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THAT REMAIN

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Fragments that remain from
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Fragments That Remain

From the Ministry of
MALTBIE DAVENPORT BABCOCK
Pastor Brick Church, New York City, 1899-1901

Reported and arranged by
JESSIE B. GOETSCHIUS

*And voices are heard that only come
With the winds, from a far-off shore.*
—WASHINGTON GLADDEN.



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FRAGMENTS THAT REMAIN

*To the great multitude who were
cheered and strengthened by Dr.
Babcock's words and who still
remember him with reverent af-
fection, this book is dedicated*

PREFACE

DURING the years that have passed since Dr. Babcock closed his eyes on this earthly scene, to open them in the full glory of his Master's presence, there has been a constantly expressed regret that no record of his sermons has been preserved.

The present volume is composed of notes taken—not in short hand—and written out immediately after the service by the aid of a retentive memory, for private use, and with no thought of publication. No one can be more keenly aware of their limitations than the writer. Notwithstanding the fact that many who were accustomed to sit under Dr. Babcock's ministry have assured her that as they read they seem again to hear his voice and see his form, she has hesitated to put them into permanent form, hoping that other, fuller and better manuscripts might be forthcoming. But as several years have elapsed, and no other series of his sermons seems to be in existence, and no sufficiently legible original manuscript has been discovered, she has at length consented to publish these notes.

During Dr. Babcock's ministry she was not a member of the Brick Church, and cannot account for the peculiar circumstances which drew her there and constrained her to take and preserve these notes, unless it was a providential leading. Probably the most helpful modern sermons are those of Frederick Robertson, of Brighton,—one series of which would have been lost to the

Christian public but for the fact that notes of the discourses were preserved in the same informal manner that these have been from the ministrations of Dr. Babcock in New York.

In yielding, however, to the demand for publication, which it seems impossible further to ignore, the writer wishes again to assume entire responsibility for all defects, and to admit the probability that in some cases she may unconsciously have expressed Dr. Babcock's thoughts in her own words. Yet she feels assured that his thought is faithfully transcribed, and that with rare exceptions his exact phraseology is given to the reader; and she has reason to believe that these admittedly fragmentary notes of occasional sermons will be received with appreciation, not only by those who were permitted to hear, but also by that far larger number who felt the influence of this prince of preachers.

These "fragments" are given to the public with the earnest desire that they may extend and perpetuate the influence of a life that was unique in its power and sweetness. May He, who was the inspiration of Dr. Babcock's life, again reveal Himself through these printed words as He did when they were spoken.

J. B. G.

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I
SERMONS

THE HOLY SPIRIT

“ May our daily life be a ritual of the gospel. May we remove all barriers ; may we give the Spirit His opportunity with us that Christ may live in us ; may we not deprive Him of His opportunity by our sin. Oh, send forth Thy Spirit into our hearts that we may know our Father.”

THE HOLY SPIRIT

“And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever.”—JOHN 14: 16.

GOD is a discovery, not an invention. God *was* before man knew of Him, before man formulated a theology. More than this: man knew God before he expressed that knowledge in a theology. Experience always precedes explanation. The life is lived before it is described.

You do not say, “The Letters and Life of Gladstone,” but, “The Life and Letters,” because the life makes the letters. You look at flowers; you study, you compare them, you love and admire them, and the classified knowledge becomes botany: but the flowers preceded botany. You look at rocks, and see that this one was acted on by fire, and you call it igneous or plutonic; other rocks appear to you to have been formed by the action of water, and you classify accordingly; thus you have the elements of geology:—but did you see geology written across the rocks? Did you see botany written on the flowers? In every case, the explanation, the science, followed—did not antedate—the experience. Life is lived; it is studied in its various phases, and you have a biology, a science of life, but always the life first.

So with theology. Theology is only man’s attempt at a systematic arrangement of what he knows of God by revelation and from his own experience. It is not final;

it is not perfect ; it is not complete ; it is human ; it is not to be worshipped ; it is only an attempt. We say, "Up to the present writing, this is how it appears to us." But we do not expect it to be crystallized in that form, any more than great and good men of past generations expected us to accept their work as final. We hope to add to it ; we feel sure that succeeding generations will. Our knowledge is very imperfect, but we have some ; we do know some things, and we know that we know them. And because we know only a little and not all, because there remain some mysteries insoluble by us, some difficulties that we cannot explain, our ignorance does not cast shame on our knowledge.

I carry a candle through the darkness, and it sheds a little circle of light. I hold it as steadily as I can, I throw out the light as far as I can, I trim the candle and try to extend the circle of light, and I see some things, and see them plainly, and rejoice in what I see. But some one says, "See the darkness—it engulfs everything!" No, it doesn't ; it doesn't engulf the light from my candle. I hold it before me, and go on steadily, step by step, hoping and believing that some day all the darkness will be illumined. Use the knowledge you have ; proceed on that ; more will come as fast as you can and will use it.

O I love mystery ! What would Christmas be without mystery ! What would heaven be without mystery ! Fichte once said, "If you held out your hands to me with truth in one, and the search for truth in the other, and gave me my choice, I would refuse the truth, and enter on the search for it" ; and so would I, and so would you. Mystery is God's allurements along the path of knowledge ; it is His challenge to a hungry soul.

You sometimes make statements about the affections, the will, the mind, and you know what you are talking about. No, you don't. The affections? the will? the mind?—what do any of us really know about them? But we *spea*k of them, and more or less clearly convey our thoughts,—not always stopping to explain seeming contradictions, knowing that fuller experience will unfold them to our hearers. So Christ, in that Upper Room, was talking to a group of plain men, not scholars, and He spoke (as we might say) in words of one syllable, stating sublime and incomprehensible truth most simply, and leaving it without explanation, to be understood by them as their experience unfolded it. He knew whereof He spoke. He told them quite naturally of the Father and of Himself and of the Holy Spirit. He made no attempt to explain and “reconcile”; it was *truth*, and He could trust it to go out and do its work. He did say, “If you will live up to the knowledge you have, I will manifest Myself to you”—offering manifestation in place of explanation: and that we can have, and thousands do have. I do not know whether the explanation of Peter, regarding the mysteries of our faith, would be worth much; but, O, what would I give to have His experience! I do not know how Paul would state his theory of the Godhead; but, O, that I might know what Paul knows of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

And the only way to arrive at knowledge, to gather experience, to receive manifestations, is to use the knowledge you now possess, to travel by the light shed round you now. I do not understand the chemical process by which bread becomes blood—the vital fluid by which I work and love and hate and endeavour and accomplish things. I know it does do this. I know the fact, and I

eat bread. I know the effect, but I do not understand the cause. I could tell you about what I attempted and what I accomplished yesterday, and also what bread and beef and porridge contributed to my physical upbuilding, but if you ask me about the chemical analysis, I cannot tell you. I cannot explain how the food forms chyme and chyle—which, by the way, always seem to me as if they ought to be two German commentators). I do not know why, when I am startled or ashamed or roused by some pleasurable emotion, the blush mounts to my cheeks, and hangs out that signal flag between the physical and the spiritual. But I do know that that blood coursing through my veins is my life, and that it depends on food, and so, trusting to my experience, I eat food, and I live. And the scholar and the labourer alike live by the same means. They may put the resultant power to very different uses, but it comes to them both. One man may use his new power to dry the tears of a little child, to help some struggling brother; he may use it in manual labour, while you use it to form a philosophy of life or to elaborate a system of theology; but, in both cases, it is the food eaten becoming effectual. Be careful that you who put it to an intellectual use do not despise him who uses it in other channels.

Men have taken the statements of Christ, and thought them over and pieced them together and tried to reconcile them (which they never can do fully, for truth is infinite; we shall never wholly understand these great mysteries),—but they form as clear a conception, plan, classification of the facts given to them in the Bible about God, as they can, supplementing it by their experience, and the result is a the-ology—a science of God. Some of us see

in it a tri-unity—a trinity. The words are not in the Bible; they are man's effort to express what they see there.

Then when I close the book, and try to see God in nature, I form a system called Natural Theology. It teaches me much. I see the majesty of God in the mountains. I see His power in the ocean. I see beauty in the landscape. I see infinitude in the stars. But this system is of little worth for a sinner: for there comes a time when I fall, and grovel, and despise myself; then God's power only crushes me, and His majesty belittles me, and His beauty is a rebuke, and infinity an awful condemnation. I do not see the love of God,—it is not there. There is only irresistible force. I do not see the Father yearning over His wandering boy. I must turn back to the Bible to see God unbosoming Himself in Christ, to see Him hating sin (and, O I am so glad He hates it, and I know I ought to hate it, and I do), but to see Him loving the sinner. I do not understand such love, but I can trust to it, and act on it.

I want to speak of two points in conclusion: first, the explanation, and second, the experience, of the Trinity. I hesitate greatly over the explanation,—it must of necessity be so unsatisfactory; but I rejoice in the experience,—there I am on sure ground.

1. As to *explanation*: let me give you my metaphysical idea of God,—meta-physical, that is, beyond the physical, as above it. Metaphysics has been defined thus: When a man understands what he is saying, and conveys that understanding to his listener—that is physics; when he does not understand himself, and fails to make his listener understand—that is metaphysics. In view of which definition, perhaps I had better not give

that explanation, or, at least, not call it by that name. But—I see in myself a composition that helps me in some faint way to conceive the Trinity,—the Tri-unity. I see in myself not a dual, but a three-sided personality, each element expressing itself independently, while yet I am only one man. (I know some here will not agree with me, but this is my view of it). I am perfectly conscious of having in myself a physical part, a mental part, and a spirit,—heart, affection—call it what you will,—these three working in greater or less unity; and still I am only one:—I am a tri-unity. So in some way—some dim way—I can see that God may be a Tri-unity. But this is speculation, thought, analogy,—it *proves* nothing. It is very faulty at best, but may help to some conception of God.

God is eternal and unchangeable; therefore, since He is love, He must always have been love, and must always have loved, even before man existed. There must have been that in Himself, in His personality, which could be an object of love. He must have been a sodality, a fellowship, a brotherhood, a fraternity. Plato says, “Benevolence is goodness reaching down.” It seems to me that love is goodness on a level—intercourse between equals; and God is love. All forms of earthly love help us to understand God. In earthly fatherhood we see a faint type of His fatherhood; from the relation of son—so beautiful even here—we can reach a faint understanding of the relation between God the Father and His Son, our Saviour. In the mutual love of brothers we find a mental rest for our conception of brotherhood in the Trinity. Love is not only the activity of one towards another; it is also the bond that unites them. The Father must love the Son, and the Spirit of the Father

must become the Spirit of Christ, forming a channel of communication between them.

2. But let us pass on to our *experience* of the three-fold manifestation of God ; for now I know whereof I speak, and so do many of you. God's revelation of Himself is generally divided into three parts—the period of the Old Testament, the time of Christ and His disciples, and the ages since. The first is called the dispensation of the Father, the second is the short period when Christ was on earth, and the centuries since have been called the dispensation of the Spirit. Yet all these manifestations of God were present in each, and the life of the Spirit has been the unbroken bond between God and His people. But for illustration of God's Spirit working in men, we must come to Pentecost. There is the power of the Spirit in its fullness, to which all the rest led up.

You know there is a time in the training of a child when he rebels against authority—have you no recollections to serve you?—when he obeys because he must ; when he inwardly rebels, but a wholesome knowledge of the results of rebellion and of the laws that will then become operative, holds him to the path of obedience, however reluctantly. Then comes a time when he begins to admire his father, when he says to the other boys with a flourish, “ You ought to see *my* father ! ” when he notices how his father ties his necktie, and goes up to his own room to practice. Then I meet him as a young man of nineteen, and there is a grave look in his face, and a cordiality in his manner, and certain tricks of the head and fingers, and I say, “ How like your father you have grown ! ” First, rebellion ; then, admiration ; then, an unconscious imitation that makes him a reproduction of his father, and proves the father's life in him.

You see a baby boy just learning to talk ; a few years later he is in school and about to say his first piece, and in the novelty of it he loses himself and blushes and stammers. You are sorry for him, but you smile and say, "It will come" ; and it does,—he gathers himself and goes through with it. Not so very long after that, you see him again. Now he can talk ! Nor does he need to use the words of others. He is master of himself. He can speak his own thoughts with conscious power. A learner, an imitator, an originator.

Do we not know that stage of Christian experience when our allegiance to Christ was dull hardship ? "I know I must do this, but I don't want to." "I know this is wrong, but I'll do it anyhow." "I wonder if this is wrong, and if I dare, as a Christian, do that ?" That is all very unsatisfactory ; we are just beginning. But we pass on from this to a point where we honestly long to be like Christ and honestly try. We make good resolutions and we break them. We resolve that we will not lose our tempers, that we will be sweet and thoughtful and forgiving and Christlike, and the resolution lasts to-day, to-morrow, the next day, perhaps, and then we fall—we are down again, and we say "It is all of no use." O yes, it is ! It is of great use ; it is fundamental. Where is the trouble ? It is here—you are living in the second stage of development, the stage of admiration and conscious imitation, not yet of the unconscious reception of the life that will find its own expression. Keep on with the imitation till the life develops, as it surely will. These efforts are like the candle ; they will guide you safely to Him. You try to develop the fruits of the Spirit, and when you least expect it the fruits of the flesh become manifest. They hang from the branches of the tree, and

in your disappointment and discouragement, you tear them down, only to find that that is useless, for the bud remains, and will again develop. There is no help for you but in the acquisition of a new life that will live in and through you.

Paul speaks of these three stages in a Christian's growth in his letter to his beloved church at Philippi:—first, the struggle with the flesh, "Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law"; then, the watching and imitation of Christ, "I press towards the mark"; and, finally, the consciousness that he "can do all things" by the indwelling power. His life had then become a life of power, with an inward force finding expression through him. This is inspirit-ation, inspiration!

How shall you attain to it? By being faithful in conscious imitation. Say to yourself, "Christ has in the world no hands with which to help others; I will be hands to Him: He has no feet to go to those who suffer; I will go: He has no mouth with which to speak comfort to others; I will speak for Him." Live for Him, and that means living for others. Parents, live for your children; don't expect them to live for you. Show them an example of self-forgetting parenthood, that they may know God better, and grow up to be even nobler than the fathers and mothers who trained them. Be courteous to servants. Show honourable dealing to employees; and do it all consciously for Christ's sake. However often you have done it before, deed yourself over to Christ again to-day, and act as if He would keep His promises. You need not urge or entreat Him to come to you; He is standing, waiting, longing to come; only be sure you do not close the door. Take His power—He holds it ready for you.

Do you want to serve Christ?—I do.

Are you a Christian?—I am.

Have you given yourself to Him?—Yes.

Do you try to serve Him?—Yes.

Are you afraid of the future?—No, I am not!

How do you know you are His—that He has accepted you?—Why, I trust what He says, “Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.”

Then you came by faith?—Yes.

And you hold to Him by faith?—Yes.

Then can't you take this next step by faith, and surrender yourself anew to Him, and let Him dwell in you till conscious imitation is all past, your life having been absorbed and transfigured, and you present His life unconsciously, irresistibly?

“Oh, 'tis life, of which our nerves are scant;

'Tis life, full life, for which we pant;

'Tis life, and fuller, that we want!”

“To as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become sons of God”—yes, the right! but we want the power; how shall we get it?

Let me close with those words from Galatians, “When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made under the law, made of a woman, to redeem them that were under the law, that ye might receive the adoption of sons [and with the adoption, the power to live and act like sons], and because ye are sons [and you are] He hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son [the Spirit of Christ; the very Spirit that animated Him] into your hearts, that you too might cry [that the new life in you would be crying], ‘Abba—Father.’”

Yield yourselves to Him; let His life have free course

in you ; let him use you ; give up your will ; try to think less of yourself, to stop envying others. Be careful not to hold the door closed, but let the Spirit of Christ in, and let Him so work on you that you too become sons and daughters of God.

POWER

“Command in us more hunger and thirst. Is a friendship breaking, a sorrow looming up ahead of us? Is there some plan which, it seem to us, must come true, because for every reason we can see, it is a good plan?—Thou knowest.”

POWER

“*In demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*”—I COR. 2:4.

THE keynote of Christianity is power, not words. Any one can talk ; every one can talk ; man is essentially a talking animal, and always has been prolific in words, talk, speech, debate. We have our dictionaries, our lexicons, our glossaries—*glossa, glotta*, a tongue. There are your Polyglot Bibles, *i. e.*, translated into many tongues. All religions have had their formulas, their creeds and liturgies, they have all held meetings and councils, they have all debated and discussed. Christianity has had its share of these things for good and evil, but its power does not lie in any of them. It is not the mechanics, but the dynamics of Christianity that have made it the unique force it is in the world,—not its machinery but its power.

I want to speak of this power under three headings:—

Power essentially.

Power experimentally.

Power evidentially.

I.—*Essentially or historically.* Let us consider this power as it shows itself in the history of the race. See the great men of faith in the Old Testament, who lived in the twilight of Christian thought and principle—impelled by a power that made them *do* things. Look at that grand and solitary picture of Abraham, going out, he knew not whither, but trusting to the power which had spoken within him ; led by it to face the difficulties of a strange land, and to be strong and trustful in his loneli-

ness. See him with his son :—" Shall the heathen offer their children to their gods, and shall not I offer my child? How can I prove to them what I claim—that my God is the only true God and supreme—if I am not willing to give my dearest to Him? But he is my *only* son! How can I do it? He is the child of promise;—ought I to do it?" Nevertheless, he goes steadily up the slopes of Mount Moriah; he *does* it, yielding himself so completely to the inward, impelling power, that he is able to look beyond the death of his son, and to believe that death, even, shall be as nothing before the power working in him.

And look at Isaac's life after his father's death. It took tremendous force to hold on, with that quiet tenacity that never let the heathen encroach at all on his faith or his promised possession.

Every God-sustained Old Testament character could be cited. See Joseph in the midst of seductive temptations, which appealed to all the intensity and ambition of youth and not to passions flickered out, drawing back in the conscious possession of power :—" How can I do this great wrong, and sin against God!"

The Three Children in the fiery furnace. O, there is tremendously concentrated force in those three simple words—" *but if not.*" The three Hebrews stand before the king, the ordeal of fire before them, and they calmly say, " We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. *But if not*"—well, if *not*, what then?—" be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, or worship the golden image that thou hast set up!" *That was power!*

Come down to New Testament times. See how the phraseology of the New Testament teems with this word *power*. See how Christ used and claimed it. Note the texts in which the word occurs:—"For with power He commanded the unclean spirits and they came out of them." "The power of the Lord was present to heal them." "They were all amazed at the power of God." "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins"—that ye may *know*. No man can see sins being forgiven—no one can put that to the test, but that ye may see the action of power where it will appeal to you, I will heal him. "And He turned, and said to the sick of the palsy, 'Take up thy bed, and go into thine house.' . . . Then they glorified God, who had given such power unto men." Christ claimed that He had power to lay down His life, and power to take it again. When He was going away, He commanded His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high. And after that power descended, see the Apostles! See Peter as he answers their question, by what authority, or by what power he had done this great miracle,—“By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,” though he knew this answer meant stripes. Why, they returned to their company “rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” See the power wielded by them all:—"They that have turned the world upside down have come hither also"! And Paul—that incarnation of living, throbbing power, all derived from and consecrated to his Divine Master! And consider since then, the endless train of those who by their own claim were empowered by Christ and have moved the world.

II. We come now to the consideration of the power

actuating the Christian life, as it appears *experimentally*. The etymology of the word helps to its understanding. *Experience* is from the same root, *ex*, out, and *periri* to touch, to try. Experience is what comes to you by *trying out*, and it thus becomes part of you. To experiment is to try; and the expert is he who has experienced and *knows*. Only by touching, trying, experimenting, do you get experience, by which you know in a practical way.

So, if you really want to know God and the truth of Christianity, experiment! Christ invites you to this. It is His chosen way of revealing truth. It is the word graven on the threshold of His glorious Temple. Come in; try and test it all, and see if it does not prove itself to you. You object that you want to know before you enter; but that isn't reasonable, nor logical, nor scientific. No branch of human learning yields up its mysteries to a mere desire to know, but to investigation only. Apply the same principle here and test the results. Do the will, and you shall know of the doctrine.

That was a wise word of Gamaliel, wise and dignified, amid the clamour and fury of the excited council:—"Let them alone, for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it." Then why not stand aside, and view results without experimenting? Simply because our lives are too short, and too much is at stake. And for this same reason, supplement your own experiment with the experience of others; see how they have fared. This will not give you proof, but such testimony is strong presumptive evidence. It is proof, but proof only in the case to which it applies; it is strong evidence for all similar cases.

A man has a nervous affection of the hand, and the thumb and fingers are drawn in. The doctors look at it, consider it, and say (touching a certain spot on the head, which they suppose controls the nerve-centres supplying the hand), "Here is the trouble." Various physicians agree;—(I do not offer this as scientific statement, but only by way of illustration)—they apply a current of electricity to that spot, and the hand responds. That looks well. Shall we have the operation? Yes, it seems wise. The trepanning is done—the scull is opened, the clot removed, normal conditions are readjusted, and forever after the thumb comes in only when the will says, "Come in." Now, that is *proof* only for that case, but it adds immense weight to the doctors' recommendation of trepanning in all similar cases. So, while no amount of personal evidence from others can be proof to you, it ought to make you more ready to experiment.

Let me give you two strong cases from my own experience. I have a friend, a very dear friend, one of my dearest; a man working successfully for Christ, bringing men to Him, lifting them out of weakness into the power to resist temptation; giving himself heart and soul, and giving himself joyfully, to the work of saving men; living a beautifully pure and gracious life. He was once as nearly a confirmed drunkard as any man you ever saw. But one day Jesus Christ laid His hand upon this man's shoulder;—he turned about, and has been testing the new life and the new power ever since, with the result of which I have just told you.

George Romanes was probably the greatest exponent of Darwinism in recent years, and the greatest next to Darwin himself. He had been a Christian, that is, a

traditionalist. He accepted Christianity, but he accepted it because it had been taught to him. He had never tested it, but he had advocated it, and considered himself fully committed to it. I will mention in passing, that he had won a prize at Oxford for an essay on Prayer. Professionally, he was an enthusiastic biologist, and in pursuing his investigations became convinced of the truth of Darwinism. He could no longer hold to Christianity. The two seemed incompatible. To his mind, Darwinism was capable of proof and Christianity was not; therefore, he put the latter aside. He did this with regret. He admitted freely and unhesitatingly that it left his life empty and barren,—he could see no light anywhere. To quote his own phrase: “To me, those words have an awful meaning, ‘Work while it is day, for the night cometh in which no man can work,’ for that darkness is already enwrapping my soul.” But he saw no way of escape, in loyalty to the truth. So he laboured wearily on, becoming an accepted authority in all biological research. At about this time he wrote a thesis attacking the very foundations of the Christian faith; an attack, which, from its scholarship, dignity and calmness, was one of the most effective and dangerous the faith was ever called upon to meet. Two of my friends who read it—the book is out of print, I think; it was never reprinted after the first edition was exhausted—but two of my friends who read it, men of deep Christian faith and knowledge, said, “We actually trembled when we read it, lest the divine edifice could not sustain so well-planned and consummate an attack.”

There was a missionary in Japan by the name of Gulick, sent out by the Congregational Board, also a biologist, who made some very remarkable discoveries

and some very successful investigations in his study of a certain rare shell-fish; and, after infinite labour and patience, established an important nexus in the line of life-development—one of the most important, in fact, to the perfecting of the Darwinian scheme. It was hailed with delight by biologists the world over, but by none more cordially than by Romanes. He was enthusiastic in its praise and in praise of its author, when by chance one day he learned that Gulick was a missionary. A missionary! How could that be, and a Darwinian?

He sat down and wrote to him: "My dear sir, we are strangers, but on the ground of our common research, will you satisfy my questionings?" Were they questionings and longings out of his own past? echoes from his parents' faith? a secret, though unacknowledged, yearning for the vindication of the Name that had once been to him above every name? Was it a longing to have a tenant once more in that tenantless room? However that may be, he asked: "How can you hold the scientific views you do, and still accept the teachings of Christianity?"

And this answer came: "I can do both because I apply the same principles of investigation and experiment to both. You know how I must have proceeded in the scientific field; I have done the same in the moral field: for, though the field is different, truth must be reached by the same methods. I look about and I see certain tendencies and effects underlying and forming human life;—these must be accounted for. These tendencies and effects are moral; I must look for moral and religious causes sufficient to produce them, and I find, invariably, the best and highest result from Christianity. I watch this and its antagonistic forces in the lives around me

and in my own life, and can reach but one conclusion if I am true to scientific principles of investigation and experiment. May I urge you, my dear sir, to try and test and experiment for yourself."

And Romanes did, so that he came out of doubt and scepticism into the clear assurance of the truth as Christians hold it; and before he died, he wrote one of the fullest and ablest vindications of his recovered faith, and died most joyfully,—not going into the darkness.

Are you afraid that your past life is so full of sin and defeat as to shut you out? Remember my friend. Are you checked and hampered by philosophical doubts? Consider Romanes, investigate, experiment; and you will find that your sins are cancelled and your doubts are swept away, and you possess a new power. These two cases cannot be proof to you, but they should so inspire you that you would leave no test untried, till you prove for yourself whether such power can be yours.

I can see how a man may refuse to test many things that are brought to his notice. Life is short, and a man must select. But I *cannot* see, I *cannot* understand, how a man *dare* leave this alone, when this is the all-important decision, and eternal issues depend on it.

III. And now we come to the third and last point I mean to make:—this power shown *evidentially*, that is, power as evidence, as men see it in the lives of those about them. Life must express itself in terms of power. Where there is life, there must be power to some degree. Life might be defined as the power of adaptation. The chief difference between a living and a dead body is that the former is alert to every change of condition and environment, and the latter is not,—it is powerless, it can-

not adapt itself, and becomes the prey of the nimble fingers of the laws of disintegration.

How we all revel in power! What if it is only—why do I say “only,” for it is magnificent—but what if it is only the power in the express train as it goes rushing past. Think of the power in those vibrating rods! Or look at the engines of an ocean steamer, or, if you do not want to go so far, see the engines of the *Priscilla* of the Fall River Line. As you look at them, doesn't it send a thrill through you? Don't you feel like saying: “I wish I were an engine of such power”? And I think a thoughtful mind is always lifted up to the God of Power.

You can be such a manifestation of energy; you can be a living embodiment of power. Do you object that that cannot be true, because Christians as a body do not manifest such power? But, because a man is bent over, and narrow-chested, and wants to be let alone, and desires not to be called on for any exertion, has hardly energy enough to change his collar, is that any argument against health? Because some natures are utterly incapable of appreciating music, does that prove that there is no beauty in music? Is it any proof against the power of electricity that a fuse is burned out, and the circuit is dark, and the trolley cars won't go? Why, powerlessness in me is no proof that there is no power, but only that I refuse to appropriate it. God forgive us that we lead powerless lives, when all power in heaven and on earth is in the hands of our Master, and He will put as much of it at our disposal as we need.

When Paul would give proof of his apostleship, he did not cite his great commission, or any vision or revelation, nor any great work he had done, but he pointed to his converts,—they were his proof. “Why,” he says,

“ your good works are trumpeted throughout the world ! ”
Are ours? Is any one talking of my life as a life of power? Is any one talking of your life as a life of power? It should be so.

Do not let us meet temptation with concession and compromise. When it comes to us, let us not dally with it, and then cry, “ Well—I can’t struggle any more; have it your own way ! ” *Make* the spirit triumph over the body. Keep relations right; spirit should rule. Keep your temper before your children; keep your dignity before your servants; show honourable dealing before your clerks. Let power fairly emanate from your lives, so that they who do not care for the Bible and will not read it, may see in your lives a commentary on it, which shall lead them to it. Is this too great a demand? Think of those words of Paul: “ I can do all things through Christ who enableth, who empowereth me ! ” And don’t forget the alternative: “ Apart from Me ye can do nothing ”; absolutely nothing! Lose yourself in Him so completely that the chord of self, smitten by His love, sinks trembling out of sight. Let us go bravely, victoriously, into all places where He will Himself come. All power is His, and He gives to us the power to become sons of God. Take it !

THE ONE-TALENT MAN

“ May the memory of the consecration of His life be a challenge to our own. Lead us till we reach that timeless, tireless, sinless, deathless state, where there are no more sunsets and no more night.”

THE ONE-TALENT MAN

"Quartus, a brother."—ROMANS 16 : 23.

I WANT to call your attention this morning to Romans 16 : 23, "*Quartus, a brother.*" Professor Ramsey and Professor Harris have been making a very interesting study of the salutations and greetings contained in ancient Greek and Roman epistles. They are similar to those we find in the New Testament :—"To all that are in Rome, grace to you and peace." "My love be with you all." "All the saints salute you." "Peace be to the brethren." "The salutation by the hand of me, Paul." "Grace be with you." "Unto Timothy, mine own son, grace, mercy and peace." Such salutations are not Paul's only, but those of all well-read men of that day, much as we now say, "Give my love to the folks." That is very vague. Why not specialize and say, "Tell Mary I think of her often and lovingly." "I hope the boys are getting along well in their studies." "I pray that the great sorrow that has come to your sister may be blessed to her." Then it means something. Read this sixteenth chapter of Romans, and take it as your model. See how full of love the heart of Paul was, and how in the conclusion of this Epistle it burst out in many messages of individual love ; and use your imagination so that you can feel how people loved him.

But who is Quartus ? Paul I know, and Timothy I know, but who is Quartus ? He is "a brother," just one of the obscure members of that Roman church. The epistle begins with Paul and ends with Quartus, the

loftiest and the lowliest, but brought very close to each other by love. Paul was a splendid lover and was splendidly loved. One woman treats him as her son; others would have laid down their necks for his life. He writes to the Galatians, "I know that you would have plucked out your eyes for my sake." Does any one love you like that? Is there any one who would pluck out his eyes for you, because you brought him the knowledge of Jesus Christ? Do not break friendship with Paul too easily. The man who said to me last week that he never felt drawn to Paul, may know him as the Rabbi, the Pharisee, the Theologue, but truly, he does not know him as the man.

"Quartus, a brother"—that is all we know of him, and we know that only through Paul's love for him. Gaius, the host of the church we know; and Erastus, the city-chamberlain, we know. These are great names, but Quartus has his place with them—he follows in the wake of these great leaders. And I am glad that immediately following his name comes, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Quartus was contributing to that grace. It is only a coincidence, I know, but we have a right to our own little imaginings, and it is good to think that this obscure brother helped to bring about that great benediction, and, with others, sent a message of hope and love to the church which was at Rome. We are so used to our tattoo marks by which we classify men, and we think them so indispensable! We insist so on labelling those who come under our observation! We can have no real relations with a man until we have properly pigeon-holed him! Here is a man who comes before us only as a brother, but by so coming he calls attention to his worth (all unconsciously to himself) and

supplies the greatest need of the world, for the world needs brotherhood more than anything else. This man had his name in the book of life, but he passed among men unmarked, in the same uniform as the others,—the regular blue jacket—*without* bands. There is no gold braid on his clothes ; he has no carriage. Others ride ; he walks. But he is the man the world needs, needs supremely. Quartus may be weak by himself, but when he unites with the many of his clan he is the mightiest force in the world. What *he* chooses, shall be,—it shall come to pass ; and what he vetoes, no power on earth can make successful.

But unhappily he himself often fails to recognize his power ; he and his people, too, often say—say because they are not leaders,—“ I have no talent ; I can do little ; my efforts count for nothing,” and so the work of the kingdom is left undone (for the leaders alone cannot do it),—when, if each would only use the talent he has, if each would do his little, nothing would remain undone of all the great mass of work the Master has left for His church to do. Then our united power would be given to

“ The cause that needs assistance,
And the wrong that needs resistance,”

and God’s kingdom would come with leaps and bounds.

Be ready to recognize Quartus,—he is the human bacillus, the life-giving germ, the vivifying cell from which activity and effectiveness go throughout the social organism—the *mikros bios*. He is the drop of water which, with its countless neighbours, forms the mighty ocean ; the grain of sand which, with its fellows, spreads out the great sea-beaches ; the kernel of corn producing the fields of tasselled grain ; the leaf on the tree which, in myriads,

makes the forest green ; the blade of grass forming, with its kin, the beautiful carpets of earth. He is what St. Francis would have called, "Our little brother, Atom," holding in himself the endowments and enduements and the marvellous forces on which all nature depends. Quartus is the *leucocyte*,—the white corpuscle in the blood, the free formative protoplasm of the life-current. He may have but one talent, he may be unknown, undistinguished, but in union he is a mighty power, and is to be reckoned with.

Perhaps you may be able to say, "I stand with Gaius and Erastus." Then you, too, have your place,—an important and trying place. I do not underrate it. I know that you bear the burden of life, that you stand before men where you can be seen, under a blaze of light and a fire of criticism, and the world has great need of you. The world needs leaders. But you are not so apt to neglect your duty as these less talented brothers, and so I appeal to them.

Your name may be Primus or Secundus or Tertius or Quartus or Quintus or Sextus or Septus or Ultimus. Suppose it is only Ultimus, will you hold back the little that is in you, and so lose to the world what you might give? Or will you say, "I am only an atom, and not near the cutting edge of the chisel ; I am not even steel, but only a grain of wood in the handle, but I will do what I can to push the work along." O if you only would ! If you have only a half-talent, or a fifth of a talent, then for the service of God and the need of humanity, I call on you to use it ! You draw back in your "humility," as you call it. It is a shameful humility ! If you are as weak as you say, if you cannot inaugurate, if you cannot initiate, then—(let me say it here as well as at the end

of the sermon)—then coöperate. If you do not know how to secure interest on your money, go to the banker. If you do not know where your little will count, come to me and let me place you. If you are the last man in the line, still, stay in the line; let us experiment together, and, though you be *Ultimus*, I promise you results.

Now, in conclusion, I want to speak of two things in regard to *Quartus*—his danger and his duty.

I. His danger we have touched on, the danger that the one-talent man will think his talent not worth using. He says, "If I were the two- or the five-talent man, it would be different." Yes, it would be different, but the responsibility would not be different. Each one is responsible for using what he has, not what he has not. He is still the individual, the indivisible, and God looks for returns from him, though only in proportion to what He has given him; each man must give an account of himself to God.

The five-talent man must give larger return. He is seen and recognized. There is a force acting on him that will allow him neither to sit nor stand, but go. He cannot rest; he must be active, he must be at work; his gifts urge him on like a fire in his bones; he feels an inward push, an outward pull, and he does not think so much of others,—there is work to be done which he can do, and he must do it. But the one-talent man is apt to indulge in that odious comparative degree. He will not keep his eyes on the positive degree of fact, or the superlative degree of endeavour, but constantly compares his lack with his neighbour's endowments and weakens his own powers. The positive and superlative degrees carry a man right forward, but the comparative degree deflects his attention, and he turns his head from the main issue.

You say you amount to nothing, that you don't signify. Yes, you do signify or you would not be. You say, "I come into a room,—no one notices me. I go out,—no one feels any sense of loss. I enter an assembly, but am never invited to the platform. When my boat goes down stream, I do not notice that the banks are washed out much by the swells." Now, this is his chief danger, and the chief danger to the church of Jesus Christ. If all these one-talent members of the body of our Lord would line up, the treasury of the church would not long be empty. Other men go forth to battle, but these men stay at home, and so the cause flags and at least seems to fail for lack of workers. There comes an appeal for charity—others give, but these, because they can give so little, will not give anything, and the starving die and the naked freeze, for the five-talent man cannot do it all.

This was the trouble with Meroz—just because they would not take their share in the battle. "Curse ye Meroz! Curse ye Meroz bitterly!" Why? "Because they came not up to the help of the Lord—to the help of the Lord against the mighty!" They stood on the hilltop and saw the confusion, and said, "There seems to be some trouble in the camp, but I don't know where to go, and I'm not much of a soldier, and my weapons are not in very good order; I guess I won't go into it at all." The true man would have said, "There is trouble, and I must help. I don't know just where I'm needed, and I haven't much skill nor very good weapons, but if they are in a strait they may be very glad of me; and I must go!" So the cause of the Lord is saved. Be sure of this—the commonplace is God's workshop, and the commonplace develops the uncommon. If there were no

mountains there would be no valleys; if there were no lights there would be no shadows. The commonplace sun and moon and stars and sunrise and sunset and days and nights and seedtime and harvest and birds and fishes and insects,—why, it is out of these commonplace things that God has made His beautiful world!

Out of the fibres and fragments and atoms of matter are built up muscles and tissues and sinews and bones and nerves, and loves and hates and aspirations and visions and dreams. The extraordinary rests on the ordinary, and presupposes it. Are you willing to be ordinary to support the extraordinary? “O,” you answer, “I *do* the ordinary; I earn my living; I try to make my house beautiful.” But I am not speaking of these necessary things. Do not even the publicans so? I want you to take a step from the undebatable necessary to the debatable necessary. “Here is something I might do, I could do. The church needs me. Christ needs me. But I don’t know; *I* don’t amount to anything.” Don’t you, really? Is that honestly your estimate of yourself? Would you be satisfied if you knew others rated you so? Do you truly rate yourself so?

You say, “I am nothing.” Well and good; but bring nothing to the right side of an integer and it becomes ten, a hundred, a thousand, incalculable, innumerable increase. God’s figures turn our naughts into boundless stores of usefulness and power. He created the world out of nothing. He can use nothing honestly brought to Him. He is Creator! He can use willing nobodies. I put it down on this lowest level, for I do not want any one to escape. For lack of the willing cooperation of the scantily endowed, the church suffers and is retarded. Because they are so far from Gaius and

Erastus, they refuse to array themselves at all on the side of the kingdom.

II. Well, what is the duty of Quartus? He represents brotherhood. In one sense, the world needs this most, even more than motherhood. I had a letter from a lady last week which touched me deeply. It was written to enlist my interest in a young man, and she writes, "I have tried to mother him, but he needs something else. It is like being in an orchestra to try to help people. Some are like the drum, and can be beaten; some are like the cymbals, and you must take them up in your hands; some are like the violin, they must be held up close to you." Is not that beautiful? Some cannot be mothered, but they can be brothered. Go out to them as brothers; that you can do, and so help them to realize the brotherhood of Christ. How are they to learn to know God, else?

The church, you know, is a kind of human bee-hive. The queen-bee is the most important member of the hive. It is on her account and for her account that the hive exists. But she cannot go everywhere. The workers must do that,—and they are often hindered by the drones, for there are drones,—but the workers, consciously or unconsciously, must do the work. They gather the honey and the wax, sweetness and light. Now I am not exactly the queen-bee, though I hold a kind of position of headship here, but I am not a drone, and I am a worker. Nevertheless, I cannot go everywhere. I need you; I need you all.

Who then, is the man who can go to the bank and the counting-room and the office and the shop and the hospital and the workroom and the factory and the drawing-room and the concert-hall and the endless gathering

places of men? Why, Quartus! He has the right of way; he knows the password. He can go in the power of Jesus to all the multitudes that no one else could reach. So you see your calling. That is a wonderful word,—that you should be *called* to a certain activity for Jesus. “You see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called”—“not many,” some, of course, for the church needs leaders—“but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are *not*”—which are naught—“to bring to naught things that are.” So you see your calling. You are called to call; you are blessed to bless; you are helped to help; you are saved to save.

Quartus, *do* you see your calling? Advocate what you know is right. Oppose what you feel is wrong. Throw your force against evil. Help the good along. No matter if you are put out and voted out. If a man has given you help, go and tell him so. Let him have the comfort of knowing it, and don't withhold that comfort from him because you think he wouldn't care for praise from *you*. Stand for all things Christ stands for. Do you see your *calling*? You are to be a brother to every one needing you, a servant to all wanting help; you are to sacrifice yourself for others—to be strong where others are weak—to be kind as a big brother to the little brothers for the sake of the Elder Brother. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? You cannot all hold the places of Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus, but you can all serve. Go and get your talent out of that hole in the

earth—with this you can serve. Men, in your daily walks of life you can serve the Christ. Women, you know this. In your homes, in your social circles, in your philanthropies, you can serve Christ.

As into the world we go, may we truly present Him who died for us, and lives for us, and waits to receive us !

HOPE

“O Lord, fulfill our aspiration not to be a disappointment to Thee! May we be uplifted by the infusion and infilling of hope.”

HOPE

“For we are saved by hope.”

“The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope.”—ROM. 8 : 24, 20.

“**F**OR we are saved by hope,” says the Apostle ; but we read elsewhere, “By grace are ye saved”—“by faith are ye saved”—love saves us. Here it is hope. Yes, but they are all true, because they are all graces implanted by Christ, and we are saved by our Saviour, God ! God is in Christ, saving us by His own royal love, “and the life that we now live, we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us.” Faith is this salvation taking an upward look to the God who was its author ; grace is the look beneath, to the things from which we have been saved by God’s favour ; love is the look around, going out in helpfulness to others ; hope is the look to the future, when we shall be with God.

The Christian religion is the religion of Hope. It is a strange mixture of completeness and incompleteness—incompleteness here, that is to find its completion beyond. May this be a message from God’s own Word to some heart here to-day ! Do not worry about the future ; it is safe in His hands. Do not fear to meet Him ; there is no condemnation to you who are in Christ Jesus—no condemnation nor any judgment at all ; be perfectly easy about that, if you trust in Christ. There is no great white throne for you—it is fled away. There is the giv-

ing an account of your stewardship, a passing in of your papers, a record of what you have done—but no judgment. So cheer up, if you are Christ's. All things here are incomplete, and are looking towards completion. Creation is still incomplete—the creature was made subject to vanity by him who looks forward with hope to its perfection. And even we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, are yet incomplete,—they are only first-fruits—completion is ahead of us, and now and here, the setting of life is incomplete. But then, this is only a beginning. Paul wrote to the Philippians, “He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it”—of course He will; He is not a God who stops. His resources are inexhaustible; we shall never get beyond the beautiful hopes He has laid up for us. Eternity is full of hope—it is only eternally beginning. “Now abideth faith, hope, love,”—they abide, and need all eternity for their fulfillment. The hymn is wrong which says,

“Hope shall change to glad fruition”;

no, it will still be hope with endless fulfillments, but also endless expectations. It is true in one sense, for many hopes will be realized, but hope will still be with us.

Through all eternity, we shall have faith—some one to trust; and hope—something to look forward to; and love—some one on whom to lavish our affection, never thrown back coldly on ourselves. That is the joy of eternity. There we shall be satisfied, and our ever-forming hope will be satisfied, too.

There is no satisfaction here, but a blessed unrest. This is our goad and incentive. Some things never can come true here. Much of this life seems like chaos, but it is only incompleteness—beginnings whose ends we

cannot trace; aims whose purpose we cannot measure; ambitions and aspirations which we groan to express and fulfill. Yes, here we groan, being burdened and confused, but it is a groan towards God. Is your spirit restless? Do your powers flag and fail? These are prophecies of that future life which alone is full enough to satisfy. In second Corinthians Paul says, "Thanks be to God who causeth us to triumph!" Yes, those moments do come to rest and refresh us,—they are the first-fruits, the bunch of grapes from Eshcol. The vine is over there, and we have only the bunch of grapes here—only the foretaste, but can we not revel in the thrill of joy He often sends us as some gleam of the great hope bursts forth? O be strong! Say to yourself, "I can do it; I will do it!" Be willful in this matter. You feel the power in exalted, lonely moments; cherish such moments,—they are the foretastes of perfect fulfillment; they are sent to keep you hoping!

Have you never noted an evening of extraordinary beauty? As you stood and gazed and bathed your soul in its effulgence, have you never felt a sadness creeping over you while you thought, "This will soon pass, and night will come"? Or have you thought, "This is as an entrance into a beauty no mind can conceive"? So with the moments of hope and inspiration,—they pass, and reaction comes.

But, no, they are not lost. Is this present experience what your life really is? Ah, no; this is but the forecast and foretaste of what it will be in its perfect fullness. These are the most beautiful moments of life. They are what start the martyr's pulse, and set him aglow to bear and face all things, to attain completion. You are in a world that belongs to the God of Hope. The very in-

completeness is a prophecy. Turn your face to the east, and see the glory of the sunrise—it is as nothing to the glory of the perfect day which has no night. Birth is given to the flower that it may perfect its fruit and seed,—a perpetual carrying on of life.

Did you ever see them fishing for mackerel or porgies on the New England coast? They have nets with corks on top, and leads at the bottom—corks *and* leads. If there were only corks, the net would float on the surface of the water and drift away; if there were only leads, it would drop to the bottom and be useless. But with corks and leads properly balanced, it stands in its place and encloses the school of fish. We have duties, disciplines, weights,—these are the heavy things to hold us down and make us useful; and He sends hope into our lives to make us men and keep us buoyant.

Other religions have no hope. Sir Henry Maine, who from long residence in the East was qualified to speak on the subject, says that the hopelessness of all other faiths is the most pitiful element in them. They are utterly without hope. The noblest of them is Buddhism, and its noblest conception is extinction; it is aimless, profitless—a sinking into nothingness—Nirvana! The Stoic is the noblest man outside of Christianity. If I couldn't be a Christian, I'd be a Stoic; if I couldn't live at Jerusalem, I'd live at Sparta. He faces life bravely. He will not let his lips tremble. He passes great sorrows off with a maxim, and dies when he must, without a quiver. But noble as that is, it is nothing to Christianity. Christianity lifts us, not out of burdens, but out of the treadmill.

Have you read the story by "Story-Tell Lib" about the horse that was going somewhere? He was in a

treadmill. He was always cheerful because he was going to *go* somewhere, but continually he went on and on in that treadmill. No need of that for *you*. You *are* going somewhere, because you belong to the God of Hope. Look over the shoulder of *things*, and see the face of your God! When a child turns and looks up into his father's face he is strong for anything. Christ entered into the world to bring hope into it. He said, "I do not deny that there is trouble and sorrow and much to be borne, and great differences in men's lives, and much to vex and annoy. In this world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, and you shall. So, cheer up! You are only a little flock, I know, but to you the Father has given the kingdom, so look onward and upward." The difficulties of life are sent to sift you. You can get no fair register of things in the dark, but with hope flashing over all, they take their proper place.

The best men of Christ's day were hopeless for society. They looked about and saw profligacy and vice. They saw only publicans and harlots; but when Jesus came, He came with hope,—hope in all men, and hope for all men, so that even the harlot said, "Is there hope for me?" and the publican rose up from behind the custom-box and followed Him, and lived and died for Him. The *world* was saved by hope!

Ah, you don't realize what a Saviour you have! And He has hope invested in you. He looks to see you conquer, and you ought not to disappoint Him. If you have doubts, look at them from the other side. Hope is the better side of doubt. Hope is a mental therapeutics; it is the labouring oar that carries the boat inshore; it is the sail way off on the horizon that betokens the long-ex-

pected ship ; it is the palm-tree on the edge of the desert, promising refreshment to the fainting traveller ; it is the little moisture (only a little, perhaps, but some) which gives the promise of abating fever. It is hope that carries you right over death. Do you remember in Bunyan's Pilgrim, when Christian was sinking in the river of Death? It was Hopeful who put his arm around him, and steadied him and said, "I feel the bottom, and it is good." Hope will hold you up in this life, and through death, and into that other life. Hope can accomplish anything—it is sufficient for the life that now is, and for the life that is to come.

"But," you say, "I must work and suffer just the same." Yes, you must work and suffer just the same, and yet not quite the same, and these are the two points of my sermon. If to your work you add hope, if to your sorrow you add hope, you have realized a Christian's joy.

You must work. And you cannot pick out your work, or set your own wages, or command recognition, or choose where you shall work, but your Lord says to you, "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life!" This world is a workshop of character. It doesn't matter what your work is—whether you are a boy carrying a pail of water to thirsty workmen in a factory, or a girl delivering parcels of work that others have finished, or a lawyer in the Supreme Court deciding questions of jurisdiction for the country,—all that does not matter, for God is building character, and He can judge of character just as well by one kind of work as by another, since His test is fidelity. So work in hope. Be faithful in that which is least, and He will take care of the future.

At a time of some public exhibition at Rochester, there

was a great crowd of people struggling to get through the train-gate, but one of the officials stood quietly with his back to the gate, and so restrained the crowd. Some one laughingly said, "You're not a very popular man to-night," and he answered, "O yes I am; I'm popular with the management." It is not your business to be famous or popular here. Faithfulness is fame in another country. The hopes of this world amount to very little even if attained; they are hardly worth the striving for: unless hope has eternal roots it soon withers. Don't fret under work; work is a beautiful thing, and your Father is interested in your work. He says—whatever the task—"Do this for Me," and that ought to thrill our hearts.

Let me say this in passing. What is your attitude towards servants and employees? Do you put hope into their lives? You ought to. You know how hard it is to live hopeless lives; but do you give them anything to look forward to? Suppose you say to your servant, "If you do your work well, I will raise your wages gradually until you become too expensive for me, and then—some one else will want you." You ought to do something of that kind. There is a place in Wales where the workers are given food and clothing and lodging in return for work. Could anything be more cheerless! Not a penny to save, not a thing that might be a nest-egg, nothing to dream of. This is all wrong.

Perhaps you know the worthlessness of mere earthly hope. Then fill your life with deeds of kindness, which shall each be a seed of immortal hope. That is the joy of preaching—one takes such beautiful risks; one never knows what may be the outcome of a chance word, whether or no it may chance in a psychological moment,

in the nick of time. "No act falls fruitless, nor can any tell how vast its power may be." So work in hope.

And suffer, if need be, looking steadily to the outcome. The sorrow is here, and the suffering and the discipline and the annoyance and the vexation. This is a very wearisome world for people who want to escape all annoyance. Suffer, but add a plus sign with hope. Must I plow all through this field?—But a man said to me this week, "You do not understand the joy of plowing—it is most fascinating." I told him the only experience approaching it that had ever come to me, was digging for worms, and I do like the smell of the fresh earth. He said that was nothing compared to the pleasure of plowing; but, then, he was an enthusiast. Plow your field! Hope says, "There is to be a harvest." The bar of iron says, "Must I go into the fire?" "Yes, you must go in, but look to the fine and far-off issue when you are to come out shining steel." "Must I bear these crosses?" "Yes, but there is a crown for you." "Must I submit to this discipline?" "Yes, because you are a disciple." You remember the hard benches in school? and how you grew restless and rebellious under the work that seemed so purposeless to you? It does not seem so to you now; now you are glad you went through it. So be patient under present conditions, looking forward to the time when you will understand. You are learning now the elements of hope.

There are times, too, when you have to be hope for other people. This is sometimes very discouraging, but don't faint under it. Exert your will. Hope! Hope!

Even if the world seems devoid of hope, it isn't. Paul was once on a vessel in a terrible storm. All hope was dead, except in his heart, and he said, "Be of good

cheer, for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." Through every chance and at all times, be of good cheer. Brace yourself up with your Christian hope, and say, "I believe it shall be even as it was told me"; and say this, not only for yourself, but for others who may not have your faith and courage; say it not only for the present sorrow and discipline, but for that also which is only just around the corner. You remember that beautiful little stanza by Victor Hugo:—

"Let us be like a bird, a moment lighted
Upon a bough that swings;
He feels it sway, yet sings on unaffrighted,
Knowing he hath his wings."

So do you sing on in all, and in spite of all, knowing you have your wings.

In closing, let me speak of the time when you come to die. It need be no time of dread to you. Even the Psalmist said, "My flesh shall rest in hope," and he was still in the twilight. But death to the Christian is all joy. Death is the porter who swings the door wide open to me, and I go in. *I* go in—not my body, but a new body, a resurrection body, a spiritual body, a body which can utter all the thoughts that gasp and struggle for utterance here, a body commensurate with my dreams and ambitions,—"Like unto His glorious body"! His body and mine shall be alike, and I shall know Him when we meet. Sing songs of hope as you approach the end. Be seers of visions, and dreamers of dreams past all counting, which *shall be* realized! Throw away fear of death. It is really not our business; it is His. Some day, we don't know when, it will come,—will come as an incident in some one of our days. We shall

go to sleep, and wake with Him. Meet it, not with a twilight hope, but with a noonday hope. Anything less is unworthy of a Christian! You recall that beautiful stanza of Mrs. Barbauld —

“ Life ! we’ve been long together
 Through pleasant and through cloudy weather ;
 ’Tis hard to part when friends are dear,—
 Perhaps ’twill cost a sigh, a tear ;
 Then steal away, give little warning,
 Choose thine own time ;
 Say not, ‘ Good-night,’ but, in some brighter clime,
 Bid me ‘ Good-morning.’ ”

Isn’t that hopeful? Tennyson and Browning, those two modern prophets of God, each expresses this glorious hope in different ways, and each expresses it in trustful faith.

“ Sunset and evening star,
 And one clear call for me ;
 And may there be no moaning of the bar
 When I put out to sea,

“ But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
 Too full for sound and foam,
 When that which drew from out the boundless deep
 Turns again home.

“ Twilight and evening bell,
 And after that the dark !
 And may there be no sadness of farewell
 When I embark ;

“ For tho from out our bourne of Time and Place
 The flood may bear me far,
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face
 When I have crost the bar.”

You will meet your Pilot. He will not fail you. You will go with Him.

Then Browning's, noblest of all—ragged and rugged! He once said to a friend, "Never think of me as dead, but just away, and more alive than ever. Never, never speak of me as dead." And he is not dead, and our loved ones are not dead; they are more alive than ever,—“all live unto Him.”

“ At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
 When you set your fancies free,
 Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned —
 Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
 —Pity me ?

“ O to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken !
 What had I on earth to do
 With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly ?
 Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivell
 —Being—who ?

“ One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
 Never doubted clouds would break,
 Never feared, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph.
 Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
 Sleep to wake !

“ No, at noonday, in the bustle of man's work-time
 Greet the unseen with a cheer !
 Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
 ‘ Strive and thrive ! ’ cry, ‘ Speed,—fight on, fare ever
 There as here. ’ ”

Greet your unseen Pilot with a cheer. Let the day of your release be your busiest, sunniest day—not lugubrious at all, but brimming over with joy.

May the God of Hope fill you with all peace, living and dying !

THANKSGIVING

*“We will not petition Thee ; we will only thank
Thee. Thou hast given the message : it is
true. Thou wilt help in the delivery ; Thou
wilt help in the hearing ; Thou wilt bring the
result.”*

THANKSGIVING

"The people therefore that stood by and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him."—JOHN 12: 29.

I WILL read a few verses before the text. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? but for this cause came I unto this hour. This will I say: Father, glorify Thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

And this is my text: "The people therefore that stood by and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him."

I remember learning when I was a little boy a stanza —

"Whether the world is good or bad
Is only as you make it;
It makes you happy or makes you sad
According as you take it."

That may be poor poetry, but it is true philosophy. Here was the same sound, and some said it thundered, others heard angels. Where was the difference? Inside or outside? Surely inside, where all differences are. Fichte said, "A man's philosophy is the expression of himself." Whether a man is a Stoic or an Epicurean, a utilitarian or a necessitarian—whatever he is, depends on his own personality, which he projects into all he sees or hears. And Kant, a far greater philosopher, has much to say about what he called "The Thing in Itself" (*Das Ding an Sich*). But who knows what the thing is in it-

self? I take up this book. I see it. I handle it. It is thick. It is red. It has printing in it. It is intelligible. But what do I know of the book—the thing itself? And, to complicate the problem, if another comes and looks at the same book he describes it in different terms,—yes, he sees a different thing.

I want to divide my discourse into two headings instead of three,—an additional cause of Thanksgiving for you, no doubt!

I. *What you see and hear depends on what you are.* Why do we see all things so differently? Because my perception of a thing depends on my personality. Apperception is my perception coloured by the *me* behind it,—yes, coloured not only by what I see, nor by that influenced by my ear, but by both, influenced by a something behind the eye and the ear. It is as though we looked through glasses of different tints and shades. Our estimates of persons and things depend on and reveal our characters, for we estimate according to what we are. What we look on, what we listen to, decides our judgments: but *looking* is seeing plus attention; *listening* is hearing plus attention. We see and hear much that we need not look at or listen to. We get from life what we impart, impute to it,—we get ourselves back. I once went to a concert with a friend and his wife. It was a stringed quartette—the very perfection of musical bliss; and after it was over, I drew a long breath of mingled delight and regret, and wondered how I was to get down to ordinary levels again. I turned to my friend's wife and said, “*What* did you think of that!” and she answered, “One long squeak!”—I came down.

When the Pharisees saw Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom, they drew the robes of their holiness about

them, and turned away ; they saw only a publican and a sinner. Christ looked at him and saw an evangelist.

Did you ever see the violet shadow under a gray fence? You smile ; you think it isn't there ; but it *is* there,—*did* you ever see it? You have to bend down and look under to see it ; you have to *look* for it ; and it is so much easier to stand up and look straight before you, and say it isn't there !

A man once said to Turner, while looking at his pictures, "They are beautiful, but I never saw such things in nature!" and Turner answered, "Don't you wish you could?" Do *you* wish *you* could? You ought to be able. You are responsible for the power to do so, for it can be cultivated. It is as Wordsworth says,

"The world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers,
For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;
It moves us not."

And again, this —

"I heard a thousand blended notes
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

"To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran ;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

“ Through primrose tufts, in that sweet bower,
 The periwinkle trailed its wreaths ;
 And 'tis my faith that every flower
 Enjoys the air it breathes.

“ The birds around me hopped and played ;
 Their thoughts I cannot measure :—
 But the least motion which they made,
 It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

“ The budding twigs spread out their fan
 To catch the breezy air ;
 And I must think, do all I can,
 That there was pleasure there.

“ If this belief from heaven be sent,
 If such be Nature's holy plan,
 Have I not reason to lament
 What man has made of man ? ”

But whatever the surroundings of our lives, we can withdraw ourselves from the sordid and see the sublime. We can look *at* and listen *to* what we will,—at least we can learn to.

II. *We need not be slaves to temperament.* I will repeat a sentence I have used before:—You are not responsible for the disposition with which you are born into the world, but you are responsible for the disposition with which you leave it. Shall I let my disposition dispose of me, when I have a God-given power by which I can dispose of myself ! Suppose we have inherited some faults from those we love so much, and whom we are so loath to criticise,—need we perpetuate them ? As we look back to them and see some traits, some tendencies, not quite ideal, and see those same traits and tendencies reappearing in ourselves, must we weakly say, “ It is heredity ; I was born that way, and I can't help it ” ? No ! Read the seventh chapter of Romans. If you *will* make

so much of heredity, let me recall to your minds a heredity behind heredity:—"In the image of God created He them!" Claim this heredity, and work out your freedom. "We are the sons of God; it doth not yet appear what we shall be," but "we *are* the sons of God." See that you make all things after the pattern shown you in the mount. What if the sign and line of your life be Jovial, Mercurial, Saturnine, Martial,—you can have your life-line crossed with the angelic; you can be born again under the Star of Bethlehem! You can readjust your life.

A young man sees a glass of wine;—he can't help seeing it, but he can help looking at it. He says, "There are many reasons against taking it; there are risks and dangers involved; on the whole, since I have only one life to live, I think I had better not." God gave him a neck and a will. He could not help seeing the temptation, but he could turn his head, and not look upon it.

Suppose a fly, in the habit of feeding upon carrion, should be attracted by the flight of a bee. He watches and watches the bee until he becomes enamored of it. He follows it. He studies its habits. He notes its food. He sees the beauty of its form. He sees how busy it is. He is watching it now! It flies back past him. He catches a whiff, as it passes, of—something—what is it? It is sweet.—It is delicious.—N-no, it is not *exactly* like carrion. Now he longs to be like the bee. He eats what it eats. He imitates its habits. He tries to live its life. And in time, the scientists say,—I do not know; I am not acute or astute enough—but the scientists say that the fly will become a bee, and live on honey and wax. Honey and wax—sweetness and light!—The light of a candle?

But whether true or not in the scientific world, it is

true in the moral world:—you become like your ideal. Look for the angels, and you see them; listen for their voices, and you hear them. Day by day, beholding, you are changed into the same image from glory to glory, and sweetness and light become the characteristics of your new life, received from that far-off heredity. It is simply a matter of persevering choice. On this side, things that make for righteousness; on that side, things that make for evil. On this side, kindness of thought and speech; on that side, gossip, scandal, ill-natured remarks. On this side, all that is ideal; on that side, all that has a downward tendency. On this side, beauty and loveliness; on that side, ugliness and repulsion. On this side, cheerfulness; on that side, grumbling. On this side, sweetness and light; on that side, carrion! Which will you choose?

I had only two *headings* to my sermon, but I have three *conclusions*.

First. Train yourself to see and hear the good, the angelic, and not the evil, the thunderous. I have met the Knight of the Gloomy Countenance and the Prince of the Leaden Heart. I have heard them talk. I know their views. I know this world is a vale of tears. There are sickness and gloom and death and disappointments and broken hopes, and life is unsatisfactory, and nothing is worth while. O I know it all! But change your attitude towards it, and *it* changes. And if you *can't* see things in a cheerful light, at least be still about them. Cultivate the best part of speech—silence! It takes great self-command to do this. It means immense self-control. It involves sturdy and persistent self-repression. But it accomplishes much. If you did not sleep well, you need not mention it in the morning. If your breakfast does

not suit you, you are under no moral compulsion to find fault with it. If you feel wretched and disagreeable, there is no law of obligation that you exploit the fact. You are at liberty to keep your pains and aches to yourself; no one will feel defrauded.

Carlyle once heard of a man who grumbled, and said, "I wish I had him by the legs, with a stone wall near!" That was the estimate by the Prince of Grumblers of one who grumbled.

The old lady, who looked in her barrel of apples every day for one rotten apple, found that the laws of Nature satisfied her desires and supplied the rotten apple daily: she never got one good one out of the whole barrel.

Sir Walter Scott once had a friend staying with him, and in the morning the guest said, "Did you hear that pestiferous cur in the night?" and Sir Walter answered, "Yes, poor dog, he seemed to have troubles of his own!" Isn't that just delicious? What a comfort to live with such a man!

My second conclusion is,—I plead for a molecular change. To-day you may not be able to hear anything but thunder; yet by next Thanksgiving day that can be changed. There are some people in this world who cannot hear anything but angelic voices—it is a beautiful necessity; but by next Thanksgiving they may be able to see the angels,—they may even get themselves confused with them. This will not come all at once; it will not come suddenly. My arm is denuded of tiny, microscopic particles with every movement I make, and is built up again in the same way, molecule by molecule. It is built up by use, and withers without it. So this new power for which I plead—you can form it within yourself, but only by steady training. Possibly the advance will

be slow, but it will tell in a year, and you will be thankful, and—so will your friends.

My third conclusion is—Let the soul of sweetness and light and thanksgiving express itself in your outward life. If you try to, you *will* see that violet shadow under the gray fence; you will hear angel voices. If your life seems gloomy and hard and sordid and without sources of thankfulness, try this plan:—do one kind act every day. A friend once said to me: “I would not mention it, only we are talking between ourselves.—For years I have made it a rule to do at least one kind act every day, and one night, no longer ago than last week, I got into bed, and suddenly remembered that I had done no consciously kind act that day; so I got up, made a light, wrote a letter to a woman in trouble, and enclosed a check.” Tell me that man would not hear angel voices! Yes, and see angels, too! Tell me that he would not appreciate a kindness done to him! that he would fail to recognize God’s goodness to him! If you can’t recognize it in your life, I am sorry for you, but try my friend’s plan. Don’t gossip; be tender; cultivate one blind eye for the faults of your friends, and one deaf ear for social purposes. Recognize that your servants will get into a temper sometimes—you do;—that they will now and then have the blues; that occasionally they will have quiet streaks—and don’t feel always called on to comment on it—you wouldn’t with your friends.

The men of that day might have said to their more fortunate companions, “Did you really hear an angel speak? I wish I had!” And the others might have replied, “Listen, and you will.”

Now, do *you* listen for the angels, and the atmosphere of your life will not remain thunderous!

THERE GO THE SHIPS

*“Help us to conquer the sins Thou hast forgiven;
Thou knowest how we suffer while we are re-
sisting. May we feel towards sin, whether in
ourselves or others, an utter hatred and con-
tempt, but towards the sinner may we feel the
utmost kindness.”*

THERE GO THE SHIPS

“*So He bringeth them unto their desired haven.*”—Ps. 107 : 30.

OUR subject is a ship. Did you ever think how significant of human life a ship is? Did you ever realize how at some stage of development in a boy's life he has a mania for making boats? I can feel now on my thumb a cicatrix where I cut myself years ago in my efforts to make a boat. I well remember the place where I worked. It was under the front steps of the house, and I had to crawl in, but once I was in, I was undisturbed in my work.

How productive of the highest qualities a ship has always been! Think of the splendid courage of Columbus and the Cabots and Magellan, of Drake and Frobisher,—men who risked their lives to advance the knowledge of the world. And how did they risk it? Not as we do when we cross the ocean in powerful steamers, but they sailed out on unknown seas, in their frail boats, little better than cockle-shells. Unknown, inconceivable dangers were before them, yet they never flinched as they faced the uncharted seas. And what have they given to humanity? A new world, with its limitless stores of power and knowledge! Think now of the splendid day-boats on the Hudson—each of them a palace—and then think back to Robert Fulton and the *Claremont*. How trustingly we board the vessels of to-day, and how almost invariably they reach their desired haven!

As I look over this audience, I think how in a few passing minutes you will all scatter, and I can say,

“There go the ships! There go the ships!”—for each one of you is a commissioned craft—a commissioned craft, if you did but know it, with an order of sailing, and a definite port, and a catalogued cargo. How are you sailing? Whither are you tending? What will become of your cargo?

I want to call your attention to three points about a ship that figure our human life.

I. Who owns the ship? “Why,” you say, “I do.” No, you don’t; you are the captain, but does the captain own the ship? Not at all. He is under orders. He only sails the ship, and sails it in the interests of the ship-owner. Your bodies are your boats, and you are not your own, but are bought with a price. You belong to God, wherefore glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God’s. This body is not mine. From the elements of earth and air and water, it was made by God and entrusted to me, to be used for His sake, and to return to Him the best possible results. It is a great honour He has given me, but let me not forget the honour and say, “Now it is mine.” This hand is not mine. It is very familiar to me; I know it well; I use it often; it does me good service; but it is not mine. It is His; I am all His, and to Him I must give account. “Oh,” you say, “if I only had a different body!” But He wants you to sail the ship He has given you, and for that only will He hold you responsible, and for that only can you hear, “Well done!” when you land in the desired haven. “But, ah, if it were only stronger, better adjusted, more graceful!” That has nothing to do with it. It doesn’t matter in the least whether you are as graceful as a full-rigged yacht or as ugly as a Dutch lugger. Your boat, whatever it is, is your opportunity,

—yours only, and your only opportunity. When we grow restless and refuse to sail our boat because we don't like its plan and style, we check our development. This willfulness loses us many of the richest of life's lessons.

Not only must we sail our boat, but we must care for it. Perhaps some day, wandering about the deck, I start to cut my name in the woodwork or to write with my ring on the glass. No, I must not; the boat is not mine, and I must not mar it in any way. The boat, your body, is a sacred trust. Do not overwork it, but also, do not underwork it. Put it to legitimate exertions. Exact from it what it is able to perform, for this you owe to the ship-owner. Do not neglect it; do not abuse it; do not forget its dignity; remember its marvelous mechanism and its fitness for the work it has to do, and bear in mind that it is not to be exploited for your own convenience. It is part of your stewardship. For a moment, dissociate your spirit from your body. Rise up to the level from which God sees, and look down on your body. Consider what you have done with it, what you have accomplished by its aid, what you are planning as to its future activities, and tell yourself honestly whether you are faithfully fulfilling your commission to keep it pure and wholesome, and trim and shipshape.

II. Who is to manage my ship? "Why, I am." Yes I *am*. O the glory of *self*-possession,—to feel the power of my own will over my body! To feel all the force and energy of this sensuous nature, and to know that I am stronger than it! To feel all the allurements of sense and taste, and never to let them dominate! To know that through all storms and tempests and whirlwinds there need be no wreck! There will be losses and breakages and bad management sometimes, but always

my power, my self, is regnant! O the joy of self-possession!—to *possess your self*.

Those are not the best days on which all goes well with us, when wind and tide are in our favour, and the sky is glowing with colour, and the winds are zephyrs, and the waves are calm. But, ah, the days when we battle with the tempest, and hear the straining cordage and the creaking planks, yet keep our hands on the wheel and weather the storm, those are the best days,—the days that test and stablish our manhood, that show the glory of the trust that was put into our hands when He formed us men.

We often thought our school-days were hard, and the lessons beyond our powers and to no purpose anyway; but do we think so now as we look back and see what was accomplished by them? Sir Algernon West said, in speaking of Eton, “I look back to dear old Eton and think of the life there, the absolute order, the regular hours, the six-o’clock breakfast, the bare floor, the many restrictions, the few rewards. And I go back there now and see the luxury—the upholstery, the cushioned benches, the easy life—and wonder whether it is all improvement. The old way was hard, but it made men hardy; it brought out the thews and sinews of our manhood.”

I tell you, we pamper our bodies too much; we take too much comfort. We sit in too easy chairs when we are reading. The rose-mesh of the flesh is very pleasant, but it is not invigorating. Think of the splendid regimen of the apostle Paul: “I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection,”—I hold it as a conquered steed, as a hound in the leash. It is hard? Yes, but it makes you hardy by the very hardness of your struggle!

The Civil War did more than cement the Union, or, rather, it did that in a way for which I thank God. It brought the South to see the courage, the system, the power of the North, and the North to recognize the brave self-devotion of the South. I greatly admire "Stonewall" Jackson; he was a fine type of manhood. He would not drink coffee because it was not a necessity but a self-indulgence, a luxury; and he was determined to reduce his life to the simplest principles,—he would not have his *life* depend on *things*. He would not wear an overcoat in winter. He declared that the heart within him should keep him warm. That may be very foolish physiologically, but it is splendid morally! I love the reign of principle. I love to see a man—I am proud of myself when I can do it—live by the unknown, the invisible, the unseen. O, I glory in that power of holding myself superior to the here and the now, and of looking beyond to the unseen and the eternal!

Once, while travelling, I was very much struck by a sentence in a book I was reading. I will not tell you its name, for it was a foolish book. It was about an artist who persisted in doing his work on a high plane, and would in no wise let it down because of financial need or to secure pleasure; and when his friends jeered at him he said: "But how do I know, if I yield, but that what I gain in pleasure I may lose in delicacy of work; that what I secure of enjoyment, I may lose from the sacredness of work?" O the shame and weakness of self-indulgence,—how all that is best in us recoils from it! O the glory and joy of self-control,—how it thrills us with a sense of victory! No self-indulgent man can live a life of power. He cannot do it. It cannot be done.

Let us return to the figure of a ship. You are alone in

the pilot-house. No one except you has a right to enter there, but many others are clamouring to come in. Don't let them come! Lock your door! Bolt it! Keep your eye on the compass and your hands on the wheel! Steer it yourself, and steer it according to your chart, if you would reach your desired haven. But up the stairway leading to that pilot-house come stealthily creeping the rascal senses, and the debasing lusts and the clamorous passions. And they knock and implore and cajole you to let them in. You refuse to open the door; you say, "I must keep my attention on the chart." They answer coaxingly, "If you knew the deliciousness of sailing when we steer!" But you say, "It could never equal the joy of reaching the haven towards which I steer." "Let us in! Let us in! Let us get our hands on the wheel—just a little while, and we will show you what pleasure is."—"Ah, but there is more than one kind of pleasure, and I prefer mine. You shall not come in."—"If you will let us in, we will steer *with* you. Your hand, too, shall be on the wheel; we will sail just where you will, and you shall know no restraint. Do let us come in!"—"But I love the restraint that is power. I want to sail this way. I long for the expected end of this voyage. You *shall not* come in!"—Do not let them, as you value your life! They want but to dispossess and displace you. As surely as you permit their spectral hands to touch the wheel, you are on the rocks and near to shipwreck. Your pilot-house is your castle, your temple, your refuge, where only the owner of the ship dare come in beside you. Discipline yourself. Keep the end of the voyage before you. Keep your body under, your spirit regnant. Shut the door on the willful, imperious demands of the flesh.

Say, *have* they come in? Have they now their hands

on the wheel? Do they, as yet, let you keep one hand on, and they control only in part? Now for your life-and-death struggle! Gather your forces and *contend!* Drive them off! Send them skulking down the stairs! You can do it!

You *had* to let go? No, never! And you can put your hands back on the wheel even if you have let go.

A man came to me this past week—only a day or two ago, and catching my hands in a viselike grip, he said: "See! See!"—and I saw; I saw the triumph of the flesh. He said, "I cannot conquer"; but I said to him then, and I say to him now, if he is here this afternoon, "Yes, dear, you can, you *can*. God's Spirit is your helper, and you can do all things with Him. Only gather your forces and contend!"

III. In the third place, I would remark that we do not harness a horse just to see how he looks in harness. We do not send a current of electricity vibrating through the wires just for the pleasure of charging wire. We do not lead water through channels and raceways just to hear it gurgle.

And so God does not give you a cargo just as ballast for your ship. He has a destination for it. He expects you to sail from a port of fullness to a port of emptiness. You are ships in commission. He wants you to take the cargo where it is needed. His divine exports are to be used as human imports. How many of you have steered to a port of emptiness to-day?—not to ports of fullness; that is useless; there you are not needed—but to how many ports of emptiness have you sailed?—"Well, I wrote a letter to a friend."—Is her life an empty, neglected life? If not, that was a port of fullness.—"I called on one of my set."—That was sailing from a port of full-

ness to a port of fullness. But what ports of emptiness have you supplied with your precious cargo? Have you followed the leadership of Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister?

I want to paint two pictures:—

Here is a lovely ship that is launched amid many salvos and cheers. It is very pretty, and starts out with colours flying. The paint is fresh and white; the deck is polished; the uniforms are new and fine; the sails are fully spread. The engine is perfect. You say to the captain, "You have a fine ship; where are you going?" "O I don't know; I am just going to sail." "Yes, but what course will you take?" "Well, most any; I just enjoy navigation." "But to what port are you bound?" "None in particular; I take great pleasure in travelling."

So he sails away—this way—that way—turning the ship where he will—seeking pleasant seas and lovely isles, and all is beautiful. But even such a ship gives out in time. The paint is not quite so fresh; uniforms are a trifle worn; the engine wheezes a little; a little leakage here and there; nothing much, but the ship is not quite what it once was. Then comes a storm, and the inexperienced, fair-weather pilot can do nothing. She strikes the rocks and goes to pieces; and some on broken portions of the vessel, and the captain, on a board, get to land. They are saved, so as by water. The captain missed the haven; and what will he do when the owner asks for his papers and chart and compass? How will he account for his cargo?

Again: I see a ship start out. It, too, starts off well, and starts with a definite purpose. It meets a storm almost at once, but though there are rent cordage and torn

sails and some breakage, there is no wreck. There was no fear of the storm,—rather, a sort of suppressed joy, and now,—the joy of victory! But it must put back for repairs. It starts again, and steering steadily towards the port, all goes well. This vessel, too, grows old. There are some leakages and a general appearance of wear and tear. Will it be able to make the port? It never swerves from its course. It is beginning to run slowly. What is that just ahead?—Land! The ship approaches. There are palm-groves. Nearer and nearer the pilot steers,—not upon the rocks but through the channel. Who are those waving their hands to him? They are those who made this voyage successfully before him! And now they welcome him, and straightway he is at the harbour whither he desired to be!

So He bringeth them unto their desired haven.

PRAYER

“ We pray to Thee from whom every good prayer cometh. Accept our prayers and present them to our Father. As a little child will gather a bouquet of wild flowers, and the elder brother will pick out what is harmful or poisonous, leaving only the beautiful for the mother to receive, so wilt Thou sort and arrange our prayers, that they may be acceptable to Him whom we would serve.”

PRAYER

"And praying, the heaven was opened."—LUKE 3 : 21.

IN one of his superb flights of thought, in a burst of noble enthusiasm, Tennyson says prayer is

"A breath that fleets beyond this world
And touches Him who made it."

Is this an iron world? Is it hardness and inflexibility and remorseless law? Is there no tenderness and love and responsiveness? Is it, indeed, an iron world? Yes, so men think, some men, some kinds of men. But they are wrong, and we who believe in God as our Father, who know and respond to His love, who know Him as God the Father Almighty, are right. One of the mediæval mystics said, "Prayer is the flight of a lonely man to the only God." And that other outburst of Tennyson,—

"Pray for my soul.
More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Therefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me, night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

There it is again—"chains"! Is it chains on every

side? Yes, there are restrictions, limitations; but the chains are golden chains. The world is full of iron, full of law, but it is loving, beneficent, personal law. There are only two theories of the universe—God, and No God. You may mix and mingle these as you will; you may name them as you choose, but it is *Father* or *Fate*. Call Fate by whatever name you will,—force, law, chance,—it is still Fate, and the only alternative to Father. Matching theory with theory, I hold up my right hand and say, “Our Father,” and I say it on the best spiritual authority in the universe,—the experience of men who have put their trust in it. Prove it? I don’t attempt to. It does not come within the region of physical proof; but, theory for theory, I still hold up my right hand and say, “I believe in God, the Father Almighty.” Magnify all the vast processes of nature, dwell on the energy stored in the earth, prove all the great natural developments and adaptations of organisms, carry it all as far as you can and will, and I welcome it; I rejoice in it, for every bit of power you can prove only magnifies the Almighty Father whom I trust. I greet them all; they are but broken lights of the Father of Lights. This is my faith. I do not now appeal to the Bible nor to moral philosophy, but theory for theory again, I claim that you have nothing better than this:—“He is my Father: He loves me.” To my mind, this touches the highest point. If you know anything better, anything that has an ultimately higher reach, then tell it to me. I need it. I want to know it. I want to preach it. But think what my theory implies—a Father with all His oversight and care and wisdom and tenderness; the son looking up to Him with filial love; the child trusting Him!

“O,” say the non-Christian philosophers, “pray by all means. Prayer is a great uplifting power. It is splendid in its reactionary effects. Its reflexive power is very elevating. In its subjective results there is nothing so stimulating to all that is noble in man.” I believe that, too. I want to make a one week’s prophecy. For this next week, offer not one syllable of prayer; but go alone by yourself, and with folded arms or interlaced fingers, with no interruption and in perfect quietness, just think. Think of something noble,—a beautiful picture, an entrancing sunset, the roar of the tumbling surf on the beach,—anything grand. It is mighty hard work to abstract yourself from all else and just think; but do it, and—this is my prophecy—you will be greatly uplifted. Largeness is good for littleness. In the same manner think of God,—of His greatness, His infinity, His eternity. It is inspiring. But, man, you tell me prayer is nothing more than that! Do you mean that men will do that for a lifetime if there is no response? that the race has been doing that for millenniums, because of the fine subjective and reactionary effect on themselves! Do I go on writing with a dry fountain-pen because I especially enjoy that particular form of finger exercise? Do I keep working the handle of a dry pump because the muscular exercise involved is so strengthening? Do you spread your table, Mistress Hubbard, if the cupboard is empty? If you do it for a day or two, your friends try to lead you away, and if you resist, saying, “I like to see the dishes,” they fear for your mind, and shake their heads and say, “Too bad: too bad!” The farmer ploughs. There is no time when I admire the farmer more, or wish less to be a farmer, than when he ploughs. But does he plough as a pastime, as having fine reactionary effect on his mus-

cles ; or does he plough in expectation of a harvest ? Would he plough if he knew there would be no waving wheat, no tasselled corn ? I will stretch a point, and allow that a man might pray for a day or two just for the sake of the mental excitement resulting to him, but if he kept it up any longer for that reason, I should doubt the balance of his mind. Think of the telephone. There is something at the other end. Does a man go and talk into an empty hole in a wall ?

Men make a great mistake when they talk of law as an objection to prayer, because they fail to consider that prayer is one of God's laws and that He, as God the Father Almighty, can manipulate His laws to ends of His own choosing. Hartley Coleridge said that "prayer is the highest form of human energy." At one time he spoke of prayer as the impossible, the inconceivable ; but his later and riper judgment was that it was the highest form of human energy.

Your boy brings you a plaything which he has broken, and asks you to mend it. But you must not, for we are in a world of law, and he has broken law and must abide by it. You have no right to touch it. You say, "Nonsense ! I know a higher law. I see how the law can be adjusted and the plaything mended." And shall not the Almighty be able to readjust the laws we have broken when we ask Him ?

You are in business with your father. You come to a difficulty which you are not able to untangle. You think over it. You wrestle with it. You hate to give it up, but at last you must, you are not equal to the case ; and then he brings to bear on it his wider experience, his subtler perception, and all is readjusted. He has not broken law—all he has done has been in obedience to a

higher law, and is lawful, loving, beautiful; there has been an interchange of filial confidence on your part and paternal love and wisdom on his.

Of course, if you can prove to me that the world moves on in a hopeless lockstep, no change, no possibility of loving control by the Maker, then I move that prayer be abolished. But if I can originate; if I can be a poet, a maker, a dreamer, a creator; if I know how to take advantage of the higher law, shall I deny to God the poetic power, the power to make, to dream, to create, to use His higher laws in controlling the lower?

Water flows down-hill according to natural law. Then why should you fly in the face of law and invent the pump? You have no right to. You have no right even to carry water up-hill in a pail, for water is not meant to go up-hill. You build a reservoir on a high hill, because you see that water rises to its own level. You say that is hydrostatic equilibrium. All right, but it looks to me like violation of law. "Yes," you say, "but *I* come in, and use the higher law; and when I want to, I use the lower law, and turn on my water, and make it flow down again. *I* can control law." And so, though law seems most capricious, it never is capricious; I may handle it as I will if I remember it is *law*. But I must never get playful with law. If I do, I have a broken leg, or a broken back, or a dislocated shoulder, or a flood, or a fire. But law, lawfully used, both higher and lower law, always answers to my knowledge and demand. "Here I am: I obey," it says.

You ask me for a drink of water,—why should you? That is prayer. What difference will it make? The law of high levels is still in force, but then, the law also is in force that by turning the spigot, I create a vacuum,

and the pressure of the atmosphere—fifteen pounds to the square inch,—forces the water up, and so the water flows. Therefore, it *is* a reasonable thing for you to ask me for a drink, and a courteous thing for me to give it. But we have been using the great laws governing water-levels for our own convenience. Then how strange that we should deny the same power to the Great Law-Maker ! He surely can superimpose what higher laws He will. Now, *He* manipulates all laws to one end,—the formation of character. To this end He sent Christ ; to this end He permitted Calvary ; to this end all law in the universe is set in motion. He has predestined that you be conformed to the image of His Son. Therefore, whatsoever you ask in His Son's name, for this purpose, He can and He will grant. Man is not intelligent enough to know how God does this, but knowing how far he can himself control law, it seems strange that God's power to do so should be inconceivable to him.

Livingstone once said, "I do not understand how men can admit that God made the world, and set it spinning, and then claim that He stands powerless before His own creation." The house is afire ! Well, let it burn. It is the nature of fire to burn, and law must not be tampered with. "But," you object, "it is the nature of water to put fire out, and that is the law I mean to use !" And shall God be bound by the lower law ! If I am to be rolled and stood about like a stick or a stone, let me surrender myself to the inevitable. If I have no volition, no control over a higher law, let me not brace and balance myself, and stand up like a man, but let me be the sport and plaything of every chance wind that blows against me ; let me stumble over every chance obstacle that lies across my path.

No naturalist ought ever to object to prayer. The young raven cries, the mother bestirs herself and overcomes her sloth and self-indulgence, and seeks food for the little one in response to the cry that was a prayer. The lamb bleats, and in answer to the need, the cry, the prayer, not only does the mother suckle the little one, but the milk flows into the udders—just in response to a cry! Shall this be in nature, and not in nature's God? It is strange to deny power to God,—to say that He who made the eye cannot see our need, that He who formed the ear cannot hear when we call, that He who made the heart will not understand its needs and longings, that He should have prepared throughout nature an appropriate answer to every cry of the lower creation, but to the human cry, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God," He has no answer! It cannot be! It is not! When I yearn to grow pure and holy, can He not answer me? When I ask Him to help me conquer my mean and low habits, has He no answering grace for me? When I struggle to control my temper, will He not respond to that struggle? We do not think this; we know better; but—we don't pray.

What do you do with Christ's life of prayer? He prayed continually. He learned to pray at His mother's knee. He prayed as a boy, when He went up to the Temple; in His shop at Nazareth; at His baptism; in His temptation He fortified Himself with prayer; before He called His disciples He spent the whole night in prayer; after that wonderful Sabbath in Capernaum He departed into a solitary place and there prayed; the Transfiguration came as the result of prayer; He raised Lazarus after prayer. Did you ever notice the signifi-

cant break between the seventh and eighth chapters of John? The last verse of the seventh chapter is, "And every man went into his own house"; and the first verse of the eighth chapter is, "Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives": each to his own place,—the crowd went to their homes, and Jesus went to commune with His Father. Was it petition? Yes, sometimes; but oftener, just communion, I think. Gethsemane was petition; the prayer in the Upper Room was petition and intercession.—(How do the advocates of the purely reflexive effects of prayer, account for prayers of intercession?)—But most of Christ's praying seems to have been communion.

A little boy comes in quietly and sits down by his father who is working, and who only looks up and smiles, and says, "Did you want anything?" and the little boy answers quietly, "No, I just wanted to be with you." That is what prayer should be to us,—just being with our Father, talking to Him, telling Him all about ourselves, asking advice, speaking freely about all things. Keep your windows open towards Jerusalem; talk much with God; tell Him you want to be receptive. Have you read the Confessions of St. Augustine? They are merely long monologues with God. He tells all about his inner and outer life in an unbroken conversation with his Father. He even mentions a pain in the face,—and it is all addressed to God.

The prayer-life is a beautiful life. We do not train ourselves for it as we should. We do not enter into our closets and shut the door and pray to our Father in secret. In the busy crowd, we do not swiftly close the doors on the outside world, and so keep the communion with Him unbroken. We do not realize that most beautiful of all spiritual conditions,—"Still, still with

Thee." If we did, we would show it in our calmness, our unruffled serenity, our patience, our sweetness, our untroubled attitude towards life. We do not stay on the mountain-top long enough to keep the face shining.

You know the spectrum is a brilliant band of most beautifully coloured light, but you do not know what is at the end of the spectrum, beyond the light. What is the power of prayer? Experiment, and you will know. That is the way in which we have learned what power there is in that dark end of the spectrum beyond where the light reaches. There is one ray that is extremely actinic, very powerful in all photographic effects. We have not exhausted the power of light. There is the X-ray. We used to classify things as opaque, translucent—dimly seen through, as a thin shell, a delicate china cup—and transparent. But with the X-ray, such distinctions vanish and all becomes transparent. And there is now the S-ray and the Victor-ray, and we do not know where it will stop.

So is prayer. It reveals—though it takes courage to be alone with God. But if you will pray, He will reveal Himself to you, in you, through you, and you will inevitably reveal where you have been, for you will live the Father-life among the brothers.

“ Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make !
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parchèd grounds revive as with a shower !
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower ;
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth a sunny outline, brave and clear.
We kneel, how weak ! We rise, how full of power !
Why, wherefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong ;

That we are ever overborne with care ;
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee ! ”

AFFLICTION

“ Help us to praise Thee, Thou who inhabitest the praises of Israel. If we are walking in darkness and mystery, and yet the path of obedience lies that way, may we tread it bravely and trustfully.”

AFFLICTION

“ It is good for me that I have been afflicted.”—Ps. 119 : 71.

DAVID did not say, “ It is good for me that I am being afflicted ” ; that was too much to expect of him. God does not demand the impossible ; He is very tender with us. But David did what we can all do,—as he looked back, he said, “ Yes, I see now that it was good to be afflicted.” At the time it did not seem so to him ; then he said, “ I am consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath am I troubled ” ; now he knew it was not anger and wrath, but the best and gentlest training the Lord could send him, and yet make of him all He meant him to be.

We go to school and submit to rules that we may learn to be better, and we know, as we look back, that all the irksome discipline against which we rebelled was good and wholesome. “ O but,” you say, “ I am out of school now.” Are you ? Then I pity you. I think the loveliest conception of life is that which regards it as a school, where rules must be obeyed and lessons learned and self-control acquired,—all to some gracious purpose that we shall some time understand and glory in. I love to think that I am a disciple, that I am undergoing discipling—and I just drop that final *g* and submit to discipline. Some time you will learn to say that you are glad of the discipline. The best things in life are always hardest to attain. If life goes easy with you, you are sure to be a man of soft fibre. Brace up to your work. Be brave and faithful even if you can't like it. No playing truant !

You are still in school, still on your hard bench ; clench your hands tight and hold on. Kiss the rod even when it comes down on smarting shoulders. Shake hands with the inevitable,—*that* must be God's appointment. Make friends with your teachers and lessons. The unploughed field produces no wheat. No coal or iron comes from the undug mines. So from the untrained nature no nobility is developed. If the field and the mine should say, "Leave us alone ; we do not want to be disturbed or interfered with,"—then they might as well not exist. The steps up Parnassus are hard to climb, but—the gladness of reaching the heights ! O if you only knew what God was working out for you, you would even choose His way to the fine and far-off issue of His plan !

Once, at a memorial service of the Civil War, a general, who was addressing the meeting, suddenly lifted his wooden crutch and said, "I won that at Chancellorsville ! " *I won* it ! I *WON* it ! I glory in it ! " No repining or regret there ! It is good for me that I have been afflicted !

Dr. Gunsaulus, in speaking before a Christian Endeavour Convention, opened his remarks by saying, "I thank God that I have been sick for two years ! " That is the victory of faith. Troubles come ; friendships are breaking ; efforts for others are not appreciated ; health is giving away—but God does it, and it must be right. *I* don't know why, but *He* does. O look up, tired heart ; believe in "the far-off interest of tears" !

Nations are born out of trouble. They grow stronger by what they endure. Spain is stronger because of our war with her, and she knows it. She herself recognizes that it was good for her to have the rotting tips of her American possessions cut off, that her strength might be given to growth at home. Her navy was our terror,

and we trembled as our white ships with their unsmoked funnels went out to meet her. But they came home victorious; and out of that pain and terror we have the gladness of having learned that our manhood is still in us; our strength as a nation has not departed through shop-keeping. The sanitary conditions of Cuba were such that we shrunk in fear, yet we had to face them; and already out of that affliction is coming health for its people and ours. From that island were carried over to New Orleans the germs of our national plague—yellow fever. But with the bettering of conditions there, come better sanitary conditions in our own land, and they will grow better yet. In the military camps life is much safer. There are two or three deaths now where there were hundreds under Spanish rule. Our own nation was born in pain. We came here from the Romish and Jewish persecutions of the Continent. Out of the sufferings of our fathers our own church had its birth. The Jews themselves developed out of the bondage of Egypt, and the hardships of the desert.

Much can be learned from an ocean liner. On the White Star Line, the captain may not attend the concert which is always given by the passengers near the end of the trip, because once when he was present the ship nearly ran on the rocks and precious lives were in danger. So he can come no longer, giving up the pleasure, that no danger creep unawares on the ship. No one may stand on the bridge with him. One would like to—the outlook is fine—but once when he was talking to a passenger, he failed to note in time the signs of coming danger. Nor may any one go into his stateroom—not even his friends or his wife—for his papers and charts and instruments must not run the risk of being disturbed. So he gives up

many of the passing enjoyments of the trip and submits to discipline, that his trust may be faithfully discharged.

Our personal life is a gift—a sacred trust—for others. We are enriched at the point of the bayonet. Wheat springs up where the plowshare passed through. It is a deep primal necessity for us to struggle if the highest in us is to be developed. The best that is in us finds expression only so. The critics of the universe say that bread and butter should grow on trees. But I do not see that the nations are strongest where conditions are easiest. It is better to earn your bread in cold weather than to pick bananas in warm. The law is, “in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread,” and that is a good law, for He who made it *knew*.

I read of this incident lately ;—it is true as an isolated fact, but I cannot say whether or not it would always be the case. A traveller in Africa happened to notice one of the large brilliant butterflies of the tropics just as it was about to emerge from its cocoon. Pitying the anguish of its struggles to free itself, he determined to help it. He took out his penknife and cut the ligament at which it was straining, and it came out safely and easily, only—all its brilliant colouring was gone! It had needed the anguish to develop that. It is good for me that I have been afflicted,—good for me that affliction forms part of the Lord's method in my development, else how can I reflect the brilliancy of the divine life? Christ's showers and storms may beat upon His loved one, but they strengthen him so that he can do all things. The Apostle said, “Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.” The manifold temptations were but the furnace out of whose crucial fires would shine forth the highest graces, tried and precious. The trying of a man

is the crowning of a man! In the great Revelation—they that are arrayed in white robes, who are they? and whence came they? *Up, up*, out of great tribulation! God is training, developing us, fitting us for our highest blessedness. Never think for a moment, when His strokes fall thick and fast, that He is punishing you. God is not punishing, else where would any of us be? He is loving us into something higher than we could ever reach by any other means. This world is a training-course for better living.

I want to call your attention to four graces which are best developed by affliction.

I.—*Patience*. That is the perfect, the perfecting grace. What, *that!* That monotonous grace, bearing all things, submitting to all things? Yes, that grace. The Apostle says, "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting *nothing*." It is by submitting, yielding, bearing, that we learn. Even Christ learned obedience by the things which He suffered. If He, then I and you must so learn. Teach children that they should never whine. Teach them to burn their own smoke, as our great engines do. Train them, encourage them, to keep their troubles inside.

Slag is not all loss. Dross is not all waste. Emerson says a weed is a plant whose uses we have not discovered. From our waste products, what do we get? Our most delicate perfumes, our most brilliant dyes. And the weeds, many of them, contain healing properties. And so does patience. Let patience work in you. Endure, be steady, and wait for the result which is sure to come, when you can say, "I learned patience through the things that I suffered."

II. The second grace developed by affliction, of

which I want to speak, is *Sympathy*. It is the wounded, grafted tree that bears the most delicious fruit. One who has not suffered has no right to come to you in your anguish with his platitudes. It is an impertinence for him to tell you to look on the bright side. You say, "There is no bright side;" and he answers, "Then polish the dark side." *He* does not know; *he* cannot comfort. When a person is suffering from nervous exhaustion and enduring all the depression that results from it, no one but a fellow sufferer whose suffering is past and triumphed over, can bring any relief.

I remember with great gladness how I was once able to comfort a friend, a naval officer, who was going through deep waters. Some of you in this room know something of the weeks and months of pain through which I passed, that brought me the power to help. And when I felt the relief coming to him, and knew that the tension was lessening, I said, "It was good for me that I was afflicted." Without that experience I should not have known enough of what he was bearing, to help. Because of that experience I have far wider and deeper knowledge of human need. I may not yet know much, but I know more than I should have known without it. And so will you. Be patient. Try not to grow restive, and you will instinctively learn this great lesson of sympathy.

III. Affliction leads us to a new devotion of our lives. First patience, then sympathy, then *Usefulness*. A loss shows us the emptiness of life, and so we learn that we are not putting our lives to the best use. Train yourself to usefulness. Let God train you to usefulness. Try to realize that the noblest thing in life is usefulness.

But suffering is more than a teacher; she is also a guide. Joseph was sold into captivity; tempted by a

strong and seductive temptation ; found himself in prison. But he bore the suffering with faith in God, and the very suffering led him up to his high post—from the prison to the right hand of the throne.

A man lived in this city, whom you would know if I mentioned his name. He had a dearly loved daughter, and when she died, his heart died. But through that loss thousands of girls have been saved from worse than death, and led to happy and honoured womanhood. His great grief led him unto the light, and he led others there.

John Bright, one of England's greatest orators and most useful public men, married young, and on his wedding-day declared that no one on earth could be so happy as he. Within a year his wife was dead, and the hope of his life gone out. He was utterly stricken and prostrate. Then Richard Cobden came to him and said, "Your wife has gone from your side. Can you not give your life in memory of her to the women of England, and make their lives brighter for her sake?" He roused himself, and carrying his pain always with him, he did his work, till scarcely a man in England was so beloved. And years after, when peace had come to him, he said, "My God knew best."

Oh, let suffering draw you nearer to your God ! Through it, learn how much dearer He is than any earthly good He displaces. Count it all joy when He holds you worthy of such discipline to make you useful in His service.

"Then welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough."

"It *is* good for me that I have been afflicted." Men and

women need to do something, to go somewhere, to be shaken out of their sloth and selfish comfort; and only discipline can lead them to those they can help. Only through discipline can they help.

IV. And the fourth blessed grace is the knowledge of God. We never learn to know God till the dark hour comes. When Job was in great affliction, his wife said, "Curse God and die," but Job said, "No; shall we receive good at the Lord's hand, and shall we not receive evil? The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, but blessed be His name, *He* is left!" Job was too much of a man to curse God; and after the darkness was past, he said, "*Now* mine eye seeth Thee"; but it got its power of vision in those dark days. We do not think very much about God when all goes well. In business hours we are so absorbed; our duties need our attention; our homes take our time. Children make constant demands; they and our friends fill up our lives, and we feel no lack. But one day something happens,—our business fails and our occupation is gone; our home is broken up; our children leave us; our friends forsake us. We have broken through the usual and accepted and trusted. We feel now that it was the superficial, and we say in our bitterness, "Is anything real?" Yes, God is. Turn to Him. He never removes His everlasting arms. Some time, somewhere, some way, you will learn to know the love of God, and an inexplicable peace will enfold you despite your loss and pain, because you have become sure of God.

Jacob learned to know God through that long, midnight wrestle that left him with a withered thigh. Do you suppose he ever grieved over his deformity? To Heine, harassed, troubled, restless, came the knowledge

of God by the things he suffered ; and he lost his craft and his cunning, and awoke in the greatness of God,—awoke to deeper wisdom, a nobler love, a stronger hope than he had ever known,—not now alone, but forever with God.

Affliction helps us to understand the problems of life. As Tennyson says, it is by sickness and desolation and loss and mental doubt that we come to “hold the keys of all the creeds.” But do not go out of your way for trouble. God will send what you need, and so through affliction draw you nearer to Himself. And at last you can say, as David learned to say, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.”

LITTLE THINGS

“Be with the man who is making his living with difficulty—may he make his life. Whatever failure he may meet, may he be a success.”

LITTLE THINGS

“ But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are of old, from everlasting.”—MICAH 5: 2.

IN the Authorized Version our text reads, “ But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Into how many minds does there come at once Phillips Brooks’ “ Bethlehem ” ?

“ O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep,
The silent stars go by.

* * * * *

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given; ”

—and who does not love the man who wrote the words ! Their spirit was exactly his own. To have known him was to be thankful that the Spirit of Christ could be so incarnated in human nature ; his was the childlike spirit almost perfectly,—he seemed to grow into a more and more perfect childhood. Once, when a friend went to call for him, he found him with a little child before him, holding the little one’s face between his palms, and he looking down steadfastly into the childish eyes, as if he

would draw thence the secret of childhood. How many Christmases has he already been with Him who was once the Babe of Bethlehem !

“ O little town of Bethlehem ! ”

Yes, so little that it is not so much as mentioned by Nehemiah in his various lists of places to be considered and rebuilt ; nor by Joshua. It was too insignificant to be noted, but it was David's flock-tower, and to that flock-tower how many tired souls have gone and found the Good Shepherd, who has taken them in His arms and rested their tired souls ! Beth-lehem, House of Bread—ah, how many hungry ones have wended their way there through the ages, and been fed and filled and satisfied with the Bread of Life !

God chooses little things. On this earth He illustrated to the universe the relative values of spiritual things. Size is nothing to Him, but motive ; space is nothing to Him, but spirit. Use and wont hold us like slaves. There was the old Ptolemaic system, that seemed somehow necessary for the maintenance of God's majesty—the church could not let it be touched. The earth *must* be the centre, and the sun and moon and Jupiter and Saturn must be satellites,—this was a sacred necessity, for did not Christ die here ! And when Copernicus came with his new system, and said that the Ptolemaic system was wrong, and the sun was the centre and earth the satellite, there was consternation. As if one need ever fear *Truth* ! especially be fearful of its disturbing God's revelation ! God is Himself Truth ! Tennyson felt something of this doubt,—we were so little, so insignificant, and God's universe was so illimitable ! Could it be that here, on this little planet, God's great revelation was made ; that here

the manifestation of the Eternal took place? And Daniel Webster spoke of the same thing in that familiar passage: "The philosophical question as to how this little world could be the centre of God's great revelation in Christ sometimes shakes my faith to its foundations and casts me into darkness; but when I consider the experiences of my own soul, when I see how God's revelation and my own inward experiences agree,—then, I am stilled again."

Well, that is all theory: this is fact—God did so manifest Himself in this world and in little Bethlehem. And why not? What is size in spiritual measurements? Spiritual things are measured by quite other standards than any we know from nature. How big a world would you like to have had God choose for His revelation,—twice as big as our earth? "No; bigger than that." Ten times as big? "No." Well, how big? as big as the sun? "Yes; I think that would suit me." Don't you see how absurd that whole system of measurements is when applied to spiritual things! This was the theatre, the stage, from which the universe is to view it all! What is the sun? Only the centre of a little system, which, centre and all, is barely to be seen from the nearest of fixed stars! Elijah made the same mistake. He expected to find God in the thunder. As it rolled around him with its awful reverberations, back he started, thinking surely God must be in such majesty of sound. A lady said to me lately, "I love to hear the voice of God in nature,—the birds and the brooks and the sighing of the winds." "And the tempest and the lightning and the thunder?" I asked her—"Do you love to hear His voice in the thunder?" "Oh, no," she said, "the thunder terrifies me. Surely, that is not His voice!"

But it is. The word for thunder in Hebrew is very beautiful—it means, “the Voice of Jehovah.” “The voice of Jehovah is on the great waters.” “The voice of Jehovah is rending the cedars.” “The voice of Jehovah convulses the desert”—that is the thunder, the voice of God uttering itself in majesty. But Elijah did not find God in it, nor in the wind, nor in the earthquake, but in the still, small voice.

It is the little things that count,—the still things, the low things, things of no moment in the world’s estimation. On the whole, I think we owe more to fustian than to velvet, to hard hands than to soft ones. Not that money and education and art and social graces and influence are of little account or of none—not that, but they are only tools at best, and we sometimes confuse them with the worker, and the workman is always greater than his tools. We must classify by power, by spirit, not by size. England could be contained in Texas six times, in Russia nearly fifty times, but how different is the spirit, and how different is the accomplishment! God’s plan, purpose, aim, design, is to be considered, and not the size of His arena.

Now, let us look at the subject historically. Of what importance was Bethlehem? What was it compared with Egypt, Babylon, Nineveh? How did Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar and Sargon regard it? It is amusing to read their ancient cylinders as they are unearthed. “I, Sargon, have ground into dust, and caused to cease to be, Kuans and Irkanat and Arvad and Israeli and Usanat and Sizan!” Which of them have you ever heard of but Israel? Would you have barely heard of Sargon himself but for his connection with Israel? Yet it was a very little people and feeble. The scoffing

heathen said, "What do these Jews?" A feeble little band come back from Babylon,—what do they, indeed! They had no strength, no following. What do these Jews? Well, what do they? Much! Who has so influenced the world? Who has so moulded religious thought? Whose power do we so feel?

And the twelve disciples—ignorant, unlearned fishermen—what were they? They were twelve men filled with the Spirit of Christ, and that, in God's multiplication, carries the calculation far beyond the reach of human thought.

Do you remember in the book of Ecclesiastes—I think there are moods and tempers in every man's life when he enjoys Ecclesiastes. It is a curious book, but I think nearly every man has at times a real pleasant and enjoyable season of melancholy with it. Well, in that book there is an account of an attempt to take a besieged city. A great king built mighty bulwarks against it, but could not take it because there was in it a poor man who joined himself to wisdom, and was more than a match for him. It all depends on what our feebleness is joined to, what a man rests his weakness upon.

Do you know who wrote "A Bruised Reed"? Do you? If you do, I wish you would tell me. But some one did. And Baxter read it, and found the Lord and wrote "The Saints' Rest," which has been the comfort and upbuilding of countless souls; and among them Doddridge, who, as a result, wrote "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul"; and Wilberforce read that, and started out on his wonderful course, and converted Hannah More, who transformed thousands of lives—no one can ever calculate the good that woman did. Wilberforce also started into action Legh Rich-

mond who wrote "The Dairyman's Daughter," which has been translated into—who can tell how many languages? It was translated into Turkish and found its way into Nichomedia, and when a missionary finally made his way into that remote place, he found two hundred souls worshipping Christ and living faithful lives, with no Bible but "The Dairyman's Daughter." And Wilberforce himself—how many liberated slaves hold up their hands and bless God that he lived! But I want to know who wrote "A Bruised Reed."

Who was the man that stood by Moody in a steady, helpful friendship all through his boyhood? I do not know who he was, but somebody did, and Moody has been used by God with mighty power.

Who was it that met a young man in Japan, and asked him if he would like to live forever, and handed him a tract, saying it would show him how to do it? I do not know, but the young man read the tract, found the secret of eternal life, and showed others. From that beginning has come the marvellous spread of Christianity through Japan.

Goethe said that the Bible was the book that glorified little things. So it does, for little things are beginnings and can be nourished into life. "Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart."

We are bewitched with bigness; we are bewitched with largeness. We need to realize the insignificance of circumstances and the infinite significance of life itself. We covet praise and recognition and appreciation and influence and position. Of what moment is it? Of what moment are the tumults of the world, the cries of acclamation, the heralding of what the world calls great, when, but just a little way up, they are all

lost in empty space, and you are among the eternal silences? Some of us are on mountains and some in deep valleys, but rise only a little above the earth, and valleys are exalted and mountains and hills are made low, and all are as one before God. And as each man does his own work in his own place shall the kingdom of God come.

Yes, out of the eternity behind us, God's love, in one great burst of centrifugal power, sought out one system in His universe, and in that system He chose our earth, and obscure Palestine, and little Bethlehem, and a humble manger, narrowing down to one intense point, from which, I truly believe, it will continue to radiate till the uttermost rim of the earth lives in that Life manifested there, till the outermost bound of the universe sees light in the light of the Star of Bethlehem, which rose there for the instruction of God's universe. For we catch such strange suggestions in this Bible, of mysteries that set our hearts to throbbing:—"The ages to come," "angels and archangels," "innumerable companies of angels," "principalities and powers," "powers of the world to come," endless series and ranks of created intelligences! And in Him, Christ, they all "*consist*," are held together.

Do you ask how this concerns us? Are you little? Do you feel that you are insignificant? Ah, but the Lord has some work for you to do. Have you a Sunday-school class, and are you thinking of giving it up? I charge you on your life, *Don't!* Go back to it. There may be some soul there that needs help that only you can give. Take what powers you have; hold your candle as high as you can; let His ministering care through you be applied to the bruised reed; let the

breath of His Spirit, active in you, blow on the smoking flax, and it shall burst into flame !

“ Ah,” you say, “ you don’t know my life,—how I live, how limited I am, how sordid my environment is, how from my earliest memories I have been checked and hindered, how from out of the darkness of my ancestry a hand clutched at me with my first breath and handicapped me for life, how I have to struggle with ill-health and evil tendencies and low passions ; oh, if you knew it all, you would never tell me that *my* life could be a power for God ! ” Yes, I would ; because He expects back from you only what He gave to you, with the natural increase that comes with the faithful use of it. He does not expect the impossible ; He expects only fidelity with what you have. He does not expect you to do another’s work, but your own. So only can you render Him best service. But see to it that you “ make all things after the pattern shown to you in the mount.”

Do this. Take the rest of your life, however short it may be, or unsatisfactory it has been, and reconsecrate it to Him. You say it has been a wasted life ? Let Him have the rest, lest it, too, be wasted. If you are just starting out in life, let Him have it all, to use as He will. I call on every man and woman and child to render up his or her life to the Lord, and let Him use it as He sees best. Is it little ? He can increase it by His own divine Spirit. Is it all blackened and sin-stained ? Give it into His hands, and He can cleanse and sweeten and use it. Is it still unblemished and untried ? Give it into His keeping, and *do* something for Him.

You fathers, take your sons by the hand, and speak to them of Christ. It is hard, I know, but hard things count.

Mothers, speak to your children. What if the tears do come into your eyes? It is no shame for the tears to come when you are speaking of the deep things of God—nor at any other time for them to come into a mother's eyes. You can never tell what may be the influence of even one word truly spoken, and spoken for Christ.

A man, of standing in this city and widely known, met a friend one New Year's morning, and said, "I wish you a Happy New Year," and was about to pass on, when he turned back and added, "I wish it could be a new year with God"; to which his friend responded with polite indifference, "Very kind of you, indeed; thank you." Gathering courage from what had been said, he asked, "Do you know God?" "No." Then growing bolder with every effort, he said, "I wish you did. I knew your father, and loved him well. Will you go home and get down on your knees and give yourself to God?" No answer. "Will you?"—"Will you?"—"Will you?"—"Yes, I will!" And he did, and found Him, and has been leading others to Him ever since. It didn't seem much to do, did it? Will you do as much? Some day you will lay these tools aside. When we die—and we all shall die—He will give us other work and other tools. When we lay these aside, let them be worn out in faithful work for Him, so that He can promote us! "Though thou art little, yet ——!"

OPPORTUNITY

“ Teach us the infinite significance of the opportunities of life, and the insignificance of the setting of life. May we wear ourselves not out for gilt, and lose the gold.”

OPPORTUNITY

"Not always."—MARK 14 : 7.

THESE two words at once suggest to you the thought of passing opportunity. In many questions that present themselves to you for decision, it is now or never, for "not always" do they return. Ah, if we could only know which moments are of importance! which could be safely left aside! But opportunities do not come to us labelled; they are not appraised; they come like little children, looking up innocently at us, holding up their hands to us:—but some little child holds the secret of the future, and some moment is fraught with opportunity. And since we cannot know, I see nothing for it but to do the best we can with every moment. Down the centuries God sends you your opportunity, into this year, this day, this hour—how do you know? Be alert; be conscientious; the opportunity may not come again, or, if it does, that saddest of all conditions may be yours,—that it comes not to the same being, that you are not ready and willing to take it as you were before, when you hesitated. The moment when such an impulse of response comes to you may be what the philosophers call a psychological moment, and may hold the secret of your life's development,—may hold the secret of your eternal destiny. "Not always" do such chances repeat themselves.

Once there was a man named Esau, and when the opportunity of his life came to him he failed to recognize it, and filled his life with regrets. Once there was a woman

named Esther, and she saw her opportunity, and saved her nation, and filled her life with rejoicings. She had a wise old uncle who said to her, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this!" How do you know that *you* are not come to this very time of your life, to this end of this century, to do some great thing for God!

Once a man named Simon was asked by his dearest friend to watch with him, because his heart was heavy and his spirit was sick within him, but—Simon slept! Do you not suppose that through all his after life he regretted that he had failed his friend the only time he ever asked him to watch? "Not always," *not again* could he do such a service for him. A woman named Mary once broke a very costly box of ointment on her Master's head, and filled the house and the centuries with its fragrance, because she saw and used her opportunity. Else she had anointed only His dead body!

Oh, the regrets of life! Are there some here whose hearts are clutching at them while I speak, as they think of the kind words they might have said to those who have forever passed away from them? Do not spend your time in regret. Redeem the time. By the sadness of those past memories I summon you to live for those who are left. Say the kind thing. Speak the encouraging word. If you have a carping or a cynical or a critical thing to say, don't say it; repress it. Remember that in criticism is bound up construction. Do not express the criticism unless you have a remedy to suggest,—at least, do not express it publicly. Go off by yourself, and if you can think of no method of improvement, then refuse to criticise. How much less criticism there would be if it had always to be accompanied by a remedy! It would

be, if you remembered that criticism and construction are inseparably united. But if your disapproval is as a fire in your bones and must be expressed, an honest and (as you think) a necessary criticism, and yet you have no remedy to suggest, there is only one alternative—say frankly and freely, “I think this thing is wrong; I can see no way to right it, but I hope some one else can.” As a rule, however, give help instead of criticism. Begin to-morrow (perhaps to-day) to encourage some child under your care. Speak kindly to servants. Show interest in your employees. Yes, more than that. Encourage some aged one, who has reached gray hairs and perhaps feels that he is no longer wanted, and has dropped his tools. From the warmth and vigour of your life put new energy into him, and see how he catches up his tools again, and with a new light in his eyes goes on with his work.

Did you ever see a smouldering fire—just a mass of smoke with no tongue of flame? And did you ever get down on your knees and puff at it, and see it burst into light? Can't you do that with some discouraged life? Come down from what we call your “high horse,” and speak words of cheer to that one and start him on again. All about you are discouraged people. Many a man showing a brave front to the world is only practicing that holy hypocrisy which Christ speaks of when He tells men to anoint their heads and appear not unto men to fast. They are bearing heavy loads bravely, but they need a word of encouragement.

I want to press this farther. I want to plead that you express your love. Don't be ashamed to show it. It is noble and godlike to love and to be loved, to long for love and to show love, and we stunt our natures when we deny to them their natural expression. I am sorry for

the dumb boy who finds it so hard to say a word of love to his mother, to his sister; yet the embarrassments of love are the proofs of love, and you want your love proved even at that price. But, ah, how many of you catch your breath as you think of the words of love you might have said, and would so gladly say now if you could! Don't lose any more chances. This continual stream of opportunities, of chances, is what Emerson meant when he said, "Every day is a day of doom."

Dom Pedro was once asked what he thought was the secret of the different development of South America and of North America, and he replied "*Mañana* [To-morrow]. You North Americans never let an opportunity slip; we always wait." That is a good motto—"Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day." A business man says, "Don't put it off till this afternoon; do it this morning." A good business man says, "Don't put it off five minutes; do it *now*!" By working in this way, you come to realize something of the intensity of God's life, who works in an eternal now.

To all of you comes the thought of posthumous gifts—the flowers at a funeral, the set pieces—when a little bunch of violets given *now* would bring tears of joy to the eyes you love so well. Is it not foolish to trust your gifts to a fallible, uncertain, breakable will, which may be set aside, when you might be your own executor and have all the joy of distributing your own bounty? Don't be too ambitious about the things of this life, about acquisition, accumulation; but be ambitious about the kingdom of God and your relation to it. In the Roman arena there was a kind of contest between the two combatants, one armed with a sword, and the other with a net and a trident. The net was a delicate little silken af-

fair that could be gathered up in the hand, and the contest seemed a very unequal one. But the man with the net, who was called a *retiarius*, threw it out in many directions, and knew well that if he could once entangle his antagonist in those delicate meshes, he could use his trident with deadly effect, and his opponent's sword would be useless. So the spirit of this world throws out the net of ambition and money and political power and social position, and (unless we are ever watchful) renders the sword of the Spirit useless. Therefore *be* watchful. Look for your opportunity to serve Christ.

But I cannot close without an appeal to you on a yet higher plane. What is your attitude towards Jesus Christ? Surely, in an audience like this there must be some who are just wondering whether to yield themselves up to their Saviour or not. Act on the good impulse. Do not let it cool. Do you suppose Mary would ever have broken that alabaster-box if she had stopped to consider? Many a good impulse is lost through delay.

Hartley Coleridge, who every one had a right to expect would reach the same high level as his father, once on his return home picked up a school-book that had been given to him long before. He looked it over, and then wrote in it, "Only seventeen years had passed over me when this book was given to me. Then all looked forward with joy and hope to what I was to become. Now, every mother prays that her lamb—every father hopes that his boy—will never be what I have become." Is there any man here who, as he takes a little child by the hand, hopes he will never know what he knows, will never become what he is? The only way to check the decay is to return to your Father. But for the young man and the young woman far better is it to heed the

plea—O “remember *now* thy Creator, in the days of thy youth” ; before the evil days come when, in place of all the glad enthusiasms that now surge in your heart, you must say, as you confront the sadness of your experience, “I have no pleasure in them.” But do it *now* ; every delay gives the opportunity the chance to pass—yes, worse, it changes you, and perhaps you will be incapable of response to it if it should return. While you hesitate it may be gone. What would you think of a farmer who should refuse to plough after the rain while the ground was soft, on the plea that he farmed on principle, and it was not right to take advantage of the condition of the ground ? or of a blacksmith who put his iron into the forge and drew it out red and soft, and then said, “It is not fair to attack it while it is in that condition. I will let it cool and then show my muscle” ? You would say he was a fool. Then apply it. When God softens your heart and fills you with tender and exalted impulses, when you feel Him drawing you towards Himself, respond to Him. Every time you send Him away from you, you make it easier to shut your heart to Him next time. Every time you fail to open the door to His knocking, the hinge grows rustier and the bolt is harder to draw.

I heard a story this week which set my heart to thumping,—a story of the men on the English coast who climb the cliffs to secure the birds’ eggs. They are let down by ropes, and they fill their baskets as they stand on the projecting ledges. One man, as he began to collect, happened, somehow, to let the rope slip, and there he stood, helpless, resourceless, as the rope swung out—a hundred feet from the top of the cliff and many more from the sea foaming below him. With the quick instinct born of

danger and self-preservation he knew he must catch that rope as it swung back the first time, because it then swung nearer to him than it would again, and to lose it meant starvation and thirst and dizziness and a plunge into the sea below. So, watching it intensely, he calculated its speed, where it would swing in, and as it came he jumped for it, and—caught it! He did it, but if he had not done it then he would never have done it.

No impulse can ever return with its first force; it is different either in degree or in its power of appeal to you. What is life but the perpetuation of principles which you have all along been forming—the petrification of moral decisions—the crystallization of voluntary choices? That is what is meant in The Revelation, “He that is unjust let him be unjust still”; that is, “He that is unjust will be unjust still; he that is filthy will be filthy still.” “He that is righteous let him be righteous still; he that is holy let him be holy still,”—he will be; character tends to solidify; not always do the currents run back and renew the chance. I am a hopeful man, I am not a pessimist; I look for the good in men, and I expect to find it, but I can see no appeal from the workings of God’s laws,—they tend to permanence. They are the same everywhere; they must be, for God’s creation is a uni-verse, an integrity, an integer. Put yourselves into harmony with those laws now. Don’t be afraid to give yourself over to God, for “I am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him against—*that* day”? Yes, and every day in between. I would make the whole life an intelligent choice and seizure of opportunity.

No one will ever regret that he made this decision for Christ to-day, if he do but make it. This may be the

year of your home-going. School days may be nearly over for you. When I was in school I learned a piece to the effect that there was a part in the race of life for me—a part no one else could take, and an individuality in my work. It is true. Find your place. Use your opportunities. They return “not always.”

THE GOD WHOM WE WORSHIP

“ Listen to us now, as in the silence of our own hearts we express to Thee those needs which might seem trivial to others, but which mean so much to us in our weakness. By Thy forgiveness we hope to live lives needing less forgiveness — lives that shall ring with victory.”

THE GOD WHOM WE WORSHIP

“And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold Dagon was fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold—only the stump of Dagon was left to him.”—I SAMUEL 5 : 4.

FOR many years this whole chapter has been a source of great interest to Bible students; to some from real interest; to some from pure criticism—because they were of a critical turn of mind! It has even been a source of humour and fun to some. “Why,” they say, “this was the fish-god, with scaly hands and a fish’s tail, much like the Greek mermaids; what would be the sense of offering mice to such a god? What possible relation is there between the two?” So they have distorted their minds and had much merriment over this record. But the Bible has stood other attacks, and will stand this, and many more. God has an archæological mind, and His safe, in which He keeps the secrets of the ages, has a time-lock; this safe He opens just when His records need support, and always corroborates them. Don’t grow nervous over the Bible; it is the guardian of truth, and there is much more importance in what it thinks of men than what men think of it. It has weathered attacks from men quite as able as we, and of ages quite as cultured as ours, and is in no danger of overthrow.

If you should go to Oxford, England, you would see, in the museum there, a beautiful crystal, on one side of

which is inscribed, "Baal-Dagon," and on the other a field of wheat. And so this god was not the fish-god of Babylonia, after all, but the Baal-Dagon of the Philistine farmers, and guardian of the fields and of the processes of growth. And there was nothing ludicrous or inconsistent in propitiating this god by golden images of the little field-mice, that destroyed so much of his work. Time will see to the fitting of God's truth into the needs of our lives; eternity only can show its marvellous reach and adaptation.

There is no time for me to read the next chapter, but you must have been impressed with the power and pathos of the one I did read. Israel has been defeated in an important battle and her warriors are on the run. They have turned their backs on their God, and so they turn them on their enemies. When we face our God—when we look up into His face with trust and faith—we can also look our enemies in the face, and they fall before us. But the Israelites were God-forsaken because they were God-forsaking, and God had sent on them a strong delusion that they should believe a lie. That is said in Thessalonians, but it is true of all time. If truth is not welcomed, the lie will compel an entrance. I suppose it is because the moral nature, also, abhors a vacuum, and something must come in where God has been pushed out. The empty house is not left empty; God must be there, or the evil spirit will call in seven other spirits worse than itself. If you have no moral standard and incentive, you spend your time in idle activity; you twirl your fingers behind your back, or you rattle dice, or you seek to a clairvoyant—some anchorage, some filling, the moral nature must have. So Israel, in its great straits, not having a God, casts about for some means of

defense. They say, "Send for the ark of God ; it will save us ! " *It ! It !* There was their mistake. No *thing* can save a *person*. Everywhere it is *life*—life in activity, in manifestation—life, more abundant life, and only God can give that. If you are in trouble, seek no amulet, no charm, no formula, no use and wont, no system of philosophy, no business occupation. Leave *things* alone. Things are but barriers between you and the help you need. Seek the living *God !* Never say *it* when you can say, "God, the Father Almighty." The Children of Israel were come to a hard pass, and good enough for them it was, for their abandonment of the God whose wonderful deliverances even the Philistines remembered and feared. Poor old Eli receives the news,—"The battle is gone against us !" That he could stand. "The army is fled !" That he could bear, for Jehovah had marshalled its panic-stricken and scattered forces before.—"Thy two sons are dead !" But he gave no sign.—"The ark of God is taken !" Then Eli fell backwards and his neck brake. But, ah, his heart was broken first ! And his daughter was near to be delivered of a child, and her pains came upon her, and she bowed herself and brought forth her son, her first-born, the little boy who was never to know his grandfather or his father or his mother. And when they roused her to tell her that she had brought a man into the world, she said, "Call him Ichabod, for the glory is departed from Israel," for she thought on the ark of God and her father and her husband. It always gives me a chilly sensation—just as when I hear "The Two Grenadiers"—"The Emperor is dead, dead, dead !" It is awful ! "The battle is gone against us ; the army is fled ; thy two sons are dead ; and the ark of God is taken !"

But see the Philistines—how they shout and rejoice! See their exultation in their victory! Hear their shouts and acclaim! See them run up the hill after the charge! What exhilaration and triumph! The famous ark is in their hands, and their gods are stronger than the God of Israel. They shout and exult! They are wild with joyous excitement! There is great tumult of joy among them! But at last the music dies out, and the noises die down, and the rejoicing is over, and night is come, and all is quiet. All is quiet, except that in their temple where they have placed the ark, at midnight there is a sudden sound of something falling. Listen—a heavy thud!—And in the morning they find Dagon fallen on the floor with his face bowed before the ark—before the ark! What do they do with him? Why, they set him up again on his pedestal, and proceed to worship him as aforetime. On the morrow—on the *morrow*—he is down again, and his head is broken off and his hands are gone, and the stump is left to him—only the stump! What do they do this time? Set him up again? No, they are afraid, and decide to get rid of the ark. A truth has shot clear across their lie, and they get rid of the truth—it makes them uncomfortable.

We are all idolaters. Some cry, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” Some shout for Baal-Dagon. Some worship money, music, intellectual attainment, social power. The object of worship differs with the devotee. It is always only the shadow of ourselves, but the shadow cast is very large and obscures much. Sometimes there is some iron in our idols, but always a good deal of clay; yet we worship them with a vast amount of complacency. We offer them costly offerings and are happy in our devotion. Everything goes smoothly and we are con-

tent. But one day we find a greater than Baal-Dagon ; our idol falls before it and is broken. We hardly know what to do ; we are astonished and confused. But we lift it up and stand it in its place again, and give it our devotion as aforetime. Yet we rather distrust our silent divinity that never speaks. However, we settle down to our life again. Our writing, our music, our attainments, satisfy us pretty well ; we even have a sense of growing satisfaction in them, and say to ourselves, "I am doing very well, very well indeed ; on the whole, my life is very satisfactory." Then in the midst of your reëstablished complacency, something goes wrong in your temple ; your idols are failing you. The worship becomes disorganized and you grow restless. You indulge in increased activity. You are disturbed, but you try not to show it, not to feel it. You try to be consistent with your former methods and standards. Oh, the curse of consistency ! "It has been this way so long, it must be right. I will not change. I will settle down to what brought me contentment before." Don't ; don't even try to be satisfied that way—find the noblest way out.

" Life is a sheet of paper white
 On which each one of us must write
 A line or two,—and then comes night.
 If you have time
 For but a line
 Makes that sublime !
 Not failure, but low aim is crime."

I know I am probing some hearts here to-day to their inner recesses. You are busy and occupied and useful, but you are not satisfied. "Yes," you say, "I am !" Honestly ? Is there no hunger ? no restlessness ? no longing to know the truth of the stronger God who has

demolished your dreams? These disturbing ones—these messengers of that stronger God—have invaded the region where dreams come true and have destroyed forever the possibility of complacency on the old levels. No past dream will satisfy you now. This is true of many Christians, too. They give a half-hearted service, and that grudgingly. Of the royal law of liberty that comes of self-abnegation, they know nothing. Of the enthusiasm of self-forgetting devotion, they have no conception. How can they have? They settle down into ruts and stay there. Some one has said there is no difference between “groove” and “grave” but death, and even that will be but a slight change to some so-called Christians. They take as their favourite text, “Be not righteous overmuch”; and they live up to it. They read about the wonderful Teacher come from God (having left His pre-existent glory), washing the disciples’ feet, and they say, “All that is different now.” They read of one who gave all the living that she had to the service of her God, and they say, “Beautiful! but of course that is not expected of us now.” Or, there is Sister Dora, of whom I have been reading this week. One little girl, when dying, assured her that she would meet her when she came to heaven, and give her some fresh flowers—such sunshine had she brought into the child’s life. But they say, “Such lives are very charming, but it is quite impracticable for us now.” They cannot be moved out of their groove, and they try to be happy with Baal-Dagon. But they cannot; they have heard, and they cannot escape from, that wonderful story of Christ’s great love and sacrifice, and forever afterwards Baal-Dagon lies prone before this Prince of the Heart, and can never again *satisfy* his worshippers.

I speak to the unsatisfied people here. I do not mean unsatisfied on exciting days, when with other worshippers you crowd the temple of Baal, and the shouts and music drown all other thoughts and make any other allegiance seem impossible; probably on such a day you are *not* unsatisfied. But the common day comes, when there is no buoyant excitement, and a sense of longing haunts you, and you think of Christ, and hesitate, and wonder what you will do. Do you then turn your back on Christ and return to Dagon? The young ruler came running to Christ, and begged to be led, but found the following too hard, and turned away again.—Do you?

Still, even in the common day, you may quiet yourself with what has quieted you before, and be nearly content. But in the night, even an ordinary night, you go to bed and you do not fall asleep at once. You hear the ticking of the clock that marks the passing of time, and you know that it is slipping away from you. You hear the pulses of that faithful little organ, the heart—beat, beat, beat!—steady throbbing of your life. And you think how that life is passing on—how ideals are not being realized, how purposes are not being attained—and you wonder if it is worth while to live. You recognize the dismemberment of your idol, and the dismemberment of an idol is hard to face. You know your life is bringing you no true satisfaction. And the steady beat, beat, beat, goes on, irresistible.

What will you do? Will you go back to your idol at break of day? Will you take the headless stump and set it up again in its place? If you do, you are committing deliberate moral suicide. For it is a vastly different thing to go on serving an idol that as yet you have no reason to doubt, from serving that same idol when you

realize its powerlessness, and when the true God has asked for your allegiance—and you know He has.

May the true God before whom all idols must fall, lead you to give yourself to Him in a complete consecration that knows no reservation !

WORK: I

“Thou hast made Thy laws firm and stringent, for Thou wouldst not have us triflers and idlers. May we learn that one reason why we suffer is that others, looking at us, may learn how to suffer.”

WORK: I

“ My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”—JOHN 5: 17.

OUR text is one of the great sayings of Christ, like: “ This is eternal life, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent ” ; “ He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him ” ; “ He that seeth Me, seeth Him that sent Me.” These and many others all plainly teach the divinity of Christ. How can a man believe that He was either mentally or morally responsible if He was not divine? For He claimed to be divine. The Jews fully understood this, and “ *therefore* took up stones to stone Him ; not only because He broke the Sabbath, but that He said God was His Father, thereby making Himself equal with God.”

But I am not now concerned with the divinity of Christ, but with the divinity of toil. I mean to speak on another aspect of the subject this afternoon, and will try not to trench on it this morning ; but I want now to show, if possible, that toil—all honest toil—is the reflection of the activity of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. While the Jews were trifling over what a man may do on the Sabbath, Christ was working in glorious imitation of and obedience to His Father. Whence comes the feeling that it is lowering to work ; that it is far more exalted to draw the purple robes of our idleness about us, and be waited on? The Chinese noble lets his finger-nails grow into long, horny, horrid talons to prove to the world that

he is not a craftsman, that he never handles tools. We have a feeling of disgust for that, but is there not in the minds of some of us a subcutaneous sympathy with him?

This feeling that work is ignoble does not come from God. He works; and when, in olden times, He would choose men for His own special commissions, He called a David from his flock, or a Saul from his farm, or a Gideon from his threshing-floor. To the Church at Antioch He said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the *work* whereunto I have called them." Right from their daily *work* He called them. Did He choose idlers? Certainly not—He had work to be done.

The idea does not come from Christ. He works, too. His life was ceaseless activity—no leisure, so much as to eat. In art, He is represented as gentle, in the sense of being effeminate and weak. Weak? Never! After His agony in the Garden, that great cry on the cross from His broken heart could never have been the cry of a weak man. His whole life trained Him for strength. He handled the saw and the plane; He made ploughshares and yokes; He could sleep in a storm. It is the glory of toil that His hands were hardened and calloused by labour.

The idea does not come from the Apostles. Listen to Paul's strenuous rule for the idle Thessalonians: "Whoso will not work, neither let him eat."

It does not come from our first parents;—they had a garden to take care of. Toil was not the curse on them, for they toiled before the Fall. The care of that garden must have been beautiful work. I have always hoped to be able to work in a garden myself, to work in honest dirt, to smell the soil as it smelt when I was a boy. I

hope some time to do my work as a minister, and play in a garden.

What is play? What is the difference between it and work? Some one has said, "Play is activity *as* an end, and work is activity *for* an end." There is a great difference; but note that both are forms of activity. Play should be a preparation for work, the leading of activity into right channels. Therefore, watch your children's games. Let their games be a help; direct them; don't let them be games of chance, for it gives them false ideas of life. Life is not chance, but a great system, social order, the interrelation of activities,—for this reason, keep your children from games of chance. Let them play; play is good,—a sheep, a lamb, a kid, a dear little boy or girl,—it is good to see them play. But you? You should be at work. It is mental, moral, physical suicide for *you* to drop out of the ranks of the workers.

But this idea that toil is ignoble must have originated somewhere. Perhaps it came from the old feudal system, where some were to fight, and some were to stay at home and work; and the glory gathered round the fighters. That was a very primitive state of society. It prevailed among the North American Indians—the braves went to war, or they hunted; and the squaws did the housework, the baking, the farming. This division, of those who work and those who war, prevails only in a most rudimentary social state; but in a more refined form it obtains among us—the served and the servant. It must be a part of the abnormal attitude of our fallen nature towards life. Anything abnormal—against the rule, out of place—has this same disturbing effect on our conceptions.

Whatever your social setting, find your work, and do it faithfully. Your Father and your Brother work. You

get far more tired of what you have than of what you do. Just think of it, and see if it is not so. Ruskin said, "Life without industry is sin; industry without art is brutality"; and I add, "Industry without heart is productive of deadness, lifelessness." Activity is much, but it is not all. Combined with it must be consideration for others. I do not want to touch on the afternoon's theme, but there must be community of interest with others, and a sympathetic adjustment of our activities to them. Madame de Staël said that her idea of life was "to be forever busy at what is worth while." Aristotle defined life as "energy in action." Be alive, and find out what form of activity will most worthily express your individuality! And train your children to the same conception of life.

I once had a friend send me some lines he had taken from a journal, with the request that when I reached the seaside, and the salt spray was making me tingle with life, I would set them to music, as he would like his boys to learn to sing them. I did it, and would be glad to send a copy of them to any one who would like to have them.

“ O hark! for the hour is coming
 When your ears shall anointed be.
 Ay, listen! 'Tis rising and swelling
 O'er populous land and sea.
 The morning stars began it
 At the dawn of Creation's birth;
 And the circling spheres go swinging,
 And singing it unto earth.
 And earth shall forget her groaning,
 And learn the song of the spheres;
 And the tired shall sing, that are moaning;
 And the sad shall dry their tears.

CHORUS :—

“ Blessed are they that work !
Blessed are they that work !
For they shall inherit the earth
In the dawning day.

“ Lo, the burden shall be divided,
And each shall know his own ;
And the royalty of manhood
Shall be more than crown or throne ;
And the flesh and blood of toilers
Shall no longer be less than gold ;
And never an honest life shall be
Into hopeless bondage sold.
For we, the people, are waking ;
And high and low shall employ
The splendid strength of union
For liberty, life and joy !

“ For the song of the spheres is motion ;
And motion and toil are life !
And the idle shall fail and falter
And yield at the end of strife.
As the stars tread the path appointed,
And the sun gives forth his heat,
So the sons of men shall labour
Ere they rest in leisure’s seat.
And the kings are to serve the people,
And wealth is to ease the poor,
And learning, to lift up the lowly,
And strength, that the weak may endure.”

I venture to repeat Kipling’s rugged sturdy lines. The poem would hardly be classed among religious poems, but it is strong and virile, and our Christian hymnology is most woefully lacking in those characteristics. There is too much mere contemplation ; for heaven, and the life there, means vastly more than this.

“When earth’s last picture is painted, and the tubes are
twisted and dried,
And the oldest colours have faded, and the youngest critic
has died,
We shall rest, and faith, we shall need it—lie down for
an æon or two,
Till the Master of All Good Workmen shall put us to
work anew!

“And those that were good shall be happy: they shall sit in
a golden chair;
They shall splash at a ten-league canvas with brushes of
comets’ hair;
They shall find real saints to draw from—Magdalene, Peter
and Paul;
They shall work for an age at a sitting, and never be tired
at all!

“And only the Master shall praise us, and only the Master
shall blame;
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work
for fame;
But each for the joy of the working, and each, in his sep-
arate star,
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of Things
as They Are!”

Why doesn’t some one put that sentiment into the form
of a hymn that we could use in our churches? It will
be done.

And there is that poem of Arthur Clough:—Travel
west—put your girdle round the earth—dare, venture,
achieve,—not for reward, but for the joy of the doing.

Even in your body it is the activity and not the recep-
tivity that is more essential. I am not sure of this—I
have not thought it through. It came to me only this
morning when I was thinking over my subject, and I

have had no time to test it, but I think it is right. Consider your digestive apparatus, its constant activity ; and if you experience four hours of indigestion after each meal, you will need no argument to prove to you that its unnoticed activity is far more important than the few minutes of pleasurable receptivity. So with your lungs—but you think it out.

O the joy of work ! The sense of self-mastery and the mastery of tools ! To feel the energy throbbing through you, and to know that you can control and guide that energy ! To know that you can make every bit of it worth while ! “ Ah,” you say, “ if you knew what my life is you would not say so. If you knew on what a low plane I must work ; how sordid, how uninteresting, how monotonous it is ! You don’t know my life. Such work as mine cannot be uplifting, and you would not say it was if you knew.” Yes, I would. I regret that the skyline is shut out of so many lives. I arraign the social conditions that make it so. They should be adjusted, and every man should be working towards that end. But be patient ! It is for such a *little* while ! Do the best you can where you are, or you will never be fitted for a higher or more responsible place. Use well the tool that is in your hand, and so prepare yourself to use a more delicate tool. It will be given to you as soon as you are fully able to handle it. God will find you if you are busy, just where and as He has found all His workers—where He had placed them. And He will promote you if you are worthy of promotion. He does not waste energy. He always puts force where it will tell most.

I want to make three applications of this subject. Work fits us to know, and to grow, and to enjoy.

I. Work fits us to know,—to know God, and to know

ourselves, and to know life. After you have done your day's work, find some one whom you can help. It is a sure cure for skepticism. Not in any easy chair, not from a book, not from friends whom you admire, and who, in their turn, admire you, do you get forceful growth, but in activity for those in need. From these you get clearer views of life. No man so occupied ever doubts God or His goodness. It is easy to go to the club in the evening, but if you would seek out misery and suffering, you would have full assurance of the divine as you felt it throbbing through you. Yes, you *have* a right to yourselves, to selfness, that is, to self-preservation, but not to the extent of disregarding the needs of others. Use your leisure in such a way as to prepare you for more effective work. See what Gladstone did—after his days of hard labour, way into his old age—he sought out the poor of London, and went to them with help and cheer and counsel. Suppose at fifty he had said, “I have done my work; now I will rest”—then never that long life and full energy; never that crown of snowy glory!

II. Wholesome work makes us grow. You grown-up people understand the development of muscle, but there are some children here, and I would like to explain it for them. You move your arm, and the muscle is used up little by little with every motion, and drifts off in a fine dust, and floats away on the rivers of the veins. Then you take a long breath of fresh air, and the blood, which by that time has reached the lungs, is purified and sent back to the heart. And the heart, by its steady action—pump, pump, pump,—sends it back to the very place where the waste, the use, was; and the arm is built up again by tiny, dust-like particles. Or, if the need is else-

where, then to that place the particles are sent. When you think hard, the head gets red, because the blood is carrying its fresh matter there, where, just then, the need is most tremendous.

So in the spiritual life. Use, and you will grow. Where you spend, you will be supplied ; where you give, you will have it returned to you, good measure, shaken together, pressed down, and running over. If you do not use, you dwindle, as the unused muscle does.

III. Activity gives us the power to enjoy. Would you rather sing, or hear singing? Well, it would depend ! But, all things being equal, the joy comes with the doing. Would you rather paint, or pay the admission fee to see a painting? O, the joy of being able to express one's self in colours ! Would you rather do, or have some one do for you—rather minister, or be ministered unto ?

God does not say, "Well thought !" though thought is often activity for Him ; nor, "Well said !" though a true word, bravely spoken, is often loving service for Him : but He looks at all from the point of work, and says, "Well *done* ! enter into the joy of your Lord."

Doing service for some of His little ones about you,—for our earth-life cannot be lived in heaven, but must be lived in the world, if it is to be lived for Him—that is the way Christ lived, when He and His Father *worked*.

WORK: II

*“ May what we receive to-day influence what
we do to-morrow, and make some one yearn for
Thy gift.”*

WORK: II

“*My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*”—JOHN 5 : 17. :

“**M**Y Father worketh hitherto, and I work,”—and *I work!* This is what each of us should add:—“My Father worketh hitherto and I work, and *I work!*” so that the divine continuity be not destroyed. I quote Ruskin again: “Life without industry is sin; industry without art is brutality.” But art is relation. One tone, one tint, one stroke, one act—is not art. It has no relation; it leads nowhere; it accomplishes nothing; it stands alone; it has no meaning; it is not to be regarded. But many related tones,—music! Many strokes and colours,—a picture! Many acts,—a life! There is no such thing as an unrelated thing, except as a mental conception, when it is a mere theory, or as a determination of one’s life, when it is a sin. A man who lives solely for himself has no right to live, for life is relation to others.

What is the eye if it be not in its true relation to the body? Suppose the nerve is paralyzed; the eye reflects images and light just as perfectly, but it is of no use—it is not truly an eye now, for it does not fulfill its purpose; it is not in relation. There is danger, but *I* am not warned; there is an opportunity, but *I* cannot know it—the organ does not communicate with me. Think of an eye that with its glance has brought an ecstasy of bliss into your life, that to you has been an image of what perfection of life might be, that has clouded in sympathy with your sorrow, and glowed in response to your joy,—

that has been the mirror of your very thoughts. Now take it out of its setting and hold it in your hand, and look at it, and admire it. Away with it! It is a horror, a monstrosity! It is not an eye; it is a *wrong*,—it is wrung out of its place.

So a life must be in its place; it must keep in proper relation, or it is useless, purposeless, without effect or beauty.

There is often a deep truth in popular proverbs. We do not say, "He works like a wolf." We do not say, "As busy as a fly," though it would not at times be an inapt expression. We do not send the sluggard to the cricket, for example, to be taught industry. But we say, "He works like a beaver"; "As busy as a bee"; "Go to the ant, thou sluggard." Note that these are all animals that live in communities, and take their share of related labour. There is a truth in that. So God has given us varying gifts, not to be exercised independently, but for mutual helpfulness,—“to some, apostles; to some, teachers, miracles, gifts of healing”: they form a community; they work for the body's sake. If any part rebelled, or if all had the same office, where were the body! My will says, "Walk," my feet respond and I do walk,—will and feet forming a community of action. I command my hand to grasp something, the hand responds, and the body is served.

Let the same principle run out into your social life, your church life. Think for others; let your desire to help be a constant goad. Think less of yourself and what you want. Don't let things be in your lives what the Romans called their baggage, *impedimenta*, things in the way of the foot, always obstructing your truest and highest usefulness. Be superior to things. You are a

servant, a clerk, a seamstress,—what does it matter? Work for the common good, the common weal, the commonwealth, as the people of Massachusetts put it,—the State, a part of the Nation! See how far out the ripples of your related activity reach!

“But,” you say, “can it be that my little bit of work, in my obscure corner, amounts to that?” O believe that it does, just as the cogs and pivots of a watch are indispensable to its proper use, and then act on it. Do the work you must do, better than ever before; let your work enter into your life. Perhaps you will hear the Master say, “Thou hast done it well; try to do it better to-morrow.” Watch the Master-Workman; glimpses of His work will teach you in time “tricks of the tool’s true play”; level difficulties as far as you can; clear the road for somebody else.

There are many grades of labour.

I. First, there is slave labour—for there is still slave labour in the land—work that must be done under the whip of necessity, under the lash of fear, under the threat of loss of place, without hope, without cessation, and then—to have the needs of life barely supplied! When Abraham went down into Egypt, he is spoken of as having had so many “souls” with him; now we say so many “hands.” It does not look like progress, and yet we have made progress, for there is now much of labour on the second grade, namely,

II. Work to supply needs, to support and develop life, to equip the home, to beautify it, to furnish the mind and the æsthetic nature. This is all right and proper, and vastly higher than the other, but there is great danger of its leading to selfishness—danger that the muscles of contraction will be abnormally developed,

and the expanders will grow flabby; danger that the centripetal will grow unduly strong and the centrifugal very faint and weak; danger that acquisition shall rule for acquisition's sake, and not for self-preservation or even comfort. It is as if a bird should say, "I have built one nest, I guess I will build two. Now, I wonder how three would be; or, perhaps, four would be better," and—he begins to feather his nests!

A good way to test how far one may acquire for one's self, is to use the try-square,—one arm pointing towards God, and one towards man. Does this act honour God? is it fair and kind towards my brother? This will settle many difficulties. Leave yourself out of the reckoning, and you will find your life fairly adjusted to all true relationships.

III. Then, there is work for work's sake, with no thought of any reward it may bring, but just for the pleasure of putting your faculties into operation—work for the delight there is in it. This is fine! I pity the man who has never experienced it. The absorption that would render Archimedes so dead to all around him that they could burn his laboratory and he would not know; the delight that draws you on into the hours of the night, that makes you wonder where the morning has flown. This is delicious!

IV. But better still is the feeling that comes over the best workers when they review their efforts: "I was irritable to-day, and a little lax; I will do better to-morrow. I will work so as to help some one else. I will be more patient, more serviceable, more thoughtful." Then you reach the highest form of work—work for the good of others,—for the body's sake. As the eye gives warning of danger or opportunity, so be an eye to the

body-social; or a hand reached out in helpfulness; or feet going on errands of thoughtful kindness. As you enter into this relation of mutual helpfulness, you learn more of the nature of God, who has revealed to us that He is ever thinking of us—that He makes all things work together for good for us; He must, for the love of God must find expression. Love is never satisfied with merely being. But how about that unknowable time when we were not, and He had no object on which to lavish His love? This is, to my mind, one of the strongest arguments for the Trinity. Love is relation, and God is love. God is eternal. Love is eternal, but creation is not. Therefore, God must have had that in Himself which could be an object of love. He must be a sodality, a fraternity.

I bless God that we have grown out of the time when a man must be his own forester, his own lumberman, his own shoemaker, into the time when men band together for mutual helpfulness. The hunter wants vegetables, and the farmer does not want to be a vegetarian; and so they make an agreement:—"You bring me venison, and I will give you vegetables. You give me good measure, and I will give you good measure." But to do this, they must be related; *both* form the bud of a community. One is not a community; both are. We have grown out of unity into community. "O," you say, "that is communism!" Don't be afraid of that. Communism will never rule. The deathlessness of the individual is the death of communism. I will repeat that, for in it lies the solution of this question of communism,—"*The deathlessness of the individual is the death of communism.*" The man who forces himself out of kindly relation with his fellow men is really the one who plants the seeds

of communism, for he plants dissatisfaction, unrest, a sense of injustice. He says, "I will get all I can, and give as little as I can. I will buy in a cheap market and sell in a dear market. I will pay my employees just as little as I can, and still keep them working for me. I'm in business to make money. If I don't look out for myself, no one else will look out for me."

Have you ever gone trout-fishing, and felt as if the man who had been there before you ought not to live? He didn't care, so long as he got his mess of fish, who came after him. He was looking out for number one, and had left everything disordered and trampled and broken. No, a community of interests will not bring about communism. Did the community build houses and run engines and construct ships, to support the house-builder, the engineer, the shipwright; or, did society need roofs to cover them, and engines and ships to take their tired feet on their way? Why, the latter, of course. And one man especially fitted to build houses, finds employment, and at the same time finds his own support; the engineer, the shipwright, the cooper, the lawyer, the merchant, find society ready to support them in return for whatever of their specialty they give society.

I met, not long ago, a friend in Baltimore, a native Cuban, who said, speaking of an inexcusable fraud which had been practiced on the people of the island, "It is not only the present injustice of the fraud which troubles me, but it is the long years it will take to reestablish confidence." Some American merchants went down to Cuba, and offered excellent articles at fair prices, and then, when they had succeeded in persuading the natives to invest all their capital, they sent down an article so inferior in every way, that those small merchants were

ruined. I pleaded that it was not an action of the American government, and would be set straight by them ; but, ah, it will be so long before there is any confidence again ! A man who could do that has no idea of mutual obligation ; he was living out of relation, out of what should have been his social setting, and was simply a rascal.

What does all this mean to you ? This : try to get yourselves into sympathetic relations with man ; and not only with man, but with God, from whom alone the high motive comes.

I owe an apology to Emerson,—

“ The hand that rounded Peter’s dome,
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome,
Wrought in a sad sincerity.
Himself from God he could not free ——”

O, I will improve on that,—

“ Himself from God he *would* not free !”

No human soul that has ever known the bliss of that copartnership will ever again wish to be free from its control.

I hope that when I am dead I shall be remembered as one who *worked* ! Heaven will be work, relation. As Browning has said,—the here is there ; the there is here ; not two unrelated existences, but the one a completion and development of the other, or, as Tennyson says, no less beautifully —

“ And doubtless unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In such great offices as suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.”

FRUSTRATING THE GRACE OF GOD

“ May those who are rich be given grace to divide fairly as good stewards. If we have education, may we use it to help others to the joy of knowing.”

FRUSTRATING THE GRACE OF GOD

"I do not frustrate the grace of God."—GALATIANS 2: 21.

WE can frustrate—render void or valueless—the grace of God. Are there any here who bear an historic, honoured name—a name that has been a power for God and His cause? What are you doing with it? Are you adding to the honour already gathered round it, or are you trailing it in the dust? The iron is taken from the mine, and smelted and refined and made into a tempered blade. It is passed from the hand of one hero to another. Hero after hero wields it for his country, making it an ever more-prized heirloom. At last it falls into the hands of a coward and a poltroon, and its glory is departed. I think of Ticonderoga and Quebec and Lake Champlain and Stillwater; I think of the man whom Washington delighted to honour; and I think how jealousy and ambition dragged the fair name down from its glory.

But I want to make some definite applications of this theme.

I. There is the grace of letters. Did you ever think how much went into the making of books; what application and experiment and research and long nights of weariness and days of toil; what generations of scholars have lived and died and studied that you might have the means of acquiring an education? What use are you making of it? What special line of reading are you pursuing? Do you give your reading-time to the maga-

zines and newspapers? Did you ever notice how yellow the papers get if they lie in the light? "O," you say, "I have no time to read anything more substantial than the newspapers; I must make a living!" Well, what of that? There are other things you must make, too. What specialty are you pursuing? I have a friend who has made a special study of botany along the line of trees, and he is a most pleasant companion to be with. No man can study it all. What are you adding to the daily enjoyment of those who love knowledge? Of what use to you are your Astronomy and Botany and Zoölogy or anything else you ever studied? Was it a sacrifice for your father and mother to put you through school? and was it worth while? Had you ever a teacher who urged you to some special endeavour, who thought you would be the purple thread in the garment?—and are you? So far as you are neglecting all this, you are frustrating the grace of God in this special form of letters.

We are to worship God with all our *minds*. The horse can do its daily work and so can we; the bird can rear its young; the beaver can build a dam; the peacock can strut; the sheep can wear "all wool." Wherein do we differ? Do we differ so very much? Christ said, "Is not a man better than a sheep?" We might say, "*Is* a man better than a sheep?"

II. I can dwell but a moment on it, but what about Sunday? O how much God's grace means to you in this day which frees you from the strain of life! What do you read on Sunday? What did you read this morning? What will probably be your reading this afternoon? What would it almost certainly have been if you had not heard this sermon? Do you give the day up to

social pleasures? Do you voluntarily increase the labours of others? Do you allow your business to encroach on this consecrated time? Do you frustrate the grace of God in your use of this day?

III. And there is the grace of citizenship. Consider what contests with feudal barons and powerful popes, what suspense and torture, what stakes and fagots, what expatriation and loneliness lie behind your privileges of free thought and self-government. Are you doing what you can to conserve them? Do you always attend the primary in your district? You say it is of no use. It is of use; it is your responsibility as a citizen under a Republic. Do you say, "Good men never go into politics"? That is not so. But when they have gone in, I have never noticed any special commotion among those who cry for purity in politics. Your individual influence may not seem to count. You may not elect your candidate, but you do set in motion principles and establish aims that lift popular thought to a higher level. And if you neglect the duties which come to you as a citizen, you frustrate, as far as in *you* lies, the grace of God in this free nation.

IV. And, ah, the grace of God that comes to us in loss and bereavement and loneliness and disappointment and defeat and distress! Is the grace of God in this? Yes, yes,—a kind of grace He can bestow in no other way; for the gardener is always kind. He is kind when he prunes and lops and uproots and hangs away in the dark cellar. If plants had life like us, I know not what the result would be. If the rose-bush, as it felt the tender sprouts being cut away, could draw back and say, "He is taking my grace and beauty from me," and so shrink into itself, and let its juices dry up and shrivel,

all his work would go for naught. But the rose-bush cannot do that, and so it must develop as the gardener plans; and the life dammed back in one place comes out in fruit in another. If only we would submit ourselves to the Gardener! Loss and bereavement are to draw us closer to Him and to the home where our treasures, or the fruit of them, have anticipated us; loneliness is to develop the power of communion with God; disappointment is to lead us to rest in His all-sufficiency. There is, therefore, no disappointment to them that are in Christ Jesus; defeat is to show us our own weakness and His exceeding strength, and distress should teach us to rest in the everlasting arms. O, submit yourself to Him! Let Him develop the grace He can bestow upon you in no other way! Let Him decide what fruit you are to bear, and when and how! You may not see it now, but in that other home your eyes shall be opened, and you shall see the fruit of a life submitted to His guiding.

V. And I must not close until I warn you of the danger of frustrating God's grace in salvation. You can do this. The more I see of men, the more I am convinced that this is possible. You cannot frustrate His justice or His laws; you may delay or hinder, but not defeat His power. But His grace He seems to have put at the command of our wills; and to me it is an awful thing to refuse it—awful that we *can* do it. I beseech you by the disappointments of the past, and the fear and uncertainty of the future—that future which seems like a fog into which you are inevitably rushing; by your early memories; by the gladness of a life that succeeds, to accept God's grace. And if you have accepted it, and yet have fallen and been defeated, and have dishonoured His cause, take up His banner again, and let it lead you

into victory! You can do this; you and God can do *anything!*

Do you remember those lines of Herbert, where he says that God has given us parents and teachers and helps and providences all the way to lead us to Himself, and how one bosom sin destroys the power of them all? O, root it out! and let the grace of God have free course and be glorified. The light streams to us from undreamed-of spaces; it journeys over hill and dale to fall upon our face, and we drop the fringed curtain of our eyes and lose it all. I beseech you as the ambassador of Christ that you open out your soul, and let Him come in and possess you, and develop you in all things by His grace!

ATONEMENT

*“ May some one, who has come in here indiffer-
ent, go out a changed man, as he passes under
the hand of the miracle-working God.”*

ATONEMENT

“Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.”—JOHN 1: 29.

DON'T you suppose that John the Apostle, as in his old age he wrote this gospel, looked back through the mist of years, and thought of that gesture of the Baptist, as he pointed out the Man who was to so influence his life! John the Baptist was probably the greatest and certainly the saddest man of his generation. He had a passion for righteousness; and such natures, by an inevitable attraction, draw hungering souls to them. When a man is “far ben” (as the Scotch say) others follow him. With this passion for righteousness surging in him, John could not rest till he was right with God, and until he set others right. He spoke out to soldier, publican, Pharisee,—yes, and you Scribe! He laid the axe to the root of the tree. He did not speak of the leaves, and wonder what could be done for this one and that one; the whole tree was diseased. He did not deal with this sin and that one, but the whole life, ruined and weakened by sin, must be renewed and redeemed by sacrifice.

When a man preaches about sin he must preach directly. The Bible speaks directly; there is no confusion of thought. Let me tell you my idea of sin.—The most glorious thing a man can do is to yield his will to God, to merge his personality into God's. Sin is the reverse of this; it is not defect, it is defection; not deficiency, but alienation, rebellion, treason! How the

college days come back! That line of Ovid: "I saw the good, and approved, and—chose the wrong!" There it is—I *chose* the *wrong*. I may turn from the good with reluctance, but I do turn. I may be uneasy and restless in my choice, but I do choose. It is a definite act of the will.

Now, how to get at the root of sin. We talk of model tenements and sanitary plumbing and a living wage, and many more plans of modern philanthropy; but these do not touch the disease of sin. They are only the equalization of opportunities between man and man. It is fitting that I look after the rights of my fellows; that I see, as far as I am in sociological touch with them, that they have time for rest, for recreation, for thought. But sin needs far more radical treatment;—let us not fall into confusion of moral distinctions. Back in the time of Isaiah, God said, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." And He said so because of the confusion of thought caused by such moral contradictions. Sin is the subversion of all moral order; and sin can be met only by salvation.

Let us now consider salvation. We must try to think ourselves back into John's day, and realize how his hearers felt when they heard him say, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" What did that mean to them? The lamb slain—the morning and evening sacrifice—was as familiar to them as the communion is to us, and must have conveyed to the dullest some idea of expiation. I do not know how they felt in the twilight, for I was not born in the twilight, but in the full day; yet I am sure that if I had brought an

innocent little lamb to the priest, and had stood with my hand on its head confessing my sins, and then had seen that life taken, something in me would have surely made me hate the sins that needed that sacrifice. And, possibly, as John spoke, a flock of sheep passed by, destined for the Temple, and the meaning of it all suddenly found expression as he said, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" I am so glad that the emphasis can be put in only one place, if it be read naturally. You cannot say, "Behold the *Lamb* of God!" It must be, "The Lamb of *God*." It is God's Lamb; it is God's love that provided Him. "*God so loved the world!*" There have been, there may be yet, some souls who think that Christ can be approached more easily than God; some, perhaps, who think that His exaltation is so great that Mary must be invoked,—surely, her womanly heart will pity. Or, if her austere holiness seems forbidding, some good man or woman who has earned the name of saint, will intercede.

O, *God* is Love! He is not a tyrant whom Christ is winning over to our side:—"I say not, 'I will pray the Father for you,' for the Father Himself loveth you!" He is not a being who needs to be placated. Can a mother forget her child? Yes, she may. Yet will I not forget you, saith the Lord of hosts. He does not want us to live in fear of Him, and wonder continually how we shall prove to Him that we would serve Him. "Shall I give the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

Abraham wondered how he could prove that God had his heart wholly. He saw other men causing their children to pass through the fire—he saw them offered to Moloch. Was there no way in which he could show that he, too, put his God first? Could he not sacrifice his

only child for God—his son of promise? At last the call comes to him, “Take thy son; slay him for Me!” O, it must have cut him to the heart when the boy said to him, “My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt-offering?” Abraham answered, “My son, God will provide Himself a lamb.” And God did; He always does; you need not look about for the sacrifice and wonder how sin is to be set straight. At the needed moment Abraham saw a ram caught in the thicket. It was all a type. Behold the Lamb of God, caught in the thickets of this world, offered for you, and offered by a Father’s love.

I do not understand the Atonement, and it is not necessary that I should. But I believe and accept it, and that makes it operative for me. The man who has the most perfect and satisfactory theory of the atonement—fair to God and just to man—is not saved by his theory, but by his faith in God’s love, and the yielding of his will to it. All the laws of God’s universe need obedience, not understanding, to unlock their power for us. Be obedient to the law, and you get its results; and the ignorant man gets these as truly as the learned. The very wise professor in the college eats bread, and—so does the janitor! Both are nourished by it, irrespective of their relative knowledge of the laws that govern the assimilation of food. Laws need obedience, not theory.

But I have a theory. Illustrations are always weak, and I feel that I should apologize for using them to set forth these unspeakable spiritual truths; and yet I must; I have no other way. In the Atonement, as it seems to me, God must accomplish two things—He must vindicate His government (for He is a King), and He must win my will; He must take that inner citadel of

my nature. How can He, without violating my freedom? Now, for my illustration.—Suppose I had a father who was most tenderly attached to me; suppose, too, that he was a judge; suppose, again, that I had willfully outraged his love in every shameless and inconceivable way, had trampled on his love ruthlessly, and had at last committed a robbery, which came within his circuit, and was brought before him for sentence. It is his boy. He loves me. He yearns over me. He would give his very life for me! But he cannot set me free out of hand. He has obligations. He represents more than fatherhood. He stands for law and order; he stands for government, and these claims are not to be disregarded. So he condemns me to pay a sum which I simply cannot pay (and which he knows I cannot), or, as an alternative, submit to an imprisonment, which, if it be not for life, will still ruin that life by stultifying my manhood and checking my development. If I could pay the fine I should be free. He could pay it, but it would impoverish him. *Yet he does!* And when he goes out a ruined man, I know at last how he loves me. He goes out a ruined man, but he goes out with my hand in his, and my heart and will fully surrendered to him—he has won his son!

So, in some sense, I think God deals with us in the Atonement. He wins our love and will—that I know; He vindicates His moral government—that I know; *how* He does it, I do not know, nor do I care to pry into the secrets the Father hath kept in His own power. I want to believe and love Him, for so the law of Atonement becomes effective for me. O, my brother, yield to His love!

Spurgeon was once invited to speak in the Crystal

Palace, London ; and, fearing that his voice would not fill such an immense space, he went before the service to try it. Into what he supposed to be the empty vastness of the building, he sent the message of our text,—“ Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.” Satisfied with the result, he came away. Years afterwards, he received a letter from a man who said that he had on that day been working on a high scaffolding, and had heard the great message coming to him when he thought himself utterly alone ; that he had not been able to free himself from the power with which it had taken hold of him ; and that now he would not free himself, for he had accepted the great sacrifice, and knew what God’s forgiveness meant.

If I could feel that, by pointing out this afternoon the Lamb of God, I had been the means of bringing one soul, who had not known Him, into loving relations with a loving God, my heart would be filled with deep joy and thankfulness that I had been again permitted to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.

FOREIGN MISSIONS

“ Help us, O Lord, to be just and generous to those who are not ‘ just our kind.’ ”

FOREIGN MISSIONS

“And ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

—ACTS. I:8.

I WANT to preface my remarks on this subject of Foreign Missions with five premises.

I. God is Love. We have learned or are learning this great truth, but to millions no such thought has ever come. Children are born into hopelessness, and live hopeless lives, and die hopeless deaths, because to them has never come the knowledge of Jesus,—the love of God incarnate.

II. God loves all men. Do we believe that?—that He loves a Hottentot, a Chinaman, a little Indian papoose,—that He really and truly loves them? Why, we are behind the times of Samuel! We are looking only on the outward appearance, but when God looks on a man He sees a divine possibility.

III. He has given us a commission. There must be no question as to whether we approve or disapprove of missions. We have His command and we must obey. When an officer commanded a private to do a certain duty, and the private answered, “Sir, it is impossible!” he was met with—“I did not ask for your opinion, but for your obedience.” We have then our commission—“In Jerusalem (*city missions*), and in Judea (*home missions*), and in Samaria (Samaria—what does that mean? Why, the people of your special aversion, as the Samaritans were to these people. To you it means Jews or

Italians or Chinamen. It means whoever excites, not your *sympathy* but your *apathy* or your *antipathy*), and to the outermost rim of the inhabited earth" (*foreign missions*).

IV. God has blessed us out of all proportion to our devotion. We have received to divide. In our Presbyterian Church (which is not behind in this matter) we give, counting by individuals, two cents a week—less than a carfare a fortnight; by families, much less—and this, to carry on a work to which we have agreed by most solemn covenant, and by our love to Christ, and by our hopes of eternal salvation! Do we really pray "Thy kingdom come"? Do we ever think it, and mean it at all, when we say it? We say it daily; but if we prayed it, would we not do more for it?

And yet see what great things God has done in answer to our listless prayers and meagre gifts. Sixteen years ago there was not one Christian man in Korea; now they do not count by individuals,—there are over three hundred self-supporting churches there. They seem to have caught the apostolic spirit, and as soon as the truth comes to them, they plan to support a man who may carry it to the surrounding communities. It is literally like leaven, working out in every direction. It was once said, "If I could see a Hindu really and truly a Christian, I could believe anything. If I could see a Chinaman a Christian, I could accept any miracle." Yet India counts her converts by the hundred-thousands, and China contains more Christians now than the whole world contained at the end of the first century of the Christian Era.

Missions are not defeated by these disasters in China. Again the blood of the martyrs may be the seed of the

church. A young man just out of the seminary, defending his mission-house, was called on to deny the truth of Christ. He refused, and when they had beaten him with bamboo rods until he was nearly speechless, they said, "Will you deny Him now?" And when he answered faintly, "Not *Jesus!*" they beat him into jelly. Doesn't such heroism fire you to emulation! Paton, the veteran missionary to the New Hebrides, was told that it was useless to go; the people were cannibals, and he would only lose his life; but he said, "It is decreed that worms shall at last eat my body if I die a natural death. If in pursuance of my Master's call, it is eaten by men, that is not my concern;"—and he has changed the whole character and life of the islands.

The missionaries that escaped the danger are not discouraged; they strain at the leash to return. Why do they want to? They are educated men and women, graduates of Yale, Bryn Mawr, Hamilton, and I know not what other colleges; they are fitted to enjoy as we are—why, the love of Christ constraineth them! They want to go back and build up the waste places. Can't we at least do one act of kindness and self-sacrifice every day?

V. Now, look at it from the point of fairness. The Chinese have two-thousand miles of coastline, and not one port which they can use without the consent of some foreign power. Every nation of Europe is claiming some part of that empire, even little Belgium and Denmark. Don't you suppose that if any foreign power claimed the New England coast, and another Pennsylvania, and so on down to Florida, I, a minister of the gospel, would make some other than a verbal protest in defense of the land of my birth, the land for which my fathers fought?

Their bean-oil trade has been ruined by the introduction of foreign oils; our threads have supplanted theirs, and the looms of the old women stand idle; our steamers, plying up and down the coast and through the rivers, have destroyed their carrying trade, and thousands of coolies are out of work. We have driven our railroads and telegraphs straight through their cemeteries and their prejudices!

Now, what are we to do? Carry them the gospel. That only will adjust things. If missionaries from southern Europe had not gone and preached to the ancient Picts and Scots and Danes, we should not be Christians. The same objections were in force then,—their work was needed at home; it was useless, and so forth. But they went, and you and I were born Christians. When my little baby eyes first opened, I looked into the face of a woman, I lay on the breast of a woman, I was cared for by a woman to whom I owe all that is best in me, and who as a girl, a wife, a mother, found her life in Jesus Christ. But millions of children are born who have no such motherhood around them, and we must give it to them. We are stewards of this blessing; let us as stewards divide rightly.

“But,” you say, “Christianity is revolutionary, and will cause trouble.” It is revolutionary. They that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;—but the world is already wrong side up, and Christianity adjusts.

Now, do you accept my premises,—that God loves all men; that He has given us a commission which we have no choice but to obey; that He has blessed us out of all proportion to our devotion; and, lastly, that it is only fair to share our good things? “No, I don’t!” Well,

then, dismiss the matter wholly from your mind as a bad dream; don't let it give you any uneasiness; shake it off and go out; wrap the robes of your selfishness around you, and enjoy yourself for yourself; and at last go to your grave, and sink into oblivion! But, if you do accept the premises, then what is the conclusion? Why, give of your time, your effort, your prayers, your money, for the rebuilding of the world. We shall probably receive an indemnity from China for the destruction wrought in our missions, and it is right that we should. But *give now*, and let the work go on without delay, and if the indemnity come, let it be used for expansion.

Keep your feet on the solid ground of reality, and do something tangible. *Do* His will; don't *suffer* it. You are the light of the world;—then shine! Light that is covered is not light, for men still walk in darkness. You are the salt of the earth. If it be covered up, it not only loses its savor, but, worse yet, destroys its reason for being, since it is a preservative. Put yourselves at the decaying points of social life and stop the putrefaction. Because past generations have not done all that they might, that is only an additional reason why we should do all we possibly can. During the last century the Church has been roused to the importance of this work; it should have been going on since the first century. Let us do our part *now!*

LIVING STONES

“ Keep us patient under the school lessons that are fitting us for a larger life. May we do our present duty so that it develops a heavenly beauty. Help us to realize that the tools we are using now are creating the skill that will make the new set useful in our hands. May ill-health develop the patience and sympathy which are the perfect health of the soul—a present limitation for future development.”

LIVING STONES

"Ye also as living stones, are built up a spiritual house."—

I PETER 2:5.

CHRIST is the great foundation stone. He is the living stone, chosen of God and precious. None can displace Him. But He says to Peter: "Thou art Rock, and on this Rock will I build My Church," and Peter formed the first layer on that great foundation-stone. Special honour was given to him, that he should stand, to the whole Jewish and Gentile world, as Christ stood to him.

But we, too, form part of the wondrous foundation,—ye *also* are living stones. Do you know of any life on which yours has rested when faith was giving way, when burdens too heavy to be borne were pressing on you? Do you remember any who were as foundation-rocks to you, because through their steadfastness you realized the steadfastness of Christ on whom they rested? Have you been such a support to any other life? You should be, for the Church of Christ is built up, layer by layer, of living stones that support each other and rest on Christ.

This explains both duty and discipline. You have one calling in this life,—the unselfish giving of your lives to others; implanting and keeping alive faith in their hearts, forgetting yourselves utterly. And you need discipline. If you are to support other lives, you may need just the crook your present pain is developing to fit into the crook of those other lives where they need help. Some sorrow in your life may bring the knowledge that will be

the prop to some other soul, drooping under sorrow, and you may be the only one who can help that soul. Just as in a carpenter-shop an old stick of wood, gnarled and crooked, is set aside as useless now but possibly useful later. At last some special work is to be done, and that piece and that only (with its curious crook) can be used. Or, to revert to the figure of our text, some peculiarly shaped stone will be needed to fit into a corner developed in the exigencies of building. Isn't it worth while to bear the pain if, by it, you become part of the great tiers of His great edifice?

GOD'S PLAN

“ May we reach into the depths of that man's faith who said, What shall separate us from the love of Christ! I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor any other creature can come between Him and me.”

GOD'S PLAN

"For we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

—ROMANS 8: 28.

TO those who love God"—enter that door if you will; "to those who are called according to His purpose," or "to those who purpose according to His call" (it can be read as correctly one way as the other),—surely, you can enter that door! Or, if you want an abundant entrance, swing open the whole two-leaved door and enter! Do you feel unequal to the demands of the life hid with Christ in God? The Spirit helpeth our infirmities. The vague longings in your heart for which you find no expression are the Spirit's voiceless intercessions in your behalf.

The new life will demand self-denial. It may demand the giving up of health, for health is not always a first consideration. You may have to lay down your life to build up the kingdom of God. You may have to lay it down all at once, or perhaps give it up, little by little, through a long lifetime. Don't be penurious with God. A candle burns away *as it gives light*, and He is pledged to make all things work together for good—for God-likeness—to them that love Him. Through all the vicissitudes of life, God never loses sight of His far and final purpose.

But *all* things? Yes, Paul says it.

Ill-health? that obstacle, that hindrance, that clog? Yes, I cannot say "No" when Paul says "*all* things."

My sins? Ah, now my certainty falters. My sins,

my mistakes, my slips? Yes, I cannot discount the promise. Paul says so, and Paul knew!

And is it so strange? *We* work in the same way. Out of the refuse of the coal-tar products we make the brilliant aniline dyes and exquisite perfumes that ravish the senses. We do it, and shall not God!

This is the meaning of discipline. Take the illustration of the watch—wheels moving against each other. If they all moved in one direction the motion and the use were gone! It is their interaction and opposition that make it a watch. And so difficulties and disappointments and distress and failures are God's pivots and teeth and cogs by which He perfects His splendid conspiracy that all things shall work together for our good. How does He do it? I don't know. Does He do it? Yes, that I know, and so do you.

Do God the justice and yourself the kindness to trust Him now where you cannot trace Him. That is your chance now; and now is your only chance to do that. In that other life you will serve Him in many ways, but there will be no need or chance to trust Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Only here can we walk by faith.

Through all the discipline He will protect you. His defenses are "insuperably impregnable." (That is surely either Johnson or Carlyle. I delight in one sentence of Carlyle. After the destruction of his manuscript of "The French Revolution," that work of years, he writes to a friend, "I have digested my misery.")

You speak of cross-purposes. Think over that for a moment. He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not make all things work together for good to us?

Will you say any more about "cross-purposes"?

NOT WORDS BUT DEEDS

“ Help us to be careful of ourselves, but not too careful, not selfish. May we take care of our health, yet use that health for Thee.”

NOT WORDS BUT DEEDS

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”—MATT. 25 : 40.

THE temples and palaces of worship erected by man will fall and cease to be, but never true work done for Him whom we worship. Don't be afraid of doing too much in His service. When the Master comes to reward His servants, won't you be glad to have a headache or a backache invested?

A church has no right to exist except to gather power which it is to distribute to others. We as a church have no right to exist unless we realize the need all about us and reach out our arms to help. We should be a blood-making engine, sending the life-current into all the channels around.

I do not now call you to *self*-sacrifice. That may come, but has not come yet. I call on you now to give, and so send a representative; but that is not self-sacrifice. By the measure of your Lord's sacrifice for you, I urge you to give. Does He say, “Freely ye have received, freely enjoy”? O, no; freely give!

Either we or our representatives must go to every place where men need Him, for there Jesus would go; and He called His disciples unto Him and sent them forth into all places whither He would Himself come. So we meet here with our Lord to receive His commission, and then to go out wherever He would go. Where do you think He would go? To those in sorrow? Then

do you go and try to comfort those in sorrow ; He will teach you how.

O yes, I remember what Goldsmith says in the "Vicar of Wakefield," "Premature consolation is only a reminder of grief ;" but never mind, you will learn how to bring true consolation if you go as the forerunner.

The work of the Church in this age is to convert the abstract into the concrete. Not theology or philosophy is what the Lord wants, but a response to His commands. He commands our service, and service done for one of His little ones He regards as done for Himself. He has left us an example. Even on the cross He thought for others.

No expression of love for Him can take the place of the actual doing of His will. Do we not all sympathize with Kipling's demand that a man be tested by what he has done? I think I need hardly apologize for quoting from "Tomlinson." You know the poem. Tomlinson had lived the ordinary life of the ordinary man of his day, and he died,

"And they came to the Gate within the Wall where Peter holds the key.

'Stand up, stand up now, Tomlinson, and answer loud and high
The good that ye did for the sake of men or ever ye came to die —

The good that ye did for the sake of men in little earth so lone !'
And the naked soul of Tomlinson grew white as a rain-washed bone.

The Wind that blows between the worlds, it cut him like a knife,
And Tomlinson took up his tale, and spoke of his good in life.

'This have I read in a book,' he said, 'and that was told to me,
And this I have thought that another man thought of a Prince in Muscovy.'

* * * * *

And Peter twirled the jangling keys in weariness and wrath.
 'Ye have read, ye have heard, ye have thought,' he said, 'and
 the tale is yet to run :

By the worth of the body that once ye had, give answer—what
 ha' ye done?'

* * * * *

And the naked soul of Tomlinson grew white as a rain-washed
 bone."

Our Lord commissions us to do something for Him. Ye are members of the body of Christ. I want to pick up that book. The head flashes the command to the hand, but the hand does not move. What does this mean? I see a physician, and he says, "Incipient paralysis," and all that can possibly be done is done to effect a cure. But how about us? When the Spirit of Jesus Christ lays His commands upon us, do we always respond? If we do not, the members are not obeying the dictate of the Head, and to the degree that we fail our spiritual life is paralyzed.

SERVICE

*“ We thank Thee for Thy great gift. May
we go on some unusual errand for Thee.”*

SERVICE

“Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, We are able.”—MATT. 20 : 22.

THEY knew not what they asked, but, surely, had they known, they would still have asked and dared to take. They said, “We are able,” and though they did not understand Him, they spoke truly according to their own understanding. It is the men who say, “We *can*,” who *do*. They attain their end, though perhaps by as unexpected a path as James and John, one of whom went to his seat in the kingdom by swift martyrdom, and the other through the martyrdom of a long life.

Here are two paths before me,—Self and Service. This I would like to take, but that is the path of advancement in the kingdom. How shall I decide? Shall Self have the right of way, or Service? O, give out your life! By whatever charm of manner you have, by whatever political power, by whatever social influence, move the world forward and leave it your debtor! Earn your living incidentally, but serve God fundamentally. *Diminuendo* will be written over the music of your life if its *motif* be self-seeking.

“To sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give”;—and what Christ said He meant literally. He was not speaking out of His humiliation, but as the representative of God, and He said that He could not give them the seats of power and influence. And God

cannot. He gives us life and salvation and opportunities, but the use we make of them, and the goal we reach, depend on ourselves, and on our own voluntary coöperation with Him.

II

TALKS PREPARATORY TO COM-
MUNION

CONFIDENCE IN GOD

“ May we live so much in Thy presence and catch so much of Thy Spirit—the Spirit of Jesus Christ—that, though we may not want to say much about it, it will yet be true that for us to live is Christ.”

CONFIDENCE IN GOD

"Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us."—2 COR. I: 10.

I SUPPOSE it has happened to you often, as it has to me, that a strain of music, a melody, will sing itself over and over in your mind, consciously and subconsciously all the day long, fitting itself into the work and the pleasure and the burden and the sorrows and the joys of the day,—braiding itself in and out of all the experiences that come to you, interweaving them into a beautiful whole. This is the exquisite pleasure of a symphony, where the *motif* is often repeated, and hearing it over and over again, recurring and again recurring, it gets itself enunciated, *sounded out*, into your life.

Now, the gospel is just such a strain of music—linking past, present and future into a perfect harmony under the uniting *motif* of the power and the love of God.

I want to call your attention to one of Paul's experiences, when he looked back to a great suffering which had come to him, so great that he despaired of life, and said, "But He did deliver; He doth deliver; yea, I am persuaded that He will deliver!" Here was Paul, facing some trouble so great that he was weighted above measure, above endurance, almost to the breaking-point. The pressure was so great that he thought he could not live through it; he despaired even of life, and, as he expressed it, "we had the sentence of death in ourselves." This Greek word translated "sentence" means a judg-

ment pronounced in court, by a judge ; and Paul uses it in this sense, and uses it only this once, because of the extremity to which he was here brought. It is used only this once in the whole Bible. He says, " When I stood face to face with the conditions of my life, and was asked what the outcome was to be—if I could get through it—I saw only one answer, ' I cannot ; I must die.' But I did get through it ! He did deliver, even out of that ! He doth deliver ; He is delivering me even now ; yea, I am not afraid as I face the future—I am persuaded that He will deliver ! "—accounting that God was able even to raise him from the dead, if he were still needed here—as God almost did, in this case.

I want you to take this man and this verb, *Paul* and *deliver* as paradigms for your lives—paradigm, an example drawn from the past,—and see what strength and comfort you can get from them.

A picture comes to my mind. There is a wreck off in the ocean, and between the wreck and the shore is a life-boat. I am in it. I look back to the wreck, and say, " That was an awful ordeal ; we were pressed out of measure ; we despaired of life ; but we got through it—He did deliver ! " Now I look towards the shore and I draw in my breath sharply—" *Oh*, that was a great billow, and the life-boat is small ; but He carried us over, and we are safe—He doth deliver ! " And now I look ahead calmly. There are more billows to come, more to be met, but the life-boat is strong. I shall reach the shore safely—He will deliver !

Now I see another picture. I see *Christian* in the Pilgrim's Progress, standing outside the City of Destruction. He is looking back—" Ah, He did deliver me ! " I wonder if there is any one here who has not

yet wakened up to the need of deliverance. *Christian* was in that city a long time before he knew he needed help. If any one here does not realize his danger, O that I could sound the alarm clear and loud in his heart! For such a man I can do nothing but pray earnestly that he may be utterly miserable till he finds out what a dangerous position he is in; till he gets where *Christian* was, and can look back and exclaim, "He did deliver me!" But how about the Slough of Despond and Apollyon and the Valley of the Shadow of Death? How about them?—why, He doth deliver! And what is this? Am I on the Delectable Mountains? Do I indeed see the gates of the City? Yes, I do, I *do*!—He will yet deliver!

Do you look back to some sorrow, some pain, so awful, so heart-rending, that you despaired of life? Did He not deliver? Are you in the midst of great pressure now, and are you cast down? O, by the memory of His former goodness, I pledge you that He doth deliver; and soon in the joy of your heart you will cry, "Yea, and He will deliver!"

And the God who will deliver will carry you right over death. Don't fear it. He is the God of the Resurrection. And the God of the Resurrection is the same as the God of the re-surgings,—the surging back and forth of your life-current. He has carried you over many billows already. He lets you die daily. The life surges away and you sleep; you are in a state of complete unconsciousness. As you approach the condition of sleep, you can rouse yourself with a start, and say, "There, I was nearly asleep!" But you never can say, "I am asleep"—for when that is to be said, you are gone. And when you sleep, you rest quietly back in the

Everlasting Arms, which are always underneath, and the Lord keeps your life-current surging and resurging, and when He is ready, He wakes you up, here or there, wherever He may need you. The God of the resurging and of the Resurrection are one. Trust Him utterly. Dare to face the future without a tremour. Dare to throw down the gauntlet to your God!

People have told me that they like my preaching because I do not preach doctrine. I do, but I cover up the dry bones and do not let them stick through the flesh, nor let the ugly skeleton show. But I mean to-night to show you three of the naked bones—three of the strong underlying doctrines—the rocky ribs of our Christian faith.

He did deliver us from sin—"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree"; "By whose stripes we are healed"; "Who was delivered for our offenses"; "Who gave Himself for our sins." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,"—that is *Justification*. I will repeat a sentence I may have used before: God forgives us once as a Judge, but constantly as a Father; never but once do we stand before Him as Judge.

He doth deliver us from sin, day by day. He doth conform me unto His heavenly kingdom. Every day, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, I am changed into the same image. That is *Sanctification*.

He will deliver. "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory"; "I will come again and receive you unto Myself"; "Where I am, there shall also My servant be." That is *Glorification*.

Justification, sanctification, glorification! Justification,

that is, in Christ; sanctification, that is, like Christ; glorification, that is, with Christ. And we see all three in this supper. "In remembrance of Me," "This is My body which is broken for you"—there is justification. You are in Christ. The Father looks on you, and sees His Beloved Son, and you as in Him, joined to Him, and "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," and therefore justified.

"This do"—*this* do. Do what? Why, this, and this, and this, and everything. That is the meaning of His command. He took the most ordinary event of your daily life, and He said, "Do this for Me"—could He have meant anything but, "Do this and all else for Me"? I often wish we observed one custom of the pristine church—that instead of saying, "Will you ask a blessing?" we might break bread in His name—the head of the family taking the bread, and amid silence and loving remembrance of Christ's great sacrifice, each member breaking off a piece of it. Do not think you can serve the Lord here unless that service shows in every act of your life. Do what your Master did. Be a blessing to every one you meet through the day. Take hold of the hand of Christ; walk arm in arm with Him, and let your life be the expression of His. I hope He will grant us to-night, and on Sunday as we commune with Him, the special blessing which He means us to receive through the Communion, and then send us out to do this and all things for Him. Then shall we be transformed into His image, and that is sanctification.

"Till He come"—there is glorification. He will deliver. O this glorious hope! We *may* not die; we *may* be lifted up, caught up into the air, and so be forever with the Lord. This is the beautiful promise which

the Father hath kept in His own power, but holds before us all as a glorious hope. Through all ages He encourages His church with this, the blessed hope of the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. O if He would only come! He will come! Perhaps, before I die; perhaps, to-night! And to be with Him, when He shall have delivered us from all that makes it hard to live—that is glorification!

Why do we have this feast? Because it commemorates a great event. We do not commemorate a failure. Why do we keep the Fourth of July? Because it tells of the birth of a glorious independence. Why do we celebrate Washington's Birthday? Because of a noble life nobly lived, and a great work accomplished. We could not suitably commemorate the Panama or Nicaragua Canal, because it is not yet carried through—it is in the air. It must be a success before commemoration is suitable. And so, I do not think so much about the Resurrection—though there is not, even according to Greenleaf and Ewald, a better attested fact in history—while we have this perpetual and unbroken feast in memory of our Lord. Why did He institute it? Because we so soon forget; because we could forget even Him, and in the unspeakable condescension of His love, He admitted that we might forget, and gave us this tangible thing, so that what might be often forgotten, would not be always forgotten,—that when we became too engrossed with *things* we might be recalled to His love and His gift.

Are you Christ's?—Yes!

Are you afraid of the future?—No!

How dare you be so confident, so unhesitating in your answer?—Because I know whom I have believed. Be-

cause I know He is able to keep what I have committed to Him against that day. I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angel, nor principality, nor power, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, my Lord! He that hath begun a good work in me will perform it unto the day of Christ Jesus who says: "Where I am, there shall also My servant be. All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth." He is able to make all grace abound. He is to present *me* to His Father with joy—holy, and unblamable before Him! He has delivered me before! He has never failed me! Why should I doubt Him?

Does some trembling soul say, "Ah, if I only knew this was for me!" It is for you. "All that the Father hath given Me shall come to Me."

"But how do I know the Father hath given me to Christ? If I could only *know* this, it seems to me that I could be such a happy, joyous Christian."

But listen—"All that the Father hath given Me shall *come* to Me."

"Yet that is just what I am not sure of—how do I know that I am Christ's? If only this doubt could be set at rest! I don't doubt Him; I doubt myself."

Let me repeat that text once more—"All that the Father hath given Me shall *come* to Me—shall *come* to Me." Have you come? "Yes." Then that is the seal. You come because the Father hath given you to Him. That you have come seals you, for "whosoever cometh unto Me I shall in no wise cast out, and none shall be able to pluck Him out of My hand." You are safe. He will deliver!

Think of the century we have just left. Some of you know only sixteen or twenty years of it; some were born back in the sixties, the forties—perhaps some of the gray-headed men in the thirties. Has He failed you? O by all the goodness of the past, trust Him for the future. He that has begun a good work will finish it. If He has got you this far He will get you the rest of the way. He that hath delivered you out of six troubles will deliver you out of seven. He will help you in trouble and into trouble and out of trouble. He will help you over trouble and around some troubles you forecast but never reach. Once an aged Christian, while in great suffering, was asked by his friends whether he could bear it, if he would not break down under it; and he said, “Not until the sixteenth Psalm breaks down at the eighth verse.” They asked him what he meant, and he answered, “Because He is at my right hand, I shall never be moved.” There is your confidence. No matter how alone you are, yet you are not alone, for Christ is with you even unto the end of the world.

“How am I to realize this comfort? What am I to do?” Rest on Christ. Trust in Him. When I was a boy, we used to sing this—

“Nothing either great or small,
 Nothing, sinner, no—
 Jesus died and paid it all,
 Yes, all the debt I owe.”

Every bit of it! He is more than sufficient. You have nothing to do but take His great gift and say, “Thank you.” Now you can wrest that to your own destruction; you can be a mere literalist, and say, “Then let me continue in sin that grace may abound”; but if you do,

you know that you are wrong, and with certain reasonable restrictions, that is good theology, for—"by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

If you realize the presence of Christ, you will not make that false plea. This feast is a great help to that realization, and so we keep it till He come.

"Till He come! O let the words
Linger on the trembling chords;
Let the little while between
In their golden light be seen;
Let us think how heaven and home
Lie beyond that—Till He come.

"When the weary ones we love
Enter on their rest above,
Seems the earth so poor and vast,
All our life-joy overcast?
Hush, be every murmur dumb,
It is only—Till He come.

"See, the feast of love is spread;
Drink the wine and break the bread—
Sweet memorials, till the Lord
Calls us round His heavenly board,
Some from earth, from glory some,
Severed only—Till He come."

Dwell on *His* love on the one side—love immeasurable; and, on the other, I plead as much for your loyalty as your love,—a love I would rather call loyalty. Be true to Him. Present Him fairly to the world. Live in the hope of His coming. Trust the grace that did deliver, and does deliver;—it surely will deliver!

RENEWAL

*“We thank Thee for Thy love to Peter and
Thy patience with him, that out of the shifting
material of his nature, Thou didst fuse the
rock.”*

RENEWAL

THERE is a word that occurs very often in both the Old and the New Testament, which is indicative of an absolutely necessary process in our spiritual life ; this is the word "renewal."

A mountain does not renew itself. It does change. Within the memory of man the whole contour of mountains has changed,—a crag has fallen here, a fissure opened there, a forest grown or disappeared. Look at Vesuvius—that has changed completely, but you would never speak of it as renewal ; it is destruction or accretion, but it is not renewal. A mountain does not renew itself. But a lake does. I can think of a lake now where I have often been, not twelve miles from Baltimore. I know every bit of it ; I know the depth of the water at various places ; I have fished in it fifty times ; I know every path around it, and all the roads leading to it. I could go there blindfold. And yet it is not the same lake I have seen before. Not a particle of water is there now that was there when I last visited it. Why? It renews itself ; it is fed by a stream far up on the mountainside, and as this stream flows down into the lake, it carries off the water that was there and much of the sediment, and a new—a renewed—lake is constantly being formed.

Our human body renews itself. It is constantly changing. The same particles of matter do not remain, but are drifting down the blood-streams, some being carried off, and some being taken to the lungs for renewal

and readjustment to their work. I have been much interested in watching, ever since Christmas, a crushed finger. The whole nail was crushed, and is being gradually renewed, but so gradually that there is no perceptible change from day to day. One black spot is gone; another is half off, and in time the whole nail will be renewed. It is very interesting; it is very wonderful. My hand is the same; its continuity is not disturbed; it is very familiar to me: yet it is constantly changing. The whole body continually needs and has renewal. Every movement I make breaks down some of the tissue, and brings me nearer dissolution; and if there be no corresponding upbuilding the body wastes away. Wordsworth says,

“The least motion which they made
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.”

But such motions waste the body, and alike, the expression of pleasure or of pain hastens the collapse. Yet through it all continuity is not destroyed.

Did you ever, while travelling on a railroad train, see a gang of men resting on their shovels and spades and picks as the train went by? They are repairing the road, yet travel is not interfered with. A sleeper is taken out here; a rail is readjusted there; new ballast is deposited; switches are changed—the whole track is renewed, and yet travel goes right on. As in the lake, it is the same, and not the same. So in your body the waste is repaired—new blood-corpuscles formed, old tissues removed and new put in their places, a weak organ strengthened, some obstruction taken out of the way, quantities of detritus carried off in the blood, but the body is the same, only renewed. No good physician will ever say that he heals

the body. He well knows that behind his art, and absolutely necessary to its successful working, is the *vis medicatrix naturæ*, the active remedial agencies of nature, and that they heal and bring health, that he must call on them and work in harmony with them, if he would cure.

Despite this renewal, however, on the physical side there is a line of declination, an inevitable line of declination, always bending more and more as we near that unknown bourne. Do what we will to stay it and straighten it, it yet always bends more and more. The outward man is surely perishing and being resolved into its component parts—its gases, metals, vapours, fluids. The end must come. But what of it? If the inward man is being renewed, this makes us in a grand sense indifferent to the steady, inevitable decline of the physical. Paul says, "I die daily"; he was expressing the reverse side of the truth of continuity. The life goes on uninterruptedly, but it does so on the basis of constant renewal, and if there were no daily dying there would be no need of this renewal. Let us not fear. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. I never see one of these little city sparrows without a thrill. The sparrow is not a very grand or wonderful bird, and yet I often think of the saying that not one even of them falls to the ground without your Father. I shall never forget the thrill, the shiver of emotion, that passed through me when I first saw a dead sparrow lying on the sidewalk. Think how few dead birds you see! There the little thing lay. It had been one vibrating centre of intense vitality—a vast deal of oxygenization had been going on there—and I thought of the active little heart stilled, and the busy life ended, and it just a frozen clod—its heat all radiated; and then I thought of the Father who marks the fall of the sparrow!

Will He not, then, mark my life to its end, and beyond its end? O me of little faith!

How is your mind being renewed? What have you been reading this past week that has really benefited and strengthened it? I don't mean, what have you read for pleasure, as pleasure is not always profit and upbuilding, but what really solid reading have you done? The mind, too, needs its revitalization.

And since we are in God's universe, the same law is operative for the spirit, for the new life. God's universe is one—one turn about His throne and all controlled by His law. So, like the physical and mental life, our new life in Christ must be renewed. In Colossians 3: 10 we read, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." The new man is renewed. It is not enough that I have this new life—it must be tended, fed, renewed. The new life is a life superadded, not developed from the old. God reaches down and lifts us up to Himself. Just as the vegetable takes hold of the mineral and transforms it into its own higher life, as the animal uplifts the vegetable, and the human takes all these elements of nature, and uses them for its own maintenance, so God just reaches down and catches us up to Himself, and we are renewed. Are you letting Him renew you? or is your new life barely existing, crowded back and beaten down by the world? The new life cannot thrive on any sustenance you can give it—you must push the world aside, and open the door to Christ.

Do you feel sometimes as if life were too hard? Paul felt that, and turned from it. In 2 Cor. 4: 16 he says, "For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

When the body gives out—*as* the body gives out—think of this, the spirit is being renewed and fitted for that other and completer life. The line of physical declination is inevitable, but I will turn from it to consider that straight, undeviating line of spiritual development, that points with unwavering steadiness to the triumph and completed life of the spirit. It is strong, unswerving, all-satisfying, full of hope and certitude, and what is it to me that the outward man perishes! It is but the freeing of the eternal spirit, which by its struggles has gained its power. Use whatever strength of the spirit you have, for your Lord. Forget yourself; think only of Him; get tired in His service; let the body be wearied for Him.

But do not waste your strength. We are so easily disorganized and demoralized! Do you recall the sermon of a week or so ago—"It is good for me that I have been afflicted"? So, only, can God renew us sometimes. Every sin I commit wastes some of the energy of the spirit; every evil thought sets up barriers between me and His renewing, every self-indulgence weakens my power to receive from Him; every fit of temper breaks down spiritual tissue, and only by affliction can He bring me again close to His side.

In Romans 12 : 2 we have this warning, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed"—How?—"by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." We yield a little here and a little there. From the sparrow's body had radiated all the heat, but the surrounding temperature was not appreciably raised; and so from us go principle and conscience—we lose our most precious treasures at the call of some temptation—and the

moral atmosphere is not appreciably raised ; we lose, and no one gains ; we radiate spiritual power to no purpose. It must be given out, but let it be given where it can renew and be renewed.

Going back to the Old Testament we read, "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall ; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run and not be weary ; they shall walk and not faint." And in Psalm 103 : 5, "Their youth is renewed like the eagle's"—again using that wonderful bird-life to express the energy of the spirit. So, if it is to be freely renewed, don't be afraid to expend it. If you use your strength for God He will renew it, but you must wait on Him, and waiting implies many things ; it has many meanings. Think of its many uses—"a lady in waiting"—service to royalty ;—"I will wait on you," they say at the South, meaning what we mean when we say, "I will wait *for* you"—at the corner, in the store. Then we say, "I will wait on you," meaning, sometimes, "I will serve you," sometimes, "I will go to you,"—and so on. Yes, *wait* has many different uses. Now, apply it to Christ in all its different uses and meanings, and you will renew your strength, until nothing shall be impossible unto you. There will be a re-creation in you. He will make you virile for His service. Give out of your renewed life for those who need it. Even if you don't know what to say to those in sorrow, go and sit with them, and be sorrowful with them. Even if you cannot suggest any remedy for the great difficulty confronting a friend, go and suffer with him ; let your strength radiate to him for his empowering.

Will all this tire you—use up your energy—devitalize you—exhaust you—leave you wearied and tired out? Yes, it will do all that. If virtue goes out of you, it costs—it costs; but it counts. Even Christ could not give without cost to Himself; even He perceived that virtue had gone out of Him. I know of no joy quite so satisfying as that which comes to me when I am able to help some one who is suffering. It uplifts and exhilarates me. I can hardly wait to get home after a day of such work to tell of the joy of the day; it seems almost as if I could not endure the gladness; but as I get near home, the reaction begins, the body weakens, I am tired and quiet, and have little to say after all when I reach home. After a while, high tide comes again, and they hear it and rejoice with me. But the giving costs, and because it costs, it is intensity of joy. Not only do I enjoy when I am giving out vitality, but in proportion as I give it out,—and the more weary I become in the service of the Master, the deeper is the joy. It is glorious to be used up for Him!

You have had the same experience. Something goes well with you through the day, some pleasure comes to you, some sense of enjoyment, maybe a good story. You think, “I will tell that at home”; but you don’t, at least not at first. You must recuperate; you must be renewed. And so I say to my devoted Christian as to my worldly Christian, creep up close to Christ, for He only can renew you. The pain and suffering involved in service for Christ, are but the birth-pangs by which love and gentleness are born in you. It must be so; all birth is through suffering.

The spiritual nature is renewed by knowledge, by discipline, by indwelling,—submit to it all, even if it be

through anguish. These all have their part in your perfecting, but the completion of Christ's training comes from association with Him. Wordsworth speaks of a child, who by constant companionship with nature, caught its subtle beauty, and was changed into corresponding beauty. So shall we be changed into the image of Christ. Constant association results in assimilation. "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." In a sermon on "Prayer," I told you of the little boy who came in and sat down by his father, who after a while looked up from his work and asked if he wanted anything. "No, just to be with you." Just be with God—that will bring it. O, tired woman in the household, the nursery, the school; O, discouraged man in the office, behind the counter,—just be with Christ, and the worst is over, and you are renewed. His life becomes crystallized in you; you are edified. Be much with Him. Be willful about it, willful for His sake; determine to give Him His chance with you.

When Paul writes to Titus, he says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration [there is the new birth], and the renewing of the Holy Ghost" [there is the constant vitalizing of the new life, which had its birth when we accepted Christ]. The title, "Holy Ghost," is God's Old Testament name, and points us back to the time when by His brooding over chaos it became cosmos; when He inspired Bezaleel for the work of adorning the tabernacle; when He spoke through prophets and mighty men. But He comes to us with a new name, the name of Christ,—“whom the

Father will send in My name"—and He is Christ in us and with us.

Let us not, like the mighty prophet, Elijah, get the "blues." He had gone to Douglas in his castle, had bearded the lion in his den, and then he said, "It is enough; take away my life; I am not better than my fathers. I am left alone to serve Thee!" No, he was not left alone, and you are not. Trust God; give your strength to Him; be much with Him. When the ship springs a leak, when, through the rifts of the shrinking timbers, the wind and weather come in, when the creaking of the hulk betokens danger, be you sure you are near the port, and soon to see the Owner of the ship. When you feel your grip on your tools relaxing, and the work of your life almost too much for your strength, reinforce it by the power of the unconquerable spirit. And when, in spite of all, you must let go your tools, fall back without fear into His everlasting arms, which He never removes, and wake to find the body of your humiliation changed into the likeness of the body of His glory!

CONSIDERING JESUS

“ May both our thoughts and words this day be such as will not hurt Thee ; keep us from doing what hurts Thee and disfigures us ; make us solicitous for Thy honour—we do not know how sensitive Thou art.”

CONSIDERING JESUS

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house."—HEBREWS 3 : 1, 2.

I USED to think that the etymology of the word "consider" was "to sit with," and once in a sermon I spoke of the beauty of considering, "sitting down by the side of," the poor. And it is beautiful; but it seems that an accepted etymology of the word is *considera*, "with the stars," that is, consider life, view life and all its activities from an exalted plane. The tendency of the gospel is up; it might be called "uphillwardness"; it is a high calling, and we should feel its upward pull. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me,"—far above all "principalities and powers." You climb one of God's mountain-ranges, only to see another swing into view.

Now, holy brethren, get up among the stars, above the low, earthly plane. Do you shrink from that word "holy"? Well, let us look at "brethren" first, it seems so natural and human. I would like you to-night to get some new conception of Jesus. Can't it be this nearness of brotherhood? He was not ashamed to call us brethren. He took upon Himself our flesh for that purpose. "Yes," you say, "we know we are His brethren, but so unworthy!—surely not holy! Don't, don't call me holy!" But you are; you must be; *His* holiness is imputed to you; you are a saint, a *sanct*, one

set apart for holy purposes. Christ died, and we died unto sin; Christ was buried, we, too, are buried with Him in baptism; He rose from the dead, we are raised into newness of life; He is on the right hand of God, we also shall reign with Him. The identification is perfect, and growing unto perfection. We are like Him now in essence; we are daily transformed into His likeness. And since He is "the holy child Jesus," and you are His brothers, you must be "holy brethren."

When we recall His praying "Holy Father," we think of a finished and unattainable state, and yet Christ commands us, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." He is holy, and we are in process of holiness. Temper conquered is a little piece of holiness. A kindness done is a little piece of holiness. An act of self-sacrifice is a little piece of holiness. Pieces, making wholeness; fractions, making integrity—the integer. Practice holiness; grow in holiness—this is your "calling."

But forget yourselves for a little, and "consider Jesus." Jesus, the human name. Take both of the supposed etymologies of the word. Get up among the stars with Him; sit down by Him and see as He sees. Draw into your souls the true relative values of things. Get a new and true perspective, and from those sublime heights look down on your lives, and see all that concerns you as He sees it. If ye then be risen with Christ, and seated with Him on the right hand of God, learn to judge of life from your exalted seat.

Do you remember in Browning's poem, "An Epistle," how indifferent Lazarus was to the affairs of this life, after having had a glimpse of the other? He was seeing things in their true perspective. How I would like to

know what Lazarus said when he came back from the tomb!

You ask, "Is life worth while?" O, have high ideals! What should we do without them?

Jesus was the "*Apostle*" of the new faith—one sent; as Moses was sent, as He sends you, as the messages to the churches were sent;—epistle, the thing sent; apostle, the one sent—all sent to glorify God. "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." See how He identifies us with Himself; and this sacramental identification bears fruit, creates in us new joy and new hopes.

Moses was faithful in all God's house; surely we can be, for we live in the full sunshine and he lived in the twilight. Attainment is not what our holy Father requires of us, but fidelity, *trust-worthy-ness*. With little or much, whatever He gives you, be faithful. What difference does it make what your occupation is? That is only the set of tools God gives you, the opportunity to present Him to the world; do not misrepresent Him. No matter how much we have; no matter how great our chances, at the best we enter heaven only as apprentices. Are we training to the best advantage?

III

COMMUNION DISCOURSES

THINGS THAT SURVIVE

· “*May the beauty of the Lord be upon us, so that we dare look on the white glory of His table. May what we remember to-day become a reminder next week. As we have witnessed His dying, so may His living be witnessed in us. In the tests of to-morrow may the memory of to-day strengthen us.*”

THINGS THAT SURVIVE

"They shall perish, but Thou remainest."—HEBREWS I : II.

THERE was once a king in the East, who was troubled with a vacillating mind ; sometimes he was strong and determined, sometimes tormented with uncertainty. As his mental malady grew on him, he became so miserable before a decision, that he called on the wise men of his court to give him some word that would steady him ; but they could not. Now it happened that his little daughter succeeded where they had failed, for she gave him for his birthday a ring on which were inscribed two words in Arabic, which she did not understand, but which translated meant, "This too shall pass away" ; and in the face of that certainty he gathered strength and poise.

The saying was used very effectively by Warren Hastings in his book, where he tells how this story gave him hope in his deepest despair ; and also by Paul Hamilton Hayne, the Southern poet, whose early death was only too true a comment on the words.

" Art thou in misery, brother ?
 This I say,
 Be comforted.
 Thy grief shall pass away.
Art thou elated ?
 Ah ! be not too gay,
 Temper thy joy ;
 This too shall pass away.

Art thou in danger ?
 Still let reason sway
 And cling to hope —
 This too shall pass away.
 Tempted art thou ?
 In all thine anguish lay
 One truth to heart —
 This too shall pass away.
 Do rays of laurelled glory
 Round thee play ?
 Kinglike art thou ? —
 This too shall pass away.
 Whate'er thou art,
 Where'er thy footsteps stray,
 Heed Wisdom's voice,
 All things must pass away."

I had a friend who used often to express the same idea in the words, "The darkest day, lived till to-morrow, shall have passed away." It is a wonderfully quieting thought amid the unrest of life. We stand to-day where this feeling is very strong—at the close of a year, of many years, of a hundred years.¹ We all know that at the close of this century not one of us will be here—all shall have passed away. There are two things we can all know beyond cavil—the century in which we were born and the century in which we shall die.

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day ;
 Earth's joys grow dim ; its glories fade away.
 Change and decay in all around I see ;
 O Thou, who changest not, abide with me !"

But I want to speak to you of two things that will not pass away,—the life of God in me, and the love of God for me.

¹ The first Sunday morning of 1901.

I. By the life of God in me, I mean, of course, that special life of His Spirit in mine, though I fully believe that this natural life is of Him and is His constant gift. But more especially, the life of the spirit is from Him, established and sustained and continued by Him. How I persist! This strangely familiar self of mine,—so familiar to me, and yet so strangely unfamiliar. Once I was a little baby in a cradle, and I grew and grew, and have attained to manhood; and much has changed, yet I am myself—I have persisted through all changes—physical, mental, psychical, historical. I am changing all the time. This hand of mine is changing bit by bit. Yet bodily changes do not affect me; I remain myself, with identity unchanged.

Through how many permutations have I already persisted! And when life closes, and the nimble fingers of disintegration pick my body to pieces, it will not touch me. Socrates lived in the twilight, but even he said, "Bury me where you will, if you really catch *me*." This persistence is the result of the life of God in me. We might appropriate to ourselves, in a Christian sense, what Shelley says so beautifully of the cloud:—

"I am the daughter of earth and water,
 And the nursling of the sky;
 I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
 I change, but I cannot die.
 For after the rain, when, with never a stain,
 The pavilion of heaven is bare,
 And the winds and sunbeams, with their convex gleams,
 Build up the blue dome of air,—
 I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
 And out of the caverns of rain,
 Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
 I arise, and upbuild it again."

Even without the Bible I would believe in the continuance of life. But beside the weighty argument of all natural phenomena, I know that in Christ all things consist—are held together—and in Him I live. At His word the outward world will pass away—the elements will melt with fervent heat, the firmament shall be folded up and laid aside as a garment, but by the power of the endless life of God in me, *I* shall remain, eternal as His life. It is a good gospel! I know I have followed no cunningly devised fables. I know my dream of immortality will come true.

“Thou wilt not leave us in the dust.

Thou madest man, he knows not why;

He feels he was not made to die;

And Thou hast made him—Thou art just!”

Does this table of the Supper bring old memories to you? Do you remember another hand that ministered of the bread and wine to you? Do you remember another and a loved voice which repeated to you the words of Jesus—“This is My body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me”? Do you remember your first communion, when you came as a new confessor of Jesus Christ to His table? Are there any here who remember when the walls of this church were white, before they had taken on the glory of colour in which we worship now? These are all passing conditions, but the God who gave them worth, still abides with us.

And this ever-abiding God constantly resurrects your life. He is the God of the Resurrection, as well as of the Resurging life-current that ebbs and flows day by day in you; the God of revival and survival is ever with

you. He lets you die daily ; He rouses you with a word of command, and you live.

II. And the love of God for me shall never pass away. *It* persists through all things—through the burden of sorrow, through the blackness of despair, through the depression of doubt, through the self-loathing and hopelessness of the power of besetting sin—through them all, through all things, it persists. I know His smile of approval over a kept law, and His frown of disapproval over a broken law ; but I know that both the smile and the frown are expressions of His love, and that both the kept and the broken laws are channels through which His love finds expression, whether we enjoy or suffer. He is training us ; and a strong love must find strong expression. He has loved us with an everlasting love.

Any mother here of a grown-up son who is an honour and a comfort to her, knows something of what God is expecting of us, and of how He trains us, that He may see of the travail of His soul in us and be satisfied. When you saw your boy's first smile you were glad, yet there was no certain promise in it ; but now, after your years of loving training and patient faith in him, you have fulfillment !

And to those whose sons have gone out of their lives and passed beyond their vision—they, too, shall Christ bring with Him when He comes again, and you shall be satisfied. O, believe in His love,—it will never fail you !

Invitation to the Table.—This Supper was given to all the disciples—to him who should betray Him, to him who should deny Him, to him who loved Him so—to Judas as well as to John. Christ imposed no conditions ; He trusted to the appeal of His love. He did not say, "If you will serve Me faithfully, then take, eat"—else

Peter could never have supped with Him. It was after the meal that His love began to probe them. He did not fence the table, nor dare I, nor would I. And I am glad He did not. He left it unlimited to whosoever would.

Now, I am going to do a very unecclesiastical thing, but I am sure not an unchristian thing. If there is any one in the house, who, while I have been speaking, has felt the appeal of God in his soul, has felt as if he too would like to commune with God's people, I dare not refuse that soul a place at the Lord's Table. If to any man, if to any woman, has come the desire to yield himself, to yield herself, to the love of Christ—if that soul honestly determines to confess Christ the next time the chance comes to do so, I dare not refuse you a place at His Table. I can trust to your fairness, if you will trust to His love.

As to Christians, they know their privileges in Christ.

After the Bread Had Been Taken.—We would see Jesus. We would commune with Him. We long to know Him. We long to meet Him at His Table.

After the Supper.—The feast is over. This, too, has passed away, but not His love. The bread and the wine will be removed, but Christ stays.

When after the resurrection Jesus met His disciples on the lake shore, and they ate together, when they had dined, Jesus said, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?"

And Peter said, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee."

Jesus said to him the second time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?"

And Peter said, "Yea, Lord, Thou *knowest* that I love Thee."

Jesus asks only for our love. He never asked, as the hymn says,

“ I gave my life for thee ;
 My precious blood I shed
 That thou mightst ransomed be,
 And quickened from the dead.
 I gave, I gave My life for thee —
 What hast thou given for Me ? ”

No, He never asks that ; He always says, “ What *wilt* thou give ? ”

And Jesus said unto Peter the third time, “ Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me ? ”

And Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, “ Lovest thou Me ? ” and he said, “ Lord, Thou knowest all things ; Thou *knowest* that I love Thee.”

And Jesus said unto him, “ Feed My sheep.”

Do *you* love Him ? Then go out and show your love. Do something for Him !

REMEMBERING THE LORD

*“O may such a love, that puts all past sin away,
rouse us to a freer and fuller, nobler and more
loving devotion! May we go out and bring to
the memory of the world Him whom we have
memorialized to-day.”*

REMEMBERING THE LORD

"This do in remembrance of Me."—LUKE 22: 19.

THIS do in remembrance of Me. I am sure we have all sung the beautiful hymn of Montgomery—

“According to Thy gracious word,
In meek humility,
This will I do, my dying Lord,
I will remember Thee.”

But what do we mean by remembering Christ? Just taking of this Supper? O I am sure it means something deeper than that! What do you mean to do in remembrance of Christ this morning? Take the bread and the cup; think of Him; pray to Him; rest in Him? Yes, all that; but the remembrance Jesus had in mind when He spoke these words was something more prophetic, of wider outreach,—not confined to that Upper Room. Do you remember what Jesus was doing? He was giving the symbols of His own life and blood and being. He was celebrating and superseding the old feast, and well He knew what it would mean to Him. If we would remember Him as He meant us to remember Him, it will be a memory that becomes all one with sacrifice; a memory that takes hold of the deepest purposes of life, a memory that consecrates the whole life in all its affections and activities to Him, as a sign that He gave Himself for us. The memory of what He was to

us, of what He did for us, will be a challenge and a summons to our utmost and untiring devotion to Him—not only the recalling of our old vow, when we first gave ourselves to Him, but a new avowal of our love to Him, our service of Him—the future devotion of our lives to Him—the devotion, the something vowed and set aside as sacred, and never again to be used but for Him.

What was Jesus doing in that Upper Room? Many thoughts were surging through His mind; much was just ahead of Him to bear, but His main purpose was His loving care of men. He was not thinking of Himself at all. His attention was not fixed on His own needs. He was possessed by the centrifugal force that goes out of itself in its effort to help another, and not with the selfish centripetal force that has no time for the needs of others in its own self-absorption, that asks: Does this relate the world to me? Rather He said: This relates Me to the world.

Think how strangely and cautiously the Upper Room had been selected, so that Judas might not carry out his scheme in such a way as to interrupt that Last Supper, which Jesus had so desired to eat with His own. As a result, there was no servant present to wash their feet. They sat down, and there was an exchange of glances. They could not eat until they had washed. Who should take the place of the servant? These high pretenders on the lookout for office and seats on the right hand and on the left hand in the coming kingdom, could not. "No," they said, "not I." James said, "Not I," and John said, "Not I," and Peter said, "Not I." Then Jesus, knowing that He came from God and went to God, laid aside His garments and began to wash their feet. Knowing that He came from God and went to God, noth-

ing could demean Him. This do in remembrance of Me. Do what? Anything you can do to any one for love's sake. Knowing your high mission, feel the sacredness of any act of loving service.

Was Gladstone less honoured that day when he could not be found in the House? He was needed for some important matter of state; he had left the House, so they went to find him, but he could not be found. They searched everywhere. He had been last seen at a certain crossing, and that gave them the clue. He had missed a familiar crossing-sweeper, and had gone to look him up, and help him if he needed help. They found him in a garret, reading to and comforting this man—just as willing to do that as to guide the affairs of state. Knowing that he came from God and went to God, he was ready for any service.

Was Phillips Brooks more godlike when he was swaying by his immense power the crowds who hung on his words, than when he helped that poor, tired, overworked mother? He had gone to call on her, and found that she needed to go on some important errand, but could not leave her child. So he told her to go, and he rocked the cradle and cared for the child until she returned. It was not his child; God never gave him one, but it was a chance to serve in the spirit of Christ. These things must not be incidental to life;—they are not accidental, but fundamental. Knowing that he came from God and went to God, therefore he could realize the sacredness of any loving service.

This applies to children, too. They have part in this great sacramental life. They can show the same spirit by being unselfish and obliging. There is nothing that one can do, that *can* be menial, if it be done for love.

Do you remember the illustration used in last Sunday afternoon's sermon—of Dr. Johnson standing in the market-place in London, all of one day, with no umbrella and no protection from the storm? They thought he was crazy, but he was not. He was only trying to expiate the sin of fifty years before, when his father had asked a similar service from him and he had refused. I suppose that when we come to look back on life, we shall regret almost as much as anything the acts of loving service we might have done but were too proud to do. If we recognized our high position as our Master did, false pride would be annihilated.

And what Jesus was doing then was all of a piece with what He was forever doing. He turns to Peter (though His own heart was breaking) and says, "Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you." Later, in that same room, He prayed for those same men soon to be so sorely tried: "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me." Even us He remembered that night: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for all those who shall believe on Me through their word." In Gethsemane, it was not terror for Himself that caused His anguish, but for the world that so needed the successful ending of His work. In the crowd and confusion of the arrest, He healed the ear of the wounded man. In the Judgment Hall, where, you would think, He had enough to do to care for Himself, He thought of Peter, and turned and looked at him with pity and love. Along that dolorous way, He said to the women: "Weep not for Me, but for yourselves." To the thief He opened Paradise. To His mother He gave a son, and to His beloved disciple, a sacred trust. For His murderers He

prayed forgiveness. Self-forgetting, self-effacing, self-devoting these were the natural expressions of His life.

“*This do in remembrance of Me*”: bring the supreme devotion of life to the incidental duty. Feel the obligation of high endowments, and high station and high privileges. Feel the *noblesse oblige* of great opportunities. The sun shines for all because of its own inward “must,” and we should live for all, because of the inward “must” of Christian love. Christ gave us an example, and then said: “As My Father sent Me, even so send I you.” “*This do in remembrance of Me*”: take this Supper as a memorial; but not merely this—this, and what it stands for.

Your blood must be shed; let it be shed for Him. Your body will be broken; let Him be the altar. Little by little your life drifts away; let it be a sacrificial offering to Him. Then you can see it go with joy, because you will find your life again, complete in Him. It does not matter what form your activity takes. The carpenter builds well for Him, so that His work stands. If you wield a pen, let its every word be true and every account accurate, for Him. If you control great railroad combinations, feel that you are working in unison with Him who combines all forces. Let the lawyer stand for truth and justice because he represents the God of truth and justice. Through music, let your love for Him find expression. If you teach, you can follow in the footsteps of the great Teacher, who opened up the treasures of wisdom and knowledge to others. If you are a mother in the home, comfort as He would. And the schoolboy can look for inspiration to Him who was a boy in school once. *Whatever your work is*, do it “in remembrance” of your Lord. Feel that His honour is at stake if you fail

Him. Be on guard for Him. Remember always that you represent Him, and be so faithful to His memory, that at last you will keep your trust with Him in great joy.

The crusaders had a cross sewed on their outer garment to remind them whose service they had entered, and to witness of that service to all who saw. It must be firmly sewed on, and in a conspicuous place—on the shoulder or breast, so that they would never forget their allegiance. What does the cross signify? Christ's broken body. What did the broken body signify to Christ? Completeness of devotion to the Father's will, to the world's salvation, and—*victory!* You are a King's son! Live a kingly life, and make the kingdom come!

What if to-day you have come to the Upper Room for the last time? What if your life should suddenly end? When that time comes, what would your answer be if you should ask yourself, "This was my body, broken for what?" The body surely will be broken; are you making that sacrifice worth while? Think of the last days of Napoleon,—his great schemes broken, his splendid triumphs behind him, his life lonely, forsaken and desolate. Do you remember the picture, with his head dropped forward on his breast? Thus was his body broken—for what? Some day you will say it in regard to some business combination or professional reputation or social achievement; will you be satisfied, or will you say with surprise and regret, "Is that all my body was worn out for?"

I summon you on from this lower glory to that higher and nobler glory that your Master showed,—the glory of self-sacrifice. Tire out your body for Him; coin your

blood into devotion to Him. Help and train some children that but for your efforts would have no chance in life. Lift up girls, who have little or no incentive, into noble womanhood. Enter into the lives of the poor with the radiance of your richer life. Bring to the troubled the repose of your faith. Try to adjust some of the inequalities that form life's burden for so many. So shall your body be broken and your blood be shed, but you will commit your finished work with joy into your Father's hands.

You think following Christ means following Christ to heaven. No, it means Gethsemane and Calvary. You want to follow Him to heaven, beloved, but what is the way to follow Him? You must follow Him in His life of ministry, of service, of self-forgetting love,—you must lay down your life for Him; yes, you must lay down your life little by little and day by day. You will probably not be called on to lay it down all at once, though thousands have been called to that sacrifice during this past year,—and then again, you may. But little by little, you surely must, if you would follow Christ.

I speak to the young Christian, to him who has just enlisted for Christ. Did you ever see a company of soldiers marching out to service? or even marching in parade? O, their splendid banners! And the rush and stir of many souls devoted to one cause! Martial music always brings a lump into my throat, and the flicker of soldiers' legs sends a thrill through me and brings the water to my eyes. But is there nothing more beautiful? nothing that brings higher satisfaction? Did you ever see a regiment return? They are bedraggled, their ranks are thinned out, their uniforms are torn, but the thought underneath of what they have been through,

their offerings, their dangers—the blue all discoloured by the black of battle, the white all smirched by weather and many exposed nights and the powder of many engagements, the crimson dyed a deeper hue by the blood of those who died to uphold it,—ah, then I know there is something more beautiful than the beautiful buckling on of the armour, even the splendour of a life which has been risked !

By the memory of those who have dared all and been broken, not merely for this country but for a heavenly country, by the memory of faces you have seen but will not see again till you eat this feast anew in your Father's kingdom, by the devotion of the lives you have loved best, I beseech you that you break your bodies down, that you wear your vitality out, for the onward movement of the kingdom, so that when at last you appear before Him to give in your account, you may say, "I spent it all for Thee !" Be uncompromising in your devotion. Take a sacred vow on yourself that your hands, your feet, your tongue, shall be instruments for His activity, that your gifts shall be devoted to Him and His cause, that your prayers and your sympathies shall go out to those who need you.

This do in remembrance of Him,—commune at His table with Him, and this do in remembrance of Him,—all you may do in your daily life in helpfulness of others for His sake.

Let us remember His covenant with us. He has kept His half: may He help us to keep ours !

After the Supper.—Don't stop and speculate as to how much help you have received. You ate your morning meal, and probably have not thought of it since, but in its strength you came here and have prayed and

thought and worshipped, and will return home. So, take for granted the strength received here; He will make it sufficient. Go out and do His work, and believe that the strength He has given and will give, will be all you need to do the work He gives you.

“May the joy of the Lord be in our hearts to-day, and the beauty of the Lord in our lives to-morrow.”

JOY

“That My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be filled full.”—JOHN 15: 11.

AND yet what conditions were His—a borrowed room, no remnant of the enthusiastic crowds of but a few days before, pursued by the relentless hatred of His enemies, and only twelve weak, cowardly, disheartened men to show for His years of work—and one of those a traitor. Surely, it must have been an inward joy of which He spoke. That is what the Christian should possess. Think of the symphonies heard in the mute heart of Beethoven! How his soul must have been enraptured by the unuttered music he heard! For he could hear what we cannot.

Do you know what inward joy is? Did you ever see a musician looking over a score of music and note his face light up as the melody of it came to him, though he had no instrument? He needed none! And we, who possess Christ's joy, need no outward condition to perfect it, to fill it full. There is time enough for Him to give you *things* when He sees you need things; now, He is training you to enjoy.

The disciples were sad because Jesus was going away, and He said, “I would like to stay, knowing how you feel, but it is better for you that I go away, for I will send My spirit to be with you,—an inward friend, where I could be only an outward one; and He will keep your joy replenished.”

IV

PRAYER-MEETING TALKS

“The prayer-meeting is a time for strength and upbuilding, completing the more intimate communion of the closet.”

“Past our childishness and wilfulness and disobedience, Thy will be done. Supplement our prayers. Supplant our prayers, if necessary.”

GETHSEMANE¹

LUKE 22: 39-47; MATTHEW 26: 36-47.

I HAVE taken for our thought to-night the Sunday-school lesson for next week, as is my custom on Wednesday evening. We have here the hardest lesson in the path of obedience. There is no lesson the church needs more than this lesson of obedience, and Jesus trod the path to it faithfully and to the very end. He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Not emotion but obedience is the test of our love for Christ. Jesus was a man; and in His human nature He had this lesson to learn as well as all other lessons which we men must learn. I could never preach in this pulpit again if I did not believe fully and entirely in the absolute divinity of Jesus Christ; *all* depends on that. But let us not lose His humanity. Through the Middle Ages the Church exalted the divinity of Christ so absolutely that He was lifted above the reach of man with His woes and sins and temptations, and humanity turned to Mary for comfort. God was so far off, and Christ was the Judge, and there was no one for weary humanity to touch *but* Mary,—she would pity!

What was the Unitarian movement, but the reaction in New England against an undue and one-sided view taken of Christ's divinity in the Congregational Church? It was a protest against a mathematical God. Let us

¹ Last public service in Brick Church, Wednesday evening, February 20, 1901.

who inherit the results of the over-emphasis—no, it cannot be over-emphasized—but let us who stand for the historical contention for the divinity of Christ be careful that we do not rob our God of His greatest sacrifice, the exhibition of His greatest love.

Christ came with a human nature that He might show us what humanity should be,—He was a pattern of what it all meant to God. He was divine, but He emptied Himself and reduced Himself to the dimensions of humanity, and took the form of a servant and the likeness of man. He was not a true man if He had with Him an ever-active divine nature on which He could call at any time. He was made in all things like unto His brethren, wherefore He is not ashamed to call us brethren, and He would be if He were not a “fair” brother. Do not be distressed because the many parts of this wondrous truth cannot be harmonized by our limited knowledge. In this world, truth zigzags,—like a yacht that tacks first to the right and then to the left. The ideal course is straight; but the boat approximates, and reaches the harbour. You who have learned to ride a bicycle, know how hard it was at first, how impossible, to keep a straight line; but after a time your curves straightened out, and now it is easy enough to do; you don't even think of it—it does itself; it has become automatic. So truth zigzags in this world of beginnings and incompleteness. Be patient; it will all straighten out, and the many curves and doublings of truth will be seen to form a direct line to God. Then we may understand the union of the human and the divine natures in Christ.

Jesus was human. As a boy He had to learn obedience. There is scarcely anything more suggestive than that account of the return from the Temple when He

was twelve years old. What insight came to Him then we can never know—what sudden glimpse of His unique relation to the Father—what swift knowledge of His life-work—these things we can never know. But it was not yet His hour, and He turned from it all and went back to Nazareth and was subject to His parents,—was subject, learned obedience.

A little boy who was playing about a room—he was celebrating his sixth birthday—suddenly stopped his play, and, coming over to his mother, said, “Mamma, Jesus was once six years old, wasn’t He?”—Yes, Jesus was once six years old, and the little boy had learned much when he realized that, and we all get our first glimpse of reality when we get hold of the humanity of Jesus. Once six years old! And He had to learn to shut doors, and pick up things, and be orderly, just as any little boy does now.

Then there came another and a harder lesson in obedience. In the wilderness the temptation came to Him as it comes to us. It appealed to the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life. You remember the three temptations. Satan comes to Him and says, “If you be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread,” and there were the smooth little flat stones making their unconscious appeal and increasing the hunger, because they looked so like bread. But He said, “Man shall not live by bread alone; My Father will take care of Me; My power was not given Me to use for Myself, but to be given out endlessly for others.” Then the devil takes Him to a pinnacle of the Temple and says, “Cast Thyself down, for it is written, ‘He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee. They shall bear Thee up in their arms, lest Thou dash Thy

foot against a stone.'” Jesus says, “It is written, ‘Thou shalt not.’ My Father will take care of Me. I have no right to use My power for Myself or put His power to the test. My life is Mine to do His will, not to risk.” Then Satan tried again. He took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and “showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time”—as the Greek means, “in a blink.” Satan said, “I have power and authority—all this is mine, and shall be yours if you will fall down and worship me.” But Jesus answered, “It is written, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve’”—always foiling Satan by obedience. He would win His kingdom in His Father’s way.

Then we read this curious expression: “This commandment received I of My Father.” He uses it in connection with His death:—“I lay down My life: no man taketh it from Me. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I of My Father.” Then, the yielding up of His life was the supreme act of obedience. “Lo, I come to do Thy will!” When Peter, in his impulsive love, said, “O, Lord, no—pity Thyself, don’t let it be—this shall not be unto Thee!” His words seem to have opened up to Christ again a vision of what obedience meant, and He recognized Satan’s presence. He turned with sharp pain to Peter and said, “Get thee behind Me, Satan! This is not of God.” He felt Satan near Him in the person of the disciple to whom just before—almost in the same breath, we might say—He had promised, “Thou art rock! And on such rocklike characters will I build My Church.” But he was Satan’s subtle channel now.

Sometimes the obedience is a great and overmastering joy. Once Jesus was travelling up through Samaria, and He was tired, and sat down to rest at Jacob's Well.—(Just think! I myself hope soon to see Jacob's Well. I can hardly realize it. I have been so busy that I have had no time to think of myself. It has been so hard to get away and not leave my work with ragged edges. As Robert Louis Stevenson says,

“ I leave my work with ragged edge,
For sunset comes too soon.”

I have had no time to dream, but I shall sit by the well where Jesus sat.)—He sat there, then, hungry, thirsty, tired, and His disciples had gone to the town to buy food. But as He waited, He forgot all His weariness and hunger in giving to a sinful woman a draught of that water of which, if a soul once drink, it never thirsts again. And when the disciples returned He could not eat; He was no longer hungry; He had meat to eat that they knew not of. But they learned to know, and you know. The spiritual feeding in communion with God, in obedience to Him in our activities, can actually supply the physical need or remove it, and there is no joy commensurate with it. “ I delight to do Thy will, O my God! ”

In that wonderful twelfth chapter of John, we see one of the struggles for obedience. Some Greeks desired to see Him, and He recognized in them the representatives of the uttermost parts of the earth. He suddenly realized how far His arms must stretch, how far His love must reach out beyond the little family in which He had dwelt till then, before the fulness of His mission should be accomplished. And He argues it all out with Himself—

“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit! Ah, how am I straitened till this be accomplished! How can I bear it? What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour”?—There was the human shrinking, and then the certain submission—“But for this cause came I unto this hour: this will I say: Father, glorify Thy name.” Again, obedience had triumphed.

Now we come to this final lesson in obedience, where, during that dread hour in Gethsemane, in some way, some mysterious way, the Father God made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all. He had never sinned, but He had groaned in spirit over the results of sin; He had wept and sighed at an open grave; He had been troubled and had trembled before the exhibitions of sin; He had been moved with indignation and pity by its presence; He had felt virtue go out of Him as He came in contact with it; He had stood close to sickness and physical despair; but now, *now*, the Father was making to meet on Him the iniquities of us all. He was beginning to feel in Himself this awful load that made redemption necessary. Once when the priests had brought to Him the woman taken in sin, in sheer manly embarrassment He had drawn back and hung His head and stooped down and written on the ground—the shame flushing through and through His manly purity, that men could so hound an unfortunate and sinful woman. He could not look at them; He could not face them, but wrote in the sand. But *now*, into His very being comes the overwhelming blackness—we cannot understand, but in some sense He felt in His very self the load of human guilt and sin and shame; it focused on Him and He bowed before it. If you who are fathers and mothers have ever sat by the side

of a dearly loved child whose life is ruined and disgraced, and have tried to comfort her, and have started to pray, "Forgive her," and then swiftly changed it into, "O Father, forgive us!" you know in some dim way all that humanity can know of the awful burden of Christ.

I do not understand the Atonement, but I do know this—that God must justify Himself as well as me, that He has other considerations and obligations to meet besides those for me. This is so important that I will repeat it—I do not understand the Atonement, but this I understand, that God must justify Himself as well as me—not justify His punishment of me, His severity, His justice, but justify His mercy towards me; and this meant the great load of sin imposed on some one willing and able to bear it. This suggestion is what is called in theological language a theodicy—a justification of God's plan; but we can never explain it.

And now, what was it that Christ so dreaded? What was it that wrung His soul with anguish? From what did He pray to be delivered? Not from the death of the cross,—that I am convinced of. I do not see how you can make Scripture self-consistent if you take that view. He knew that Calvary was ahead of Him. He had Himself foretold it: "This is My body broken for you"; "I give My life as a ransom for many"; "I lay down My life"; "The Son of Man is to be crucified"; "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me":—He knew all that. But we see Him now as "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world."—What mystery is this! And yet it is a mystery that we who are His can all in some sense understand. The lamb slain from the foundation of the world—the marks of sacrifice upon Him from all eternity, and to be con-

summed now. Can He bear it? Will He live through it? Can His body stand it? Or will He fail before the supreme sacrifice is accomplished? He is confused and troubled and anguished by the horror of the unexpected and wholly new experience of sin in Himself, and fears He cannot bear it, but will break down there and all will be lost. Note how He acts—as you, perhaps have acted before an operation.—Can I stand it? How soon will it be? What does it mean? And you walk up and down in your nervous restlessness. You cannot sit still. You will not run from the ordeal, but can you endure it? What is the outcome to be?—That, or a like experience.—So Christ walks back and forth—comes to His disciples for help and sympathy—goes back into the shadows and prays—lies prone on the ground in His agony and entreats, “O My Father, if it be possible, take this cup from Me,” and the swift “nevertheless, not My will—not even now and here—but Thine be done.” This must be it, for we read in Hebrews that His prayer was heard—“Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him from death—able to save Him from *death*—and was heard in that He feared”;—note, He “was heard,” and yet He was not saved from Calvary—no, because He never prayed to be saved from it, but to be given strength to go through it. Look at the language of Luke, the physician, the technical term not used by Matthew and Mark, His intense anguish forced the blood out through the pores of the skin. So near was His body to collapse.

At last the anguish is over; He has been heard and answered. He comes out of the struggle, strong. He has asked for physical strength and it has been given

him,—“ There appeared unto Him an angel, strengthening Him.” Why did He say to His disciples, “ Sleep on now ” ? Because He was strong ; He needed them no longer. A few minutes later, the officers coming to take Him, staggered back before His majesty ; when He said, “ I am He,” they went backwards and fell to the ground. And after all the agony of that night, and lack of food and sleep, and in spite of torture and crucifixion, He yielded up His spirit with a great shout. That was not the cry of an exhausted man. God had answered His prayer.

These were the two points of His prayer,—“ If it be possible ” and “ nevertheless.” The first is the natural human cry, and we all have a right to it if we are children of God. Go to Him with your trouble and ask Him to help you out. Don't be reconciled to God's will in advance. If your child is dying ; if your business is at the breaking-point ; if cherished hopes are about to fail you, don't say, “ His will be done ; it does not matter.” It does matter ! It matters greatly to you, and He knows and cares. Go to Him and say, “ O my Father, if it be possible, remove this cup from me,” and if it is possible, He will, for He is a good Father. And if it is not possible, *then* come with your “ nevertheless,” and lay down your own life, or a life dearer to you than your own, if He ask it.

This is what Sunday's sermon meant. Your life must be laid down, little by little or all at once ; but let it be according to God's will, and learn obedience by the things you suffer. Say with Him, “ Lo, I come to do Thy will,” and whether it be with the gladness of service at Jacob's Well or whether it lead into Gethsemane, still say bravely, “ Nevertheless ! ”

Jesus was calm for Calvary ; He had won the victory in Gethsemane : and you will be calm for whatever experience He sends you. And let me say, as I have said a thousand times before,—God’s will is a thing to be *done*, not *suffered*. Jesus well knew that He was not to sit down calmly and suffer His Father’s will ; He had something to do. And if you submit to your Father’s will, you will have something to do.

We do not know what is ahead of us. We cannot turn over the pages as we do with a book. You know we often turn to the end to see how it comes out, and people say, O that’s mean ! you mustn’t.” But I always do. I never read a book without reading the last chapter first, and if that is sad I don’t read the book. Why should I ? I see enough real stories every day that bring the blood to my heart and the tears to my eyes, and when I read I want something bright and restful. But we can’t do that with our lives,—we can’t “peek,” as the children say. We must read it page by page. Then let us read it bravely. Not only by what we may yet mean to each other of increasing love and helpfulness, but also by what we may mean to our Lord, I beseech you to make this the expression of your truest desire, “Lo, I come to do Thy will !” Let us follow our Lord, and help each other, and pray for one another, and may the Lord watch between you and me while we are absent from one another !

“We give to Thee of our substance. It was dear to us because it was Thy gift; it is dearer now because accepted by Thee.”

THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS

LUKE 19: 11-27.

WE have a fine lesson to-night. Well, of course, it is in the Bible. But it is particularly fine to-night. In verse eleven, “these things” means the story of Zaccheus. As Christ was going on to Jerusalem He spoke a parable, and deftly used history. “We will not have this man to reign over us” was a reference to an event in current history, and would catch their attention, for they were all interested in the attempt of Archelaus to hold the throne of the Herods. It may have been a sort of warning to the people. An embassy of about five hundred men had hastened to Rome to withstand the application there of the new king,—a risky thing to do, for when he returned (and he would) he would be interested in the protestants. Otherwise, the parable does not seem to need this incident. Perhaps it had some reference to the attempt of James and John to secure positions of influence and power in the coming kingdom. Salome thought that if her voice were added to that of her sons they might get ahead of Peter who seemed to have right of way. They all misunderstood what such positions meant. Addison said long ago that the noblest emoluments of high office were the opportunities of doing good,—a truth not realized in our political life. So don’t let us blame James and John too severely.

Well, the king returns—“It came to pass that when

he returned." Our Lord is coming again! This is the glorious hope that He holds always before us. Death is not a glorious hope. There is a hope that triumphs *over* death. Physical death is the debt of nature; spiritual death is alienation from God. But there is a glorious hope that *I* do not die at all, though physical death overtakes me. There is the more glorious hope that He will come again *before* I die, and then I need not die at all—not even my body. And He *will* come. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." That is our glorious hope.

Archbishop Trench says of it—"A thing that is possible any day, and impossible no day." When I was a little boy, my mother used always to tell me to put my clothes in order when I went to bed, "for the Lord might come to-night, and you would want to be ready to meet Him."

Then Jesus went on with His story, for He generally taught in stories; that is what parables are. Certain truths are emphasized by the form into which they are thrown. We are just beginning to learn the lessons of Froebel and Pestalozzi:—not an abstraction first, but an object. We are learning to teach children by the natural method. We put a block or slips of paper or modeling clay before them, and lead them on to the abstract. Jesus told a story and taught a principle.

The man who gained ten pounds and the man who gained five pounds are equally commended. It is not the amount we return the Master, but the fidelity we show in His service. Yet none of us is as faithful as he

might be ; none of us will return all he might : at the best, much that we might have developed by greater faithfulness has been stunted. Don't you suppose the man who gained five pounds wished it had been ten ?

Then the third servant came, the one who had done nothing, and *he* said, "*Behold!*" The one who had done the least made the most fuss. He talked more than all the rest put together ! "*Behold, here is thy pound. I did not lose it. It is here just as you gave it to me.*" Did not *lose* it ! As if that were to his credit ! But God does not give you your talents to keep, but to use. It is not enough that you return them ; you must return them with their natural increase. The figure of money is well chosen here, for money is vital ; it grows and begets offspring. "*I should have had mine own with usury.*" Usury simply means the increase or return from use—*interest* is the modern term ; it is not the same as usurious. The word used here for usury means also "*children,*" "*progeny,*" and the master had a right to look for legitimate interest on his investments.

The servant pleads, "*I kept it laid safely away in a napkin.*" The word for napkin is *sudarium*, and means the napkin or handkerchief used to wipe off the sweat of toil. The same word is used in the legend of St. Veronica—the handkerchief that some pitying soul lent to our Lord as He toiled up to Calvary under His cross. The servant, however, had not put it to its proper use, and so disclosed his double shame,—he had not toiled, and his pound had lain useless. And his excuse was, "*I knew you demanded the impossible ; therefore, I gave up.*" His master said, "*Therefore, you should have put more energy into your work.*" Of course he could convict him out of his own mouth. There are more ways than

one of securing the interest. If you have no ability to do, attach yourself to some one who has. If you have only one talent, a half-talent, a quarter-talent, a possibility of a talent—use *that*. You will be judged accordingly,—not according to what you have not, but according to what you have.

Attach yourself to some one who has the organizing faculty. In a church, the pastor makes a good bank. Come to me. I will set you at work. Sometimes men say to me that they would like to give, but their lives do not bring them into contact with such cases as need help, and they really do not know where to give. If these things are not in the runways of your life, apply to me.

In the East in Bible times there was no bank, in our modern sense. The usurers or money-changers sat at tables on which the money was placed in little heaps, and when a man failed, his table was broken to pieces to indicate that he might go into some other business. I think it quite likely that our term “broken bank” had its origin there. What is “bankrupt,” rupture, but a broken bank?

Then Christ enunciates the great law that, He who useth not, even that which he hath shall be taken away; which is just and right.

[The hymn beginning :

“O Lord of heaven and earth and sea,”

was then sung; and after the singing Dr. Babcock took exception to the sentiment expressed in the fifth stanza :

“We lose what on ourselves we spend.”]

Many of our hymns are beautiful and helpful, but re-

member, they are not Scripture ; they are not inspired ; sometimes they are not true. Much of our hymnology represents heaven as mere rest, quiescence, as great multitudes of redeemed ones singing. Now, singing may be truest worship, but they don't sing *all* the time. No, heaven is increased activity, where

“ Every power finds sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy.”

Perhaps some of you feel as if you would like to rest for an æon or two. But we shall not need it. The Master will set us at work anew, and it will be work without weariness, for then we can employ “the full-grown energies of heaven.”

“ For doubtless unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit,
In such vast offices, as suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.”

That is virile, dynamic. I always like to send that to those who are suffering bereavement. It gives outreach.

The hymn we sung says, “We lose what on ourselves we spend” ! Not at all. Many an investment for ourselves yields a splendid return for the owner as well as for the steward ; and the estate is taxed in part to support the steward.

Whatever tends to make me a healthy and happy steward, God freely allows me ; but I doubt whether it is ever right for you to spend anything on yourselves that does not make you better men. Think this out, and draw some fair line.

The head of a business house sends a drummer out on the road. He returns with his itemized bill of expenditure,

and his employer notes—" Ah, there you hired a carriage. Was that necessary? and the dinner? " The man explains that the former saved him important time and the latter secured a valuable customer, and his employer is satisfied. He knows that all reasonable outlay secures better returns for the business, and a good business man wants his representative to be contented and feel unhampered, but—there must be no imposition! After all, the property is not yours, but the owner's. You say, " My power, and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth." No, you forget; it is He that giveth you the power to get wealth. I have nothing that is not my Lord's. Jesus uses this figure frequently—now it is a steward in charge of property, now a servant in care of a house.

Notice the three parables He gives us on this subject, and so closely allied. First, there is the parable of " The Talents "—varying gifts, and the worker is rewarded for his faithfulness. In the parable of " The Pounds," it is equal gifts, and the reward is for industry. And in the parable of " The Workers in the Vineyard," where they who come in at the eleventh hour are paid exactly as they who toiled all day, the reward is for the spirit in which the work was done. You know how when you go into a hotel, it is the pleasant, obliging man to whom you turn for help. It is so much more agreeable to be waited on by a man who responds to your need with alacrity and, apparently, no thought of a " tip." (I say *apparently!*)

I have one or two corollaries to offer on the teachings of these parables.

I. Use your pound. Some of you simply let it lie fallow. How much do you know about your own property and the needs of your tenants? A man interested

in these questions, and anxious to interest a friend who owned a great deal of property, asked him to take a walk with him. The friend consented, and was shown some model tenements, with all their comforts. Then they went down to his own property, and when he saw things there he said, "I am ashamed. I did not realize how things were. Thank you for the lesson. I will have that air-shaft removed, and open courts built—or, better, the whole thing shall come down." Can't you set some one at work considering his talent? Some men are always clutching. If they could be suddenly robbed of all that with which conventionality clothes them, they would simply be clutchers. When Peabody saw what a surgical operation it was to some men to give, he made up his mind that he must train himself to enjoy giving.

II. The diffident man is in the greatest danger. He says, "One is only one. One and one are only two!" But do what you can. When a soldier was ordered to the charge and objected, "My sword is too short," his commanding officer replied, "Put another step behind it!" That means, put moral heroism behind all your defects and deficiencies. Do what you can. Entrust your limitations and deficiencies and weaknesses to the Lord,—He can use a *willing* weakling. If the older men will not take part in the meeting, do not let that deter you younger men. It means growth to you. Take care of your spiritual investments.

III. But another point,—by entrusting all to Him you learn patience. "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting *nothing*." James speaks as if this were the crowning virtue of the Christian life. Work is normal. Even a lazy

man will acknowledge that, after you once get him at it. But patience is a slowly acquired virtue. It must grow.

I went to see an invalid this week. She finds it hard to be unable to do her accustomed work in the church and at home. I said to her, "God told you to work, and nobly you responded. Now, He wants you to learn a harder lesson for Him,—stand and wait."

He has lessons for you to learn, too—energy *and* patience.

“ May we dispense our stewardship generously, not leaving too much behind us when we set forth on our new adventure in that new life, to cause complications for those who come after us.”

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

MATTHEW 25 : 14-30.

WE have to-night for our lesson the parable of The Talents. The kingdom of heaven is like, is like, is like, and so often the likeness is expressed in commercial terms. It seems to me that I have presented this thought to you again and again, but I cannot help it, for it recurs again and again in these last lessons presented by Christ, as though He would say as His final and supreme counsel, “ Use your talent ; invest it ; secure interest on it ; let Me have My own back with its natural increase when I return. Go and trade with it.”

Christ says of the five-talent man, “ He *went* and traded.” That is truly Oriental ; that is the way an Oriental boasts of his wealth ; he travels. He does not have the fine houses and establishments of the Occidental, so this is his way of exploiting his wealth.

One digged in the earth and there bestowed his Lord's money. The eastern savings-bank is a hole in the ground—it is the only place of safety there, but it is not a place of safety for your talent. Go to that hole, and get your talent out. Don't plead, “ I return it just as I got it”—that is shameful and lazy. I like Carlyle's rugged “ Produce ! Produce ! ” *Do* something, or you will bring on moral atrophy. “ I would,” you say ; “ if

I had that man's talent, I would do his work. If I had that man's money, I would be generous." No, you wouldn't unless you are now. Faithfulness is tested as truly by the little as the great. Use what you have. There is no place for the comparative degree in a Christian's parsing. There is only the positive degree of fact and the superlative degree of enthusiasm; but the comparative degree is vulgar. You say, "But I can't do anything. I don't profess to be able to effect results." You must use what you have, just the same. Responsibilities are not created by professions. More than that. You are bound to trade with your Lord's money; for, remember, it is His, not yours at all. "He called His own servants and delivered unto them His goods." And if you can't originate, you must coöperate with some one who can. You will cause some one trouble? Well, some one will be troubled anyhow, and he would like to have some of it that way.

And the invested money grows. Enlarge your horizon. You have only a little gift for music? Then use that little for Him—don't hide it. There are places where your little is needed. There is a splendid chance to serve Him in this church. The East and West side work—the two handles of the Lord's plough!

Your talent may be that of money-getting, of invention, of political or social influence. Whatever it is, use it for Him. It is His entrusted talent. I refuse to acknowledge that the consecration of a minister is any different from that of a teacher or a business man. It is not what we serve with, but how we serve. Sir Humphrey Davy had little more than a tin pan and a candle to work with, but he invented the miners' lamp, and has incalculably increased the security of life in the mines. Faraday

worked as a bookbinder's apprentice. One day he chanced to notice an article in a book which interested him. It was on electricity. He used his own spark of genius to create other sparks, and he finally became a Leyden jar and electrified the world!

My most important talent, I feel convinced, is my knowledge of Jesus Christ, and every one of His followers has that; and my most awful responsibility is the use I make of that knowledge.

The *faithful* servant is the one the Master watches approvingly. If we are faithful, then we shall win the Master's smile, and smiles are divine, you know. Have you ever seen a child bringing up work to a teacher, and noted how she waited to catch the teacher's smile, and how when it came, her face lighted up, and she went away happy? Don't you want to win the Master's smile? Don't you want to *make* Him smile?

The faithful servant will be glad to meet Him. His work was not perfect, but it was intentionally, approximately, progressively so. Like the twelfth and fifteenth in music. They are not harmony, but they help to make harmony.

People of one talent are what we want, are what the world needs. There are more of them than of the five and ten-talent folk, and enough of the single water-drops make the flood.

“Thou hast known disappointments and disillusiones and betrayal and broken friendships. Thou art touched, not with the fact, but the feeling of our infirmities.”

THE TEN VIRGINS

MATTHEW 25 : 1-13.

THIS parable of the Ten Virgins has a curious association for me. The first time I can remember hearing it was when a stranger spoke on it in our old church at home. He had a curious habit of hissing his s's. A sudden consciousness of life came to me then, and there comes such a time in every child's life, when a film breaks, and he is thenceforth a man. How beautifully Wordsworth has said this in his ode on “Immortality” :—

“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar ;
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory, do we come
From God, who is our home.
Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy ;
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,—
He sees it in his joy ;
The youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended ;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.”

Again we have in this parable the *likeness* :—“The

kingdom of heaven is like—is like,”—and here it is preparedness. The wise virgins took oil in their lamps. The oil always represents the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus. The Spirit is the omnipresence of the humanity of Christ, and we all can have a full supply of His power ; we can always have this oil in our lamps.

Notice the force of “but.” In reading your Bibles it will add greatly to your interest and pleasure to note these little connectives ; they are very suggestive. In this parable, the “but” each time introduces a contrast between preparedness and unpreparedness. The foolish took no oil, *but* the wise, etc., the foolish said, Give us of your oil, *but* the wise answered, etc.

Doors are opening or closing all the time in life, and which they shall do for you depends on the way you grasp or fail to grasp the opportunities that come to you. Be watchful ; be ready to act.

What is your attitude towards the future life ? Some say it is a certain uncertainty. No, it is an uncertain certainty,—uncertain as to when it will come, but certain to come. On which will you reckon ? For which will you prepare ? We urge men to accept Christ, to accept Him now, and they say, “Well, we will think about it,” or, “Yes, I know it ought to be attended to.” Why, you wouldn’t act that way five minutes about your health or your wife’s health or your business. But in this most important matter you delay, and so you fail to be ready for this uncertain certainty.

“And five of them were wise and five were foolish.” In which class do you belong ? for we are constantly being classified, constantly being “assigned to our station” whether we will or not. Are you wise or foolish, careful or careless, thoughtful or thoughtless ?

At length the uncertain certainty came to pass,—at midnight the Bridegroom came, and “the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.” Will you run such a risk in that hour? No, it is not a risk; it is certainty of failure. The wise *could* not share their oil; oil is character, the result of the indwelling of the Spirit of Jesus. And in that supreme hour, none can share with you their preparedness, for character is not transferable. In a sudden emergency you say to a friend, “O give me your calmness and poise!” He would, but he cannot. You must have oil in *your* vessel for *your* lamp.

I am not an old man. I have had an uneventful life, but sorrow will probably come to me,—every one gets about as much as he can bear before he is through. I want to meet whatever experiences are ahead of me with fortitude, in such a way as to honour Him whose name and sign I bear.

Prepare now for the emergencies which are sure to come. Prepare in trifles, so that you are ready for crises. If your oatmeal is burned at breakfast, take it calmly; then when your house is afire, you can meet that with calmness and composure, too.

The wise virgins attended to their supply of oil long before the midnight came. You must get in the daylight the oil you will need at night—in the darkness. If you were suddenly called on to speak comfort to a dying man, what could you say? Could you say, “This I know, I *know*”? O I covet for you perfection as Christians!

You know not the hour when your Lord will come, but you know there is an hour, and—the Bridegroom sets the hour of His coming.

RABBI BEN EZRA

“ Help us to reach out past the things we cannot understand to the God we trust. We thank Thee for the passing of what changes, and the changelessness of what passes not.”

RABBI BEN EZRA

AS next Sunday is review, and we have no regular lesson, I have decided to take up with you to-night Browning's poem, "Rabbi Ben Ezra," one of the most familiar and most helpful of all he wrote. Browning is one of the latter-day prophets. Wordsworth and Tennyson also belong in this classification. The former is simple and direct; the latter is compressed but easily understandable; Browning is intricate. I think it was a trick of his mind. He saw things that way and stated them with little reference to their clearness, trusting to their strength and truth. This poem is an epitome of his teaching. Learn it, and learn also "Prospice," "Saul," and "A Death in the Desert." These are some of the simpler of his sustained efforts.

The lack of the present day is the lack of sustained thought. Thanks to the—if I may use "thanks" in such a connection.—Thanks to the light newspapers and lighter of the magazines, all power of concentrated thought is being lost. Children will not go through a book unless it is interesting enough to excite them. This light reading is demoralizing or, rather, dementalizing.

Every stanza of this vigorous poem might be summarized by a verse of Scripture. We will take it up stanza by stanza.

I

Grow old along with me !
 The best is yet to be,
 The last of life, for which the first was made :
 Our times are in His hand
 Who saith " A whole I planned.
 Youth shows but half ; trust God : see all, nor
 be afraid ! "

You have got to grow old ; you can't escape it ; such is the law of life. But don't be afraid. The God who has delivered, will deliver. You would not stop at the beginning of life, would you ? Well, this whole life is only a beginning. God has His best things still in store for you. Be ready to see all He has to show you.

II

Not that, amassing flowers,
 Youth sighed " Which rose make ours,
 Which lily leave and then as best recall ? "
 Not that, admiring stars,
 It yearned " Nor Jove, nor Mars ;
 Mine be some figured flame which blends, tran-
 scends them all ! "

You choose the rose and then spend your life regretting that you did not choose the lily. Don't spoil your life by such vain and foolish regrets. " In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." A good man's probabilities are the certainties of God's providence. After you have decided a thing according to your best judgment, and prayerfully, don't fret—whatever the result. When all seems to go wrong, don't feel that all is wrong. Suppose you are cast into the furnace, that is where steel is made. Suppose the plough-

share does cut through your turf, that is where wheat springs up.

And don't spoil your life, on the other hand, by impracticable visions. Your particular star cannot outshine all others. Do not set yourself to make yours some combination of Jove and Mars, exceeding either, for you cannot do it, and your life will drift purposelessly away while you fret about it. Do the best you can, and then, forgetting the things that are behind, press forward.

III

Not for such hopes and fears
 Annulling youth's brief years,
 Do I remonstrate : folly wide the mark !
 Rather I prize the doubt
 Low kinds exist without,
 Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

The hopes and fears will develop you, but development means pain. If we were merely clods it would not be so, but we are clods with sparks and cannot hope to go through life "untroubled"; only "low kinds" can do that. Be glad you have the spark.

IV

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
 Were man but formed to feed
 On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
 Such feasting ended, then
 As sure an end to men ;
 Irks care the crop-full bird ? Frets doubt the
 maw-crammed beast ?

Of course not ; they are clods without sparks. All a bird wants is a full crop. Does the beast with a crammed

maw have any doubt of the felicity of life? But *we* are *men*, and need something beside feasting—even on joy. A witty woman once said, “There are four important events in every day of a man’s life. The first is *Eat*, and I forget the other three.” Don’t be animated stomachs.

Rejoice we are allied
 To that which doth provide
 And not partake, effect and not receive!
 A spark disturbs our clod;
 Nearer we hold of God
 Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must
 believe.

The intensity of life annuls the expansiveness of time. That splendid absorption in life that makes you a co-worker with God, allies you with Him, and causes you to forget the needs of the body, the flight of time! This is the reason God is never weary; He is so intensely at work.

That spark will give us no rest; it disturbs us, but it makes us give, not take,—that is what God does.

VI

Then welcome each rebuff
 That turns earth’s smoothness rough,
 Each sting that bids, Nor sit nor stand, but go!
 Be our joy three parts pain!
 Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
 Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never
 grudge the throe!

Have you a pain in your body? It is a call on the

soul to triumph over it. Have you lassitude dragging you down? It is a chance for you to show the dominant power of the spirit. Keep your spirit on top. Keep your body under. Keep yourself under control. Go to bed early. Yes, this is hard in the city, I know, but you would be more spiritually-minded men if you did, less irritable, more composed, the nerves not worn to such a fine edge.

Even if your joys are three parts pain, what of it? They are the growing pains of the soul. Be glad of them. Rejoice that God has a development to work out in you,—you are not yet a finished product.

VII

For thence,—a paradox
 Which comforts while it mocks,—
 Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail :
 What I aspired to be
 And was not, comforts me :
 A brute I might have been, but would not sink
 i' the scale.

Seeming failure is not always real failure. There is a victory of struggle as well as of attainment. You say you have attempted so much, and accomplished so little. But if your attempts have been earnest, you are a more accomplished person thereby.

“A brute I might have been”; yes, and you might succeed as a brute, but would you want to succeed on that plane? Would you not rather even fail on a higher plane? Shall we let the body rule?

See Joseph. He had his purple aspirations, but he drew back from temptation with the thought, “How can I do this great wrong and sin against God!”

VIII

What is he but a brute
 Whose flesh hath soul to suit,
 Whose spirit works lest legs and arms want play?
 To man, propose this test —
 Thy body at its best,
 How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

Did you ever wish, as you saw an animal resting, that you were a brute? Perhaps I ought not to ask that; but I have wished it—just for the utter rest that we men never know.

“Thy body at its best”—think what it could do at its best! Never harbour that false and ascetic teaching that the body is evil. Why, our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is used to dwelling in a body. He dwelt in the Old Testament heroes, who were not always worthy. Christ was His perfect temple. He will dwell in your body if you will let Him, and as fully as you will let Him. No, the body is not evil; it is good. But the body is my beast of burden—to be used, to be cared for, to be considered, but never to rule. I am to rule *it*.

IX

Yet gifts should prove their use:
 I own the Past profuse
 Of power each side, perfection every turn:
 Eyes, ears took in their dole,
 Brain treasured up the whole;
 Should not the heart beat once, “How good to
 live and learn”?

But this body is the channel of God's gifts, and He expects us not only to live, but “to live and learn”—*learn*, that is the purpose of living. We are in school

here. If in the Father's house are many mansions, in the Father's school are many benches, and we need all the school-training to enjoy the mansions. Be faithful ; learn your lessons ; clench your hands on your hard bench, and hold on till the bell sounds.

X

Not once beat—Praise be Thine !
 I see the whole design ;
 I, who saw power, see now love perfect too :
 Perfect I call Thy plan :
 Thanks that I was a man !
 Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what Thou
 shalt do !

Not once beat, but beat many times, as we increasingly realize the love as well as the power of God. "Thy plan,"—think what it is. "We know that all things work together for good." After all, I would not be a brute ; thanks that I was a man—a man, even if it hurts. Complete Thy purpose in me ; carry it out to its far-off issue. I can trust Thee ; at least, I can *learn* to trust Thee.

XI

For pleasant is this flesh ;
 Our soul, in its rose-mesh
 Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest ;
 Would we some prize might hold
 To match the manifold
 Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we
 did best !

After our highest aspirations we still feel the downward pull of the flesh. The life of the flesh is pleasant and easy ; it is a rose-mesh and very ensnaring ; and we long to yield to its allurements. There is still a little leaning

towards the brute-life, a little unacknowledged wish that we were not troubled with sparks.

“Manifold possessions of the brute,” their instincts. If only we could be guided by instinct! Their instincts are unfailing; when they follow them, all goes well. Would we had some prize to match them! But we have not. We cannot shift our responsibility. We are men, and every decision we make must be thought out.

XII

Let us not always say,
 “Spite of this flesh to-day
 I strove, made head, gained ground, upon the
 whole!”
 As the bird wings and sings,
 Let us cry “All good things
 Are ours; nor soul helps flesh more, now, than
 flesh helps soul!”

The body need not be a hindrance; it may be the channel of God's choicest blessings, if it is kept in its place, made servant and not master.

XIII

Therefore I summon age
 To grant youth's heritage,
 Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
 Thence shall I pass, approved
 A man, for aye removed
 From the developed brute; a god, though in
 the germ.

You are reaching a transition period. You want to pass your examination. Don't you want to pass “Approved”? Then Christ can present you before His Father with great joy.

XIV

And I shall thereupon
 Take rest, ere I be gone
 Once more on my adventure brave and new :
 Fearless and unperplexed,
 When I wage battle next,
 What weapons to select, what armour to indue.

This life is over, and I face the problem under other conditions. As I have told you before, my strongest feeling in regard to death is curiosity. I wouldn't be afraid! I have to die. I know that. And I wouldn't be a coward!

“I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
 The best and the last!”

You get that in Browning, too. But I would like to know what is behind the door, in that other mansion of the Father's house. A sudden surprise of glory? Well, I cannot know now, and I am not in a hurry; but it will be fine to know some time!

Do you remember Thomas Hook's epitaph?—“Here endeth the first lesson.” After death comes the second. With the experience I have had, the struggle I have faced, I shall know just how to take up the next, whether here or there.

XV

Youth ended, I shall try
 My gain or loss thereby;
 Leave the fire ashes; what survives is gold :
 And I shall weigh the same,
 Give life its praise or blame :
 Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being
 old.

There are advantages in growing old. It settles many difficulties. It helps us to set the true value on *things*. We learn to distinguish guilt from gold.

XVI

For note, when evening shuts,
 A certain moment cuts
 The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:
 A whisper from the west
 Shoots—"Add this to the rest,
 Take it, and try its worth: here dies another
 day."

Emerson says, "Every day is a doomsday." If we realized this, we would take each day and try its worth as it came to us. Then we would do better work to-morrow.

XVII

So, still within this life,
 Though lifted o'er its strife,
 Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
 This rage was right i' the main,
 That acquiescence vain:
 The Future I may face, now I have proved the
 Past."

This attitude of calm review of our days, this testing of their real worth, lifts us above the strife of life. The Psalmist says, "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." But the review is not always what we would desire. "This rage was right in the main." On the whole, it was right to contend there; but it was mean to truckle here. If I had it to do over, I would show a just indignation there, but I would try to be brave enough not to acquiesce here.

XVIII

For more is not reserved
 To man, with soul just nerved
 To act to-morrow what he learns to-day :
 Here, work enough to watch
 The Master work, and catch
 Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's
 true play.

In all your work, watch some master-workman ; it is a great help and incentive. It adds dignity to your work—brings out hidden meaning in it. But Browning has written the word Master with a capital M, and so he intends it to mean all it can mean. We have one Master, and He works ; yes, He watches the Father work, and whatsoever the Father doeth, that doeth the Son likewise. Look to Christ and watch Him work, and follow and imitate Him, that the beautiful continuity may not be broken.

XIX

As it was better, youth
 Should strive, through acts uncouth,
 Towards making, than repose on aught found
 made :
 So, better, age exempt
 From strife, should know, than tempt
 Further. Thou waitedst age ; wait death nor
 be afraid !

Teach your children to make, to create. Don't always give them finished products to enjoy. They don't enjoy them half as well. Did you ever notice the unconscious look of pleased satisfaction that comes over the face of a child, when, after many discouraging defeats, he succeeds in constructing something ? Leave him this joy.

You don't want to grow old, but you must, so don't become restive and apprehensive about it. However, you may stop counting if you wish; that would be a good plan. That would give you something of the sense of God's eternity, His self-existence.

XX

Enough now if the Right
 And Good and Infinite
 Be named here, as thou call'st thy hand thine
 own,
 With knowledge absolute,
 Subject to no dispute
 From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel
 alone.

It is good to be alone sometimes. All true natures crave it. So we come to know what Jesus meant when He said, "And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." The same idea is expressed in that most beautiful hymn by Mrs. Stowe :

"Still, still with Thee."

XXI

Be there, for once and all,
 Severed great minds from small,
 Announced to each his station in the Past!
 Was I, the world arraigned,
 Were they, my soul disdained,
 Right? Let age speak truth and give us peace
 at last.

Another advantage of growing old—it teaches us to classify wisely and justly, to give things their proper value. The whole stanza is an expression of classifica-

tion. There is always—there must be—classification. If we should try to ignore it, it would be forced on us. Our lives are full of it. Our very expressions, our daily talk, show it—good, bad ; beautiful, ugly.

But where do you stand in the classification? Are you right or wrong in your attitude towards life, towards your brothers? Age will help you to decide ; and so will watching the Master-workman who is continually classifying His apprentices—and He classifies according to faithfulness.

XXII

Now, who shall arbitrate ?
 Ten men love what I hate,
 Shun what I follow, slight what I receive :
 Ten, who in ears and eyes
 Match me : we all surmise,
 They, this thing, and I, that : whom shall my
 soul believe ?

Well, not any one who judges only by the outward appearance and literal accomplishment. You may not make a living, but you can make a life.

XXIII

Not on the vulgar mass
 Called " work," must sentence pass,
 Things done, that took the eye and had the price ;
 O'er which, from level stand,
 The low world laid its hand,
 Found straightway to its mind, could value in a
 trice :

Of course, the world can put a value on things, for things are on its level ; and it is a low level. Things appeal to it.

XXIV

But all, the world's coarse thumb
 And finger failed to plumb,
 So passed in making up the main account ;
 All instincts immature,
 All purposes unsure,
 That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the
 . man's amount :

And these finer, spiritual accomplishments that cannot be rolled between the thumb and finger, the world takes no account of. It cannot. It does not even know they exist, for they are spiritually discerned.

But these immature instincts, these unsure purposes ! O, this is what I have so often said before. These are what count. These are what God sees and values ; and you who have the mind of Christ, you who are seated with Him in heavenly places, must learn to judge as He does. Don't disregard the struggling instincts and purposes which, as yet, can find no expression. Don't undervalue them and overvalue material things. Believe in these voiceless groanings of the soul : "Some things I know are true, and I will hold to them ; some things I know ought to be true, and I will proceed as though they were, even though I can't prove it—the doubt and uncertainty may be God's challenge to my faith !"

The man who lays up things, will have the things taken from him and only a cipher left. The man who is struggling under ever so great discouragement and uncertainty towards God and truth, will find some day that the ciphers are taken away, but he, the integer, remains.

Think how many immature instincts and unsure purposes and voiceless longings go into any piece of work that is worth the doing. When you hear the magnificent

“Hallelujah Chorus,” do you stop to think of the hunger and fatigue and work behind it? Yet they are there and give it worth; for if it doesn't cost, it doesn't count:—such is the law of life.

Both the seen and the unseen, the building and the foundation, must swell the man's amount.

XXV

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act.

Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This I was worth to God, whose wheel the
pitcher shaped.

Once he gets that pitcher in, he cannot get it out again, and the figure runs through the remaining stanzas of the poem.

XXVI

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel

Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,

“Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone,
seize to-day!”

XXVII

Fool! All that is at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;

Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be;

Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and
clay endure.

XXVIII

He fixed thee mid this dance
 Of plastic circumstance,
 This Present, thou forsooth, wouldst fain arrest :
 Machinery just meant
 To give thy soul its bent,
 Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently im-
 pressed.

You want to arrest the Present. You don't want to grow old. You want to hold on to this life. You don't want to die. But did you ever think that you would then be a case of arrested development? His machinery is perfectly adapted to your needs, and He wants to turn you off a finished product, that He may see of the travail of His soul in you and be satisfied.

XXIX

What though the earlier grooves
 Which ran the laughing loves
 Around thy base, no longer pause and press ?
 What though, about thy rim,
 Scull-things in order grim
 Grow out in graver mood, obey the sterner stress ?

The little cupids ran round the cup at first, but now intenser needs, and nobler (perhaps grimmer) purposes are wrought out. Never mind. Look up. Find God's purpose for you, and don't shrink, and don't shirk ! What has passed out of your life is not to be compared with that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory He has in store for you.

XXX

Look not thou down, but up !
 To uses of a cup,

The festal board, lamp's flash, and trumpet's
 peal,
 The new wine's foaming flow,
 The Master's lips aglow !
 Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst
 thou with earth's wheel ?

That is magnificent ! That is magnificent ! It needs
 no comment.

XXXI

But I need now as then,
 Thee, God, who moulded men :
 And since, not even while the whirl was worst.
 Did I—to the wheel of life
 With shapes and colours rife,
 Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake Thy
 thirst :

“But I need now as then, Thee, God.” Just this
 little pathetic appeal. That will be glorious, but it seems
 far off. “Be near me, O God. I need Thee now, *now*.
 I know I shall have Thee then, but be with me now,
 while the whirl and distraction of life are around me !”

Let us not mistake our end. We are cups to quench
 His thirst, and God takes pleasure in a man when he
 fulfills the purpose of his being.

XXXII

So, take and use Thy work ;
 Amend what flaws may lurk,
 What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the
 aim !
 My times be in Thy hand !
 Perfect the cup as planned !
 Let age approve of youth, and death com-
 plete the same !

V

BROKEN PIECES

THE INCARNATION

WE cannot understand the limitations involved in the great self-emptying that was necessitated by the incarnation. But it has often seemed to me that it might be illustrated by a large pipe-organ and a small parlour-organ. Imagine that the large organ has all its stops shut off but the flute and diapason, and then, under this limitation, plays in unison with the small organ which has no wider scope.

That, in some dim way, is what our God did for us when He became man in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The power was all at His disposal, but in His wonderful condescension He held it in abeyance, that He might live our life and understand our trials and sorrows and sufferings, and through His own victory purchase victory for us.

Do the best that you know, that you may know better. If you have a poor watch, still, keep your appointments by it, so that when you get a good one, the habit of keeping appointments will have been formed.

Follow your conscience. It may be faulty and warped, but by following it, you steady and rectify it; and when it is at last perfected, you have learned the lesson of obeying it, and can go on to perfection under its leadership. Follow Jesus Christ at all times: He is standard time for the universe!

PARTING OF THE WAYS

I want a faith that will let me dare to look to all four points of the compass from which the winds of temptation blow.

We may refuse to face responsibility, but in so doing we lose potential power. We would not refuse if we realized the alternative. When the rich young man, who called out the Master's love, said, "What shall I do more?" Christ saw the idol of selfishness, and probed him at that point. What would have been the result if he had yielded? Maybe Christ would have said, "Sell *some*, and learn its blessedness." To Abraham He said, "I have your heart; you may keep your boy."

When the road forks, be careful that in refusing the difficulty you do not refuse God's allurements to a heroic soul. What if your face does grow white and your lips blanch and your knees smite together? You can say, "God gave me a will, and I *will* do this right thing!"

THE CRITERION

"He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained."—Acts 17:31.

There is a gesture behind that expression. It is "*That* man!"—as the countryman says and as our children say, "That there man." Why do we condemn them? Do we not say in French *cet homme-la*—"that man there"—with the gesture?

Now, *that* man is Christ. God is to judge the world by Christ. Christ is God's idea of what a man should be. He is the world's idea, too. Then gauge yourself up to Him. He became man so that He could judge fairly; He came also to correct our mistaken idea that God did not love us.

THE HABIT OF PRAYER

O, if Jesus Christ was a man of prayer, how dare I live without it !

Jesus had an accustomed place of prayer. Have you a place, a definite place, where you meet your Father ?

If you have time, always think before you pray. There are times of emergency when the only thing for you to do is to send up a quick cry for help, and then go ahead and do the best you can ; but, if it is possible, think first.

CHILDREN

Who helps a little child stirs the heart of Christ.

Don't be afraid to state the most abstruse truth about God to a child. He will understand it far better than you do yourself. And sometimes it seems as if at the extreme end of life, the Lord grants a second period of childhood, not with its inability and ignorance, but with its spiritual insight.

Children who mean to follow Christ must be obedient to parents, kind to servants, generous in their play, and honourable among themselves.

When we are put out, we say, "Everything goes wrong !" When children are put out, we say *they* go wrong !

I read this the other day : " Always take the attitude of admiration before a child." That is fine. They will learn to criticise easily enough, and do it better than you ever did ; perhaps because they will have had better teachers than our parents were to us—bless them !

If the education of our children has been taken out of our hands and put into the hands of the angels, shall we

not help some other little children who do not receive the training we would have given ours?

THE HOLY SPIRIT

“I will send you another Comforter. I am one; He is another. I have been with you; He will be in you.”

You may have noticed that I seldom speak of the Third Person of the Trinity as the Holy Ghost. That is His Old Testament name; He comes to us with a new name, the name of Christ—(“whom the Father will send in My name”)—and with more than Christ’s power. Think of Him as Christ;—speaking Christ’s words, doing Christ’s work, producing in us the Christ-life. I am sure you will find this conception of the Holy Spirit a great help in your Christian development. Think of Him as the Spirit which animated Christ while in the flesh, and which could be liberated in His fullness only when Christ laid down His human work (of which the Spirit had been the animating power), and returned to the Father. In that last talk with the disciples He says, “I have needed Him; I have used Him; but when I go away, I will send Him back to you.”

Christ was the Logos, the Word of God; and the Spirit was the indwelling power, giving that Word utterance, expression. Now He dwells in believers, as He did dwell in Christ, giving expression through them to the Word of the Father.

When Christ sends the Holy Spirit, He convicts the world of righteousness, because salvation is accomplished, and there is no judgment now for them that are in Christ Jesus. Judgment for His own being set aside, God’s righteousness can become operative in us. He convicts

the world also of judgment, but it is not for us ; we are not of the world, if so be that the Spirit of Christ dwell in us.

GIVING

Give freely. Try to catch the Spirit of Christ, who pleased not Himself. O, but some of us have learned the joy of not pleasing ourselves. Truly, it is more blessed to give than to receive. Say it this way, and you will realize the blessedness if you never have before, —It is more blessed to give than to *have* to receive.

Give, gladly and generously, considering those who have to receive.

CHRIST IN THE WORLD

All history is a mystery without His Story.

POWER

What is your life? It is even a vapour. What is it harnessed to? Steam is a vapour, but it moves the world.

LOVE

If we feel neither fear nor love, we are on a level with the brutes ; if we have fear and not love, we are slaves ; if we have love and some fear, we have passed into the region of friendship ; if fear is gone and love only remains, we have reached intimacy, identity.

COMMUNION

May we not at every meal take one little bite of bread in remembrance of Him ?

PRAYER

With Thy perfect petition we close our imperfect ones :

“ Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread : and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil : for Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever.

—Amen.

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