Wordsworth, Carlyle and a score of others refer to its influence upon their literary style, their thought and life. Like all the supreme things in eloquence, this chapter is a spark struck out of the fires of war and persecution. Its author was not simply an exile—he was a slave who had known the dungeon and the fetter. Bondage is hard, even for savages, naked, ignorant, and newly drawn from the jungle, but slavery is doubly hard for scholars and prophets, for Hebrew merchants and rulers.

This outburst of eloquence took its rise in a war of invasion. When the northern host swept southward, and overwhelmed Jerusalem, the onrushing wave was fretted with fire; later, when the wave of war retreated, it carried back the detritus of a ruined civilization. The story of the siege of Jerusalem, the assault upon its gates, the fall of the walls, all the horrors of famine and of pestilence, are given in the earlier chapters of this wonderful book. The homeward march of the Persian army was a kind of triumphal procession in which the Hebrew princes and leaders walked as captives. The king marched in the guise of a slave, with his eyes put out, followed by sullen princes, with bound hands, and unsubdued hearts. As slaves the Hebrews crossed the Euphrates at the very point where Xenophon crossed with his immortal ten thousand. In the land of bondage the exiles were planted, not in military prisons, but in gangs, working now in the fields, now in the streets of the city, and always under the scourge of soldiers. When thirty years had passed the forty thousand captives were scattered among the people, one brother in the palace, and another a slave in the fields. Soon their religion became only a memory, their language was all but forgotten, their old customs and manner of life were utterly gone. But God raised up two gifted souls for just such an emergency as this. One youth, through sheer force of genius, climbed to the position of prime minister, while a young girl through her loveliness came to the king's palace. One day an emancipation proclamation went forth, from a king who had come to believe in the unseen God who loved justice, and would overwhelm oppression and wrong. The good news went forth on wings of the wind. Making ready for their return to their homeland, all the captives gathered on the outskirts of the desert. It was a piteous spectacle. The people were broken in health, their beauty marred, their weapon a staff, their garments the leather coat, their provisions pieces of moldy bread, and their path fifteen hundred miles of sands, across the desert. To such an end had come a disobedient and sinful generation!

In that hour, beholding these exiles and captives, a flood of emotions rushed over the poet; he saw those bound who should conquer; he saw that men were slaves who should be kings. Then, with a rush, an immeasurable longing shivers through him like a trumpet call. Oh, to save them! To perish for their saving! To die for their life, to be offered for them all! In an abandon of grief and sympathy, he began to speak to them in words of comfort and hope. At first these exiles, dumb with pain and grief, listened, but listened with no light quivering in the eye, and no hope flitting like sunshine across the face. Their yesterdays held bondage, blows and degradation; their tomorrow held only the desert and the return to a ruined land. Then the word of the Lord came upon the poet. What if the night winds did go mourning through the deserted streets of their capital! What if their language had decayed and their institutions had perished? What if the farmer's field was only a waste of thorns and thickets, and the towns become heaps and ruins! What if the king of Babylon and his army has trampled them under foot, as slaves trample the shellfish, crushing out the purple dye that lends rich color to a royal robe? "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people." Is the way long and through a desert? "Every valley shall be exalted, every mountain and hill shall be made low." Has slavery worn man's strength to nothingness until he is as weak as the broken reed and the withered grass? The spirit of the Lord will revive the grass, trampled down by the hoofs of war horses. Soon the bruised root shall redden into the rose and the fluted stem climb into the tree. And think you if God's winds can transform a spray and twig into a trunk fit for foundation of house or mast of ship, that eternal arms can not equip with strength the hand of patriot?

Is the Shepherd and Leader of His little flock unequal to their guidance across the desert? "Behold the Lord will come with a strong arm; he shall feed his flock like a shepherd and he shall gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom." What! Man's hand unequal to the task of rebuilding Jerusalem? Hath not God pledged His strength to the worker, that God whose arm strikes out worlds as the smith strikes out sparks upon the anvil? Is not man's helper that God who dippeth up the seas in the hollow of His hand? Who weighs the mountains with scales and the hills in the balance? What! Thine enemies too strong for thee? Why, God looketh upon all the nations and enemies of the earth as but a drop in the bucket. He sendeth forth His breath, and the tribes disappear as dust is blown from the balance. Then the trumpet call shivered through these exiles. "Hast thou not known? Have the sons of the fathers never heard of the everlasting God, the Lord, Creator of the ends of the earth? Fainteth not, neither is weary!" Heavy is the task, but the Eternal giveth power and strength. Even tho young patriots and heroes faint and fall, they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. While fulfilling their task of rebuilding they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. Oh, what a word is this! What page in literature is comparable to it for comfort! Wonderful the strength of the warrior! Mighty the influence of the statesman! All powerful seems the inventor, but greater still the poet who dwells above the clang and dust of time, with the world's secret trembling on his lips.

He needs no converse nor companionship,  
In cold starlight, whence thou can not come,  
The undelivered tidings in his breast,  
Will not let him rest.  
He who looks down upon the immemorable throng,  
And binds the ages with a song.  
And through the accents of our time,  
There throbs the message of eternity.

And so the unwearied God comforted the fainting strength of man.

Primarily, this glorious outburst was addrest to the exiles as heads of families. The father's strength was broken and his children had been crusht and ground to earth. The ancient patrimony was gone; he had gathered his little ones in from the huts where slaves dwelt. He was leading his little band of pilgrims into a desert. But the prophet spoke to the exiles as to men who believed that the family was the great national institution. With us, the family is important, but with these Hebrew exiles the family was everything. For them the home was the spring from whence the mighty river rolled forth. The family was the headwaters of national, industrial, social and religious life. Every father was revered as the architect of the family fortune. The first ambition of every young Hebrew was to found a family. Just as abroad, a patrician gentleman builds a baronial mansion, fills it with art treasures, hangs the shields and portraits of his ancestors upon the walls, hoping to hand the mansion forward to generations yet unborn, so every worthy Hebrew longed to found a noble family. How keen the anguish, therefore, of this exile in the desert! What a scene is that of the exiles upon the edge of the desert. Darkness is upon the land and the fire burns low into coals. Worn and exhausted, children are sleeping beside the mother. Here is an old man, lying apart, broken and bitter in spirit—one son stands forth a dim figure—looking down upon his aged parents, upon the wife of his bosom and upon his little children. Standing under the stars, he meditates his plans. How shall he care for these, when he returns to his ruined estate? In the event of death, what arm shall lift a shield above these little ones? What if sickness or death pounce upon a home as an eagle upon a dove, as wolves upon lambs, or as brigands descend from the mountains upon sleeping herdsmen!

Every founder of a family knows the agony of such an hour! We are in a world where men are never more than a few weeks from, possible poverty and want; little wonder then that all men seek to provide for the future of the home and the children. But to the exile standing in the darkness, with love that broods above his babes, there comes this word of comfort: God's solicitude for you and yours will not let Him slumber or sleep! God will lift up a highway for the feet of the little band of pilgrims. The eternal God shall be thy guide in the march through the desert. His pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night shall stand in the sky; He shall lead the flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the little ones in His arms, and carry the children in His bosom. And if the father fall on the march, the wings of the Eternal shall brood the babes that are left. His right arm shall be a sword and His left arm a shield. The eternal God fainteth not, neither is weary. Having time to care for the stars, and to lead them forth by name, He hath time and thought also for His children. What a word is this for the home! What comfort for all whose hearts turn toward their children! What a pledge to fathers for generations yet unborn! This truth arms every parent for any emergency. For God is round about every home as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, for bounty and protection.

But the sage was also thinking of men whose hopes were broken, and whose lives were baffled and beaten. These exiles, crossing the desert, might have claimed for themselves the poet's phrase, "Lo, henceforth I am a prisoner of hope." Like Dante, they might have cried, "For years my pillow by night has been wet with tears, and all day long have I held heartbreak at bay." For these whose glorious youth had been exhausted by bondage, life had run to its very dregs. Gone the days of glorious strength! Gone all the opportunities that belong to the era when the heart is young, the limitations of life had become severe! Environment often is a cage against whose iron bars the soul beats bloody wings in vain!

How many men are held back by one weak nerve, or organ! How many are shut in, and limited, and just fall short of supreme success because of an hereditary weakness, handed on by the fathers! How many made one mistake in youth in choosing the occupation and discovered the error when it was too late! How many erred in judgment in their youth, through one critical blunder, that has been irretrievable, and whose burden is henceforth lasht to the back! In such an hour of depression, Isaiah assembles the exiles, and exclaims, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people. Tho your young men faint and be weary, tho the strong utterly fail, yet God is the unwearied one; with his help thou shalt take thy burden, and mount up with wings as eagles; with his unwearied strength thou shalt run with thy load and not be weary, and walk and not faint." For this is the experience of persecution and the reward of sorrow, bravely borne that the fainting strength of man is supplemented by the sure help of the unwearied God.

Therefore, in retrospect, exiles, prisoners, martyrs, who have believed in God seem fortunate. The endungeoned heroes often seem the children of careful good fortune and happiness. The saints, walking through the fire, stand forth as those who are dear unto God. How the point of view changes events. Kitto was deaf, and in his youth his deafness broke his heart, but because his ears were closed to the din of life, he became the great scholar of his time, and swept the treasures of the world into a single volume, an armory of intellectual weapons. Fawcett was blind, but through that blindness became a great analytic student, a master of organization, and served all England in her commerce. John Bright was broken-hearted, standing above the bier, but Richard Cobden called him from his sorrow to become a voice for the poor, to plead the cause of the opprest, and bring about the Corn Laws for the hungry workers in the factories and shops. Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people.

Let the exile say unto himself: "Your warfare is accomplished; your iniquity is pardoned; the Lord's hand will give unto thee double for all thy sins that are forgiven." The great faiths and convictions of the prophets and law-givers, your language and your laws and your liberties, have not been destroyed by captivity; rather slavery has saved them. At last you know their value; in contrast with the idolatry of the Euphrates, the jargon of tongues, the inequality of rights, the organization of justice and oppression, how wonderful the equity of the laws of Moses! How beautiful the faith of the fathers! How surely founded the laws of God. Henceforth idolatry, injustice and sin became as monstrous in their ugliness as they were wicked in their essence. Everything else might go, but not the faith of the fathers. Persecution was like fire on the vase; it burned the colors in. Little wonder that the tradition tells us that for the next hundred years, at stated periods, all the people in the land came together, while a reader repeated this chapter on the unwearied God and the fainting strength of man that had recovered unto hope, men whose hopes had been baffled and beaten.

The thought of an unwearied God is also the true antidote to despondency. The ground of optimism is in God. When that great thinker described certain people as without God and without hope, there was sure logic in his phrase, for the Godless man is always the hopeless man. Between no God anywhere and the one God who is everywhere, there is no middle ground. Either we are children, buffeted about by fate and circumstances, with events tossing souls about in an eternal game of battledore and shuttlecock, or else the world is our Father's house, and God standeth within the shadow, keeping watch above His own. For the man who believes in God, who allies himself to nature, who makes the universe his partner, there is no defeat, and no death, and no interruption of his prosperity. Concede that there is a God, and it follows as a logical necessity that He will not permit any enemy to ruin your life and His plans. For a man who holds this faith it follows that there can be no defeat, or failure. Indeed, the essential difference between men is the difference in their relation toward God. Here are the biographies of two great men. Both are men of genius, both are marvelously equipped, but their end was, oh, how different. One is Martin Luther, who stood forth alone, affirming his religious freedom, in the face of enemies and devils thick as the tiles on the roofs of the houses. The few friends Luther had shut him up in a fortress to save his life, but Luther mightily believed in God. With the full consent of his marvelous gifts, he surrendered his life to the will of God. Knowing that his days were as brief as the withering grass, he allied himself with the Eternal. In his discouragement he read these words, "The Everlasting God fainteth not, neither is weary." In that hour Martin Luther shouted for joy. The beetling walls of the fortress were as tho they were not. Victorious he went forth, in thought, ranging throughout all Germany. And going out, he went up and down the land telling the people that God would protect him, and soon Germany was free.

Goethe tells us that Luther was the architect of modern German language and literature, and stamped himself into the whole national life. The Germany of the Kaiser is simply Martin Luther written large in fifty millions of men. But what made Luther? There was some hidden energy and spirit within him! What was this spirit in him? The spirit of beauty turned a lump of mud into that Grecian face about which Keats wrote his poem. The spirit of truth changes a little ink into a beautiful song. The spirit of strength and beauty in an architect changes a pile of bricks into a house or cathedral or gallery. And the thought of our unwearied God changed the collier's son into the great German emancipator. But over against this man, who never knew despondency, after his vision hour, stands another German. He, too, was a philosopher, clothed with ample power, and blest with opportunity. But he did evil in his life, and then the heart lost its faith, and hope utterly perished. The more he loved pleasure and pursued self, the more cynical and bitter he became. Pessimism set a cold, hard stamp upon his face, and marred his beauty. Cynicism lies like a black mark across his pages. At last, in his bitterness, the philosopher tells us the whole universe is a mirage, and that yonder summer-making sun is a bubble that repeats its iridescent tints in the colors of the rainbow. Despair ate out his heart. He became the most miserable of men, and knew no freedom from sorrow and pain. And lo, now the man's philosophy has perished like a bubble, his influence has utterly disappeared, for his books are unread, while only an occasional scholar chances upon his name, tho the great summer-making sun still shines on and Luther's eternal God fainteth not, neither is weary.

Are you weak, oh, patriot? Remember God is strong. Do your days of service seem short, until your life is scarcely longer than the flower that blooms to-day and is gone tomorrow? God is eternal, and He will take care of your work. Are you sick with hope long deferred? Hope thou in God; He shall yet send succor. Have troubles driven happiness from thee, as the hawk drives the young lark or nightingale from its nest? Return unto thy rest, troubled heart, for the Lord will deal bountifully with thee. Are you anxious for your children? God will bring the child back from the far country. For the child hath wandered far, the golden thread spun in a mother's heart is an unbroken thread that will draw him home! For things that distress you to-day, you shall thank God to-morrow. Nothing shall break the golden chain that binds you to God's throne. Are you hopeless and despondent because of your fainting strength? Remember that the antidote for despondency is the thought of the unwearied God who is doing the best He can for you, and whose ceaseless care neither slumbers nor sleeps.

Little wonder therefore that God became all and in all to this feeble band of captives, journeying across the desert back to their ruined life and land. God had taken away earthly things from them, that He might be their all and in all. When the earth is made poor for us, sometimes the heavens become rich. God closed the eyes of Milton to the beauty in land and sea and sky, that he might see the companies of angels marching and countermarching on the hills of God. He closed the ears of Beethoven, that he might hear the music of St. Cecilia falling over heaven's battlements. He gave Isaiah a slave's hut, that he might ponder the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. How is it that this prophet and poet has become companion of the great ones of the earth? At the time Isaiah rebelled against his bondage, but when it was all over, and the fitful fever had passed, and the fleshly fetters had fallen, he smiled at the things that once alarmed him, as he recalled his fainting strength and the unwearied God.

Gone—that ancient capital. Babylon is a heap. Jerusalem a ruin! But this epic of the unwearied Guide still lives! Isaiah, can never die! Can a chapter die that has cheered the exile in his loneliness, that has comforted the soldier upon his bivouac, that has braced the martyr for his execution, that has given songs at midnight to the prisoners in the dungeon? Out of suffering and captivity came this song of rest and hope. At last the poet praised the eternal God for his bonds and his imprisonment. Oh, it is darkness that makes the morning light so welcome to the weary watcher. It is hunger that makes bread sweet. It is pain and sickness that gives value to the physician and his medicine. It is business trouble that makes you honor your lawyer and counselor, and it is the sense of need that makes God near.

Are there any merchants here who are despondent? Remember the eternal God and make your appeal to the future. Are there any parents whose children have wandered far? When they are old, the children will return to the path of faith and obedience. Are there any in whom the immortal hope burns low? The smoking flax He will not quench, but will fan the flame into victory. Look up to-day; be comforted once more. Work henceforth in hope. Live like a prince. Scatter sunshine. Let your atmosphere be happiness. If troubles come, let them be the dark background that shall throw your hope and faith into bolder relief. God hath set His heart upon you to deliver you. Tho your hand faint, and the tool fall, the eternal God fainteth not, neither is weary. He will bring thy judgment unto victory, immortalize thy good deeds, and crown thy career with everlasting renown.

**÷**10-08 JEFFERSON

THE RECONCILIATION

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Charles Edward Jefferson was born at Cambridge, Ohio, in 1860. He came to public attention by the effectiveness of his preaching during a most successful pastorate in Chelsea, Mass., from which he was called to the Broadway Tabernacle, New York, in 1897. During his New York pastorate the Tabernacle at 34th Street has been sold and a unique structure, including an apartment tower ten stories high, has been built farther up-town. Dr. Jefferson has published several successful books. He has a mellow, sympathetic voice, of considerable range and flexibility, and he speaks in an easy, conversational style.

JEFFERSON

Born in 1860

THE RECONCILIATION[1]

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*Christ died for our sins*.—1Co 15:3.

I want to think with you this morning about the doctrine of the Atonement. Having used that word atonement once, I now wish to drop it. It is not a New Testament word, and is apt to lead one into confusion. You will not find it in your New Testament at all, providing you use the Revised Version. It is found in the King James Version only once, and that is in the fifth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans; but a few years ago, when the revisers went to work, they rubbed out the word and would allow it no place whatever in the entire New Testament. They substituted for it a better word—reconciliation—and that is the word that will probably be used in the future theology of the Church. It is my purpose, then, this morning, to think with you about the doctrine of the reconciliation, or, to put it in a way that will be intelligible to all the boys and girls, I want to think with you about the "making up" between God and man.

Christianity is distinctly a religion of redemption. Its fundamental purpose is to recover men from the guilt and power of sin. All of its history and its teachings must be studied in the light of that dominating purpose. We are told sometimes that Jesus was a great teacher, and so He was, but the apostles never gloried in that fact. We are constantly reminded that He was a great reformer, and so He was, but Peter and John and Paul seemed to be altogether unconscious of that fact. It is asserted that He was a great philanthropist, a man intensely interested in the bodies and the homes of men, and so of course He was, but the New Testament does not seem to care for that. It has often been declared that He was a great martyr, a man who laid down His life in devotion to the truth, and so He was and so He did, but the Bible never looks at Him from that standpoint or regards Him in that light. It refuses to enroll Him among the teachers or reformers or philanthropists or the martyrs of our race. According to the apostolic writers, Jesus is the world's Redeemer, He was manifested to take away sin. He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. The vast and awful fact that broke the apostles' hearts and sent them out into the world to baptize the nations into His name, was the fact which Paul was all the time asserting, "He died for our sins."

No one can read the New Testament without seeing that its central and most conspicuous fact is the death of Jesus. Take, for instance, the gospels, and you will find that over one-quarter of their pages are devoted to the story of His death. Very strange is this indeed, if Jesus was nothing but an illustrious teacher. A thousand interesting events of His career are passed over, a thousand discourses are never mentioned, in order that there may be abundant room for the telling of His death. Or take the letters which make up the last half of the New Testament; in these letters there is scarcely a quotation from the lips of Jesus. Strange indeed is this if Jesus is only the world's greatest teacher. The letters seem to ignore that He was a teacher or reformer, but every letter is soaked in the pathos of His death. There must be a deep and providential reason for all this. The character of the gospels and the letters must have been due to something that Jesus said or that the Holy Spirit inbreathed. A study of the New Testament will convince us that Jesus had trained His disciples to see in His sufferings and death the climax of God's crowning revelation to the world. The key-note of the whole gospel story is struck by John the Baptist in his bold declaration, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." In that declaration there was a reference to His death, for the "lamb" in Palestine lived only to be slain. As soon as Jesus began His public career He began to refer in enigmatic phrases to His death. He did not declare His death openly, but the thought of it was wrapt up inside of all He said. Nicodemus comes to Him at night to have a talk with Him about His work, and among other things, Jesus says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so shall the Son of man be lifted up." Nicodemus did not know what He meant—we know. He goes into the temple and drives out the men who have made it a den of thieves, and when an angry mob surrounds Him He calmly says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." They did not know what He meant—we know. He goes into the city of Capernaum, and is surrounded by a great crowd who seem to be eager to know the way of life. He begins to talk to them about the bread that comes down from heaven, and among other things He says, "The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." They did not understand what He said—we understand it now. One day in the city of Jerusalem He utters a great discourse upon the good shepherd. "I am the good shepherd," He says; "the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." They did not understand Him—we do. In the last week of His earthly life it was reported that a company of Greeks had come to see Him. He falls at once into a thoughtful mood, and when at last He speaks it is to say that "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." The men standing by did not understand what He said—we understand. All along His journey, from the Jordan to the cross, He dropt such expressions as this: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." Men did not know what He was saying—it is all clear now.

But while He did not talk openly to the world about His death, He did not hesitate to speak about it to His nearest friends. As soon as He found a man willing to confess that He was indeed the world's Messiah, the Son of the living God, He began to initiate His disciples into the deeper mysteries of His mission. "From that time," Matthew says, "he began to show, to unfold, to set forth the fact that he must suffer many things and be killed." Peter tried to check Him in this disclosure, but Jesus could not be checked. It is surprising how many times it is stated in the gospels that Jesus told His disciples He must be killed. Matthew says that while they were traveling in Galilee, on a certain day when the disciples were much elated over the marvelous things which He was doing, He took them aside and said "Let these words sink into your ears: I am going to Jerusalem to be killed." Later on, when they were going through Perea, Jesus took them aside and said, "The Son of man must suffer many things, and at last be put to death." On nearing Jerusalem His disciples became impatient for a disclosure of His power and glory. He began to tell them about the grace of humility. "The Son of man," He said, "is come, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." On the last Tuesday of His earthly life He sat with His disciples on the slope of the Mount of Olives, and in the midst of His high and solemn teaching He said, "It is only two days now until I shall be crucified." And on the last Thursday of His life, on the evening of His betrayal, He took His disciples into an upper room, and taking the bread and blessing it, He gave it to these men, saying, "This is my body which is given for you." Likewise after supper He took the cup, and when He had blest it gave it to them, saying, "This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. Do this in remembrance of me." It would seem from this that the one thing which Jesus was desirous that all His followers should remember was the fact that He had laid down His life for them. One can not read the gospels without feeling that he is being borne steadily and irresistibly toward the cross.

When we get out of the gospels into the epistles we find ourselves face to face with the same tragic and glorious fact. Peter's first letter is not a theological treatise. He is not writing a dissertation on the person of Christ, or attempting to give any interpretation of the death of Jesus; he is dealing with very practical matters. He exhorts the Christians who are discouraged and downhearted to hold up their heads and to be brave. It is interesting to see how again and again he puts the cross behind them in order to keep them from slipping back. "Endure," he says, "because Christ suffered for us. Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree." The Christians of that day had been overtaken by furious persecution. They were suffering all sorts of hardships and disappointments. But "suffer," he says, "because Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Certainly the gospel, according to St. Peter, was: Christ died for our sins.

Read the first letter of St. John, and everywhere it breathes the same spirit which we have found in the gospels and in St. Peter. John punctuates almost every paragraph with some reference to the cross. In the first chapter he is talking about sin. "The blood of Jesus Christ," he says, "cleanses us from all sins." In the second chapter he is talking about forgiveness, and this leads him to think at once of Jesus Christ, the righteous, "who is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world." In the third chapter he is talking about brotherly love. He is urging the members of the Church to lay down their lives, one for another, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." In the fourth chapter he tells of the great mystery of Christ's love: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." To the beloved disciple evidently the great fact of the Christian revelation is that Christ died for our sins.

But it is in the letters of Paul that we find the fullest and most emphatic assertion of this transcendent fact. It will not be possible for me to quote to you even a half of what he said on the subject. If you should cut out of his letters all the references to the cross, you would leave his letters in tatters. Listen to him as he talks to his converts in Corinth: "First of all I delivered unto you that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins." That was the foremost fact, to be stated in every letter and to be unfolded in every sermon. To Saul of Tarsus, Jesus is not an illustrious Rabbi whose sentences are to be treasured up and repeated to listening congregations; He is everywhere and always the world's Redeemer. And throughout all of Paul's epistles one hears the same jubilant, triumphant declaration, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Let us now turn to the last book of the New Testament, the Book of the Revelation. What does this prophet on the Isle of Patmos see and hear, as he looks out into future ages and coming worlds? The book begins with a doxology: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever." John looks, and beholds a great company of the redeemed. He asks who these are, and the reply comes back, "These are they who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." He listens, and the song that goes up from the throats of the redeemed is, "Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain and didst purchase us for God with thy blood." At the center of the great vision which bursts upon the soul of the exiled apostle, there is a Lamb that was slain. Whatever we may think of Jesus of Nazareth, there is no question concerning what the men who wrote the New Testament thought. To the men who wrote the book, Jesus was not a Socrates or a Seneca, a Martin Luther or an Abraham Lincoln. His life was not an incident in the process of evolution, His death was not an episode in the dark and dreadful tragedy of human history. His life is God's. greatest gift to men, His death is the climax and the crowning revelation of the heart of the eternal. You can not open the New Testament anywhere without the idea flying into your face, "Christ died for our sins."

How different all this is from the atmosphere of the modern Church. When you go into the average church to-day, what great idea meets you? Do you find yourselves face to face with the fact that Christ died for our sins? I do not think you will often hear that great truth preached. In all probability you will hear a sermon dealing with the domestic graces, or with business obligations, or with political duties and complications. You may hear a sermon on city missions, or on foreign missions; you may hear a man dealing with some great evil, or pointing out some alarming danger, or discussing some interesting social problem, or urging upon men's consciences the performance of some duty. It is not often in these modern days that you will hear a sermon dealing with the thought that set the apostles blazing and turned the world upside down. And right there, I think, lies one of the causes of the weaknesses of the modern Church. We have been so busy attending to the things that ought to be done, we have had no time to feed the springs that keep alive these mighty hopes which make us Christian men. What is the secret of the strength of the Roman Catholic Church? How is it that she pursues her conquering way, in spite of stupidities and blunders that would have killed any other institution? I know the explanations that are usually offered, but it seems to me they are far from adequate. Somebody says, But the Roman Catholic Church does not hold any but the ignorant. That is not true. It may be true of certain localities in America, but it is not true of the nations across the sea. In Europe she holds entire nations in the hollow of her hand; not only the ignorant, but the learned; not only the low, but the high; not only the rude, but the cultured, the noble, and the mighty. It will not do to say that the Roman Catholic Church holds nobody but the ignorant. But even if it were true, it would still be interesting to ascertain how she exercises such an influence over the minds and hearts of ignorant people—for ignorant people are the hardest of all to hold. When you say that the Church can hold ignorant men, you are giving her the very highest compliment, for you are acknowledging that she is in the possession of a power which demands an explanation. The very fact that she is able to bring out such hosts of wage-earning men and women in the early hours of Sunday morning, men and women who have worked hard through the week, and many of them far into the night, but who are willing on the Lord's Day to wend their way to the house of God and engage in religious worship, is a phenomenon which is worth thinking about. How does the Roman Catholic Church do it? Somebody says she does it all by appealing to men's fears, she scares men into penitence and devotion. Do you think that that is a fair explanation? I do not think so. I can conceive how she might frighten people for one generation, or for two, but I can not conceive how she could frighten a dozen generations. One would suppose that the spell would wear off by and by. There is a deeper explanation than that The explanation is to be found in the spiritual nature of man. The Roman Catholic leaders, notwithstanding their blunders and their awful sins, have always seen that the central fact of the Christian revelation is the death of Jesus, and around that fact they have organized all their worship. Roman Catholics go to mass; what is the mass? It is the celebration of the Lord's Supper. What is the Lord's Supper? It is the ceremony that proclaims our Lord's death until He comes. The hosts of worshipers that fill our streets in the early Sunday morning hours are not going to church to hear some man discuss an interesting problem, nor are they going to listen to a few singers sing; they are going to celebrate once more the death of the Savior of the world. In all her cathedrals Catholicism places the stations of the cross, that they may tell to the eye the story of the stages of His dying. On all her altars she keeps the crucifix. Before the eyes of every faithful Catholic that crucifix is held until his eyes close in death. A Catholic goes out of the world thinking of Jesus crucified. So long as a Church holds on to that great fact, she will have a grip on human minds and hearts that can not be broken. The cross, as St. Paul said, a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes. The Catholic Church has picked up the fact of Jesus' death and held it aloft like a burning torch. Around the torch she has thrown all sorts of dark philosophies, but through the philosophies the light has streamed into the hearts and homes of millions of God's children.

Protestantism has prospered just in proportion as she has kept the cross at the forefront of all her preaching. The missionaries bring back the same report from every field, that it is the story of Jesus' death that opens the hearts of the pagan world. Every now and then a denomination has started, determined to get rid of the cross of Jesus, or at least to pay scant attention to it, and in every case these denominations have been at the end of the third or fourth generation either decaying or dead. There is no interpretation of the Christian religion that has in it redeeming power which ignores or belittles the death of Christ.

If Protestantism to-day is not doing what it ought to do, and is manifesting symptoms which are alarming to Christian leaders, it is because she has in these recent years been engaged so largely in practical duties as to forget to drink inspiration from the great doctrines which must forever furnish life and strength and hope. If you will allow me to prophesy this morning, I predict that the preaching of the next fifty years will be far more doctrinal than the preaching of the last fifty years has been. I imagine some of you will shudder at that. You say you do not like doctrinal preaching, you want preaching that is practical. Well, pray, what is practical preaching? Practical preaching is preaching that accomplishes the object for which preaching is done, and the primary object of all Christian preaching is to reconcile men to God. The experience of 1900 years proves that it is only doctrinal preaching that reconciles the heart to God. If, then, you really want practical preaching, the only preaching that is deserving the name is preaching that deals with the great Christian doctrines. But somebody says, I do not like doctrinal preaching. A great many people have said that within recent years. I do not believe they mean what they say. They are not expressing with accuracy what is in their mind. They do like doctrinal preaching if they are intelligent, faithful Christians, for doctrinal preaching is bread to hearts that have been born again. When people say they do not like doctrinal preaching, they often mean that they do not like preaching which belongs to the eighteenth or seventeenth or sixteenth centuries. They are not to be blamed for this. There is nothing that gets stale so soon as preaching. We can not live upon the preaching of a bygone age. If preachers bring out the interpretations and phraseology which were current a hundred years ago, people must of necessity say, "Oh, please do not give us that, we do not like such doctrinal preaching." But doctrinal preaching need not be antiquated or belated, it may be fresh, it may be couched in the language in which men were born, it may use for its illustrations the images and figures and analogies which are uppermost in men's imagination. And whenever it does this there is no preaching which is so thrilling and uplifting and mighty as the preaching which deals with the great fundamental doctrines.

In one sense, the Christian religion never changes, in another sense it is changing all the time. The facts of Christianity never change, the interpretations of those facts alter from age to age. It is with religion as it is with, the stars, the stars never change. They move in their orbits in our night sky as they moved in the night sky of Abraham when he left his old Chaldean home. The constellations were the same at the opening of our century as they were when David watched his flocks on the old Judean hills. But the interpretations of the stars have always changed, must always change. Pick up the old charts which the astrologers made and compare them with the charts of astronomers of our day. How vast the difference! Listen to our astronomers talk about the magnitudes and disunites and composition of the stars, and compare with their story that which was written in the astronomy of a few centuries ago. The stellar universe has not changed, but men's conceptions have changed amazingly. The facts of the human body do not change. Our heart beats as the heart of Homer beat, our blood flows as the blood of Julius Caesar flowed, our muscles and nerves live and die as the nerves and muscles have lived and died in the bodies of men in all the generations—and yet, how the theories of medicine have been altered from time to time. A doctor does not want to hear a medical lecturer speak who persists in using the phraseology and conceptions which were accepted by the medical science of fifty years ago. Conceptions become too narrow to fit the growing mind of the world, and when once outgrown they must be thrown aside. As it is in science, so it is in religion. The facts of Christianity never change, they are fixt stars in the firmament of moral truth. Forever and forever it will be true that Christ died for our sins, but the interpretations of this fact must be determined by the intelligence of the age. Men will never be content with simple facts, they must go behind them to find out an explanation of them. Man is a rational being, he must think, he will not sit down calmly in front of a fact and be content with looking it in the face, he will go behind it and ask how came it to be and what are its relations to other facts. That is what man has always been doing with the facts of the Christian revelation, he has been going behind them and bringing out interpretations which will account for them. The interpretations are good for a little while, and then they are outgrown and cast aside.

A good illustration of the progressive nature of theology is found in the doctrine of the atonement. All of the apostles taught distinctly that Christ died for our sins. The early Christians did not attempt to go behind that fact, but by and by men began to attempt explanations. In the second century a man by the name of Irenaeus seized upon the word "ransom" in the sentence, "The Son of man is come to give his life a ransom for many," and found in that word "ransom" the key-word of the whole problem. The explanation of Irenaeus was taken up in the third century by a distinguished preacher, Origen. And in the fourth century the teaching of Origen was elaborated by Gregory of Nyssa.

According to the interpretation of these men, Jesus was the price paid for the redemption of men. Paul frequently used the word redemption, and the word had definite meanings to people who lived in the first four centuries of the Christian era. If Christ was indeed a ransom, the question naturally arose, who paid the price? The answer was, God. A ransom must be paid to somebody—to whom was this ransom paid? The answer was, the devil. According to Origen and to Gregory, God paid the devil the life of Jesus in order that the devil might let humanity go free. The devil, by deceit, had tricked man, and man had become his slave—God now plays a trick upon the devil, and by offering him the life of Jesus, secures the release of man. That was the interpretation held by many theologians for almost a thousand years, but in the eleventh century there arose a man who was not satisfied with the old interpretation. The world had outgrown it. To many it seemed ridiculous, to some it seemed blasphemous. There was an Italian by the name of Anselm who was an earnest student of the Scriptures, and he seized upon the word "debt" as the key-word of the problem. He wrote a book, one of the epoch-making books of Christendom, which he called "*Cur Deus Homo*." In this book Anselm elaborated his interpretation of the reconciliation. "Sin," he said, "is debt, and sin against an infinite being is an infinite debt. A finite being can not pay an infinite debt, hence an infinite being must become man in order that the debt may be paid. The Son of God, therefore, assumes the form of man, and by his sufferings on the cross pays the debt which allows humanity to go free." The interpretation was an advance upon that of Origen and Gregory, but it was not final. It was repudiated by men of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and finally, in the day of the Reformation, it was either modified or cast away altogether.

Martin Luther, Calvin, and the other reformers seized upon the word "propitiation," and made that the starting-point of their interpretation. According to these men, God is a great governor and man has broken the divine law—transgressors must be punished—if the man who breaks the law is not punished, somebody else must be punished in his stead. The Son of God, therefore, comes to earth to suffer in His person the punishment that rightly belongs to sinners. He is not guilty, but the sins of humanity are imputed to Him, and God wreaks upon Him the penalty which rightfully should have fallen on the heads of sinners. That is known as "the penal substitution theory."

It was not altogether satisfactory, many men revolted from it, and in the seventeenth century a Dutchman, Hugo Grotius, a lawyer, brought forth another interpretation, which is known in theology as "the governmental theory." He would not admit that Christ was punished. His sufferings were not penal, but illustrative. "God is the moral governor," said Grotius, "his government must be maintained, law can not be broken with impunity. Unless sin is punished the dignity of God's government would be destroyed. Therefore, that man may see how hot is God's displeasure against sin, Christ comes into the world and suffers the consequences of the transgressions of the race. The cross is an exhibition of what God thinks of sin." That governmental theory was carried into England and became the established doctrine of the English Church for almost three hundred years. It was carried across the ocean and became the dominant theory in the New Haven school of theologians, as represented by Jonathan Edwards, Dwight, and Taylor. The Princeton school of theology still clung to the penal substitution theory, and it was the clashing of the New Haven school and the Princeton school which caused such a commotion in the Presbyterian Church of sixty years ago. They are antiquated. They are too little. They seem mechanical, artificial, trivial. We can say of the governmental theory what Dr. Hodge said, "It degrades the work of Christ to the level of a governmental contrivance." If I should attempt to preach to you the governmental theory as it was preached by theologians fifty years ago, you would not be interested in it There is nothing in you that would respond to it. You would simply say, "I do not like doctrinal preaching." Or if I should go back and take up the penal substitution theory in all its nakedness and hideousness, and attempt to give it to you as the correct interpretation of the gospel, you would rise up in open rebellion and say, "We will not listen to such preaching." If I should go back and take up the Anselmic theory and attempt to show how an infinite debt must be paid by infinite suffering, you would say: "Stop, you are converting God into a Shylock, who is demanding His pound of flesh. We prefer to think of Him as our heavenly Father." If I should go further back and take up the old ransom theory of Origen and Gregory, I suspect that some of you would want to laugh. You could not accept an interpretation which represents God as playing a trick upon Satan in order to get humanity out of his grasp. No, those theories have all been outgrown. We have come out into larger and grander times. We have higher conceptions of the Almighty than the ancients ever had. We see far deeper into the Christian revelation than Martin Luther or John Calvin ever saw. These old interpretations are simply husks, and men and women will not listen to the preaching of them. If, now and then, a belated preacher attempts to preach them, the people say, "If that is doctrinal preaching, please give us something practical."

And so the Church is to-day slowly working out a new interpretation of the great fact that Christ died for our sins. The interpretation has not yet been completed, and will not be for many years. I should like this morning simply to outline in a general way some of the more prominent features of the new interpretation. The Holy Ghost is at work. He is taking the things of Christ and showing them unto us. The interpretation of the reconciliation of the future will be superior in every point to any of the interpretations of the past.

The new interpretation is going to be simple, straightforward, and natural. The death of Christ is not going to be made something artificial, mechanical, or theatrical. It is going to be the natural conception of the outflowing life of God.

The new interpretation is going to start from the Fatherhood of God. The old theories were all born in the counting-room, or the court-house. Jesus went into the house to find His illustrations for the conduct of the heavenly Father. He never went into the court-house, nor can we go there for analogies with which to image forth His dealings with our race. It was His custom to say, "If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him."

The new interpretation is going to be comprehensive. It is going to be built, not on a single metaphor, but on everything that Jesus and the apostles said. Right there is where the old interpretations went astray. They seized upon one figure of speech and made that the determining factor in the entire interpretation. Jesus said many things, and so did His apostles, and all of them must contribute to the final interpretation.

Two things are to be hereafter made very clear: The first is that God reveals Himself in Jesus Christ. The old views were always losing sight of that great fact. There was always a dualism between God and Christ. I remember what my conception was when I was a boy. I thought that God was a strict and solemn and awful king, who was very angry because men had broken His law. He was just, and His justice had no mercy in it. Christ, His Son, was much better-natured and more compassionate, and He came forth into our world to suffer upon the cross that God's justice might relax a little, and His heart be opened to forgive our race. I supposed that that was the teaching of the New Testament, it certainly was the teaching of the hymns in the hymn-book, if not of the preachers. And when I became a young man, I supposed that that was the teaching of the Christian religion. My heart rebelled against it. I would not accept it. I became an infidel. A man can not accept an interpretation of God that does not appeal to the best that is in him. No man can accept a doctrine that darkens his moral sense, or that confuses the distinction between right and wrong. I would not accept the old interpretation because my soul rose in revolt against it. I shall never forget how, one evening in his study, a minister, who had outgrown the old traditions, explained to me the meaning of the reconciliation. He assured me that God is love, invisible, eternal. Christ, His Son, is also love. In becoming at one with the Son we become at one with the Father. This is the at-one-ment. And when that truth broke upon me my heart began to sing:

Just as I am—Thy love unknown  
Hath broken every barrier down;  
Now, to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come!

I wonder in telling this if I have not spoken the experience of many of you this morning. It is impossible to love God if we feel that He is stern and despotic, and must be appeased by the sufferings of an innocent man. The New Testament nowhere lends any support to that idea. Everywhere the New Testament assures us that God is the lover of men, that He initiates the movement for man's redemption. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son…." "Herein is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us." "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "The Father spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "I and my Father are one." These are only a few of the passages in which we are told that God is our Savior. When an old Scotchman once heard the text announced, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," he exclaimed, "Oh, that was love indeed! I could have given myself, but I never could have given my boy." This, then, is the very highest love of which it is possible for the human mind to think: the love of a father that surrenders his son to sufferings and death.

And this brings us to the second great truth which is outgrowing increasingly clear in the consciousness of the Church. The death of Jesus is the revelation of an experience in the heart of God. God is the sin-bearer of the world. He bears our sins on His mind and heart. There are three conceptions of God: the savage, the pagan, and the Christian. God, according to the savage conception, is vengeful, and capricious, and vindictive. He is a great savage hidden in the sky. We have all outgrown that. According to the pagan idea, He is indifferent to the wants and woes of men. He does not care for men. He is not interested in them. He does not sympathize with them. He does not suffer over their griefs. He does not feel pain or sorrow. I am afraid that many of us have never gotten beyond the pagan conception of the Almighty. But according to the Christian conception, God suffers. He feels, and because He feels, He sympathizes, and because He sympathizes, He suffers. He feels both pain and grief. He carries a wound in His heart. We men and women sometimes feel burdened because of the sin we see around us; shall not the heavenly Father be as sensitive and responsive as we men? But somebody says that God can not be happy then. Of course he can not be happy. Happiness is not an adjective to apply to God. Happy is a word that belongs to children. Children are happy, grown people never are. One can be happy when the birds are singing and the dew is on the grass, and there is no cloud in all the sky, and the crape has not yet hung at the door. But after we have passed over the days of childhood, there is happiness no longer. Some of us have lived too long and borne too much ever to be happy any more. But it is possible for us to be blest. We may pass into the very blessedness of God. The highest form of blessedness is suffering for those we love, and shall not the Father of all men have in His own eternal heart that experience which we confess to be the highest form of blessedness? This is the truth which is dawning like a new revelation on the Church: the humanity of God. It is revealed in the New Testament, but as yet we have only begun to take it in. God is like us men. We are like Him. We are made in His image. We are His children, and He is our Father. If we are His children, then we are His heirs, and joint heirs with Christ. Not only our joys, but our sorrows also, are intimations and suggestions of experiences in the infinite heart of the Eternal.

**÷**10-09 MORGAN

THE PERFECT IDEAL OF LIFE

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

George Campbell Morgan, Congregational divine and preacher, was born in Tetbury, Gloucestershire, England, in 1863, and was educated at the Douglas School, Cheltenham. He worked as a lay-mission preacher for the two years ending 1888, and was ordained to the ministry in the following year, when he took charge of the Congregational Church at Stones, Staffordshire. After occupying the pulpit in several pastorates, in 1904 he became pastor of the Westminster Congregational Chapel, Buckingham Gate, London, a position which he still occupies. Besides being highly successful as a pulpit orator, Dr. Morgan has published many works of a religious character, among which may be enumerated: "Discipleship"; "The Hidden Years of Nazareth"; "Life's Problems"; "The Ten Commandments." His last work, "The Christ of To-day," has passed through several editions.

MORGAN

Born in 1863

THE PERFECT IDEAL OF LIFE

*Jesus therefore said, When ye have lifted up the son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to him. As he spake these things, many believed on him*.—Joh 8:28-30.

The Master, you will see, in this verse lays before us three things. First of all, He gives us the perfect ideal of human life in a short phrase, and that comes at the end, "the things that please him." Those are the things that create perfect human life, living in the realm of which man realizes perfectly all the possibilities of his wondrous being—"the things that please him." So I say, in this phrase, the Master reveals to us the perfect ideal of our lives. Then, in the second place, the Master lays claim—one of the most stupendous claims that He ever made—that He utterly, absolutely, realizes that ideal. He says, "I do always the things that please him." And then, thirdly, we have the revelation of the secret by which He has been able to realize the ideal, to make the abstract concrete, to bring down the fair vision of divine purpose to the level of actual human life and experience, and the secret is declared in the opening words: "He that sent me is with me; my Father hath not left me alone."

The perfect ideal for my life, then, is that I live always in the realm of the things that please God; and the secret by which I may do so is here unfolded—by living in perpetual, unbroken communion with God: communion with which I do not permit anything to interfere. Then it shall be possible for me to pass into this high realm of actual realization.

It is important that we should remind ourselves in a few sentences that the Lord has indeed stated the highest possible ideal for human life in these words: "The things that please him." Oh, the godlessness of men! The godlessness that is to be found on every hand! The godlessness of the men and women that are called by the name of God! How tragic, how sad, how awful it is! because godlessness is always not merely an act of rebellion against God, but a falling-short in our own lives of their highest and most glorious possibilities.

Here is my life. Now, the highest realm for me is the realm where all my thoughts, and all my deeds, and all my methods, and everything in my life please God. That is the highest realm, because God only knows what I am; only perfectly understands the possibilities of my nature, and all the great reaches of my being. You remember those lines that Tennyson sang—very beautifully, I always think:

Flower in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies;—  
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
Little Flower—but if I could understand  
What you art, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.

Beautiful confession! Absolutely true. I hold that flower in my hand, and I look at it, flower and leaves and stem and root. I can botanize it, and then I tear it to pieces—that is what the botanist mostly does—and you put some part of it there, and some part of it there, and some part of it there. There is the root, there the stem, and there are the leaves, and there is everything; but where is the flower? Gone. How did it go? When did it go? Why, when you ruthlessly tore it to bits. But how did you destroy it? You interfered with the principle that made it what it was—you interfered with the principle of life. What is life? No man can tell you. "If I could but know what you are, little flower, root and all, and all in all," I would know what life is, what God is, what man is. I can not.

Now, if you lift that little parable of the flower into the highest realm of animal life, and speak of yourself—we don't know ourselves; down in my nature there are reaches that I have not fathomed yet. They are coming up every day. What a blest thing it is to have the Master at hand, to hand them over to Him as they come up, and say, "Lord, here is another piece of Thy territory; govern it; I don't know anything about it." But there is the business. I don't know myself, but God knows me, understands all the complex relationships of my life, knows how matter affects mind, and physical and mental and spiritual are blended in one in the high ideal of humanity. Oh, remember, man is the crowning and most glorious work of God of which we know anything as yet. And God only knows man.

But here is a Man that stands amid His enemies, and He looks out upon His enemies, and He says, "I do the things that please him"—not "I teach them," not "I dream them," not "I have seen them in a fair vision," but "I do them." There never was a bigger claim from the lips of the Master than that: "I do always the things that please him."

You would not thank me to insult your Christian experience, upon whatever level you live it, by attempting to define that statement of Christ. History has vindicated it. We believe it with all our hearts—that He always did the things that pleased God. But I have got on to a level that I can touch now. The great ideal has come from the air to the earth. The fair vision has become concrete in a Man. Now, I want to see that Man; and if I see that Man I shall see in Him a revelation of what God's purpose is for men, and I shall see, therefore, a revelation of what the highest possibility of life is. Now this is a tempting theme. It is a temptation to begin to contrast Him with popular ideals of life. I want to see Him; I want, if I can, to catch the notes of the music that make up the perfect harmony which was the dropping of a song out of God's heaven upon man's earth, that man might catch the key-note of it and make music in his own life. What are the things in this Man's life? He says: "I have realized the ideal—I do." There are four things that I want to say about Him, four notes in the music of His life.

First, spirituality. That is one of the words that needs redeeming from abuse. He was the embodiment of the spiritual ideal in life. He was spiritual in the high, true, full, broad, blest sense of that word.

It may be well for a moment to note what spirituality did not mean in the life of Jesus Christ. It did not mean asceticism. During all the years of His ministry, during all the years of His teaching, you never find a single instance in which Jesus Christ made a whip of cords to scourge Himself. And all that business of scourging oneself—an attempt to elevate the spirit by the ruin of the actual flesh—is absolutely opposed to His view of life. Jesus Christ did not deny Himself. The fact of His life was this—that He touched everything familiarly. He went into all the relationship of life. He went to the widow. He took up the children and held them in His arms, and looked into their eyes till heaven was poured in as He looked. He didn't go and get behind walls somewhere. He didn't get away and say: "Now, if I am going to get pure I shall do it by shutting men out." You remember what the Pharisees said of Him once. They said: "This man receiveth sinners." You know how they said it. They meant to say: "We did hope that we should make something out of this new man, but we are quite disappointed. He receives sinners."

And what did they mean? They meant what you have so often said: "You can't touch pitch without being defiled." But this Man sat down with the publican and He didn't take on any defilement from the publican. On the other hand, He gave the publican His purity in the life of Jesus Christ. Things worked the other way. He was the great negative of God to the very law of evil that you have—evil contaminates good. If you will put on a plate one apple that is getting bad among twelve others that are pure, the bad one will influence the others. Christ came to drive back every force of disease and every force of evil by this strong purity of His own person, and He said: "I will go among the bad and make them good." That is what He was doing the whole way through. So His spirituality was not asceticism. And if you are going to be so spiritual that you see no beauty in the flowers and hear no music in the song of the birds; if the life which you pass into when you consent to the crucifixion of self does not open to you the very gates of God, and make the singing of the birds and the blossoming of the flowers infinitely more beautiful, you have never seen Jesus yet.

What was His spirituality? The spirituality of Jesus Christ was a concrete realization of a great truth which He laid down in His own beatitudes. What was that? "Blest are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Now, the trouble is we have been lifting all the good things of God and putting them in heaven. And I don't wonder that you sing:

My willing soul would stay  
In such a frame as this,  
And sit and sing itself away  
To everlasting bliss.

No wonder you want to sing yourself away to everlasting bliss, because everything that is worth having you have put up there. But Jesus said: "Blest are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." If you are pure you will see Him everywhere—in the flower that blooms, in the march of history, in the sorrows of men, above the darkness of the darkest cloud; and you will know that God is in the field when He is most invisible.

Second, subjection. The next note in the music of His life is His absolute subjection to God. You can very often tell the great philosophies which are governing human lives by the little catchwords that slip off men's tongues: "Well, I thank God I am my own master." That is your trouble, man. It is because you are your own master that you are in danger of hell. A man says: "Can't I do as I like with my own?" You have got no "own" to do what you like with. It is because men have forgotten the covenant of God, the kingship of God, that we have all the wreckage and ruin that blights this poor earth of ours. Here is the Man who never forgot it.

Did you notice those wonderful words: "I do nothing of myself, but as my Father taught me, I speak." He neither did nor spoke anything of Himself. It was a wonderful life. He stood forevermore between the next moment and heaven. And the Father's voice said, "Do this," and He said "Amen, I came to do thy will," and did it. And the Father's voice said, "Speak these words to men," and He, "Amen," and He spoke.

You say: "That is just what I do not want to do." I know that. We want to be independent; have our own way. "The things that please God—this Man was subject to the divine will." You know the two words—if you can learn to say them, not like a parrot, not glibly, but out of your heart—the two words that will help you "Halleluiah" and "Amen." You can say them in Welsh or any language you like; they are always the same. When the next dispensation of God's dealings faces you look at it and say: "Halleluiah! Praise God! Amen!" That means, "I agree."

Third, sympathy. Now, you have this Man turned toward other men. We have seen something of Him as He faced God: Spirituality, a sense of God; subjection, a perpetual amen to the divine volition. Now, He faces the crowd. Sympathy! Why? Because He is right with God, He is right with men; because He feels God near, and knows Him, and responds to the divine will; therefore, when He faces men He is right toward men. The settlement of every social problem you have in this country and in my own land, the settlement of the whole business, will be found in the return of man to God. When man gets back to God he gets back to men. What is behind it? Sympathy is the power of putting my spirit outside my personality, into the circumstances of another man, and feeling as that man feels.

I take one picture as an illustration of this. I see the Master approaching the city of Nain, and around Him His disciples. He is coming up. And I see outside the city of Nain, coming toward the gate a man carried by others, dead, and walking by that bier a mother. Now, all I want you to look at is that woman's face, and, looking into her face, see all the anguish of those circumstances. She is a widow, and that is her boy, her only boy, and he is dead. Man can not talk about this. You have got to be in the house to know what that means. But look at her face—there it is. All the sorrow is on her face. You can see it.

Now, turn from her quickly and look into the face of Christ. Why, I look into His face—there is her face. He is feeling all she is feeling; He is down in her sorrow with her; He has got underneath the burden, and He is feeling all the agony that that woman feels because her boy is dead. He is moved with compassion whenever human sorrow crosses His vision and human need approaches Him. And now I see Him moving toward the bier. I see Him as He touches it. And He takes the boy back and gives him to his mother. Do you see in yon mountain a cloud, so somber and sad, and suddenly the sun comes from behind the cloud, and all the mountain-side laughs with gladness? That is that woman's face. The agony is gone. The tear that remains there is gilded with a smile, and joy is on her face. Look at Him. There it is. He is in her joy now. He is having as good a time as the woman. He has carried her grief and her sorrow. He has given her joy. And it is His joy that He has given to her. He is with her in her joy.

Wonderful sympathy! He went about gathering human sorrow into His own heart, scattering His joy, and having fellowship in agony and in deliverance, in tears and in their wiping away. Great, sympathetic soul! Why? Because He always lived with God, and, living with God, the divine love moved Him with compassion. Ah, believe me, our sorrows are more felt in heaven than on earth. And we had that glimpse of that eternal love in this Man, who did the things that pleased God, and manifested such wondrous sympathy.

Fourth, strength. The last note is that of strength. You talk about the weakness of Jesus, the frailty of Jesus. I tell you, there never was any one so strong as He. And if you will take the pains of reading His life with that in mind you will find it was one tremendous march of triumph against all opposing forces. About His dying—how did He die? "At last, at last," says the man in his study that does not know anything about Jesus; "At last His enemies became too much for Him, and they killed Him." Nothing of the sort. That is a very superficial reading. What is the truth? Hear it from His own lips: "No man taketh my life from me. I lay it down of myself. And if I lay it down I have authority to take it again." What do you think of that? How does that touch you as a revelation of magnificence in strength? And then, look at Him, when He comes back from the tomb, having fulfilled that which was either an empty boast or a great fact—thank God, we believe it was a great fact! Now He stands upon the mountain, with this handful of men around Him, His disciples, and He is going away from them. "All authority," He says, "is given unto me. I am king not merely by an office conferred, but by a triumph won. I am king, for I have faced the enemies of the race—sin and sorrow and ignorance and death—and my foot is upon the neck of every one. All authority is given to me."

Oh, the strength of this Man! Where did He get it? "My Father hath not left me alone. I have lived with God. I have walked with God. I always knew him near. I always responded to his will. And my heart went out in sympathy to others, and I mastered the enemies of those with whom I sympathized. And I come to the end and I say, All authority is given to me." Oh, my brother, that is the pattern for you and for me! Ah, that is life! That is the ideal! Oh, how can I fulfil it? I am not going to talk about that. Let me only give you this sentence to finish with, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." If Christ be in me by the power of the Spirit, He will keep me conscious of God's nearness to me. If Christ be in me by the consciousness of the spirit reigning and governing, He will take my will from day to day, blend it with His, and take away all that makes it hard to say, "God's will be done."

**÷**10-10 CADMAN

A NEW DAY FOR MISSIONS

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

S. Parkes Cadman is one of the many immigrant clergymen who have attained to fame in American pulpits. He was born in Shropshire, England, December 18, 1864, and graduated from Richmond College, London University, in 1889. Coming to this country about 1895 he was appointed pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Metropolitan Tabernacle, New York. From this post he was called to Central Congregational Church, Brooklyn, with but one exception the largest Congregational Church in the United States. He has received the degree of D.D. from Wesleyan University and the University of Syracuse. The sermon here given, somewhat abridged, was delivered before the National Council of Congregational Churches, in Cleveland, Ohio, and is from Dr. Cadman's manuscript.

CADMAN

Born in 1864

A NEW DAY FOR MISSIONS

*God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*.—Gal 6:14.

The pivotal conception of missionary enterprise is the conception of Christ as the eternal priest of humanity. If any need of the world's heart is before us now, it is the need of the Cross. There is a deep and anxious desire in men for the saving forces of sacrificial Christianity. The ideals of the New Testament concerning Gethsemane and Calvary are being thrust upon our attention by the upward strugglings of the people. They, at any rate, have not forgotten the forsaken Man in the night of awful silence in the garden, nor His exceeding bitter agony, nor the perfect ending that made His death His victory. The wastes of eccentricity, whether orthodox or heterodox, and the over curious speculations of theologies remote from the habitations of men, have had little influence upon the multitudes we seek to serve. And if I had to choose a sphere where one could rediscover the central forces of Christian life and of Christian practise, I would lean toward the enlightened democracies which to-day are vibrant with the plea that the shepherdless multitudes shall have social ameliorations and new incentives and selfless leaders.

We are all very jealous for the honor and success of the propagandism we sustain at home and abroad, and I hold that its honor and success alike depend upon the priesthood and redemptive efficacies of Jesus. These sovereign forces are correlated with His victories for the twenty past centuries, and they constitute the distinctive genius of the faith.

We shall gain nothing for the rule or for the ethics of Jesus by derogating that peculiar office of the divine Victim which is, to me, at any rate, the most sublime reason for the Incarnation and the ineffable height and depth and mystery of all love and all strength blessedly operative in every ruined condition by means of sacrifice. The missionary fields confessedly can not be conquered by the unaided teacher; he must have more than a system of truth, more than a program, more than a reasoned discourse. Their vast inert mass demands vitalization; and the life which is given for the life of men, the divinest gift of all, is alone sufficient for this regeneration.

Moreover, can we rest the absolutism and finality of Jesus upon anything less than the last complete outpouring of His soul unto voluntary death for men's salvation? I do not think we can, and it is a requisite that we place larger emphasis upon this holy mystery of our life through Christ's death, the substantial soul and secret of all missionary progress in all ages of the Church.

Before we can see the miracle of nations entering the kingdom of God, before we can dismiss the black death of apathy which rests on so many professedly Christian communities, before we can dominate the social structure in righteousness and justice, the Church must be raised nearer to the standards of New Testament efficiency. And New Testament efficiency rested upon the perfect divinity and all-persuasive mediatorship of "Christ and him crucified." The personality of Christ involves for many of us the entire relation of God to His universe; He is "the central figure in all history," and Pie is "the central figure of our personal experience," creative in us, by His inaugural experience, of all we are in Him and for our fellows. Thus we make great claims for the Lord of the harvest, and we make them soberly, and we know them true for our spiritual consciousness, and we are prepared to defend them.

Yet I, for one, do not hesitate to admit that the theological necessities of missionary work are many, and that they must be recognized and met before it can fully accomplish its infinite design. Indeed, the rule of Jesus in all these aspects of His mission clarifies and simplifies the gospel. It is plain that such a gospel, wherein the living personality of the Christ deals with the living man to whom we minister, is not to be beset by complications and abstractions. Its spiritual topography embraces the height of good, the depth of love, the breadth of sympathy, and the width of catholicity. It was meant for the race and for the far-reaching reciprocities and inexpressible necessities of the race. It is attuned to the cry of the common heart. Its interpretations have the sanctions of an authoritative human experience which has never failed in its witness. Sometimes I have challenged these honored servants of the evangel who have come back to us from quarters where they were busy on the errands of the cross. Almost pathetically, with the painful interest of one inquiring for a long absent friend of whom no news has been received, I have solicited the missionaries. They came from the south of our own dear land, where they administered to the negro; from the arctic zone, from the farther East. Their wider vision, their more imperial instinct, were plain to me, and my usual question was, "What do you teach the impulsive colored man and the stolid Eskimo and the pensive Hindu and the inscrutable Asiatic?" And they replied, "We teach them, that God is a personal spirit and Father, whose character is holiness and whose heart is love; that Jesus Christ is the designed and supreme Son of God, who lived in sinlessness and died in perfect willing sacrifice for the eternal life of all men, that by the will of God and in the power of His spirit men may have everlasting life and, better still, everlasting goodness, if they will accept and trust in Jesus Christ for all."

And this gospel obtains the day of overcoming for which we plead and pray. For tho an angel from heaven had any other, men do not respond; the charisma rests on no other message. Possest of it, and possessing it, under the covenant of heaven and led by the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, we shall go forth determined to give it place in us and in our presentations as never before. May nothing mar the solemn splendor of such a message from God unto men. Let us subordinate our undue intellectualism and place our boasted freedom under restraints, so that the evangel may be preached without reserve and with abandon. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all."

Such in one grand passage is the creed that breathes the very life and spirit of the most significant and overwhelming missionary period in the history of the Christian Church.

There is a new day due in missions because of the immense superiority in missionary methods. The *personnel* of our administrations has been superb, and of nearly all the honored servants of God who have labored in domestic and foreign departments it could be said, "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity." But I presume these seasoned veterans would be the first to show us how the whole conception of propagandism has been readapted, and its vehicles of communication multiplied in various directions. The onfall and sally of the earler evangelistic campaigns are now aided by the investment and siege of educational and medical work.

The trackways of a policy embedded in the wider interpretation of the gospel are laid and the new era takes shape before our comprehension. Travel, exploration, and commerce have demanded and obtained the *Lusitania* on the sea; the railroad from the Cape to Cairo on the land, and they have left no spot of earth untrodden, no map obscure, no mart unvisited. Keeping step with this stately and unprecedented development, and often anticipating it, the widening frontiers of our missionary kingdom have demonstrated again and again how the Church can make a bridal of the earth and sky, linking the lowliest needs to the loftiest truths. And best of all in respect of methods is the dispersal of our native egotism. We have come to see that the types of Christianity in Europe and America are perhaps aboriginal for us, but can not be transplanted to other shores. "Manifest destiny" is a phrase that sits down when Japan and China wake up. Not thus can Jesus be robbed of the fruits of His passion in any branch of the human family. We are to plant and water, labor in faith, and die in hope, scattering the seed of the gospel in the hearts of these brothers of regions outside. But God will ordain their harvests as it pleaseth Him. What will be the joy of that harvest? Throw your imagination across this new century, and as it dies and gives place to its successor, review the race whose devotion has then fastened on the divine ruler and the federal Man, Christ Jesus. For nearly a hundred years the barriers that segregated us will have been a memory. The Church will have discovered not only fields of labor, but forces for her replenishing. Then will our posterity rejoice in the larger Christ who is to be. The virtuous elements of all other faiths will be placed under the purification and control of the priesthood and authority of Jesus. And tho in these ancient religions that await the Bridegroom, the mortal stains the immortal and the human mars the beauty of the divine, in the light of His appearing they will assume new attitudes and receive His quickening and thrill with His pulse. When I conceive of this reward for our Daysman I protest that all other triumphs seem as tinsel and sham. The Desire of all nations shall then see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. The subtle patience of China, the fierce resistance of Japan, the brooding soul that haunts the Ganges valley, the tumult of emotion of the Ethiopian breast, all are for His appearing; they must be saved unto noble ends by His sanctification. For that time there will be a Church whose canonization of the infinite is beyond our dreams, enriched on every side, with common allegiance and diversity of gifts, and every gift the boon of all, and Christ's dower in His bride increased beyond compare.

This is the ideal of the new day; may it become our personal ideal. Then shall we fight with new courage for the right, and abhor the imperfect, the unjust, and the mean. Our leaders will care nothing for flattery and praise or odium and abuse. Enthusiasm can not be soured, nor courage diminished. The Almighty has placed our hand on the greatest of His plows, in whose furrow the nations I have named are germinating religiously. And to drive forward the blade if but a little, and to plant any seed of justice and of joy, any sense of manliness or moral worth, to aid in any way the gospel which is the friend of liberty, the companion of the conscience and the parent of the intellectual enlightenment—is not that enough? Is it not a complete justification of our plea?

We shall do well to remember that no evangel can prosper without the evangelical temper. The parsing of grammarians is of little avail here, and to have all critical knowledge of the prophets and apostles of the faith without their fervor and consecration is profitable merely for study, and useless mainly for the larger life. Our culture must be the passion-flower of Christ Jesus. To be more anxious about intellectual pre-eminence or ecclesiastical origins than about "the trial of the immigrant" and the condition of the colored races is not helpful. "There is a sort of orthodoxy that revels in the visions of apocalypses and refuses to fight the beast," says Dr. Nurgan. Such barren indulgence is excluded from any glory to follow. Technicalities, niceties, knowledge remote and knowledge general must be appropriated and made dynamic in this life-and-death conflict; any that can not be thus used can be sent to the rear for a further debate.

Diplomacies in church government and adjustments in church creeds can wait on this consecration, this baptism of unction. I never heard that the statesman who formulated the peace at Paris in 1815 got in the way of the Household Brigades and the Highlanders at Waterloo and Hougomont. They played their commendable game, but they could not have swept that awful slope of flame in which Ney and the Old Guard staggered on at Mont St. Jean.

Let us redeem our creeds at the front, and prove the welding of our weapons and their tempered blades upon every evil way and darkness and superstition that afflict humankind.

And have you not seen with moistened eyes and beating hearts the pathetic surgings of harassed and broken sons and daughters of God toward His son Jesus Christ? I have watched them until I felt constrained to cry aloud and spare not; and while viewing them here and yonder, and refusing to be localized in our love toward them, have not our spirits been rebuked, have they not known fear for ourselves, have they not pensively echoed the charge of some that we have no real roots in democracy, but are as plants in pots, and not as oaks in the soil of earth? If independency is a barrier to the essence of which it is supposedly a form, if superiority shuts us off from assimilation with popular movements and delivers us over to cliques, then these churches of ours[1] will end in a record of shame and confusion. While we are busy in trivial things, our energy and our might will be deflected, and the living God will hand over the crusade to those who have proven worthier and who knew the day when it did come, even the day of their visitation.

[Footnote 1: The special reference is to the Congregational churches.]

We must arise with courage undismayed, and join in the cry of the ages:

When wilt thou save the people,  
O God of mercy, when?  
The people! Lord, the people!  
Not crowns, nor thrones, but men.

Flower of thy heart, O Lord, are they,  
Their heritage a sunless day.  
Let them like weeds not fade away;  
Lord, save the people.

If our hearts are thus enlarged, we shall run in the way of His commandments; fatherhood and brotherhood and sonship will not be symbols, shibboleths of pious intercourse, but ways of God's reaching out through us for the total brotherhood. We shall silence the caviler against missions; we shall raise the negro in the face of those who say he can not be raised; we shall see the latter-day miracles, and the lame man healed and rejoicing at the Temple gate. Thus may the breath of God sweep across our pastorates and dismiss timidity, provincialism, ease, and narrowness of outlook. And thus may the power be demonstrated as of heaven because it is the power unto salvation. Let us fear not men who shall die, nor be content to fill our peaceful lot and occupy a respectable grave. The new world needs the renewed baptism, and the "modernism" of which medievalists complain is the robe of honor for the Christ of this epoch. So that there shall come unto the Church the flame of sacred love, and, kindling on every heart and altar, there shall it burn for the glory of Christ, the High Priest, with inextinguishable blaze. We can rest content, for, behold! the day cometh and in its light. Let us go hence.

**÷**10-11 JOWETT

APOSTOLIC OPTIMISM

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Henry Jowett, Congregational divine, was born at Barnard Castle, Durham, in 1864, and educated at Edinburgh and Oxford universities. In 1889 he was ordained to St. James's Congregational Church, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and in 1895 was called to his present pastorate of Carr's Lane Congregational Church, Birmingham, where he has taken rank among the leading preachers of Great Britain. He is the author of several important books.

JOWETT

Born in 1864

APOSTOLIC OPTIMISM[1]

[Footnote 1: Reprinted by permission of A.C. Armstrong & Son.]

*Rejoicing in hope*.—Rom 12:12.

That is a characteristic expression of the fine, genial optimism of the Apostle Paul. His eyes are always illumined. The cheery tone is never absent from his speech. The buoyant and springy movement of his life is never changed. The light never dies out of his sky. Even the gray firmament reveals more hopeful tints, and becomes significant of evolving glory. The apostle is an optimist, "rejoicing in hope," a child of light wearing the "armor of light," "walking in the light" even as Christ is in the light.

This apostolic optimism was not a thin and fleeting sentiment begotten of a cloudless summer day. It was not the creation of a season; it was the permanent pose of the spirit. Even when beset with circumstances which to the world would spell defeat, the apostle moved with the mien of a conqueror. He never lost the kingly posture. He was disturbed by no timidity about ultimate issues. He fought and labored in the spirit of certain triumph. "We are always confident." "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

This apostolic optimism was not born of sluggish thinking, or of idle and shallow observation. I am very grateful that the counsel of my text lifts its chaste and cheery flame in the twelfth chapter of an epistle of which the first chapter contains as dark and searching an indictment of our nature as the mind of man has ever drawn. Let me rehearse the appalling catalog that the radiance of the apostle's optimism may appear the more abounding: "Senseless hearts," "fools," "uncleanness," "vile passions," "reprobate minds," "unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful." With fearless severity the apostle leads us through the black realms of midnight and eclipse. And yet in the subsequent reaches of the great argument, of which these dark regions form the preface, there emerges the clear, calm, steady light of my optimistic text. I say it is not the buoyancy of ignorance. It is not the flippant, light-hearted expectancy of a man who knows nothing about the secret places of the night. The counselor is a man who has steadily gazed at light at its worst, who has digged through the outer walls of convention and respectability, who has pushed his way into the secret chambers and closets of life, who has dragged out the slimy sins which were lurking in their holes, and named them after their kind—it is this man who when he has surveyed the dimensions of evil and misery and contempt, merges his dark indictment in a cheery and expansive dawn, in an optimistic evangel, in which he counsels his fellow-disciples to maintain the confident attitude of a rejoicing hope.

Now, what are the secrets of this courageous and energetic optimism? Perhaps, if we explore the life of this great apostle, and seek to discover its springs, we may find the clue to his abounding hope. Roaming then through the entire records of his life and teachings, do we discover any significant emphasis? Preeminent above all other suggestions, I am imprest with his vivid sense of the reality of the redemptive work of Christ. Turn where I will, the redemptive work of the Christ evidences itself as the base and groundwork of his life. It is not only that here and there are solid statements of doctrine, wherein some massive argument is constructed for the partial unveiling of redemptive glory. Even in those parts of his epistles where formal argument has ceased, and where solid doctrine is absent, the doctrine flows as a fluid element into the practical convictions of life, and determines the shape and quality of the judgments. Nay, one might legitimately use the figure of a finer medium still, and say that in all the spacious reaches of the apostle's life the redemptive work of his Master is present as an atmosphere in which all his thoughts and purposes and labors find their sustaining and enriching breath. Take this epistle to the Romans in which my text is found. The earlier stages of the great epistle are devoted to a massive and stately presentation of the doctrines of redemption. But when I turn over the pages where the majestic argument is concluded, I find the doctrine persisting in a diffused and rarefied form, and appearing as the determining factor in the solution of practical problems. If he is dealing with the question of the "eating of meats," the great doctrine reappears and interposes its solemn and yet elevating principle: "destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." If he is called upon to administer rebuke to the passionate and unclean, the shadow of the cross rests upon his judgment. "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price." If he is portraying the ideal relationship of husband and wife, he sets it in the light of redemptive glory: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it." If he is seeking to cultivate the grace of liberality, he brings the heavenly air around about the spirit. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that tho he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor." It interweaves itself with all his salutations. It exhales in all his benedictions like a hallowing fragrance. You can not get away from it. In the light of the glory of redemption all relationships are assorted and arranged. Redemption was not degraded into a fine abstract argument, to which the apostle had appended his own approval, and then, with sober satisfaction, had laid it aside, as a practical irrelevancy, in the stout chests of orthodoxy. It became the very spirit of his life. It was, if I may be allowed the violent figure, the warm blood in all his judgment. It filled the veins of all his thinking. It beat like a pulse in all his purposes. It determined and vitalized his decisions in the crisis, as well as in the lesser trifles of the common day. His conception of redemption was regulative of all his thought.

But it is not only the immediacy of redemption in the apostle's thought by which I am imprest. I stand in awed amazement before its vast, far-stretching reaches into the eternities. Said an old villager to me concerning the air of his elevated hamlet, "Ay, sir, it's a fine air is this westerly breeze; I like to think of it as having traveled from the distant fields of the Atlantic!" And here is the Apostle Paul, with the quickening wind of redemption blowing about him in loosening, vitalizing, strengthening influence, and to him, in all his thinking, it had its birth in the distant fields of eternity! To the apostle redemption was not a small device, an afterthought, a patched-up expedient to meet an unforseen emergency. The redemptive purpose lay back in the abyss of the eternities, and in a spirit of reverent questioning the apostle sent his trembling thoughts into those lone and silent fields. He emerged with, whispered secrets such as these: "fore-knew," "fore-ordained," "chosen in him before the foundation of the world," "eternal life promised before times eternal," "the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Brethren, does our common thought of redemptive glory reach back into this august and awful presence? Does the thought of the modern disciple journey in this distant pilgrimage? Or do we now regard it as unpractical and irrelevant? There is no more insidious peril in modern religious life than the debasement of our conception of the practical. If we divorce the practical from the sublime, the practical will become the superficial, and will degenerate into a very lean and forceless thing. When Paul went on this lonely pilgrimage his spirit acquired the posture of a finely sensitive reverence. People who live and move beneath great domes acquire a certain calm and stately dignity. It is in companionship with the sublimities that awkwardness and coarseness are destroyed. We lose our reverence when we desert the august. But has reverence no relationship to the practical? Shall we discard it as an irrelevant factor in the purposes of common life? Why, reverence is the very clue to fruitful, practical living. Reverence is creative of hope; nay, a more definite emphasis can be given to the assertion; reverence is a constituent of hope. Annihilate reverence, and life loses its fine sensitiveness, and when sensitiveness goes out of a life the hope that remains is only a flippant rashness, a thoughtless impetuosity, the careless onrush of the kine, and not a firm, assured perception of a triumph that is only delayed. A reverent homage before the sublimities of yesterday is the condition of a fine perception of the hidden triumphs of the morrow. And, therefore, I do not regard it as an accidental conjunction that the psalmist puts them together and proclaims the evangel that "the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy." To feel the days before me I must revere the purpose which throbs behind me. I must bow in reverence if I would anticipate in hope.

Here, then, is the Apostle Paul, with the redemptive purpose interweaving itself with all the entanglements of his common life, a purpose reaching back into the awful depths of the eternities, and issuing from those depths in amazing fulness of grace and glory. No one can be five minutes in the companionship of the Apostle Paul without discovering how wealthy is his sense of the wealthy, redeeming ministry of God. What a wonderful consciousness he has of the sweep and fulness of the divine grace! You know the variations of the glorious air: "the unsearchable riches of Christ"; "riches in glory in Christ Jesus"; "all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ"; "the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering." The redemptive purpose of God bears upon the life of the apostle and upon the race whose privileges he shares, not in an uncertain and reluctant shower, but in a great and marvelous flood. And what to him is the resultant enfranchisement? What are the spacious issues of the glorious work? Do you recall those wonderful sentences, scattered here and there about the apostle's writings, and beginning with the words "but now"? Each sentence proclaims the end of the dominion of night, and unveils some glimpse of the new created day. "But now!" It is a phrase that heralds a great deliverance! "But now, apart from the law the righteousness of God hath been manifested," "But now, being made free from sin and become servants to God." "But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ." "But now are ye light in the Lord." "Now, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." These represent no thin abstractions. To Paul the realities of which they speak were more real than the firm and solid earth. And is it any wonder that a man with such a magnificent sense of the reality of the redemptive works of Christ, who felt the eternal purpose throbbing in the dark background and abyss of time, who conceived it operating upon our race in floods of grace and glory, and who realized in his own immediate consciousness the varied wealth of the resultant emancipation—is it any wonder that for this man a new day had dawned, and the birds had begun to sing and the flowers to bloom, and a sunny optimism had taken possession of his heart, which found expression in an assured and rejoicing hope?

I look abroad again over the record of this man's life and teachings, if perchance I may discover the secrets of his abiding optimism, and I am profoundly imprest by his living sense of the reality and greatness of his present resources. "By Christ redeemed!" That is not a grand finale; it is only a glorious inauguration. "By Christ redeemed; in Christ restored"; it is with these dynamics of restoration that his epistles are so wondrously abounding. In almost every other sentence he suggests a dynamic which he can count upon as his friend. Paul's mental and spiritual outlook comprehended a great army of positive forces laboring in the interests of the kingdom of God. His conception of life was amazingly rich in friendly dynamics! I do not wonder that such a wealthy consciousness was creative of a triumphant optimism. Just glance at some of the apostle's auxiliaries: "Christ liveth in me!" "Christ liveth in me! He breathes through all my aspirations. He thinks through all my thinking. He wills through all my willing. He loves through all my loving. He travails in all my labors. He works within me 'to will and to do of his good pleasure.'" That is the primary faith of the hopeful life. But see what follows in swift and immediate succession. "If Christ is in you, the spirit is life." "The spirit is life!" And therefore you find that in the apostle's thought dispositions are powers. They are not passive entities. They are positive forces vitalizing and energizing the common life of men. My brethren, I am persuaded there is a perilous leakage in this department of our thought. We are not bold enough in our thinking concerning spiritual realities. We do not associate with every mode of the consecrated spirit the mighty energy of God. We too often oust from our practical calculations some of the strongest and most aggressive allies of the saintly life. Meekness is more than the absence of self-assertion; it is the manifestation of the mighty power of God. To the Apostle Paul love exprest more than a relationship. It was an energy productive of abundant labors. Faith was more than an attitude. It was an energy creative of mighty endeavor, Hope was more than a posture. It was an energy generative of a most enduring patience. All these are dynamics, to be counted as active allies, cooperating in the ministry of the kingdom. And so the epistles abound in the recital of mystic ministries at work. The Holy Spirit worketh! Grace worketh! Faith worketh! Love worketh! Hope worketh! Prayer worketh! And there are other allies robed in less attractive garb. "Tribulation worketh!" "This light affliction worketh." "Godly sorrow worketh!" On every side of him the apostle conceives cooperative and friendly powers. "The mountain is full of horses and chariots of fire round about him." He exults in the consciousness of abounding resources. He discovers the friends of God in things which find no place among the scheduled powers of the world. He finds God's raw material in the world's discarded waste. "Weak things," "base things," "things that are despised," "things that are not," mere nothings; among these he discovers the operating agents of the mighty God. Is it any wonder that in this man, possessed of such a wealthy consciousness of multiplied resources, the spirit of a cheery optimism should be enthroned? With what stout confidence he goes into the fight! He never mentions the enemy timidly. He never seeks to underestimate his strength. Nay, again and again he catalogs all possible antagonisms in a spirit of buoyant and exuberant triumph. However numerous the enemy, however subtle and aggressive his devices, however towering and well-established the iniquity, however black the gathering clouds, so sensitive is the apostle to the wealthy resources of God that amid it all he remains a sunny optimist, "rejoicing in hope," laboring in the spirit of a conqueror even when the world was exulting in his supposed discomfiture and defeat.

And, finally, in searching for the springs of this man's optimism, I place alongside his sense of the reality of redemption and his wealthy consciousness of present resources his impressive sense of the reality of future glory. Paul gave himself time to think of heaven, of the home of God, of his own home when time should be no more. He loved to contemplate "the glory that shall be revealed." He mused in wistful expectancy of the day "when Christ who is our life shall be manifested," and when we also "shall be manifested with him in glory." He pondered the thought of death as "gain," as transferring him to conditions in which he would be "at home with the Lord," "with Christ, which is far better." He looked for "the blest hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ," and he contemplated "that great day" as the "henceforth," which would reveal to him the crown of righteousness and glory. Is any one prepared to dissociate this contemplation from the apostle's cheery optimism? Is not rather the thought of coming glory one of its abiding springs? Can we safely exile it from our moral and spiritual culture? I know that this particular contemplation is largely absent from modern religious life, and I know the nature of the recoil in which our present impoverishment began. "Let us hear less about the mansions of the blest and more about the housing of the poor!" Men revolted against an effeminate contemplation, which had run to seed, in favor of an active philanthropy which sought the enrichment of the common life. But, my brethren, pulling a plant up is not the only way of saving it from running to seed. You can accomplish by a wise restriction what is wastefully done by severe destruction. I think we have lost immeasurably by the uprooting, in so many lives, of this plant of heavenly contemplation. We have built on the erroneous assumption that the contemplation of future glory inevitably unfits us for the service of man. It is an egregious and destructive mistake. I do not think that Richard Baxter's labors were thinned or impoverished by his contemplation of "The Saint's Everlasting Rest." When I consider his mental output, his abundant labors as father-confessor to a countless host, his pains and persecutions and imprisonments, I can not but think he received some of the powers of his optimistic endurance from contemplations such as he counsels in his incomparable book. "Run familiarly through the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem; visit the patriarchs and prophets, salute the apostles, and admire the armies of martyrs; lead on the heart from street to street, bring it into the palace of the great king; lead it, as it were, from chamber to chamber. Say to it, 'Here must I lodge, here must I die, here must I praise, here must I love and be loved. My tears will then be wiped away, my groans be turned to another tune, my cottage of clay be changed to this palace, my prison rags to these splendid robes'; 'for the former things are passed away.'" I can not think that Samuel Rutherford impoverished his spirit or deadened his affections, or diminished his labors by mental pilgrimages such as he counsels to Lady Cardoness: "Go up beforehand and see your lodging. Look through all your Father's rooms in heaven. Men take a sight of the lands ere they buy them. I know that Christ hath made the bargain already; but be kind to the house ye are going to, and see it often." I can not think that this would imperil the fruitful optimisms of the Christian life. I often examine, with peculiar interest, the hymn-book we use at Carr's Lane. It was compiled by Dr. Dale. Nowhere else can I find the broad perspective of his theology and his primary helpmeets in the devotional life as I find them there. And is it altogether unsuggestive that under the heading of "Heaven" is to be found one of the largest sections of the book. A greater space is given to "Heaven" than is given to "Christian duty." Is it not significant of what a great man of affairs found needful for the enkindling and sustenance of a courageous hope? And among the hymns are many which have helped to nourish the sunny endeavors of a countless host.

There is a land of pure delight  
Where saints immortal reign;  
Infinite day excludes the night,  
And pleasures banish pain.

What are these, arrayed in white,  
Brighter than the noonday sun?  
Foremost of the suns of light,  
Nearest the eternal throne.

Hark! hark, my soul! Angelic songs are swelling  
O'er earth's green fields and ocean's wave-beat shore.  
Angelic songs to sinful men are telling  
Of that new life when sin shall be no more.

My brethren, depend upon it, we are not impoverished by contemplations such as these. They take no strength out of the hand, and they put much strength and buoyancy into the heart. I proclaim the contemplation of coming glory as one of the secrets of the apostle's optimism which enabled him to labor and endure in the confident spirit of rejoicing hope. These, then, are some of the springs of Christian optimism; some of the sources in which we may nourish our hope in the newer labors of a larger day: a sense of the glory of the past in a perfected redemption, a sense of the glory of the present in our multiplied resources, a sense of the glory of tomorrow in the fruitful rest of our eternal home.

O blest hope! with this elate  
Let not our hearts be desolate;  
But, strong in faith and patience, wait  
Until He come!

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