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CHRISTIAN MANLINESS.*

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"Quit you like men."—1 COR. 16: 13.

IT was the habit of the Apostle Paul to crown the doctrinal discussion in the body of his epistles with a practical application at the end, in which he urged upon his readers the obligations involved in the doctrines which they had been considering. This suggests the propriety of a like practical application to ourselves of the studies in which we have been engaged during the seminary year that is now closing. The Apostle in the text sums up for us in a single word the deduction to be made alike from the theological, the biblical, the historical, and the ecclesiastical studies which we have been pursuing—*ἀνδρίζεσθε, Quit you like men.*

An injunction to men to act as men seems singular at first view. How else could they act? How can they be anything but what they are? Every substance in the universe is what it is, and

* Preached on the closing Sabbath of the seminary term.

acts agreeably to the laws of its being. Every atom of oxygen acts uniformly as oxygen. Every plant and every animal is obedient to the law of its constitution. How, then, can it be necessary to enjoin it upon men to be men and to quit themselves like men?

There are two reasons for this. In the first place man is not, like the inferior creation, subject to the control of physical necessity. Inanimate nature is under a constraint which binds it to unvarying uniformity of action; the specific properties of matter assert themselves with endless constancy. The lower animals are governed by their native instinct; they are led by blind impulse to do what their nature requires. Man is possessed of reason and of choice. No invariable force determines for him the employment of his powers or the direction of his life. If he would be a man indeed, he must make this his definite aim and must employ suitable endeavors. He must by a faithful course of self-discipline develop his powers to the full and in the right direction; and he must by their skillful use attain to the mastery and proper handling of them if he would make of himself what he is meant to be, and what he is capable of becoming. Since this is a result which does not follow of itself, and is only to be attained, if at all, by seeking and toil-

ing, it is well that he should be reminded of what is herein dependent upon himself.

And, in the second place, it is still more requisite that this should be done when we remember the influences that are at work within him and around him to degrade his nature and to frustrate the end of his existence. The corruption inherited from the fall has perverted his faculties and turned them away from their true end. The temptations and solicitations which beset him on every hand bewilder and confuse his mind, and create an eager appetite for everything but that which he should desire and strive after. The aim of the text is to break the spell of this unworthy fascination by reminding men of their true nature and capabilities, that thus, instead of sinking to the level of what is so far beneath them, they may, if possible, be induced to "quit themselves like men."

The appeal of the text addresses itself to all, and is of the most powerful and stimulating character. It is no arbitrary requirement to which you are exhorted to submit. It is nothing alien and uncongenial, as though you were bidden to put on some outlandish garb or wear some ill-fitting dress which offended your sense of propriety or hampered the free movement of your limbs. Nor does it simply urge the claims of duty, the abstract law of right,

what ought to be done at whatever sacrifice of inclination. But it may be expected to enlist every human sympathy, and to bring to its aid every generous impulse, since its summons is that you should be true to yourself and to your own nature. Evoke your dormant energies ; put forth the powers that are within you ; stifle not the noble emotions that stir your breast ; act up to your real capacity ; fulfill your own high conceptions and aspirations ; achieve results worthy of yourself, such as you can review with satisfaction and expose to others without shame. The text bids you to be thus a law to yourself. With what a charge you have been intrusted in being made a free agent—a charge that you can neither surrender nor evade ! How vast and unimagined is that which has been put within your own control in your being made master of yourself ! What noble faculties, what fine susceptibilities, what magnificent opportunities, what possibilities of high achievement, what ends may be attained, what acquisitions made, what treasures amassed, what a destiny secured, if you will but quit yourselves like men !

It adds to the power of this appeal that it is also adapted to provoke a generous emulation, and that upon the broadest and most comprehensive scale. It is not limited to that which concerns ourselves

merely as individuals, but is addressed to the nature which we possess in common with the whole human race. In bidding us to quit ourselves like men it arrays before us all that men are and have been, all that they can do and have done; everything in the character or conduct of any of our fellow-men that kindles enthusiasm or deserves our admiration; all that is wise and good and noble and brave; every worthy enterprise, every deed of heroism or of philanthropy; patient toil, unselfish love, gentle, thoughtful kindness, upright discharge of duty, firm adherence to the right, every exhibition of manly qualities in any department of human action, on any plane of life, on whatever scale of magnitude, in great things or in small, conspicuous or unobserved—all is here gathered up in one mighty argument and set before us for our imitation.

An appeal is sometimes pointed by comparison with inferior natures. Men are shamed out of their inactivity by the direction, *Go to the ant, thou sluggard*; and out of their stupid disregard of their Creator by the reflection that the ox knoweth his owner; and out of their inconsideration by the fact that the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times. But there is a reproach inseparable from such an argument, and

an implied censure, which, while it goads to duty, nevertheless leaves a sting. There is no such damaging implication when the text would rouse us to a sense of what we may become or what we may achieve by the thought of what others of our own species have shown themselves able to attain or to perform.

It has its advantage also over appeals which are sometimes made with great power to particular classes: as when they who are entering into battle are bidden to demean themselves like soldiers; or they who are set to conduct a nation's affairs to act like statesmen; or they who are engaged in pecuniary transactions to behave like honest men; or they who are in a position to reflect honor or discredit upon their country to remember that they are Americans. The argument of the text loses none of the stimulus of these more special appeals and abates nothing of their urgency, but embraces them all with undiminished cogency within itself; and, gathering the full impetus that is to be derived from every quarter, directs its entire concentrated energy upon the line of each individual life. It is not only from those whose course is parallel to our own that we are to derive an impulse, those who move in the same sphere or in similar circumstances, who are engaged in kindred pursuits or

have common aims ; the appeal is to the sentiment of a common human nature. Everything that reveals the capabilities of that nature, wherever it may be found, has its meaning and its force for me. The peasant may teach the prince ; the child may give a lesson to the man of hoary hairs, the untutored savage to the sage. Admirable qualities shown anywhere within the range of human experience suggest to us that the same may be transplanted into our lives, and may be exhibited only with altered circumstances and conditions in our daily walk. Martyrs and heroes, the good and the great of every age and of every clime, were of the same stock and possessed the same humanity with ourselves. They show the stuff of which we were made ; and they call upon us to be in our particular line of life what they were in theirs.

And even misdirected powers show a nature splendid in its ruins, which, if the perversion were removed, might well engender a holy emulation. Zeal misguided is still zeal, which would have been praiseworthy if balanced and mollified by love and shown in the cause of truth. Toils endured and sacrifices made for ignoble ends may rouse to vigorous effort those who are laboring with higher aims. Thus, we may learn lessons of honor from shame, wisdom from folly, virtue from vice, the right use

of faculties from their prostitution and abuse. We may bow to the banner that is here uplifted, even when we see it trailing in the dust; and in the picture that is all soiled and begrimed we may discover the strength and the beauty that lie hidden under the foul stains which deface it.

And the universality of the appeal made in the text is attended with another consequence, which further enhances its value. It embraces within its scope the whole range of human obligation. It is not directed merely to some one specific duty or class of duties. This one injunction includes within it all that is incumbent at all times, under all circumstances, and in every relation. Act as men; do what your nature summons you to do. It sets before us as the standard and measure of our duty not merely what is peculiar to ourselves individually, nor merely what has been in actual fact exemplified by others, but the totality of human nature—man as he was made by his Creator, and as he was fitted and designed to be.

If we should put together all the capabilities that men have ever shown, and all the excellences that they have exhibited, all that men have ever done that is worthy of imitation, this would indeed cover a very wide range, and a most exalted mark would thus be set before us. But if there be any capacity

in human nature that has never yet found full expression, if there be any reserve of force that has not been brought into adequate and thorough employment, and especially if any damage has infected our nature, or any paralysis come over its powers, so that at its best it falls sadly below its primal estate and fails to reveal itself in its genuine and native character, then the charge of the text reaches back of these impaired faculties and their enfeebled manifestations to man in the genuine and proper sense, to man in full possession of all that properly belongs to him, man in the full vigor of his original constitution, with his native force unbroken, subject to no weakness nor malady, untainted by sin, his nature undepraved. It is man as he should be, the divine ideal of manhood, which the Apostle would set before us when he bids us, "quit you like men."

The meaning of this exhortation to any person to whom it may be addressed will be chiefly dependent on two things. The first is the conception that he has of manhood. "Quit you like men" in a heroic age would be interpreted as demanding personal bravery; by the sensualist, as summoning to the utmost self-indulgence; by the Stoic, as requiring superiority to adverse circumstances. It means one thing to the rude savage and another to

the polished courtier. It means one thing to the materialist, to whom this world is all, and a very different thing to him who has grasped the idea of his immortality. In the mouth of the Apostle it derives its signification from the Christian idea of manhood: man made in the image of God; fallen, indeed, but redeemed; fashioned anew after the likeness of Christ, with all the possibilities that are set before him by the delivering power of the Gospel, the heavenly aids that are afforded, and the glorious destiny that is promised. This is what filled his thoughts when he bid us, "quit you like men."

The second consideration which may modify the meaning of the exhortation before us is the sphere of action referred to and the scope which it affords for manly qualities to display themselves. Human characteristics must have an occasion for their manifestation. Statesmanship cannot be developed at jackstraws. Fortitude cannot be shown when there is nothing to endure, nor courage in a time of profound peace, nor compassion where suffering and want do not exist, nor fidelity by him to whom nothing has been intrusted. A position, if such an one could be found, which gave no opportunity for the exercise of manly qualities would stunt and dwarf our manhood. The Apostle in uttering his

exhortation contemplated a sphere of action which is adapted to elicit manly qualities in the highest degree and afford them the largest possible scope for their operation.

In further unfolding the meaning of the text let us consider the style of manliness which it requires, and the scope for its manifestation under various particulars.

1. The Gospel approves and enjoins manliness in all the affairs of every-day life, even the most ordinary and trivial. The injunction of the text is valid in everything we do hour by hour and moment by moment. We should be under the sway of Christian principle as thoroughly when we are engaged in the most trifling and indifferent matters as when we address ourselves to those that are the gravest and most momentous. The spirit of the Gospel is an all-pervasive force; not intermittent, as though it bounded from mountain-peak to mountain-peak, touching only the summits of our lives, the loftier points which project above the ordinary level of our daily routine; but, like the atmosphere, it wraps the whole with a continuous and uniform pressure, resting on plain and valley as well as hill-top, enveloping alike with its gentle and insinuating touch every blade of grass and twig and grain of sand, and penetrating every tiny

nook and crevice with the same persistent energy as it holds in its embrace the vast globe of the earth itself.

We cannot sunder the little and the great in our lives, and, careless of the former, limit the realm of duty and of obligation to the latter. Our lives include a great multitude of little acts and scenes, each of which taken singly and by itself appears to be only of slight consequence, but which, viewed in the aggregate, assume great importance, since they are the constituent elements which make up the mass and determine the quality of the whole. Character is shown in these little things as the direction and force of the wind is shown by straws. We reveal what we are in our unguarded moments; and we do so all the more truly and distinctly that, when we are off our guard, our inmost disposition has unchecked sway. The man who even occasionally is mean, overbearing, slovenly, discourteous, or ungenerous in what he may account the veriest trifles must not be surprised if it is imputed to him and remembered against him as betraying a radical defect, which even conspicuous excellences cannot efface. The person who indulges his talent for mimicry or his fondness for a joke, even on trivial occasions, to the disregard of the feelings of a friend, or of honest and fair dealing, lays himself

open to the inference that he is not dominated by the law of love and of truth.

Honor and uprightness can be shown even in sports. There is no excuse for ungentlemanly conduct anywhere. No one professing to be Christ's should be other than manly, generous, and noble at all times, and free from even the suspicion of what is mean, dishonorable, or unworthy of a true man. Discreditable behavior brings a reproach upon the Christian character and affixes a stigma to the Christian name which he has no right to place there. And it is all the more inexcusable, as the occasions are petty, that he should dishonor his Master and damage religion in the estimate of men for so slight a cause.

The Christian assuredly should not fall below men of the world in what is honorable and decorous, in all that ennobles and adorns character and life. Nay, he is bound to rise above them in these very respects, in which worldly men most pride and felicitate themselves. As the Christian has more exalted aims and higher motives and purer springs of action and heavenly aids, his whole life should be of a nobler mold, and more free from those deplorable petty weaknesses which so often stain lives otherwise excellent and destroy much of their power for good.

The Gospel spreads its hallowed influence over us every moment. The attraction of the cross, like the attraction of the sun, permeates all things alike, and holds atom and world in its noiseless yet powerful grasp. The great spiritual realities are ever real and should be ever operative. One grand motive, "for Christ's sake," should rule in every act and thought, and never for an instant be disregarded. We are bidden, whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God. We are reminded that for every idle word we speak we must give account at the day of judgment. The Christian spirit should be infused into everything; Christian motives should govern everything; the law of the Christian life should give form to everything.

Not that we should make no distinction of time and place, or that we should act everywhere as if we were in church. The varied scenes of life are not to be met by one unvarying rigidity of demeanor. The Christian may unbend as well as other men. There is no reason why he should repress innocent mirth. He may have his seasons of recreation and of exuberant spirits. He need not be constantly oppressed by the sense of the awful and the infinite, much less perpetually wear a solemn-faced visage, as though it were a merit never to

smile. But he can be pure and truthful and reverential and kind at all times. He can make the golden rule of Christ, which is the secret of the truest politeness and of gentlemanly conduct, his perpetual law. He can constantly have his heart full of the love of Christ, and of love to men, which shall dignify and sweeten his whole demeanor, which shall be the underlying stratum that supports and shapes the whole exterior surface of his life, and which without perpetually obtruding itself nevertheless crops out in all appropriate times and ways.

There is a divine and holy art in which some have made high attainments greatly to be envied, and which is worth pains and effort and circumspection to acquire, which adjusts the Christian character with dignity and grace to all the exigencies of our daily life, and without moping on the one hand or frivolity on the other maintains the purity and consistency of a Christian walk along with all that is engaging and sprightly and attractive in ordinary intercourse; which is ever filled with the spirit of Christ, and at the same time overflows with what is kindly and generous and sweet in human companionship; and which is a perpetual commendation of the Gospel by exhibiting the true style of manliness, which it is fitted to

produce. This is what the Apostle enjoins upon us when in the common affairs of life he bids us, "quit you like men."

2. True manliness requires that a man should be a Christian. We respect manliness of character wherever shown, in earthly things and in the common intercourse of men. But we cannot refrain from saying to those who limit it to the concerns of this life, that their manliness is seriously defective and incomplete; that there is a disharmony in their life and conduct, one part standing in glaring contrast with the other and writing its condemnation. They recognize the propriety of the honorable and upright discharge of all that is incumbent in their human relations, but fail to meet the same when they are transferred to a higher sphere and far more sacred obligations are involved. They would spurn the thought of being insensible to favors received from earthly benefactors, and yet set at naught the abounding grace and love of their heavenly Friend. Priding themselves upon their punctilious integrity, they withhold from the Most High that which is his due. Nothing shocks them more than the unfilial behavior of a child, though themselves utterly undutiful to their Father in heaven. They regard with contempt the man who wastes his life on trifles, while yet they employ their

own immortal powers on things that perish with the using. The lesson of the text to such is that not only in things seen and temporal, but also in those that are unseen and eternal, they should quit themselves like men.

3. The Apostle enjoins upon us manliness in the Christian life. In the exercise of grace, in the discharge of Christian duty, quit you like men. A due regard to our manhood not only requires that we should be Christians, but that we should be manly Christians; that we should not content ourselves with a merely nominal Christianity, or with a pusillanimous and ignoble Christianity, but that our spiritual faculties should be duly exercised and in full vigor, and that our spiritual life should be upon a plane worthy of the nature which God has given us. That we may the better comprehend what is thus demanded of us, let us briefly glance at some of those qualities which should characterize our religion.

(1) Manly strength and courage. There is a demand in the Christian life for the highest qualities of soul. There are tasks which must be performed with energy and perseverance. There are foes that must be met with unshrinking intrepidity and stout resistance. There are hardships which must be borne with patience and uncomplaining

fortitude. Soft effeminaey or childish weakness and timidity will not answer in the Christian ranks. By the cross to the crown, through suffering to glory, is the path that was trodden by Jesus and to which he summons us. Native strength is here inadequate. It is perfect weakness. We need the strength which God alone supplies. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." The stripling David can in his name encounter his giant adversary. Babes in Christ, as was fabled of the infant Hercules, strangle the old serpent. It is required of them that they be strong in faith, with a firm grasp upon the promises, doing all things, daring all things, enduring all things for Christ's sake. There is no room for cowardice and vacillation and unmanly shrinking from what is difficult and toilsome. Christ must be followed through evil and through good report; his commands must be obeyed at all hazards; the burdens which he lays upon you must be borne without faint-heartedness. Quit you like men.

(2) Men are possessed of reason. The text therefore enjoins it upon you to act as rational beings, with intelligence to comprehend the situation in which you are and the matters in reference to which you are called to act; to put a proper esti-

mate upon the ends to be pursued, and to know how to use the means requisite for attaining them. When men are engaged in great enterprises or momentous interests are involved, they bestow upon them earnest thought, carefully considering each step that they take, that all may be done wisely and well. And how can they do differently when the issues at stake are the salvation of the soul and the glory of God? And especially when truth and duty are plainly set forth in the Word of God, so that he who has ears may hear, and he who has eyes can see, and he who has reason can understand, what is to be thought of him who deliberately stops his ears and shuts his eyes, preferring darkness to light? What of him who will not ponder the paths of his feet, nor make diligent use of the means of grace and of spiritual growth, thus remaining ignorant and unskillful and in the lowest stages of religious progress, instead of growing in knowledge and growing in grace, and learning how to make the most perfect use of his powers in the service of Christ? Here again you are bidden to act like men.

(3) Men are free agents, endowed with the power of choice, at liberty to choose their own course, to act in accordance with the motives that are present to their minds. He is in a pitiable case who in the

presence of the most powerful motives that should instantly decide his course is hesitating, irresolute, and unable to make up his mind; or who with strange fatuity chooses in opposition to the noblest and best impulses of his nature. If with the mighty motives of the Gospel before us we can remain undecided, or our wills are so enslaved by Satan and by sin that we choose the reverse of what we know we should, and what our highest interests demand, we act as idiots or maniacs, not as men. The Apostle would have us always and evermore be men.

(4) It is the distinguishing glory of men that they have a moral nature. They are capable of discerning right and wrong. They approve what is good; they condemn what is evil. Conscience is their supreme faculty. Duty and obligation rise above everything else. If you would fulfill the demand which your human nature lays upon you, do right. Learn your duty from the revealed will of God, and then do it, not of course in your own strength, which will not avail you, but by those divine aids which will surely be afforded those who humbly ask for them. Let there be no parleying with the enemy; no looking wistfully at what is forbidden; no yielding to temptation under the plea that it is only for this once, or under any plea

whatever. You can suffer the loss of a right hand or a right eye; you can take joyfully, if need be, the spoiling of your goods, or rejoice if you are counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's glorious name; but settle it with yourself that you cannot surrender principle, you cannot offend against God.

(5) Consider once more the rank which man holds in the scale of being: the lord of this lower world; made in the image of God; his nature kindred to the divine nature; admitted to friendly intercourse with God; made capable of knowing, loving, adoring his Maker, and in a sense quite peculiar to himself of glorifying him; endowed with a self-conscious, immortal spirit, which is worth more than the whole vast frame of material nature, and which shall continue to live when the sun itself has gone out in darkness. Of what exalted dignity is man, and what a demand is thus laid upon you to act in a manner worthy of your noble nature, as befits your high parentage and the grand destiny that awaits you! Eschew, then, all that is low, groveling, and despicable. Aspire to what is more in accordance with your high rank. Set your affections on things above. The transitory, the unsubstantial, and the trifling do not deserve the chief place in the esteem of men, who were made for higher things.

(6) But the dignity of human nature stands on far loftier ground than this, and it makes a yet stronger appeal to us. The incarnation and the atonement tell, as we never could have imagined it otherwise, the value of the human soul in the eyes of our divine Redeemer. The love that was shown, the price that was paid, the whole array of means and instrumentalities that have been set in operation, the subordination of all providence and, as it would appear, of creation itself to this crowning achievement of the Godhead, the work of our salvation, with which the Most High has condescended to link the supreme and most effulgent manifestation of his own glory in each of the sacred Persons—all this, while it is adapted on the one hand to humble us in the dust that such unexampled grace should have been shown to us in our littleness and our unworthiness, on the other hand unspeakably exalts us. His gentleness has made us great. What honor is conferred upon us in making us the objects of such divine regard! What enlargement of soul, what changed conditions, what new capabilities result from the employment upon us of this almighty celestial agency! And what possibilities are opened before us of indefinite and unending progress in all that is pure and good and holy and great!

Man redeemed is lifted up to a loftier and more conspicuous plane than he occupied at his creation. Believers in Christ are born of a new celestial birth, sons of God, heirs of heaven, wedded to the only-begotten Son, and with the assurance given them that they shall sit with him upon his throne. What new emphasis is thus imparted to the injunction, "Quit you like men." Degrade not a nature on which God is putting such abundant honor. Learn from the life of Jesus how a citizen of heaven should behave himself on earth. That is our pattern of manhood. We shall be men according to the true Gospel conception, if in all things we follow him, and resolutely refuse to stoop to that which would have been impossible for him.

In these various senses, then, you are bidden to be men in the whole round of Christian duty; in all your works of piety and devotion, in the cultivation of grace in your hearts, and in the manifestation of it in your outward lives act up to the demands of your noble nature, exhibit manly strength and courage, make full use of your reason, your free will, your moral sense, remember the exalted rank accorded to man in the creation, and the still higher rank to which he has been lifted by redemption.

The time that has already elapsed admonishes me not to trespass longer upon your patience, but

I must crave your indulgence while in a single word I suggest the application of my text to your seminary life and to your life-work. We form a little community in this institution of a peculiar kind, with our relations to one another and to those outside, with our special occupations and engagements. Now in all this be men. Let there be no petty childishness, nothing ignoble, no unmanly inconsistencies, no procrastinations, no neglects, no duties half performed or slovenly done. Maintain a character worthy of yourselves, in all things small and great, whether in these halls or out of them.

And when in due season you shall enter upon the full work of the ministry, if in God's distinguishing grace you shall be intrusted with those high functions, the highest and most sacred ever committed to human hands, then quit you like men, with all that union of strength and tenderness and all those manly qualities which this implies. If ever men can be roused to the full employment of all their faculties by grandeur of position, and nobility of work, and the magnificent sphere of action that is opened before them; by the high authority with which they come charged and the auxiliaries that may be summoned to their aid; by the opportunities afforded; by the certainty of success; by the splendor of the rewards; by the loftiness of

their aims—this is surely the case in the very highest degree with the ambassadors of God to men, who are commissioned in Christ's name to carry forward his work of blessing here below, elevating human character, lifting burdens off of heavy hearts, stimulating to pure and noble deeds, enriching men with heavenly wealth, dispensing freely of God's richest, costliest bounty, bringing new glory to God, assisting in their heavenward journey the heirs of salvation to whom angels delight to minister, and aiding in the recovery of this lost world to God and goodness. If there be any work known amongst men which should call into full exercise the highest qualities of mind and heart, which can never be suffered to degenerate into a matter of routine or perfunctory performance, but in which the whole man should be most thoroughly engaged, it is the work of the ministry of the Gospel. Quit you like men, and let it be your aim to lead every one who hears you, or whom you can influence, to manliness and manly deeds.