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## → SERMONS ←

### CHRIST'S EXAMPLE OF COURAGE AND STEADFASTNESS.\*

BY REV. H. W. MCKNIGHT, D.D., PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH AND PRESIDENT OF PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE.

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*And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.*—LUKE ix., 51.

THESE words record the invincible firmness and determination of the perfect Man. They reveal strength as well as purity of purpose—a steadfastness in which true manhood is conditioned.

Jesus, when there was everything to bind Him back, and nothing but duty and the impulses of unselfish and wondrous devotion to draw Him onward, faltered not in His work. With the scenes of home and most tender associations behind Him, and of deep humiliation and bitter agony before Him and clearly foreseen, His resolution was taken. Conscious of His mission and determined to complete it, "He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem."

How inspiring is His example! How deserving of your earnest consideration, young gentlemen, as you pass up from your retirement and studies and comparative ease into those more active engagements and stirring scenes which mark the field of life's toils, struggles, victories or defeats! In the mission before you your courage will be tested, and your success will be determined as much by the steadiness as by the nobility of your aims.

\* Preached in Christ Church, Gettysburg, Pa., as a baccalaureate sermon to the class of '89, June 2d, 1889.

## →\* LIVING ISSUES DISCUSSED BY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS. \*←

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### LAW AND PERSUASION.

BY PRESIDENT W. M. BLACKBURN, D.D., PIERRE UNIVERSITY, EAST PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA.

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How are law and moral suasion related to each other? The question is timely whenever reforms are urged upon us, and different methods are proposed for effecting them. One reformer lays stress upon law as a power to remove great social evils; another insists upon the persuasive force of sympathies, facts and truths. Are not both needed? Are not both founded in the revelation which is given us concerning the divine government, and authorized by it? God has revealed a law against all sin: one that may be applied to every iniquity that exists. His Word does not specify every injurious drug or drink, every perilous indulgence and habit, and expressly forbid them, for it is not a book of special rules; but it announces principles that meet all cases of immorality with prohibitive force by bringing them under generic laws. He also offers a persuasion for every evil-doer to abandon his sins and secure the new life. The two methods are recognized in the fervent appeal of an Apostle: "Knowing the terror of the Lord [in the law by which He will judge us all], we persuade men." The assured efficiency of law in punishment—though not always in prevention of crime—does not exclude the use of persuasion. In this present world there is a place and a reason for both of them. Each is a force sent from Heaven into earthly society for the highest purpose. In each is a power for removing public evils and reforming society. How make them as efficient as possible? Is it wise, at the outset, to place them in different latitudes whose lines never meet, so that one shall be ignored, or disowned, by the other? Shall one supplant the other? Which has the right of a supplanter? Must we not recognize their mutual dependence? What can law do without love? What can love do without law? Along these lines let us consider certain possibilities.

I. Whether moral suasion would effect any permanent good in society without law—civil, moral, divine law. We mean law that has penalties, and that is not used merely persuasively. Imagine a society in which it does not exist. It has been annulled, and still the difference between right and wrong, good and evil, is not lost; the people know it, at least as a sentiment; they are conscious that virtue and vice are not the same thing in their nature and effects. The leaders wish to promote social morality, and their method is solely that of moral suasion. Nobody shall be outwardly punished for a misdeed. Then let the men of authority proclaim on the streets and in the markets that henceforth there is to be no more law. There shall be no arrests of

evil-doers; no trials for injuries to person and property; no courts, no penalties; no forcible collection of debts, no recovery of damages for losses by fraud, theft or malice; no legal defence of personal character against a reckless pen or slanderous tongue, and no exaction of a guilty life for an innocent life, nor for high treason. Public economy shall be free from the expense of prisons, and public charities shall no longer be an obligation upon the State.

What would be the result of this method, if it alone were adopted? Less crime? Better morals? Nobler charities? A reign of justice, truth and beneficence? Let us think as favorably of human nature as the facts will justify, and still those facts will show that many people are restrained from crimes, not by love for the right, nor by convictions of conscience, nor by the "beauty of holiness," but by fear of the penalty. The persuasions that affect them are those of the law and the power that executes it with exactness. This is admitted in yonder court, and in the foreign land where fugitives from justice remain in exile so long as the law, which they dread, is in force. The fears of the criminal are his tribute to the civil power, and his motive for reluctant obedience to it. He knows the terrors of the law. But repeal the law, and you remove the terrors, and what can you then do with your rousing appeals to honor, and your gentlest entreaties of love? How can you guard yourselves and all that is sacred to you from an irrepressible lawlessness? How entrench yourself against the havoc by day and violence by night? On what persuasive argument can you lay hold to convince the lawless that you have rights and possessions and privileges worthy of their respect? The sheriff's warrant is cancelled, the policeman's club is broken, the jail is demolished, the penitentiary is an open retreat for wandering beggars. You may point to the worst deed of malice, or extortion, or lust, or intemperance, pleading that for the sake of personal honor, or kindred, or home, or Heaven, it never be committed again, and the guilty may reply, "There is no law against it, no penalty upon it. You are not invited to give attention to our affairs. Look to your own. Who is lord over us?"

Further, let it be taught that the moral law has come to an end, that human progress has carried us beyond it into the larger liberty of thought and life, and that we are not in the childhood of the human race, nor under the tutorage of any divine law with God for its authority, executor and judge, and with the future for complete and final reward or punishment. Teach men that the Ten Commandments are no longer laws with penalties, but merely principles of right or recommendations for general guidance, and then try to persuade them to comply with those recommendations, doing a right deed just because it is right and for the sake of goodness. What will you accomplish? They may not care for "right in itself," nor goodness by itself, and may ask, "Where is your law for it? By what authority is your moral suasion?" They may admit the reasonableness of your plea, but with no divine mandate to deepen its impression, their impulses will die away before the next temptation comes.

Experience teaches us to keep the law—civil, moral and divine—before the people: keep the lessons of it in the home, the church, the school, the court, and then we have a solid basis for the strongest persuasions that can affect the hearts of men. Little can be accomplished by moral suasion without law.

II. Whether law without persuasion will bring the desired social morality. Suppose that we have no moral force but law—rigid, unyielding, inevitable law. No entreating voice in the home reaching the impressible hearts of children, nor in the school where kindness wins more surely than severity, nor from the pulpit, where the plea, "I beseech you by the mercies of God," is always fitting; nor from the neighbor, whose kindly wishes open ways of blessedness to all who know his example. No helpful hand to lift up the fallen, nor benevolent soul to seek and teach the ignorant, nor courteous tongue to say to the erring, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good"; only law and power to enforce it upon every offender.

What may we expect in such a state of affairs? Obedience to law—ready, cheerful, complete, universal in the community? What has prepared the people for it? Not popular education, for it belongs to the persuasive agencies. Ignorance does not make her children good citizens; for, if they have any knowledge of the law, they are apt to know it only through its terrors, and grow defiant of its penalties. Why expect them to be law-abiding and obedient in a cheerful spirit? They have never been taught to love the statutes, nor the government. If arrested for crimes, they may plead their ignorance, lay the blame of it on society, and say, "None ever sought us, nor tried to convince us that our lives were wrong, and that a better way of living was open to us. None have cared for us except to punish us for evil deeds." Is the statement true? It would be true in a society which allowed the various forces of moral suasion to be unemployed.

Where persuasions are now earnestly used there is one fact prompting us to give a larger place in our higher schools to the studies relating to good citizenship: the fact that the penal side of civil government receives more attention in the courts and the public press, if not in the popular mind, than the protective and helpful side of it. Crimes are allowed columns, good conduct may beg for an item. The penalties are more conspicuous than the common benefits of law! If the disproportion seem too great, it would be far greater if moral suasion should cease; for these reports of crimes, arrests, trials in courts, and infliction of penalties need not be imported from afar to meet a demand for such news. Every locality would have a daily supply of its own, and its immoralities might seem to be past remedy by legislation alone. Wise legislators know that a statute which is extremely severe is liable to become a dead letter; or, if it be just, the people must be prepared for its execution by an advance of public sentiment. Law without moral suasion has little power to reform society.

III. Whether a union of persuasion and law be not the more excellent way. How is a community prepared to obey and execute good laws? By

knowing them, receiving benefits from them, honoring and loving them; that is, by the persuasive methods of education, experience, affection and conscience. The school and church logically precede the court-house and prison. The teacher's work comes before that of the sheriff, and it may relieve the policeman of duty. The blessings of the law are set forth before the penalties (Deut. xxviii.). The people learn that they have priceless benefits in a just government, and that when a man forfeits them by lawlessness his loss is irreparable. The better the government the more certainly will privileges be assured to the obedient and punishment fall upon the guilty. Thus the same law which is a terror to evil-doers is the confidence and support of those who do well.

Ill-designing men, choosing a city where they may indulge in immoralities, do not prefer the one which has the most thoroughly executed laws, the most vigilant police, the sternest judges and strongest prisons, for the terrors are too great. But in that same city are quite certain to be schools of high moral grade, active churches, and societies promoting industry, temperance and charity, representing the suasive agencies. All these—the legal and the suasive—are attractions to those who love righteousness and hate iniquity. If you seek to know where law is best maintained, go where the brightest type of social morality prevails. There public sentiment has been created and nurtured by the persuasive agencies. There you will find efforts to reform the vicious by holding out to them the benefits of good citizenship, the persuasives to a better life, the invitations of the Gospel, the divine forgiveness, and the rest which the Christ offers to the heavy-laden when they become His disciples.

This method may be applied to any social reform. We are apt to select some one great evil at a time and try to restrain or remove it. The term "social reform" implies that the evil has gone beyond private limits and become generally prevalent, that it touches public interest and public duty, and that at least two classes of people are involved in it: those who are gainers by supplying a demand, and the losers by whom the demand originally comes; or we may say the tempters and the (usually willing) victims. A third class seeks to bring the other two under its salutary influence and power.

The reform may become a "cause" with formulated principles and organized forces. It may grow without taking party form, or aiming at political supremacy, and still win to itself a majority in the state. As Christianity has changed the spirit and legislation of empires by moral methods (so far as human agencies are concerned), the special reform may leaven the national life; awaken, educate and direct the public conscience; propose and expect great moral changes—if not peaceful revolutions—removing vices and installing virtues; secure the enactment and execution of good laws, though not formally a law-making power, and all the while maintain itself by non-partisan methods.

The mind at once turns to a reform which has tried various methods, passed through many phases, and is still at the front with its problems scarcely

solved. Is it not singular that when we wish to name it, we hesitate whether to say temperance or prohibition? One is taken to represent persuasive methods, the other legislative measures. We query whether to call the evil intemperance or the liquor-traffic, one referring to the drinker, the other to the vender. We find it questioned which of these two men is the prime sinner, the drinker who comes with the demand, or the vender who brings the supply. The whole philosophy of demand and supply enters into the discussion, and it is admitted that law is not able to remove a demand which is in an appetite (or nature), is older than the liquor-traffic, and is the real cause of it. Prohibitory laws will not remove the real cause of intemperance. This is a work for divine grace and power; all that we can do towards it must be through persuasive agencies. We may logically say, no demand, no supply; but we cannot reasonable say, no supply, no demand.

It is admitted that just law can very greatly diminish the supply, and thus restrict the satisfaction of the demand. An appetite ungratified may annoy its possessor, but it is not likely to inflict injury upon home and society. Law may repress, if not remove, those evils which the saloon represents, and which are more public than personal drinking. But law will not produce these results until a community is educated—persuaded—and organized to maintain it.

It is little wonder that certain advocates of reform by law become intensely earnest, and see in their measures the only hope of relief. They have the sharper contest to wage because they ask for a kind of power which the people are apt to grant with reluctance. Their own method seems to them quite infallible, and other means are given a lower place or neglected. Some of them appear ready to say that temperance is not the word for them; their work is not to reform the drunkard, but to annihilate the drink, and then his sobriety will be assured; as if the drink was the cause of his imperious thirst and of intemperance, or food the cause of hunger and of gluttony.

This extreme is offset by another. In a brief notice of four "Gospel Temperance Meetings," at which 500 persons signed the total abstinence pledge, this advice is given: "If the good-meaning people who are gathered in convention to-day to devise means for the better enforcement of the prohibitory law will, on their return home, make a personal effort to save men and boys from becoming drunkards by kindness and sympathy and not rely on the law to do an impossibility, they will accomplish more for God and humanity than the law has done in the past five years in Iowa."

Such antagonism in the ranks of a great reform, which is essentially moral, is needless and dangerous. It tends to create two parties, each hurling at the other the charge of failure. That word "failure" is easily spoken. No principle, no cause, no movement has yet been fully successful anywhere on earth. Persuasion has not failed in behalf of Christianity, liberty, human rights, education, and every great element in our civilization. It has won for law its power, and given to it a field. It has still more to do in the renewal of the world. It will not gain its purpose by any sudden stroke. "It suffereth

long and is kind." Its silent forces are as sure as the laws of gravitation, and its triumph is most certain when they bind us and all our efforts to the orbits fixed for us by the Sun of Righteousness, in whose kingdom there is the union of law and love. It is wrong to assume that any method of reform may not apparently fail at some time and place, yet even then we may remember that

" The good is grander in defeat  
Than evil is in victory."

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GRACE HERE AND HEREAFTER (*And hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*—I. PET. i., 13).—There are three things we have to note here. The loftiest hope of the furthest eternity is the hope of grace. We usually keep that word in contradistinction to glory as expressive of the gifts of God which we receive here upon earth, in our pilgrimage. But the Apostle here goes even deeper than that and says, "Ah! it is all of a piece from the beginning to the end. The first gifts that a believing soul receives while it is struggling here with darkness and light, are of the same sort as the eternal gifts that it receives when it stands before the throne, after milleniums of assimilation to the brightness and blessedness of Jesus Christ." They are all grace; the gifts of earth and Heaven are one in their source and one in their nature. All the gifts are one in nature, and the loftiest and the last are but the efflorescence, the bright consummate flower and the undecaying fruit of the germinal gift that we receive on earth at the beginning of the Christian life.

Further, says the Apostle, this grace is "being brought to you." It has started on its road. It is being borne toward you as by a flight of angels down through the blue. And is that not so? Does not every tick of the clock bring it nearer? Does not each moment that passes thin away the veil, and will it not be dissipated altogether soon? The light that set out from the sun centuries ago has not reached some of the stars yet, but it is on the road. And the grace that is to be given to us has started from the Throne, and it will be here presently.

We are like men standing in the crowded streets of some royal city through which the king's procession has to pass. If we listened we have heard the gun fired that told that He had left the palace, and He will sweep in front of us and sweep us up into His train before very long. The grace is "being brought to us." And it is brought not merely at, but "in the revelation of Jesus Christ." "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall we also be manifested together with Him in glory." So inseparably is the poor, humble soul that trusts Jesus Christ united with Him through its trust, that Christ's apocalypse is its apocalypse, and that when He is glorified it is sure to be.

We here are moving round a half-veiled Christ, and we get but little, and oh! we give less, of His light and glory. But the day comes when we shall be swept nearer the Throne, and all the light that is manifested to us shall be incorporated within us.—*A Maclaren, D.D.*