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*The Perfection
of Beauty*



REV. MOSES D. HOGE, D. D., LL. D.

THE PERFECTION OF BEAUTY

And Other Sermons

BY THE
REV. MOSES D. HOGE, D. D., LL. D.
OF RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

WITH A LECTURE ON
"THE SUCCESS OF CHRISTIANITY AN EVIDENCE OF ITS DIVINE ORIGIN"
DELIVERED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA



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PREFACE.

THE voice of the preacher still lingers in our ear, and as memory brings him before us in his pulpit, erect, commanding, thrilled with his message, and thrilling all who heard, we are still longing for "the sound of the voice that is still." To the very close of his fifty-four years of service in the one pulpit, Dr. Hoge was so intent upon the work which his hand found to do, that he could not be persuaded to go aside, and prepare the volumes so many desired, sermons, addresses, memoirs.

The sermons embraced in this volume were taken, not from his pen, but from his lips, by a stenographer, and when written out, were only in two or three cases revised by him. They are, therefore, almost entirely word for word as they were delivered from the pulpit. Some of them were preached in a number of places, and were heard by great congregations. They are still remembered by a great company, and are all the more desired in this printed form.

The selection has been made with a view, not only of preserving examples of the method and style of the preacher, but with a desire to give to many that which will be profitable to the spirit and effective in the life, and so perpetuate the fruitful ministry of the preacher.

It is a profound regret with many, that with these sermons there have not been preserved the prayers which

accompanied them. Oftentimes the prayers seemed even more marvellous than the sermons, as he bore the silent assembly, with all its wants and desires, to the presence chamber of the God of Israel, who waited to be inquired of. They were made with preparation and with prayer. They were uttered with a voice, reverent, distinct, exquisitely expressive, which held the ear and moved the heart. They were scriptural in phrase, appropriate to the occasion, comprehensive of the whole assembly and its various needs, and led the worshipping congregation to the gate which leads up to the mercy seat.

We have added to this selection of sermons, the lecture at the Virginia University on "The Success of Christianity, an Evidence of its Divine Origin," a discourse of marked power and eloquence. It is an argument that has not lost, but gained in strength since it was presented in the masterly address. Other addresses, and some prayers offered on certain notable occasions have been published in the *Life of Moses D. Hoge*, by his nephew, the Rev. Dr. Peyton H. Hoge, an unsurpassed example of religious biography.

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A Lecture, delivered at the University of Virginia.

SERMONS.

I.

THE PERFECTION OF BEAUTY.

“Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, hath God shined.”—
PSALM 1. 2.

THE first verse of this Psalm is a proclamation well adapted to arrest attention, “The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken and called to the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.” I cannot well imagine a more impressive introduction; for God, who made the whole earth, and whose providence controls all the events which make up its history, lifts up his voice. God speaks, and the assembled race constitutes his audience. “O earth, hear the word of the Lord”; the word of him who created all that live, and controls the lives of all men that have a being, and will finally gather all mankind for judgment at his bar. He speaks; let the whole earth listen. After such an introduction comes the declaration of the text, “Out of Zion, THE PERFECTION OF BEAUTY.” Such is the title that God bestows upon his church. He calls it “the perfection of beauty.” Zion is the comprehensive word oftenest used in his declarations of intense and unchangeable love for his redeemed people. Thus we find expressions like these: “The holy hill of Zion,” “Zion, the joy of the whole earth,” “Praise waits for thee, O God, in Zion,” “The Lord hath chosen Zion. This is my rest, and here will I dwell,” “The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion,” “The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.” In the use of this word “Zion” we see how the meaning of a word

grows fuller and richer by its association with the noblest things, and how it expands until it becomes universally comprehensive of all that is brightest and best. Zion was the loftiest of the hills upon which Jerusalem was built, but the name originally became the title of the entire city of Jerusalem, and then it became a name for all God's ancient people, until finally it became the title of the entire visible and invisible church over which Christ is supreme, through all the world and through all the ages; and, therefore, when we come to read the great Epistle to the Hebrews, in that magnificent parallel which the Apostle draws between the ancient church and the church under the dispensation of the Spirit, we find him saying, "Ye are not come to the mount that might be touched [alluding to the old dispensation] and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest, but ye are come to Mount Zion; to the city of the living God; to the heavenly Jerusalem." This Zion, this ransomed church, the text declares to be "the perfection of beauty."

When God created all things by the word of his power, he pronounced them "very good"; but when God undertook a spiritual creation, it was not the work of his power only, though that was involved: other attributes played their part in the construction of that mightiest work — the wisdom of God as well as his power, the condescension of God and his infinite compassion. The old Zion, that once sat upon the imperial hill which it graced and glorified, has long since passed away like the baseless fabric of a vision; but the true Zion still stands; God's spiritual church, resting upon immovable foundations, illumined by a more excellent glory, with walls ever rising, with courts ever expanding, until the time shall come when upon the completed edifice shall be placed that ample and beauteous dome, beneath which shall be

heard the songs of the jubilant and the emancipated nations. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that inspiration ranges through all the works of God in order to select imagery with which to represent the glory and the beauty of Zion. "She comes forth," says the prophet, "fair as the morning." What emblem could have been selected to give us a more elevated conception of Zion's beauty than this?—the gladness and the rosy freshness of the early morning, when jocund day stands tiptoe upon the mountain top!

"Clear as the moon!" What beauty is there that more charms the eye and the imagination than the soft radiance of the Queen of Night, walking in brightness through the blue? "The church," is the answer; "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," apparelled, not with the beauty of earth, but of heaven, arrayed in the raiment of the King's daughter, and walking in his galleries of light!

1. Zion is the perfection of beauty because of the spiritual worship which is offered there, and which God accepts; because of the unity and harmony and fellowship and brotherly love that prevail among its members; because it is adorned with what the Scriptures call, in charming phrase, "the beauty of holiness," a phrase intelligible to the pious Israelite, but which could not have been understood by the cultivated Greek, with all his impassioned love of grace in proportion, grace in architecture, grace in statuary, grace in oratory, grace in the noblest forms of poetic art. "The beauty of holiness," perhaps, was something that he could not comprehend, but, thank God, there are millions now less erudite and less cultivated than the people of ancient classic lands who can comprehend its meaning, and who recognize in it a charm which nothing earthly can even illustrate; a charm not of terrestrial, but of celestial birth.

2. The church is the perfection of beauty because of its beneficent activity ever manifesting itself in efforts for the relief of human want and woe. We recognize a heavenly origin in the kindly cherishing spirit that goes forth from the church for the succor of all that need individual help, and for the uplifting of all the classes so long forgotten and neglected; in a word, for the relief of suffering humanity, whether that suffering is caused by physical or by spiritual destitution. I have oftentimes wondered that the church does not have more consideration and more coöperation from the men of the world, who, though animated by nothing but philanthropy, and without regard for the highest interests of the race, yet must see that the condition of the world would be very different from what it is if the church did not exist in it. Every man endowed with ordinary intelligence must see that nearly all the benevolent institutions which furnish homes for the widow and orphan; asylums for the deaf, the dumb and the blind; hospitals for the diseased; wholesome Christian literature for the reading public; the publication of the holy Scriptures in nearly all the languages spoken on the earth, emanate from the church. Why is it that in none of the great resorts and haunts of pleasure and fashion and wealth collections are ever solicited for the suffering poor, and for associations organized to advance all the forms of benevolence? Do you not think it deserves a little consideration among reflecting men that this should be so, and that the church should always be looked to to supply suffering humanity's needs while there are thousands of great secular associations, great political, scientific and commercial organizations, powerful by reason of wealth and numbers, to which appeals might be made and from which benefactions might be reasonably expected to come?

There is but one gate through which the benefactions of the truly charitable forever flow, and that is the beautiful gate of the temple. Yes, this is one of the elements that constitutes the beauty of the church; its boundless benevolence, its wide-reaching, far-reaching, all-comprehending charity.

I say the church of God is entitled to the respect and the support of the men of the world who care nothing for it as a divine institution, but who do care for their fellow-men, and who do have pity upon the sufferings of the destitute. These are the things that make the church beautiful; and that which crowns all the rest is when the members of the church, with one consent, joyfully and heartily consecrate themselves to God and take pleasure in the work which is entrusted to their hands. Then, when these things combine—spirituality of worship, harmony, fellowship, brotherly love, the beauty of holiness, intelligent beneficence and whole-souled consecration to God; when these elements unite, then the church deserves the title which it receives when it is declared to be “the perfection of beauty.”

1. The church is luminous with the reflection of the glory of its divine author. “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, hath God shined.” How is this divine effulgence manifested? I answer: No element in nature could be selected that so fittingly represents that which is most attractive in the divine nature; as the sun mirrors itself in the placid sea, spread out as a molten looking-glass, so the divine glory is reflected from Zion; no element more suggestive of divine bounteousness than the element of light, just because light is so abundant, so pure; because it diffuses so much joy, because through light all things are made manifest. Without light the earth would be wrapped in a pall, perpetual and impenetrable.

It is because of light that we see its beauty and derive our impressions of its glory; and therefore it is said, "God is light," to illustrate his perfections and his manifestations of himself to men. When he was conducting the chosen tribes in their magnificent march across the desert to the land which had been prepared for their reception, God went before the host in a pillar of cloud by day, and as the day wore on and the shades of evening approached, lo! in the centre of that cloud there was a luminous spot, and as the darkness deepened it grew brighter and expanded, and the soft luster spread until the entire cloud from top to bottom was irradiated. All night long God manifested himself in the pillar of fire. So, too, we find when he commanded his people to make a tabernacle in their march through the wilderness, in order that they might have a place where they could congregate and maintain the ceremonies of holy worship, there was one apartment more sacred than the rest, entitled the holy of holies, behind the veil, within which was the ark, with the overshadowing cherubim, and between their golden wings there flashed forth a light, the Shekinah, the manifest emblem of the presence of Jehovah. That presence was more impressively manifested when the temple was built to substitute that movable tent. When Solomon, with the materials which his father had collected for the purpose, erected the temple, at its completion, when the day of dedication came, then the glory of the Lord came down with such effulgence that the priests could not stand to minister because of that exceeding glory.

2. "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, hath God shined." God hath not only shined in his church to make it what it is, but he also shines out of it by the influences that emanate from it; and so we find that Isaiah says, "Out of Zion went forth the law, and the word of the

Lord from Jerusalem," and it is a very memorable fact that the only idea of true religion which the ancient nations possessed was from the holy light from Zion's hill, shining far beyond the walls of Jerusalem.

3. Finally when Christ himself, the Redeemer, came to Zion its light shone forth with a new glory; and when he finished his earthly work, while his commission to his apostles was to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, yet first that gospel was to be preached in Jerusalem, and there the disciples had to wait until a celestial power, manifesting itself in tongues of fire, the emblem of the Holy Ghost, came down to qualify them for their world-wide mission. It is a very impressive fact, that as the old nations got their ideas of the one living and true God, and of how he should be worshipped, from Zion, so after the advent, all successive nations have continued to receive their ideas of Christianity from the same central source of divine influence. Outward from the very city where the Lord was crucified the word of salvation went forth to all to whom the gospel was preached.

"Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, hath God shined." The people that sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them that sat in the shadow of death a light is sprung up. Just as Christianity prevailed, the world had its very intelligence quickened; a new life suddenly was felt pervading its entire frame; the superstitions that debased men began to vanish; the false forms of religion that held the intellects of men in baleful subjugation were overthrown, and the human mind was emancipated from its long thralldom. Men who had been taught to believe that might was right learned another lesson, and began to understand that right constituted the noblest might. Men became acquainted with their rights, and

endowed with the courage to maintain them. By and by, through the pervading influence of Christianity, what we call Christian civilization became the heritage of the world. It deserves notice that the strongest nations of the earth to-day — those which have just laws, true science, constitutional government and free institutions — are the nations that are most thoroughly penetrated and pervaded by the gospel of Christ.

4. "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, hath God shined." The divine glory is also displayed in the wonderful transformations which this gospel produces in human character wherever it is proclaimed and believed. "Look on this picture and on this, I pray you." Here is the portraiture that the Apostle draws of the depth of degradation into which sin can reduce humanity in the first chapter of his letter to the Romans. When you read the frightful catalogue of epithets which describe fallen humanity, you feel very much as if you were on the very borders of the pit — as if you were listening to the roll-call of demons. But after that appalling register the Apostle says, "Such were some of you, but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." What transformations that Spirit makes! My friends, do you know that there are some islands in the Pacific that one hundred years ago were inhabited by savages and by cannibals, in which not a single idolatrous temple can be found to-day? Do you know that from one of these cannibal islands a native went once to England, and in the British Museum saw for the first time in his life an idol — one of the idols his forefathers had worshipped, now deposited in the museum as a curiosity?

Would you have another illustration of the transforming power of the gospel? Then turn to the picture

of the primitive church as delineated in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and contemplate their steadfast loyalty to doctrine, their hearty fellowship, their abounding generosity, their delight in worship as they continued daily in the temple, with one accord, in prayer and Christian communion, eating their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people.

When Mr. James Russell Lowell was attending a banquet in the city of London, among the after-dinner speeches there were some that contained slurs upon the Christian religion, and ironical remarks with regard to the credulity that still lingered in the world among those who believed in the supernatural; and when Mr. Lowell rose to respond to a complimentary toast, he said, "It is very easy, gentlemen, sitting in an elegant apartment like this, around a table covered with flowers, with all the tokens and emblems of a refined civilization about us, it is very easy to speculate about religion in a jocosé way, and to cast slurs and reflections upon it, but," said he, "while our friends thus indulge themselves in the amusement of discarding religion, they would do well to be thankful that they live in a land where the gospel has tamed the ferocity and beastliness of those who but for Christianity might have long ago eaten their carcasses like the South Sea Islanders, or cut off their heads and tanned their skins like the monsters of the French Revolution. I would be glad if any one of these gentlemen would point to me ten miles square on this globe where a man could raise a family decently, under the protection of just and equitable laws, where his children could be raised unspoiled and unpolluted, where age is revered, infancy cherished, women honored, manhood respected and human life made secure; when such a place ten miles

square can be found where the gospel of Christ has not gone and cleared the way and laid the foundation of true Christian civilization, then it will be in order for skeptics to ventilate their views."

Yes, my hearers, where this gospel goes, liberty goes, just laws go, education goes, churches are built, all the benignant institutions which bless and benefit society appear. The world is revolutionized and renovated just in proportion as it is penetrated and pervaded by the gospel of Jesus Christ. And when these results are seen, then God is glorified, and "out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God's glory shines."

Since these things are so, need I ask, Ought we not to be heartily in harmony, in spirit and in effort, with God's purposes of mercy and grace to the world? Ought we not to throw our lives into the great channels which his kindness, his loving kindness, has opened for our entrance? Ought we not to coöperate zealously with the men that are trying to maintain the cause of truth and righteousness? Ought we not to give our most intelligent, earnest and generous support to those agencies and institutions by which the whole family of mankind may finally be brought back to its rightful allegiance to God? I think so; you think so; everybody thinks so in his better moments; and, therefore, we see the infinite propriety of what our Lord said to his disciples, "Let your light so shine that others seeing your good works may glorify your Father which is in heaven." Do we not see with what an attractive lustre Christianity may shine when it is illustrated in the lives of its members on this wise: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

holding forth the word of life that I may rejoice in the day of Christ Jesus”?

My friends, sometimes when I am ending my sermon I wish very much that Heaven would inspire me with the knowledge of the right way to make the right application of my discourse. If I have unfolded an important truth, or demonstrated a great principle, then I want to find some method by which I may bring it home to the conscience, to the reason, to the heartfelt approval of those to whom I speak, but now inspiration has supplied this great need in the impressive words of our Lord and of his Apostle, just read. Or if we could take to heart these simple and sweet directions, and then, imploring divine aid, sincerely and earnestly endeavor to live in accordance with them, how quickly society around us would feel the hallowed influence. Were all to unite in such consecrated effort throughout the entire church, then Zion would be recognized and acknowledged even by the world as “the perfection of beauty,” and then “the beams which shine from Zion’s hill would lighten every land.” If I were permitted to make one wish, with the assurance that what I wished would be granted to the people that I love, it would be this, that God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, would shine in your hearts, and give to every one to whom I speak this day the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

II.

“NOT OF THIS WORLD.”

“My kingdom is not of this world.”—JOHN xviii. 36.

IT seems the longer educated men live who believe in the Christian system, and whose hearts are filled with the sweet hopes of the gospel of Christ, the more they are impressed, not only with the number, but with the great variety of evidences by which the truth of our holy religion is demonstrated. These evidences are not only numerous, but they are drawn from sources so widely different. They come from departments that have no connection with each other; indeed, we may say the whole physical universe, the whole world may be levied upon for illustrations and for confirmations of the truth of Holy Writ.

We begin at the beginning; the Bible is the only book that has given the world a picture, a definition of a God that is entitled to human respect, to human veneration, to human love and obedience. What a wonderful fact that is! There was not one of all the gods of Olympus, there was not one of the thirty thousand deities that were represented in the city of Athens whose character and life was not blemished or blackened by some vice; whereas the God revealed to us in these holy Scriptures, with perfect unanimity by all the sacred writers, is represented in the same august and adorable light, worthy of the homage and supremest affection of all intelligent creatures. How wonderful it is that a system of miraculous evidences running through fifteen hundred years should

have ever been constructed — miracles that seem to contravene the natural and established laws of nature, and so well authenticated that their reality was not denied even by those most acute, ingenious and virulently bitter enemies of Christianity that wrote against it in the early centuries. They admitted that the miracles were wrought; they only denied that they were accomplished by a divine power. They ascribed them to human agencies, but as for the reality of the miracles it could not be contradicted in many instances. How wonderful it is that a system of prophecy that begins, I may say, with the beginning of man's history — that a system of prophecy should have been delineated the first sentence of which was whispered in the ears of our first parents in the garden of Eden, and that prophecy from this germinal commencement has been unfolding through all the centuries, so that every century that passes brings a new confirmation of the truth of the Bible, because it witnesses the fulfilment of some prophecy.

History is, after all, the greatest witness; the world's history as it moves on is the great demonstration of the truth of prophecy, and, therefore, as the centuries are added one to another the evidences of the truth, of the fulfilment of these prophecies will be cumulative with the progressive ages. And then, my friends, is it not most wonderful that men living in different climates, under different social and political and moral influences, that men who are different from each other in their natural and in their spiritual endowments, should have uniformly taught that the beauty of man's character, in its highest development, is the beauty of holiness. O that I had time to enlarge upon that theme with which my soul kindles when I think of it, that every writer in the New Testament, in some way or other, makes his contribution to the

effect that man attains to his greatest dignity, and his only true dignity, just as the expulsive power of the heavenly affection expels from his soul everything that is dark and defiling, and fills him with light and truth and hope and love and peace.

The most wonderful of all the demonstrable evidences of the truth of Scripture, after all, is the picture that it presents of the only perfect ideal that the world ever saw. All men's ideas of virtue and of perfection are fragmentary; here is one that is complete, here is one that is absolutely faultless, here is one before which even the skeptic and the scoffer has been compelled to bow — the matchless beauty of the Son of Mary. I do not know what forms of beauty the heaven of heavens contains; I do know that the heaven of heavens contains nothing more beautiful than my glorified Jesus. And so, my friends, we have the privilege and the happiness of embracing a religion of certainties, a religion the proofs of which are always growing stronger and more convincing. Can we recollect without devoutest gratitude that we were born in a Christian land, and that perhaps our first teacher was a pious mother?

What a privilege it is to be in connection with this kingdom of which Jesus speaks, the kingdom of which he is the founder, the kingdom of which he is to-day the loving protector. It is a great mistake to suppose that Christ's work was completed with his resurrection and with his ascension. In one sense it was only the beginning of his work. Ever since that ascension to glory he has been superintending the affairs of his church, and it is because of his perpetual and loving counsel that the church is perpetuated, and that our hearts are thrilled with the prospect of its ultimate victory.

A most interesting question here arises as to the rela-

tions between this church and the outlying world, the relation between the church and the governments, the different kingdoms and republics in which the church is planted. Our Lord very briefly says, "My kingdom is not of this world." That is a statement that has been controverted, practically, for the last fifteen hundred years by a large proportion of those who claim pre-eminence in that kingdom; it has been virtually denied by thousands of those who think that the only way of maintaining the permanency of the church, of increasing its power and of securing its universal supremacy, is by an alliance with the State. And this brings me to that epoch of ecclesiastical history to which I wish to direct your attention, because it is the beginning of that alliance and the beginning of that system of union and coöperation between church and state which has continued for fourteen or fifteen centuries.

It is often said that when Constantine ascended the throne and made Christianity the established religion of the empire, Christianity prospered because the Emperor patronized it; on the contrary, my friends, the Emperor patronized it because Christianity had prospered. It was not the church coming humbly to a Cæsar and seeking the hand of the state, it was the state that wooed the church. Constantine had the sagacity to see that the church had already become the greatest power in the world, and it was on this account that he adopted the plan of strengthening the state and of accomplishing his own ambitious schemes through an alliance with the church.

The history of this man is one of great fascination, and marks an era in church history. He was born, as many of you know, in the kingdom of Dacia, on the northern bank of the Rhine, the kingdom that embraces modern Waldachia, and parts of that section of the east-

ern portion of Europe which is included in Hungary and Moldavia. There were six emperors contending for the government of the world — three of them in the eastern part of the Roman Empire and three in the western part — six emperors contending for universal rule. When the father of Constantine invaded Great Britain, the young man hastened to him, having been separated very early from his father, and living in a distant part of the country. He overtook his father upon the banks of the English Channel, crossed the Channel with him, and partook of the easy victory that was achieved over the Britons. Many persons do not know that the father of Constantine died in the venerable city of York, within sight of that magnificent cathedral that so many of you have visited and admired. It was in that ancient city of York that Constantine himself was crowned, and became king of Britain and of Gaul and of Spain. On his return to the Continent, the constant conflicts between these rival emperors had reduced the number to four, and presently to three, one of these being Maxentius, who made every attempt that was possible to destroy Constantine — to effect his ruin and his death by fair or by unfair means. I need not recapitulate the story which is probably familiar to you — of the conflicts between the forces of Maxentius and of Constantine, how at the battle of the Milvion Bridge, near the city of Rome, Constantine achieved his great victory; I need not tell you how he conquered his other rival, Lycinius, in subsequent conflicts, and how, in his early manhood, with a princely presence, with an inflexible will, with a daring genius, with a natural aptitude for war, with the greatest self-control after a life of chastity and of temperance, and a life in which he had habituated himself to every species of hardship, he entered upon his magnificent career.

What interests us most in the connection is the story of his conversion, and the insoluble questions that have arisen with regard to it. This is one of those great historical problems that never will be solved. There are a great many Christian writers who look upon Constantine as one of the greatest servants of the church, as a man who accomplished more than any man of his day or of those centuries for its welfare; whereas there are others who look upon him as a crafty politician, as a man consumed by intense personal ambition, as only half converted, if half converted at all. And so the rival factions continue to dispute, widely divergent in their expressions of opinion, as widely differing as the statements of Eusebius, a great admirer and eulogist, and those of Gibbon, who depreciates the character of this man, and represents him as an artful hypocrite.

You are aware of the fact that while Constantine was pursuing his career of conquest he alleged, at least, that he had been greatly influenced by a dream that he had at night, in which a voice spoke to his inmost soul, in which he received, as he thought, a divine commission to undertake the reformation of the world. This was followed by that other most remarkable statement, which also is one of the controverted points in history, with regard to that vision which he professed to have seen in the sky, the vision of the cross flaming in the heavens, and a voice that uttered those oracular and inspiriting words, “By this sign thou shalt conquer.” One of the most judicious, thoughtful and pious of modern historians, Ulhorn, in his *Conflict of Christianity and Heathenism*, does not hesitate to say that he believes that Constantine was perfectly sincere in the statement of what he saw, and of the influence which it exerted upon him. That much we all may admit. Even if it was an hallucination, even if it

was some distempered ocular condition that induced him to fancy that he saw that vision, yet he believed he saw that sign in the heavens, and the evidence of that belief is that it changed, to a very great extent, the man's life, and in the most solemn manner at the time of his death he reiterated the story, and communicated the fact to Eusebius, who received it from his lips: that it had been the influencing and controlling incident in his entire life. Charmed with the romance, his ambition was too large to be filled by the possession of the city of the seven hills, and he achieved the daring project of giving the world a new capital. He accomplished what he undertook. He was the founder of the most splendid city, so far as its position is concerned, upon the entire globe — the city of Constantinople. Napoleon himself declared that it was the key to the empire of the world, and that the nation that would hold Constantinople would be the dominant nation because of its peculiar position, lying upon the narrow Bosphorus, touched by Europe on one side, and by Asia on the other; the Bosphorus so easy to shut up at both ends, and thus to exclude all hostile fleets; the city so fortified by nature as to be impregnable by land; and yet, when those gates are thrown open, all the commerce of the Euxine (or Black) Sea, all the commerce of the Mediterranean and the rich countries that the Mediterranean's waters wash, pour their riches into this city, beautiful for situation, strong by position, and the key to the destiny of the East. There it was that he founded his great capital; there it was that he built magnificent Christian churches; there it was that he invited all the patricians of Rome to emigrate and found new homes, homes which he provided for them. The hundreds of palaces he erected were designed to be the homes of learned men from every part of the world, who were

invited to that capital to give dignity and influence to it because of their genius and their culture. He ransacked the whole earth and laid all under contribution in order to adorn the city, and such were his spoiliations that some one sarcastically said that he had done everything except to bring back the souls of the great masters, the great poets, the great architects, the great sculptors. He had brought back all their works, and had done everything but to bring back their souls, and make them inhabit the city where their works had been collected in such profusion.

It was in the year 313 A. D. that he issued the celebrated edict of Milan, the edict that declared Christianity to be the religion of the empire. Then it was that he commenced those reforms for which he has been so celebrated and for which the church owes him a great debt of gratitude. He was the man who enjoined the observance of the Christian Sabbath, the first man who ever enjoined it by law, or that forced its observance upon any people. Inasmuch as a multitude of Christian churches had been demolished during the persecutions of the early emperors, Constantine required them all to be rebuilt again, and service to be performed in them by those who were not to be molested in the duties of their sacred office.

These are some of the great changes he introduced, and at the same time it is perfectly evident from the cruelties which he perpetrated that there was an occasional going back, in heart, to the heathenism with which he had been irradicably tainted, making Apollo his God as well as Jesus, Apollo with the radiant brow, Apollo the matchless beauty, Apollo with the infinitely cultivated tastes, Apollo, who charmed the imagination of this man so that his homage was divided between Christ and the Sun God. These are the things that fill the whole world

with doubt with regard to the fact whether the man was, really, ever a true convert to Christianity, or whether the alliance that he formed between the state and the church was one out of love for the church or as a matter of state policy.

When our Lord said, "My kingdom is not of this world," these words cut in twain the recognized policy of some of the most enlightened nations of the earth. My friends, accustomed as we have been all our lives to religious liberty, we are oftentimes under a great illusion with regard to the condition of religious freedom outside of these United States. In how many governments is religion free? Did you ever try to count them? I did not ask in how many governments is religion tolerated; all religions are tolerated; but who does not see that there is a world-wide difference between the toleration of religion and the freedom of religion? If a government has a right to tolerate one religion, it has a right to suppress another religion, and when the government offers to tolerate religion, it offers an insult to every thoughtful man who has been instructed out of these holy Scriptures, and taught what his rights are by that great charter of human rights. Toleration of the worship of God by the permission of a government when that right is a gift direct from God himself to the soul of man? No, my friends, we scorn the permission; we scorn the indulgence which says, "We tolerate you for that God-given gift which is equally granted to all men, the right to worship God according to the dictates of conscience. Therefore, one of the happiest things that ever occurred in the organization of this government was the fact that in the Constitution of the United States, Congress is forever prohibited from establishing any form of religion or interfering with the religion of any Christian people. It is a noble article

in the same Constitution that in these United States there never shall be any religious test that has to be submitted to in order to acquire or to hold any office of trust under this government. It is true the States can make their own regulations, and have done so, with regard to religious freedom; and it gives us a great deal of pleasure to know that Virginia was the first State to sever entirely the connection between church and state. The conflict was a very long one — it took more years to establish religious freedom than it did to vindicate the independence of the United States; but at last it was done, and the article of which I speak was embodied in the Constitution in 1785. The next State to adopt such a policy was Maryland, and after Maryland came New York, and forty years afterwards, Connecticut, in 1816. The last link between church and state was not dissolved in Massachusetts until the year 1831, but now there are no religious tests and no religious discriminations in any of the States of this great Union.

Now we are beginning, my friends, to recognize the infinite wisdom that lies in that little statement of our Lord when he said, “My kingdom is not of this world,” by which he meant that it did not have its origin in this world; that it was not the product of the times; that no tendency evolved it; that there was no philosophy upon the globe, no religion upon the globe, no nation upon the globe that could originate a system like Christianity. Certainly it could not have been originated in Athens. If you remember the ground that we went over on last Sunday afternoon, the two great rival theological sects were those of the Epicureans and Stoics. Christianity did not emanate from the religion of pleasure, nor did it emanate from the religion of pride; Christianity scorned both as the foundation upon which it was to build. It

could not have originated in Rome in its decadence, for then was the very darkest period in Roman history, when all faith in men had been lost, when all faith in the gods of the Pantheon had been lost, when the very hope of immortality was well-nigh extinguished in the world. Christ's kingdom was not of this world because it had a different origin, and next because it has a different purpose from that of any worldly kingdom. What is the purpose of the worldly kingdom? It is to augment commerce, it is to multiply the material resources of the people, it is to prepare room for a great population, it is to do everything to make the nation so powerful as to hold its own against all comers, so strong as to command the respect of the world. Christianity never attempts this directly; it does it all indirectly. Christianity undermines whatever is not fit to survive in governments simply by rectifying the principles of the people, and it gives support to all that is fit to survive by giving its sanction. The purpose of Christianity is different — it is to restore the lost image of God in the soul of man; it is to make one endowed with that awful attribute at which we shudder when we think of its true meaning, endowed with the awful attribute of immortality, so to live that immortality will be an eternal blessing and benediction, and not an everlasting curse. The great object of Christianity is so, by the preaching of a pure gospel, to influence the consciences and hearts of men as to prepare the way for the universal reign of the Prince of Peace; and, therefore, Christianity never brings under its wing or asks the protection of fleets or armies; it does not rely upon human help. "My kingdom is not of this world, for then would my servants fight"; but it is a kingdom founded in human intelligence, because it refines and elevates human thought; it is a kingdom founded in the

human heart, because, as I said just now, such is the expulsive power of a new affection that it casts out all that is unholy and defiling; it is a kingdom of truth established in the soul of man — truth in harmony with eternal law, truth in harmony with immortal love. That is the kingdom that Christ came to establish in the world. “My kingdom is not of this world,” and, therefore, when there is an alliance between church and state, both are equally injured.

In the fourteenth century, John, the Bishop of Milan, inherited a domain, and as, by that inheritance, he was to become a temporal prince, he was required to decide between the two — to make his choice as to whether he would continue to be an ecclesiastic, or whether, renouncing his mitre, he would be a secular prince. When the day of decision came he arose from the throne upon which he sat in the cathedral, with a crosier in one hand and a drawn sword in the other, and he said, “These are my weapons of offence and defence, and with this sword I will guard the crosier.” My friends, in that little incident I have told you what might be crowded into an hour’s discourse with regard to the unhallowed alliance between church and state. Those that combine the two say that so far from renouncing the one because we belong to the other, they say, “With this sword I will guard the cross, and sword and cross combined shall conquer the world.” We cannot contemplate such a system as that, my friends, without dismay, when we remember the injury that it does to the church, and how it is calculated to fill the church with corrupt men, with men who seek high positions, with men who will demean themselves and debase themselves in order to obtain the favor of the state. It degrades the citizen when the state undertakes to control religious creeds and religious beliefs; it de-

grades the citizen because it deprives him of the right of conscience, and the independence of a man to think for himself and decide for himself the great questions that lie between the soul and God. You have a state of degraded people when they are compelled to suppress that which God has given for the elevation and for the development of man's noblest nature.

The church commits a great mistake when it undertakes to control political movements, when it espouses the cause of either party, when it gives its influence to a particular candidate, when it tries, by any method, to interfere with legislation — then the church is degrading itself; and the state is assuming an unwarrantable authority when it attempts to regulate the creeds of the church, when it attempts to impose penalties upon Christian people for doing what conscience requires them to do. So that, look at the matter all around, in whatever light you may contemplate it, we have a shrinking back from the thought that the day shall ever come when it will even be proposed in this country to form any connection between church and state. We ought to dwell upon and love this great truth announced in these words of our Lord when he said, "My kingdom is not of this world."

When it was proposed to disestablish the churches in the different States of this Union, some of the best men were filled with fear. The Rev. Dr. Dwight, of Yale College, was almost tempted to put on mourning, because he thought religion would decline when the fostering arm of the State was no longer around it; and another man, whose name I will not mention, also said it was the darkest day in his life, and yet that man lived to bless God that he had seen that very day, for he saw a day that was luminous now in memory, dark as it was in past experience. Now the happy thing is that this subject

admits of a demonstration, that the men who feared the church would decline when the aid of the state was taken away, have lived to see their mistake because they see the triumph of the system everywhere; and, therefore, if you look at it for a single moment, you will see that it opens up an exceedingly interesting department of investigation. All state influence in behalf of the church, revenues coming from the state in behalf of missions, or for the building of colleges and schools, being taken away, timid men thought there would be a decline in those great interests. On the contrary, the moment the church was thrown upon its own resources it became conscious of its elasticity, it became conscious of a vigor it never before experienced, and the force and sweetness of which it had not tasted. The consequence has been that there is not a country in the world where education has been so well provided for by free schools, by the establishment of academies of high grades, colleges under Christian influence, for three fourths of all the colleges and universities in the United States are in the hands of Christian men, who exert a Christian influence, influences that are salutary, and influences that are saving, that are non-sectarian but evangelistic. There is no country that so well provides for the education of its children as this country does, and when I am speaking about children I am reminded that next Sunday is Children's Day, and that there are more children in the Sunday-schools of the United States than in all Europe put together. Is that not wonderful, when we think of great populous countries like Germany, like Great Britain, like other countries that are Protestant — there are more Sunday-school children in the United States than in all the rest of the world combined, so that we have some twelve or thirteen million of little ones the best day of the week to learn a

lesson out of the best text-book in all the universe, and from Christian men and Christian women. And then there never were such church buildings as these in the United States. I do not mean that the old cathedrals of Europe do not immeasurably surpass them, but these cathedrals were the production of the middle ages, for that was the way the church expressed its devotion in the middle ages. When it did not have missions to undertake, when it did not have benevolent work to do it expressed its devotion by the erection of great cathedrals. When you compare these edifices in the United States with those of the old world, you see what a free Christianity can do for the erection of commodious churches adapted to the purpose for which they were designed — places where it is convenient to speak, and where it is easy to hear and where the people are permitted to worship God without molestation. Then again, there is not a country in the world that makes such provision for the supply of its own spiritual destitution as the United States. Is it not wonderful, my friends, that we have a better system for supplying destitute neighborhoods than even a little country like England, not as large as a great many of our States, and where we would think the whole country could be districted, and where you would think any and all individuals might be reached? There is probably more spiritual destitution in Great Britain in certain localities than can be found anywhere in the United States, with all the splendid civilization which we so much admire and extol, and ever will admire and extol. And then, not only has provision been made to supply this destitution at home, but there never was a land in which the missionary fires burnt upward with such a steady, vestal flame toward heaven as this land; it is the missionary country of the world.

So, my friends, we thank God and take courage when we see what has been accomplished, and we see in all these things the tokens(O may God hasten it in our own time) of the final triumphs of the cross, and of the certain coming of the time when that name, which is above every name, shall shine like a radiant star upon the very forehead of our redeemed humanity. And with a hope like this thrilling our hearts we may say, "The glorious company of the apostles praise thee, O Lord: the noble army of martyrs praise thee; thy holy church throughout the world doth acknowledge thee."

III.

THE HOLY MOUNTAINS.

"His foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God."—PSALM lxxxvii. 1-3.

IT has pleased God to select mountain summits as the places of his most impressive manifestations of himself to men. Of course, he has not told us the reason of this. He could reveal himself in the valley or upon the plain. He could fill the valleys with his beauty and the plains with his glory, but he has chosen to take the mountain tops as the places for his most resplendent revelation of himself. With these lofty summits we have connected the most important events in biblical history. From these mountain peaks hang suspended the great eras and the great events that mark the progress of the church of God in the world. So that when one becomes familiar with what is in the Bible with regard to the mountains, he gets a very tolerable acquaintance with the entire revelation which God has given us in his Word. There is a wonderful connection between sacred history and sacred mountains. It was upon Mt. Ararat that the ark rested, and that the human race began anew as if from a second Genesis. It was on the slope of Mt. Moriah that Abraham climbed, with Isaac behind him carrying wood for the sacrifice; and it was there that God provided the vicarious victim that prefigures to us the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world; and it was upon the top of Mt. Moriah that Abraham's faith shone forth with

a supernal lustre. It was upon Mt. Sinai that God came down in thunder and fire to make known his laws to men, and to give that summary which no skeptic can believe could have been invented by a man like Moses — those ten immortal lines that underlie all the jurisprudence and governments of the world. No one but a man partially insane can believe that a plain, unlettered shepherd from Horeb could give a condensed law that could endure through all the changes, all the forms of civilization, from the beginning to the end of time. It was upon Mt. Carmel, that rises abruptly out of the water, with the blue Mediterranean breaking into silvery foam at its base, that the prophets and the priests of Baal held their mighty duel, when the truth was victorious and vindicated in the eyes of the nation. It was upon the summit of Mt. Nebo that Moses went up to the greatest height which he could reach upon the earth, and it was to that summit that God came down and took him higher. It was upon Mt. Hermon that our Lord was transfigured, and that mountain still seems to glow with something of the divine radiance that covered it when celestial visitors came down to commune with him respecting the things he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. It was upon Calvary, clothed with a sacredness all its own, that our Lord hung upon the bitter cross, where he purchased redemption for us. It was upon Mt. Olivet, when that redemption was accomplished, he went up to take the seat — the middle seat — on the celestial throne; and perhaps nothing gives to the mountains of Palestine a more peculiar tenderness than the associations we have between them and our Lord himself. "Seeing the multitude he went up into a mountain, and when he was set, he opened his mouth," and preached the first sermon he delivered, beginning with the ten benedictions. Oh! the solemnity of the

mountains in the midnight air. Mountains were the oratory to which Jesus went, and where he held communion with his Father; and, therefore, we find that the mountains of Scripture show the trend of revelation; and I do not know what else to compare them to that will so express the idea I wish to impress upon you — that these mountains through the Holy Land form the great piers of the bridge which spans all human history, from the beginning until the time when the curtain will drop upon the completed drama of the world.

When God's people were led away into captivity, one reason of the melancholy of their lives consisted in the fact that they no longer had a glimpse of the mountains to which they were accustomed. The plains of Nineveh and Babylon were unbroken by a single eminence. "They hung their harps on the willow when they remembered Zion" — the high and holy hill they had been accustomed to climb — that they went up three times a year to offer their joyful homage in the temple. And when the Highland regiments are moved to the East Indies or other low-lying parts of the world, they long for the wind-swept mountains of the north, with the little cottages nestling at their feet, where in their youth they learned to speak the truth, to love God and do right. So those mountains in the Scripture are made a symbol of refuge, of safety, of home.

When the patriot Bonnivard was imprisoned in the dungeon of Chillon, in a dark dungeon below the water, he sometimes made a temporary ladder that he might climb to the one small window and get a glimpse of the Alps, with their snow-clad summits and the torrents rushing down their slopes, and the blue sky beyond; but his despondency came back when he went down to the darkness and slime of his dreary dungeon.

We may climb some Pisgah and look out on the scene which God has spread for our joy and comfort.

So we find much made of the mountains of Scripture as emblems of divine protection — the safety of those who find their refuge in them. “His foundation is in the holy mountains.” That is, what God has founded is in the holy mountains: that which is dearest to God, namely, his church, has its foundation upon those great attributes which the mountain represents. “As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, the Lord is round about his people;” his righteousness, his power — great mountains of safety, of protection. When God wanted to establish that which is dearest in this world, he did not take the valley or the plain, but he took the mountain, where he based the church upon foundations firmer than the primitive granite that supports the other strata upon it that make the earth. And so the Psalmist says, “His foundation is in his holy mountains.” It was impossible in ancient times for the tribes to go to Jerusalem without remembering as they approached the city how high it was above all the surrounding country; and, therefore, we always read in the Bible about going “up to Jerusalem.” Some of the greatest cities of the world were built upon dead levels. It was so in Memphis, it was so with Thebes, it was so with Tyre, it was so with Damascus, it was so with Baalbeck; but the city of Jerusalem was built upon its ancient hills; and, therefore, it is that we have, in the very opening verse of this Psalm, this great truth told us: the stability of the church of God, its foundations being the perfections of the Almighty, and the great covenants which he makes with his people, and the great covenants which he made with his Son. We carry out this idea to its fuller development, and find the church which had its foundation in Jerusalem become the church which had its

foundation in the times of our Lord. It is built on the patriarchs and the prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone!

“On the Rock of Ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation’s walls surrounded,
Thou canst smile at all thy foes.”

“Beautiful for situation, the joy of all the earth was Mount Zion.” This was the city of the great King. “Mark ye well its bulwarks, for here was the city of the great King!”

And of Zion it is said, “The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.” The word “Zion” by metonymy is put for the whole city. Zion, as you know, was a single mountain in Jerusalem. Upon it David built his dwelling. Nearby was Mt. Moriah, upon which afterwards the temple was built. But in the process of time the whole city took the name of Zion. Notice in the study of analysis how a word with one meaning grows by successive accretions as the ages move on. Zion once meant only a single hill, then the whole of Jerusalem, then it stood for God’s ancient church, the church over which he was King in the days of the theocracy; and then when other times and dispensations came, God said, “I have set my King upon my holy city of Zion.” Then the word expanded until it embraced the entire Christian Church. We have a beautiful example of this in the passage of Scripture I read. “Ye are not come to the mountain that cannot be touched; but ye are come to Mt. Zion, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant.” And if you

want to see how a word continues to grow, you will turn over to the last leaves of the Bible (Rev. xiv. 1-3), and you will find that it is not only the church militant, but is applied to the church triumphant! That mountain of infinite sanctity upon which God reigns is the Mt. Zion above, and it is designated as the Zion of God.

Now, it is true that "the Lord loveth the gates of Zion better than all the dwellings of Jacob." And why the gates? Because in ancient cities the gates are the fortified places, the emblem of the strength of the city, and you may ascertain the force necessary to capture a city by the strength of its gates. Then in times of peace the gates were the chief places of concourse — where men of influence and power sat and where they held their conferences. And in process of time the gates became the symbols of all that gave eminence and authority in the surrounding country over which it dominated. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion"—that is, his whole collective church—"more than he loves the dwellings of Jacob." But we are not to think that this meant any disparagement to the separate homes inhabited by his people. The text does not say that the Lord does not love the dwellings of Jacob; on the contrary, it implies that he *does* love them — only that he loved Zion more. Surely he loves the pious households, where love and friendship meet, where the father is the priest, and where morning and evening prayers are offered, and where the children gather around the family altar, and where they are taught to speak the truth and to reverence the Sabbath, and to obey their parents. The Christian family is the foundation of the state; and the character of every republic, every kingdom, depends upon the character of the families that compose the nation. When God reigns in the family, then God will reign in the state; and although it

will not be a theocracy, in the old definition of the word, that people will be a people whose God is the Lord, and that nation will have the exaltation that righteousness brings. The Apostle sent his salutation to the church in the house, and so long as there are apostolic, evangelical churches in households, there will be the same kind of churches in the commonwealth, nation, world. How dear to God are his people, bound together by the ties of holy affection; but dearer is the collective church: sweet the songs that go up from the family altar, but richer are the harmonies and grander the anthems that go up from the entire church of God. As the world turns on its orbit, and as the world revolves the bright sequence runs — the collective prayers and praises of his people ascend to him!

And God loves the church because the church in its united capacity, with its organized departments of holy work, can do more for the advance of his kingdom than individual families can do. The church is the repository of his truth, the place for the administration of his holy sacraments. The church contains an order of men who have to stand up in the presence of the multitude, and remind them of their obligations to God. No matter what form of government they are under, God maintains between the human race and himself the proper relation. It is the office of the church to preserve this Bible in its purity, its integrity, and to translate it into all the tongues that are spoken on the earth, and then send men to all parts of the earth with it. The church is dear to God. It is the place where the cross is lifted high. Every faithful minister of God lifts up Christ on the cross, and Christ fulfills his promise when he says, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." The church is the place where more people are converted than anywhere else. The Word is salvation to every one that believes. As the

church is the conservator of the truth, men ought to admire the church on this account. The church is the starting-place of every benevolent enterprise the world has ever known, for the lifting up of the fallen, and for the reformation of the vicious. People ought to recall that the first hospital was originated by the church. Beautiful was the spectacle of the hospital, in which the poor, the infirm and the maimed were gathered. So beautiful was this that Julian the Apostate, to recommend his heathen doctrines, began to establish hospitals as a matter of policy. He wanted to decry Christian influence by showing that heathenism could do the same thing. If you go to heathen cities now, you will find that almost the only measures instituted for the relief of the poor and suffering are the measures instituted and carried out by the churches and by the individual members of the churches. Therefore, the church has claims upon the men of the world that the men of the world should honor. "God loveth the gates of Jacob," but he loves the church itself better than the individual household, for there is his throne, there is his altar, there is the refuge, and there is the home of his people, and from it emanates all influences that are designed to bless the world. Then, my friends, I do not know of anything more natural than that if God has this regard for his church, that all men for whose benefit the church was organized should come to it, and give it all the help they can by their influence, their time, by everything that can advance its influence in the world. For God says, "I have chosen Zion; this is my rest; here will I dwell; for I have desired it." God makes Zion glorious by the incarnation of his Son; he makes the church the body of Jesus Christ, he being its Head; he makes the church the place where the Spirit dwells, and sends forth quickening, consoling, sanctifying

power; if he makes the church the one luminary that shines through the sin-darkened world, ought not every fair, right-minded man come up to the help of the church with all that he can bring? Oh! what a lamentable mistake men make. Men that think they must have perfection before they become members of the church, forgetting that the church is the training-school, the place for every man who is sorry for his sins, who relies upon Jesus Christ as his Saviour. Every man who feels these things should be a church member. There are many who say, "I know I am a sinner." They should go on and say, "I come to thee, O Saviour, to save me from my sins." Every man is welcome who can say these things. My friends, if the dear Lord came into the world to preach his own gospel, and then died upon the cross to give you salvation, do not you think he has some rights? Do not you think Jesus Christ has some rights — rights to your love, reverence and service? Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. He gave his tears, he gave his toil, he gave his blood; and now he turns to you and says, "My friend, my friend, what are you doing for the church I loved? You have the responsibility of souls. You have immortality. What are you doing for me?" My friends, if every man in this house knew the possibilities of their lives, it seems to me they would leap for joy. I cannot frame a sentence in this pulpit that can adequately express that thought. If a man has health to come to the house of God to-day, he can obtain salvation by simple acceptance of it. And when I think of this life, this eternal life, that cannot be numbered by hundreds of centuries, and then remember that many of the men here have only a few years before them — when they think of the possibilities of their life, they should leap for joy. Who will may come and say, "I recognize thy claim

and my duty, and I trust thy promises; and although I am a poor, weak creature, I rely upon the promise that I shall be helped, and believe that I shall go on from strength to strength until I shall rise in the city of God."

"Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God." So I close with reference to that. Glorious things are spoken of the city of our God! I wish you would go back and recall the names of the men who have spoken in Jerusalem. Only think of the kings who have walked those streets! Only think of the prophets who have sung its praises. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." We have an ancient city, venerable for its antiquity and memories on the banks of the Tiber. Philosophers, orators, poets have walked through the streets of Rome, but, my friends, did men walk through its streets whose names can be put by the side of David, and Solomon, and Isaiah, and the apostles, and the martyrs? Oh! glorious men have spoken in thee, O city of my God! Such a succession of men as this world never saw before. And the men that spoke in ancient Athens, what are they now but dim shades? Is there any man in this house who is better to-day because of all that Socrates or Plato ever spoke? They please the intellect, but what have they ever done for the real good of the world? But, my friends, the names of David, of Isaiah, of Paul; the names of such men as Athanasias, or Augustine, such men as Knox, Luther, Calvin, and Huss, that have shaken society and revolutionized the world — to whom shall we compare them?

If I had time this morning, I would read you the whole of this sixtieth chapter of Isaiah. I do not know of anything more inspiring than the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, in which he gives that glowing picture of the manner in which the church shall be enlarged as all men

contribute to its glory, laying down their treasures; as science comes, and genius comes, and harmony comes, and devotion comes, as the world comes, and gives its treasures into the church of God. If anything is finer, it is the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, when all this is performed, and the eye glistens when St. John says, "I saw the new Jerusalem, arrayed in the glory of God." And when he goes on to speak of the characteristics of the city of God, and declares that there is no sun, because the Lamb is the light thereof. And when he says there is no pain — no pain of body, no anguish of heart; and where his servants shall serve him, and where the redeemed shall be blessed for evermore. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." Let us be servants in thy palaces; let us serve at thy altars; let us be partakers of thy glory!

"Blest seats! through rude and stormy scenes,
I onward press to you!"

IV.

THE RIVER THAT MAKETH GLAD.

“There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.”—PSALM xivi. 4.

NO matter how much we might try to become acquainted with a memorable place, by means of our own reading, or by what others may tell us in the way of information, there is nothing like seeing it ourselves. We may study most diligently in order to inform ourselves about some interesting object, but after all, if we are going to get a clear and a correct conception, it must be by ocular inspection. For example, we might have the plan of a great city, we have illustrated maps, we have engravings and photographic representations of the principal buildings and monuments which the city contains, but a walk of one hour on foot through that city and a look upon those places will give us a clearer idea of its configuration, of its style, of its general external character than we can get by months of such reading and study. The first sight of a very interesting object generally makes the deepest impression. There are some things that we cannot have intensely but once. Impressions may be renewed, but there is nothing like the vividness of the first impression. There are some objects in nature that affect us powerfully the first time we see them, such as, for example, the great chain of the snow-clad Alps, or the first view of the ocean, or of some mighty cataract. There are places that have no intrinsic interest whatever that profoundly affect us the first time we see

them; they have no intrinsic interest, and yet they move our emotional natures powerfully. A battle-field is not at all different in appearance from the wheat-field, but, ah! the associations connected with the battle-field, where perhaps the liberties of a people were won or lost. It has no intrinsic importance more than any other field, but by the power of mental and moral association. We look upon it with a thrill of emotion, although the hills and plains and trees that grow upon it may be just like other hills and plains and trees.

The same thing of which I speak is also true of the great rivers of the earth. The first sight of a historic river, like the Rhine, the Nile, or the Tiber or the Jordan, makes an impression that becomes a part of memory. You say, "All water flows between two banks, and all water is composed of the same elements, and has the same general aspect." So it is, my friends, and yet when you stand on the banks of the Nile, that river is no more like the Tiber, or when you stand on the banks of the Tiber, that river is no more like the Jordan than if they were made of different materials, and as if the outward aspect of them were different. And all this comes from the power of association, from the long memories which we have cherished because of the events that have occurred upon the banks of these rivers, and because of the effect which they themselves produce physically and otherwise on the countries through which they flow.

I think I will make my meaning perfectly distinct when I ask you to think of the associations that belong, for instance, to the river Jordan. It is a narrow stream; it is usually a turbid stream; there is nothing more impressive in it than there is in the Appomattox at Farmville to the outward eye, and yet any one who stands on the banks of that river has a rush of memory that goes

back two or three thousand years. We think about the time when, after the great wanderings in the desert, the trained and disciplined tribes of God, under the lead of their great Captain, crossed that narrow river, and took possession of the land that had been promised to their fathers four hundred years before; we remember how the old prophet once came down to its banks and wrapped his mantle together and smote the waters, and they receded so that he passed through dry shod; we remember how, when Joseph carried the embalmed remains of his father to the place where he wanted to rest, there was a great mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, beyond the Jordan; we remember that it was upon the banks of that river that the great preacher that shook the world walked, when John the Baptist cried out, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; it was upon the banks of that river that Jesus stood when the heavens were opened above him in answer to his prayer, and when the Spirit in the form of a gentle dove, white winged and pure, fluttered down and rested upon him. The Jordan is a sacred river, not only to the Christian and to the Jew, but to the wandering Israelite, who dips his bloody feet in the waters, upon whose banks his fathers pitched their camps three thousand years ago. There is not a river that flows that awakens so many recollections, or that has connected with it so many sacred associations by people scattered all over the world as the Jordan. There is something impressive to my mind in the fact that on the plains of India, or wherever the Mohammedan has a mosque, he reveres the Jordan just as much as the settler, the immigrant who has built a cabin on the side of the Rocky Mountains. So the Orient and the Occident, the far East and the distant West, unite in paying their tribute of homage to this little river.

Moreover, these rivers are symbols of great spiritual truths, and I am going now to call your attention to an interesting fact — that a river runs through the entire continent of Bible truth, from Genesis to Revelation. Eastward out of Eden went that river that parted into four branches; and we turn over to the last page of the Bible, and the seer tells us, “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, . . . and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” The river which started in Eden began its gentle flow through the world; it grew deeper, it grew wider as it ran, and in what sweet strains the Psalmist celebrates that river, how beautifully he presents it to our vision in the text, “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God”! And when we turn over to Isaiah we find that his poetic fancy was quickened and refreshed at the very thought of this river. “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.” What a charming commentary that is upon the text! “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.” Isaiah tells us, when he thinks about that, that wherever that river flows the whole land blossoms and blooms like the very garden of the Lord. We can hardly look upon any of the latter pages of the prophecy of Isaiah without seeing something illustrative of this great truth; and what interests us so, my friends, is the fact that this river that is said to run through the world, that commenced with the creation, that began to flow before Adam began to breathe, and has been flowing on through all the generations, is symbolic of the greatest truth that revelation itself reveals, for what

is this river but the grace of God flowing through its appointed channels, flowing through the visible church, with its ordinances and sacraments flowing through the revealed Word, which makes known what God is, and what we are and what we may be, and which brings to the world those blessings which first civilize and then evangelize the nations. Oh! this the river, "the streams whereof make glad the city of God!" But the ancient city of God in Palestine did not have any river; how about that? Jerusalem was the only famous city of the world that did not stand upon a river; it was surrounded by great hills, and not even the Jordan flowed beneath its walls. There was a celestial streamlet which ran through the city of Jerusalem that was mightier in its influence than the Euphrates, upon which the great oriental despotic cities that ruled the world were planted. I am going now to tell you about that stream, and make it illustrate my text.

The little brook Siloam, as you noticed if you followed me as I read those verses from Ezekiel, flowed from under the temple, flowed from beneath the altar, but it did not rise under the temple. It rose in the western hill that lay beyond Jerusalem; and good, wise King Hezekiah did for his city what was the city's salvation. By a secret aqueduct he conducted the water from that un-failing fountain in the western hills, first beneath the western walls of the city, and then underneath the temple, so that from the eastern side of the temple these waters were seen issuing out, and so flowed down through the streets of Jerusalem. The wisdom of his expedient consisted in this, that when the city was besieged, as it was so often, the supply of water never could be cut off by turning the stream, even as great rivers were sometimes turned by the besiegers of the cities, and the inhabitants

left utterly destitute of that without which life cannot be sustained. Because of the prudence and foresight of Hezekiah there was always a supply of water that never could be cut off, sufficient for the necessities of all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

That is the first fact, but the next one is this, that these waters flowed in a particular way, they flowed from under the altar. If the river is the symbol of the grace of God, please remember that God chooses the channels through which that grace shall flow to men. The grace of God is something invisible, but there are visible channels through which that grace flows, and one of these is the outwardly organized church. If we want to get near these refreshing waters, we have to come and take our place at the foot of the cross; if we want to drink of those fountains we have to stoop down and humble ourselves, and with a sense of inward thirst which cannot otherwise be satisfied, we must drink of that life-giving stream.

Ezekiel tells us that with regard to this stream that was consecrated at the very beginning of its flow, wherever it went throughout the land it healed everything it touched that needed healing, and he gives us a most extraordinary illustration of what he means. He says these waters ran down and flowed into the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea, you know, is a water so vile, so acrid, that no living thing can survive in it. There is not a fish in the entire sea, not one; and yet Ezekiel's metaphor is this, that if this life-bringing river only flows down and mingles with the sea, the waters of the Dead Sea themselves shall be cured and made fresh, so that it shall be filled with animated life. Wherever this river goes it carries with it cleansing, it carries with it healing; and in this respect it reminds us of what happens in the

vicinity of the city of Geneva. Two rivers come together there — the Rhone, flowing bright and blue as the bright blue heaven above it, and mingling with the pellucid waters of the Rhone comes the turbid Arve, flowing through clay soils and fed with the dirty *débris* of the mountains and of the glaciers through which its waters percolate. When this muddy stream meets with the waters of the blue Rhone, such is the antagonism between the waters that they will not mingle. They flow on, two distinct rivers, with a line of demarcation between them visible to the eye. Side by side they flow, but as they flow a process commences and continues until by and by you notice that the clear water begins to triumph over the turbid. On the right bank, along which the turbid stream flows, that stream grows narrower and narrower, and the waters become more and more purified as they run, until at last the Rhone triumphs. A few leagues from the city all trace of the discoloration is gone. And so, my friends, in that figure we have, I think, one of the most beautiful illustrations of what this gospel river will do for this world, all contaminated as it is by ten thousand of vices and abominations. In the triumph of the Rhone I see a prophecy of the triumph of the gospel, and I believe the day will come when the cleansing power of that water will not only be felt by the nations of the earth that are now most besotted, most degraded, but that the purifying power of these waters shall be felt and experienced by every individual soul until humanity shall be washed clean and be made pure.

Next, we are told that wherever these waters flowed there was a fringe of vegetation upon the banks, the fir tree, the olive tree, the myrtle, the green grass, the verdant flowers — beauty on either bank, beauty on both banks, wherever this river flowed. Perhaps there is not

such an arid looking country on the globe as Egypt during the month of August, but there comes a time when the inhabitants turn their faces northward and scan the heavens. By and by a strange haze settles over the landscape — no clouds, because it is a rainless land, and all vegetation would perish everywhere if the people had to depend upon rains. Anxious eyes are turned toward a certain part of the horizon, and by and by the hope is not disappointed, for the inundation of the Nile begins; by and by its banks are full; by and by they overflow, and the water runs over the parched plains, and there it lingers certain days; by and by the water subsides, and in a short time the vast plain becomes emerald; it stands dressed in living green until it changes for something more beautiful, and that change comes when all the plain is gold with the yellow harvest, making Egypt the granary of the East. And so it is with this river of which the prophet speaks. In whatever part of the world it flows see how it awakens the intelligence of men; see what reforms it inaugurates; wherever these waters come what new forms of life spring up in their beauty, in their symmetry, in their strength. Just in proportion as any nation becomes evangelized that nation is strong in all the elements that make a people of true progress and true power. It is obliged to be so — that wherever the gospel flows it carries certain adjuncts with it that constitute the very life-blood of the world. Wherever this gospel goes it establishes churches, with their ordinances and with their sacraments; it carries with it the written Word of God, and no book was ever written that so awakens human intelligence; there never was such a book that was such an agitator, never such a revolutionist — never a book that so stirs the thought, the emotion of men. A Bible-reading people is always a free people and

a strong people at the last, for the Bible makes men acquainted with their rights and then fires them with a determination to maintain those rights, and they do. The Bible teaches men not to bow at the feet of a spiritual despot, and the moment a man is emancipated from the thralldom of a spiritual despot, he says, "I am also entitled to civil liberty," and, therefore, wherever the Bible has gone it has wrought these two great changes. Even among the most despotically governed people the Bible is the book that teaches men that rulers have duties as well as rights, and that the people have rights as well as duties, and that is the greatest lesson that a state can learn. That is the secret of free and of stable government.

You recollect to have seen that man described by Ezekiel, as he walked along with the measuring line. He walked a thousand cubits and measured the depth of the water, and it came up to the ankle; he walked a thousand cubits further, it came up to the knees; a thousand cubits more it came up to the loins; another thousand cubits, and it was a river that great galleys and stately ships might sail on, but it could no longer be forded. In the days of good old Enoch, the seventh from Adam, a little handful of people, as many as could sit in these front pews, were banded together, and began to call upon the name of the Lord. The river was then a rill indeed; you could hardly hear it trickle; you could only see the glitter of it as it began to flow over the sand, but it flowed on; and then the patriarchs came, and the judges, and the prophets, and the psalmists; and in the days of David, and in the days of Isaiah, it was a splendid river, celebrated as such in immortal song, "There is a river that makes glad the city of God." That was true in the days of David, and, thank God, that river has been flowing on

ever since, deepening as it runs. If the man with the measuring line had attempted to ascertain the breadth of it, and the depth of it, on the day of Pentecost, he would have had a task to perform, and since the day of Pentecost the world has been living under the dispensation of the Spirit. Now the mightiest force in the world is the gospel force, and the strongest institution known on earth is the church of God. Out of the church come all the institutions of Christian benevolence, and all the great enterprises that good people have devised for lifting up the neglected classes, the hopeless classes as they are sometimes called. There are no hopeless classes, except those that the church has ceased to hope for. Whenever the church gets hopeless, then the world may get hopeless too, but there are no hopeless classes. All the enterprises of Christian benevolence by which the unregenerate, the debased and the alienated are brought out of their impurity and brought into civilization, these are the work of the church. These great institutions by which the gospel is disseminated through the world are not invented by worldly men—none of them are the devices of worldly men. Our boards of publication, our institutions for the education of pious youth for the ministry, those two great factors of modern civilization, the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society, with their gigantic presses running day and night, year in and year out, scattering millions of Bibles all over the world—these are some of the outcomes of the gospel wherever it has gone.

Therefore, we are told that wherever that river cometh it giveth light, and “it maketh glad the city of God.” Oh! yes, with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. I do not know how a man can be happy until he drinks of this stream. The grace of God is something

essential to human happiness, because it brings man's imperious will so often antagonistic to the divine will, it brings it in sweetest harmony with the paternal will that is always right; and when the little finite will merges and flows along with the Almighty will, the Omnipotent, ever-right will, the holy will of God, then the man starts right, then the gospel burns up with a clear, steady flame of devotion to God. When the will is harmonized, and when the emotions or thoughts are purified, and are all filled with the graces of the Spirit, cannot anybody see that the man may say, "There is a river whose streams make this heart, this conscience, this will, glad." "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God." The people who have told the most stupendous falsehood that was ever attempted to be palmed upon the world for its deception are the people who have represented religion as something gloomy, when it was intended as it flows on in its beneficent course through the world, that before it sighing and sorrow should flee away, and in a sweet train should follow thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

Beloved friends, it comforts me to know that the waters of this river can never fail. I do not know whether the Nile river may not be interrupted some time by a revolution of nature in the East; it may be so interrupted as not to overflow its banks, and then comes a barren strip of sand where there is now beauty and fertility; but I know that this river that runs out from beneath the temple walls is a river that will never fail. God's love is a reservoir. It is a reservoir the depth of which cannot be fathomed, and only think that out of that reservoir men of all the ages have been drinking and drawing whatever supplies they wanted, and the surface has not been lowered one hair's breadth for six thousand years. Oh! the imperishable character of the grace of

God, flowing on forever, undiminished in its force, undiminished in its healing power, undiminished in its power to make glad the souls of men. "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." I cannot make a more friendly wish; I cannot make a more affectionate wish than the wish that I do make for every one within these walls to-day — that whatever else he may fail to secure he will not fail to bend over these waters. They will give refreshment to that weary, sad heart; they will give purity with all the peace that purity brings; they will bring the harmony that will give the happiness that comes from harmony, the divine happiness that comes from holiness. O that each of us to-day would humbly bow and drink of that life-giving stream! On that last great day of the feast Jesus stood where everybody could see him, and he cried so that everybody could hear him, and he said, "If any man thirst [that means you], let him come unto me and drink."

V.

A LITTLE SANCTUARY.

“I will be to them a little sanctuary.”—EZEKIEL xi. 16.

ALL the words in our language which have been derived from the Latin word *sanctus* have a kindred meaning: sanctity, sanctification, sanction, sanctuary — one idea pervades all these derivatives, and that is the idea of something hallowed, something consecrated, something set apart from a common to a hallowed use.

In the ancient temple there was one apartment that was regarded as the most sacred of all, and when the sanctuary was spoken of originally reference was had, not to the temple, the whole temple with its different courts, but to that one consecrated place over which an unlifted veil hung through all the year, a veil that was raised only once a year when the high priest entered, with blood upon the altar to make intercession for the people that stood worshipping without. In the process of time, the whole building came to be called the sanctuary, and then the word was very naturally and properly applied to all houses of worship erected in every part of the world for the service of the great God. We speak of these as sanctuaries, remembering that they are hallowed places, that they are places of refuge, places of rest, places of communion with God, places where men are trained for service, where they gather the strength with which they go out and wage a warfare against the adversaries of the truth, and to labor for the extension of the kingdom of truth and righteousness in the world,

and where they are prepared for the higher and nobler service of the upper sanctuary.

In order to understand the full force and significance of this little text — which does not seem to have anything in it at the first reading — we must consider for a moment the peculiar history and position of the people at the time when the prophet was commanded to tell the scattered Israelites that God would be to them “a little sanctuary.”

In ancient times one of the strangest customs that the mind can contemplate, then universal, now universally obsolete, was common, and that was that when two nations made war upon one another, the victorious nation carried away hundreds and thousands of the captured people, and made them captives in their own land. This was especially true of the inhabitants of Palestine, for that little country stood just at the angle where three great countries touched, and across its narrow territory swept the great invading forces — whether they came from the far north, from Babylonia, or Chaldea, or whether they came from the south, from the land of Egypt sweeping northward — the ground upon which the people walked was nearly always trembling under the tread of warriors, and their ears were seldom without the sound of the thunder of the chariots, and the clash of splintering swords; and as a result of an attack upon the city of Jerusalem, the people of that city were carried away into captivity — once for a period of seventy years. This was the condition of things when the text was uttered, and its immediate occasion. The few Jews that had been left behind in the land of Palestine, who were still inhabiting the city of Jerusalem, regarded themselves as the peculiar favorites of Heaven, because they had escaped captivity: and they were prone to look with contempt upon their brethren, who had been made captive

by the heathen, whose ways and principles they imagined their brethren had to some extent adopted; they did not look upon them as having maintained the true faith in the God of Israel; and, therefore, in this chapter of the prophecy of Ezekiel, we find that these home Jews, these Jerusalem Jews, were in the habit of speaking disparagingly of their brethren in captivity, saying, "We are the people of the Lord, and in possession of the inheritance which the Lord has given us; we have our home, our city, we have our church, our temple." Then it was that the prophet was directed to go and bear this message to the captives who had been stolen, who "hung their harps upon the willows when they remembered Zion," and who had not lost any of their inborn love for their church and people, and who prayed for the time when they might be permitted to return to their own land, and whose hearts had grown sick because of hope so long deferred — whose hearts were wounded when they heard that their brethren at home thought them disloyal to their home and their God. Then the prophet was sent with this comforting message, "I will bring you back, and you shall be to me a people." But in the meantime, until the fulfilment of the promise, the prophet was directed to say in the name of the Lord, "I will be to you a little sanctuary."

In the sermon this morning I want to point out the exceeding kindness of this dispensation, and to show that God still delights in the worship of his people in the churches which have been organized, and where they may meet to sing together, to pray together, to hear the Word of God; and also that the divine wisdom and divine goodness has been shown to those who have been deprived of such privileges. Nothing that I am going to say will disparage in the slightest degree the feelings we ought to cherish of the house of God. These Scriptures bear

the immortal impress of the regard which God himself has for his church and the worship of his people. Turn over the leaves, especially of the writings of this prophet and of the Psalmist — the praise of the sanctuary is often the burden of their song, and his delight in the worship of his people in their churches is their theme. God's people respond, "One thing have I desired, and that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord forever" — not literally, not bodily, but always there in my interest and my affection — "to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his tabernacle; for in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion, in his secret place shall he hide me."

Man is naturally a social being, and God's people come together and gratify that social nature, so that we find ourselves edified when we sing together, and pray together, and when together we engage in all the exercises of holy worship. God has made the church the depository of his eternal truth; he has made that long succession of men, whom he intends to maintain to the end of time, to tell the people of it, to force it upon the mind of the people, and above all to uphold the cross, so that his prediction shall find fulfilment, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Yes, we are to have regard for the sanctuary, for the institutions of public worship in the houses that have been built and consecrated to his service, that have been hallowed with memories of communion with God in the sacraments that have been administered in them for generations and generations. Well, while all this is true, I want to call your attention to the divine consideration that is shown in behalf of those who have it not in their power to worship in these temples built with human hands. If I should ask you who wrote the Psalms, these children that are in the

house this morning, and that I see are listening to the sermon — even these children would say, “David wrote the Psalms.” So he did, so far as the majority of them are concerned; but Solomon wrote one of them, Asaph wrote several of them, and Moses wrote, perhaps, the noblest of them all. For depth and volume of holy thought I do not know of any human composition that can equal the nintieth Psalm. There is a dignity in it, a stately march in it, a grandeur in it, a sanctity in it that arrests our attention, and deeply moves us when we contemplate it — the Psalm that begins with these words, “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” No doubt it was when the tribes were on their wearisome march to the land they loved and were longing for, and Moses ascended some eminence, and looked out upon the hosts of Israel in their encampment. He remembered that for years and years theirs was to be a troubled and unsettled life, that although they might be encamped in the place called “Elim,” where were palm trees and refreshing springs of water, and though they might want to linger longer at a place so refreshing, yet the moment they saw the pillar of cloud rise and move onward they had immediately to fold their tents and join the march. Never could they remain long enough to sow the grain with any expectation of reaping the harvest or profiting by the result of their own industry. They were entirely dependent upon Providence for their daily supply, and theirs was a life of perpetual change — wanderers, homeless, in a great desert! It comforted the man of God that the Lord after all was the dwelling-place of his people in all generations, the spiritual home, and it comforted him

that every devout member of every tribe in the uncertain life which he lived, the life of perpetual vicissitude, the life of constant weariness, the life of continual exposure, could find in the presence of God himself the sanctuary his soul needed, and that there he could find his true rest and true home. And this has been the case with the people of God in all generations. "Here we have no continuing city." Very few of us live in the house which we built with our own hands; when we recur in memory to our earliest home of which we have any recollection, it is oftentimes accompanied by an emotion of great sadness when we think it is not our home any more, and never will be, and that the place where we learned the name of "mother," with all the endearments of home life, is now in the hands of strangers; and when we go back to it, although there may be some agreeable associations awakened, oftener they are depressing because of the melancholy changes which we see have taken place. God is the spiritual home where we are at rest, and where we find no change, and that home to us is just the same as it was in our childhood. If we have reached middle life, we say, "This is my rest now, just as certainly as when I sat at my mother's knee." And if we have reached old age, our satisfying trust is deeper as the years go on, and as we feel the need of the support of the eternal God and of the everlasting arms.

I can imagine how the great soul of Moses was comforted when he saw the thousands and thousands of Israel and remembered that for forty years, through that great and terrible wilderness, they must follow on their weary way, and how it comforted him to say, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place." We talk about our earthly home; we can find no true rest in any earthly home — I do not mean that we cannot find true love in our earthly

homes, for we do. But the very love that makes home so sweet is the occasion of life's deepest sorrow, because we know it is only a question of time when the ties that are dearest will be severed, and not only "the mourners go about the street," but sit in the house and bewail their dead. If the soul would find undisturbed tranquillity, it must be in God, who is our dwelling-place — not in the temple, but in the great Lord of the temple.

And then only remember that during the lives of the patriarchs there was no such thing as a church in all the world. Well, how did they maintain their worship without the advantages, the things we think necessary? How? By the fulfilment of the promise. The very first thing that Abraham did when God called him from his native land was to build an altar, and God was there, "a little sanctuary." And when Jacob lay upon the ground and saw that glowing ladder reaching the sky, he said, "This is the house of God, the gate of heaven." There was no house, no gate, but God was there, with all his imparted strength and consolation. Jacob was anything but lonesome and solitary when troops of angels went up and down the glorious ladder, and when God stood at the top speaking words of comfort to his servant. That was a beautiful illustration of the promise, "I will be to you a little sanctuary."

And then consider how many people there are in the land in which we dwell, where there have been Christian institutions, Christian privileges, ever since the country was settled — how many there are living in communities so sparsely settled that there are not enough to form a congregation; and if there were enough people, such is the poverty of the people that they cannot support a settled minister. Shall they be left without the consolations of religion? They are left without the house of

God; but only that, for they have the Lord of the house. "I will be to you a little sanctuary."

My sympathy goes out to the thousands and thousands of people that have no home in all the earth. Perhaps you have never thought of the people whose vocations keep them always on the move. I do not allude only to the sailors, whose home is in the forecastle of the ship; not only those, but the homeless ones, and they constitute thousands and thousands of our race. How many are there who travel up and down the land, whose whole lives are lives of perpetual change, without the comforts of home during the week, and without the privileges of the church on the Sabbath day! But there are devout believers in the truth, there are loyal servants of God in these countless thousands, and to them God says, "I will be to you a little sanctuary." I am glad to know that the sailor in the forecastle of the ship can find, even in that place, so narrow and noisome — even there he can find a sanctuary where he can meet with his Lord, and hold communion with him in prayer.

Then I call your attention to another great class. Did you ever make a calculation of the number of people in this land, in these United States, who, by reason of age or infirmity are obliged to stay in their homes? What a great host of the weary and worn, almost worn-out old pilgrims you would find, could you get a glimpse of those who have almost reached the termination of their journey, and who can only sit in the armchair, ministered to by the younger members of the family, only waiting for the doors to open and admit them to the rest so long desired! Think of the multitude of the class called "shut-in" — a very striking term. I believe there is a newspaper called *Shut-in*, which is intended for those who, by reason of long illness or infirmity are unable to leave their homes,

into whose wearisome lives it brings good cheer. Well, I believe that in the chambers where God's people are confined, and in the houses where they are shut in by reason of recent bereavement, there are some of the most beautiful disciples of Christ to be found in the world. I think some of the most saintly people in the world are those I have been describing. To them God's promise is fulfilled. Some of the most eloquent tributes I have ever heard in my life to the sweetness of God's sustaining grace I have heard in the chambers of sickness, and in the homes made desolate by bereavement. It is not in the pulpit that you hear the noblest expressions of God's unfailing care and love; it is with those who have had experience of God's grace, and appreciate it thoroughly. To the "shut-in," from any cause, the promise comes, "I will be to you a little sanctuary."

Then I would have you remember another class. Only think of the people who two centuries ago in the land from which so many of us, so many of our forefathers came; only think of the persecutions they suffered between 1670 and 1688; think of the condition in England and Scotland, when the perfidious Stuarts were on the throne, and until William of Orange came in; when the government tried to impose prelacy upon the people; when the people were forbidden to meet in the sanctuary; when they were driven from their homes, and even abode in caves, taking refuge there from the rude troopers of Claverhouse. And I know of few things more pathetic than the annals of those days, when you read of the haunts which the people of God found; when you read of the cavern which had a very narrow entrance, beyond which was a large chamber, in which they gathered; a cavern on the side of a steep mountain, where the dragoons could not reach them, the entrance concealed by

the heather and bracken that grew about it; where the people of God could gather on the Sabbath day, and who had to sing their hymns in low, subdued voices, where the hours were precious to them because attended with so much peril; where they could hold communion together, where they could sympathize with one another, and where they could gather around the consecrated elements, the broken bread and wine. They knew not if the day should close without disaster. Do you believe that there is any cathedral in the world, St. Paul's, or St. Peter's at Rome — do you believe that there is any cathedral in the world more precious to God than that old cave in the mountain where the old Covenanters used to meet? No, there was the place where they found their rich and full reward; there God fulfilled his promise when he said to them, "I will be to you a little sanctuary."

And would you not think it strange if I were to tell you that the place where God has had the most heartfelt praise, the truest sanctuary, was the prison? Only think of that scene in a prison when, with their feet made fast in the stocks, at midnight Paul and Silas sung a song which the prisoners had never heard before, the song of glory to the eternal King — a song whose echoes have never died away, resounding through the world at this moment — when Paul and Silas not only prayed, but sang praises to God! And what shall I say of the remarkable period in the life of Martin Luther when he was taken to the prison in the Thuringen mountains, and shut up for a year? It looked like a hard dispensation, and yet we see the reason for it. Martin Luther had been a man of action, he had been a man of power, he had given his testimony before kings, he had been in the habit of standing before multitudes, never fearing to let his voice be heard. By the hymns which he had com-

posed — hymns sung in the palaces and cottages of Germany, stirring hymns — he had moved the hearts of millions. And now God, in his providence, had another mission for him, and prepared him for another work. It was God's will to call him from his former life, and imprison him upon the mountain crag, like the eagle he was, where he could hold communion with God and obtain a profounder knowledge of his holy Word; and note what he says, "Called up to God, in my prison I had the sweetest experience of what comes from the grace of my Lord." And well it was that the opportunity was given him to prepare that splendid translation of the Scriptures that gave new dignity to the German language — that down from the height of that fortress that translated Word should come that should be a light, an inspiration to the German empire, and to the German people through the whole world. Never say that a year has been more profitable than that year spent in prison.

And what shall I say of that immortal dreamer, who was arrested for preaching without a license. When he was arrested, you remember John Bunyan's account of his parting with his family. He took leave of his wife, and of his children, one by one, with a great deal of fortitude, until he came to kiss his little blind child, the youngest of all and the most afflicted, and then the strong man broke down for a moment at least, and he said, "Poor child, they will buffet thee, they will persecute thee; thou wilt suffer from hunger and cold and thirst." Oh! it was hard parting from that child. And for twelve years he languished — no, he did not languish at all; for twelve years he honored and glorified that Bedford jail. And did ever man employ his time better than by writing that glorious allegory, the most glorious book that was ever written, uninspired — a book that has been more

translated than any other book, and passed through more editions than any other book except the Bible? A book that elicited praise from a cold, cynical man like Dean Swift; a book that was the theme of admiration on the part of Dr. Johnson, whose enthusiasm was not very easily awakened; a book that received the commendation of the cold, philosophic Dr. Franklin; a book that Macaulay has written about, when he tells us of the age of England that produced only two men that deserved to be ranked among immortals, and those men were John Milton, who wrote the Fall of Man and the way sin was brought into the world; and John Bunyan, who wrote about the Christ that brought salvation — the man that in a dungeon had a vision of the Delectable Mountains and the City of the Great King! To him the promise was fulfilled. Bunyan says, referring to his prison home:

“Here I have found comfort and instruction. Those portions of the Scriptures in which I found little meaning now shine upon me. I have a sweet sense of the nearness of my Lord in these solitary hours. I have felt the truth of what the Apostle said, ‘Whom we have not seen, yet love.’ My body is indeed in this prison; my soul is free, and it ascends by prayer to its source, and I hold communion with the Eternal, and I rejoice in the coming of the time when I shall be satisfied with the divine vision.”

I think the best, most graphic writing we have on Christian experience is in Baxter’s *Saints’ Rest*. Only think of the discipline that he went through during the two years he was in prison! You remember he was brought before that infamous Judge Jeffreys, and when his counsel prayed that his trial might be postponed for two days on account of the absence of witnesses, Jeffreys said, “He is one of the two greatest rogues in Great Britain.” And so that saintly man was committed to

prison, and for two years he languished there, and what is his testimony about it? It was this: "In all places where I have been I have found monuments of the divine love. Every hour that I have passed has been a time of love. Every neighbor, every friend, and even every enemy has been made to be, by God's grace, a minister of love." And then he said, "Father, bring my soul more near to thee, that it may have a purer vision, a clearer proof of that love, until I shall be taken to the place where I shall know thee perfectly and love thee more."

I hope I have succeeded in fulfilling the promise that I made at the beginning of this discourse, when I said that this little text would show so much consideration on the part of God for the homeless, and for those who are cut off from the privileges of the sanctuary. They have, we have, all that we need in him.

"In darkest shades if he appear,
My dawning is begun;
He is my soul's bright morning-star,
And he my rising sun.

"The opening heavens round me shine,
With beams of sacred bliss,
When Jesus shows his heart is mine,
And always I am his."

"I will be to you a little sanctuary."

VI.

THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

“The Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”—
I PETER i. 23.

IF, during the excavations which they are now making at Herculaneum and Pompeii, there should be found a long-lost poem by some old classic bard, or an oration, or a philosophical dissertation by some great master of thought, how every scholar would desire to possess himself of such a treasure. But I have now open before me a book that has been more safely preserved and transmitted than if it had been encased in lava and just rescued from its stony sepulchre after having been buried there for ages. And what is more wonderful is the fact that while many of the productions of authors who have written a thousand years since these Scriptures were written have perished, or have come down to us only in a mutilated and fragmentary form, we have this book in its entirety, in its integrity, in its marvellous exactness, without one solitary ray of its original glory dimmed or eclipsed.

The older portions of this book were written hundreds of years before the father of history was born; they were written more than three thousand years ago; and the very last line in the New Testament nearly two thousand years ago! And yet this ancient book is the freshest, the most up-to-date of all the books that we have upon the globe; there is not another volume that is so modern as the Bible. It might have been written in this year of our

Lord, so far as its adaptedness to human society as it now exists is concerned; it might have been composed this present year, so far as the instruction it gives as to human governments, to all associations that are intended for the betterment of the people—to all who occupy positions of trust and authority; to all who are trying to live higher and nobler lives, preparing for the life that lies beyond this, now so full of trial, darkness and tears; to all who are preparing for the life of eternal rest, and light, and gladness. This is the book that we read with ever-recurring interest; it is a book that never loses its freshness; the grass withereth, and the flower fadeth—the sweet-scented flowers that grow in your gardens, or that you pluck and place in your chambers, how soon the leaves fall, how soon the fragrance is gone! This figure of inspiration is selected to represent to us the mutability of all things earthly, for the purpose of saying, “The Word of God abideth forever!”

One of the most remarkable and interesting things connected with this book is that its authors wrote certain things that are so unlike anything that was written by any other authors of other lands or of contemporary races. In order to make it very plain, I will present to you two illustrations, one from the Old and one from the New Testament. Look at the contrast between what David wrote and what any other man wrote in all the world in David’s time. Recently you know what interest has been revived in the publication of the sacred books, as they are called, of the Oriental nations; and some humiliating comparisons were made at our great meeting in Chicago for the purpose of comparing our religion with the old ethnical faiths. But now the most learned men, and those that have acquainted themselves most intimately with their contents, tell us that while they

contain some very valuable and even precious truths, that those truths are so intermingled and buried beneath interminable rubbish that it hardly pays for the labor to discover and recover those hidden pearls down in muddy waters. It is a remarkable thing that there is not one chapter in all of those Oriental books that would be fit to preach to an intelligent audience in all Christendom. And among their sacred hymns there is not one solitary stanza that would be fit to lead the devotions of a spiritually-minded people when they celebrate God's grace on his holy day. And yet there was David, a man whose early life was spent out in the fields in the occupation of a shepherd, who had little communion with anything but nature, who went very early into the army, and who held three sceptres in his hands before he died — golden-tipped rod, the sceptre of royalty; the sword, the sceptre of the warrior, and the harp, the sceptre of the bard. David wrote a book that not only gave the world new conceptions of the character of the great God, that not only contained glorious prophecies of the reign of the coming Christ, but he wrote a book that has been the basis of the world's hymnology, the model upon which all our sacred songs are constructed — hymns that are valuable and sweet just in proportion as they contain something of that old rhythmic strain. And in those Psalms there is not a moan of the sorrowing heart which does not find expression, not an aspiration which he does not kindle and lead to the object and the right source of all aspirations, and among all the compositions of the world there is none that has so moved the heart of the world as these Psalms; sometimes tender, and low, and sympathetic, and sweet; and yet there is nothing in all the world like the triumphant strain with which these Psalms close, when David calls upon earth and sea and sky, fire and hail and

stormy wind, and "everything that hath breath," to unite in that pæan of praise that goes up from all beings that think, and live, and love, to the great Creator that gives them thought and life. Is it not wonderful that in that little fragment of a country, without schools of philosophy, without universities, without institutions for literary culture of any kind, there should have lived the bard who wrote the book through which the most impassioned devotions of God's children in all centuries and lands find their sweetest expression?

Let me take an illustration now from the New Testament, as well as this one from the Old. There was a country contiguous to Palestine, where oratory uttered its noblest strains, where poetry sung its sweetest songs, and where philosophy reached the highest heaven of its invention. In that land there lived a man whose title is "The Divine," and although he was not divine in the Christian sense of the word, our Christian writers do not hesitate to speak of "the divine Plato." Perhaps no man ever lived who had greater advantages; his genius was transcendent, his opportunities unsurpassed; with Socrates for his teacher, and the most distinguished men of the age for his school-mates; with the best opportunities of acquainting himself with the lore of all lands, not only by the study of what the most learned had written, but by personal association with the great masters of thought everywhere. Need we wonder that his works constitute the most perfect ideal of Hellenic genius, and are now counted among the most precious treasures of the intellectual world? And yet what contribution did he make to the life of the spiritual world? What regenerating effect did his teachings have on his own age, and on those to whom they were immediately addressed? "Plato, thou reasonest well," but how would you like to hear a Chris-

tian minister speak as doubtfully about the immortality of the soul as Plato did in his noble argument on that theme?

I turn now again to that other little country that lay contiguous to Greece — to Palestine — and there, too, I find a man who had native genius, and some fine opportunities, educated as he was by one of the most distinguished teachers of the time; somewhat acquainted with the general literature of the world, and in the enjoyment of some special advantages from his Jewish training and Roman citizenship. Let us glance at those fourteen little letters that Paul wrote — they would only make a chapter in one of Plato's volumes, so far as bulk is concerned. And yet, while to-day there is not a pulpit in the world that takes one saying of Plato for a text, and it may be I am the only minister on this continent that is even talking about him to-day; there are thousands of men who are preaching from texts taken out of these fourteen epistles. This is very interesting simply as a matter of comparison. Here was a man that did not have one tithe of the advantages of the illustrious Plato, who wrote a few little treatises that have actually shaped the theologies of the world, and in all the great controversies among ecclesiastics the authority of Paul is invoked as the great arbiter beyond whose decisions there is no appeal! The Agrippas and Pilates of the first century are now only so many phantoms, the Cæsars are but shades; but Paul still walks among the regnant men of the world, and sways a sceptre in Christendom second in influence only to that of his divine Lord.

These are some of the extraordinary things with regard to this Word, of which the Apostle says it "liveth." If a thing lives and abides forever, it must have in it some internal, indestructible elements. There is a rough

phrase, a sort of jargon phrase, of the metaphysicians of the day — “the survival of the fittest” — a very cruel phrase as it is often applied, when it means that the strong should finally trample out the weak, and that might makes right. But it has another meaning, and a very noble one: some things live because they ought to survive; there are some things that keep on living because men must have them and preserve them if they would secure their highest welfare; and when we apply this principle to the Bible, we assert that it survives because it is fit to survive, and it is bound to survive, because it contains those truths which are essential to humanity — indispensable to humanity — because it bequeaths to us those institutions that give to the world its brightness, its beauty, its moral and spiritual elevation — those institutions that are such benedictions to all who avail themselves of them that no man who has had an experience of their value is willing to allow them to pass into desuetude. The Bible contains within itself the essential elements of its own immortality.

I can occupy very well what remains to me of my time in pointing out some of these indispensable and indestructible elements which make the Bible the book the world most needs, and can never dispense with.

First, it satisfies what is oftentimes an unconscious longing of our humanity, but what is a universal longing of that humanity, and that is, the longing for a God that man can depend upon with unwavering confidence; the longing for a God in whose hands our breath is, and who is to be our final Judge, and yet at the same time who is our loving and tender Father? Perhaps you say that this is not a universal longing — this desire for God. Perhaps you say, when David tells us that the human heart thirsts for God, for the living God, it is an exag-

geration. It was not an exaggeration; so far from it, it is an inadequate phrase to express the whole truth. It is often an unconscious longing, but it is universal, and I will give you the demonstration. There may be atheists in the world, but there is not a single atheistic community in the world; and we never can forget that impressive statement that old Plutarch made when he said there were cities without walls, without art, without literature; but no city without temples and places where God could be worshipped! If you want an argument, I have not time to make it; if you want a proof, it is this: Throughout all the world some deity is worshipped; even the varied forms of polytheism that infest heathen nations, and have infested them from the beginning, furnish proof of this universal need of a God; and if men do not know the living and true God, they invent a god, because a god they must have. In the lands that were contiguous to the country in which the Bible was written, among the contemporaries of David, there was a great deal written about gods and goddesses; but only contrast the gods that mythology painted, and that poets feigned, with the living and true God that these Scriptures reveal! When David said that his heart cried out for a God that was alive, he represented the only religion that worshipped a living God; all the gods of the heathen were imaginary beings; there was Olympus visible enough, but no Jove ever stood revealed upon it. It was the living God that David cried out for, and a God that cared for the world of creatures that he had formed — a God that was very high, but not so high that he could not see what was on his footstool; a God that was very great, but not too great to be concerned for his children. David was two thousand years in advance of some scientific men of our time, who say that the creation did not have a Creator;

or, if it had, he was a Creator who, having made the worlds, left them to the control of inexorable law. That was not the kind of a God that David longed for, or that these Scriptures reveal — a great dumb, blind, cosmical God, without intelligence, without consciousness, without heart; but the God that these Scriptures reveal, and the God that humanity craves, is a God “infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth” — a God who recognizes the creatures redeemed by the blood of his Son as entitled to become members of his own family, the adopted children of his love. That is the God the Bible reveals to us; and one reason why the Bible is ever dear, and must always be a precious possession which the world cannot surrender, is the fact that it reveals to us just such a God as that.

And not only does it give us this great and necessary revelation, but it provides for another universal want of our humanity. If I were to say that there is a universal sense of sinfulness in the human race, would you give me your immediate assent? If not, let me make a suggestion, that there is a consciousness in the human soul of something wrong between the creature and the Creator, is evident from the fact that through the entire world, down to a certain period, the worship of sacrifices everywhere prevailed. If this universal consciousness of sinfulness did not exist, why was it that not only among the barbarous, but among the most civilized and cultivated races, sacrifices were everywhere offered. Even kings felt it honorable to put on the sacerdotal robes and minister at the altar. Why was it that men brought lambs and bullocks and offered them in sacrifice? It was a confession that they needed some mediatory influence, something with which to appease the offended deity. And then

why was it that even in the most cultivated of all the nations of antiquity the time came when men were brought to the conclusion that an irrational creature was not quite sufficient for the necessity; that a human being must be sacrificed for human guilt? And why was it that, when once the lot fell upon the king, the whole country rejoiced, and said, "Now we have found the sacrifice worthy to present to God, one in whom the majesty of the nation is settled and centred, a representative of all that is greatest and best, but now devoted to death for our redemption? Nothing but the conviction of universal sinfulness could have justified such an offering to avert the dreaded retribution.

All at once the sacrifices that were universal throughout the world came to an end. This is a great fact in human history — all sacrifices ceased, and for eighteen hundred years there has not been a sacrifice in a single civilized land in Christendom; and why? Because One came into the world to proclaim himself as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; God clothing himself in human flesh; because Deity could not suffer and die, and because Deity glorified thus (not the glory of ancient Greece or Rome) must suffer and die for human men. Both man the sinner, and God the offended Sovereign could be represented in the person of Immanuel, God with us, God for us; our substitute, our atoning sacrifice.

And now when one perturbed in consequence of conscious guilt says, "What must I do, how can I make my peace with God?" the invitation comes to that inquirer to put his trust in this unique and august personage, who came into the world to represent both parties, the offended Deity and the offending sinner, and who offered himself a sacrifice for man's transgression. I do not know a

more interesting moment in the life of any man than when he makes the discovery that he is a sinner, inexcusable and justly condemned, because he has trampled not only upon law, but upon love; when, with a sense of impending peril and coming retribution, he begins to cast about to find out how he can escape the position in which he suddenly finds himself. He turns and turns, but finds no light; he listens and listens, but hears no voice; he looks and looks, but sees no refuge, and then all at once he sees the light streaming from Calvary, and hears the voice that mercy utters from the cross; hears the assurance that God gave his "only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him should not perish, but have eternal life." And if the man asks, "How can my simple belief be sufficient, when I remember how true and holy God is; when I remember the demands of justice; how can he keep his word and be a forgiving God; how can he grant amnesty to one that deserves nothing but condemnation and wrath? What is the answer? "Justice has been satisfied; its extremest demand has been met; the God-man has been made, in the impressive language of Scripture, 'a curse for us,' — the most terrible word that can be employed — made a curse for us; wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, suffered the penalty of human guilt, until justice itself upon the throne rises up and puts its great arms around mercy with a kiss of eternal love and reconciliation." And if the man, still hesitating, says, "I see what provision has been made, but how can I obtain an immediate personal interest in this great atonement?" the answer comes — its very simplicity makes men doubt — "Only believe." "Let him that is athirst come. The Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." Purchased at the infinite cost of the blood

of Christ, but free to you! And when the man hears that assurance, when he learns that everything has been done for him, leaving him nothing to do but trust in what has been done, then with unhesitating confidence he may adopt the words of the greatest Oriental scholar America ever produced, who said on his death-bed that all his theology was reduced to this:

“Just as I am, without one plea
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!”

The man that does that is saved. Oh! yes, the word must be an ever-living, ever-welcome word that makes that provision for the sin-sick soul.

That point being settled, another consideration arises. We live in a world of mutation, of sudden and deplorable vicissitudes. How bright and beautiful the sky was yesterday; who would have thought that to-day would begin in cloud and darkness and storm! Well, this is so in human life — it is just a picture and a pattern of our own experience. Our troubles come so suddenly, oftentimes from such unexpected quarters, and when they do come, they are sometimes hard to bear. In a world that is so full of disappointment and sorrow, the human heart has another great craving — it cries out for something to comfort it. When one of those bereavements come that make all the world a blank, a dreary blank, stripped of all that makes life worth living, if any one attempts to assuage such anguish with the common places of the world's consolations, the sufferer cries out, “Have pity, O my friend, do anything but try to sustain me by such inanities — the hand of God has touched me!” When called to part with that which made life most desirable

and dear, when we stand beside the cruelest pit ever opened to mortal eyes — an open grave; when we hear the clods tumbling down upon the coffin-lid, the heart demands something more than all the sympathy that earth can offer. Then this gospel comes to comfort the mourner, to bind up the broken-hearted! I have seen a mother unobtrusively take leave of four children, with a calm assurance that the Lord would take care even of them, so sure was she that the Shepherd who had taken care of her would surely take care of her little lambs! I saw a father one day rise up in one of our hospitals during the terrible days that we never can forget, as he was kneeling by the cot of a son mortally wounded in battle; the mother on the other side of the cot of her boy, delirious from his wound, unable to recognize her, running her hand over his face, giving him tender caresses, and saying, "Oh! if you would only look at me, only speak to me, my darling, I could part with you, by son." Even while she thus plead with him, the boy died, and the old father rose — I can see him now just as distinctly as I see you, with his white hair falling over his shoulders; the old father rose, straightened himself, and said, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away" — and then he stopped! I could almost see the struggle that was going on in that man's heart between faith and grief; but presently, with a clear voice he added, "Blessed be the name of the Lord!" If you know of any other book that contains what can comfort a bereaved father and mother like that, I should like you to show me where it is to be found!

These are some of the reasons why the Bible is bound to live. It is the survival of the fittest: the survival of what is divinely fittest; it has in it those things that we cannot dispense with — the church, for instance; we

must have a place where we can come together, and bless God, and get the benefit of the sacraments that remind us of our Saviour's dying love. And then out of the church comes the philanthropies that meet the needs of society, the associations and benevolent agencies for the amelioration of want and woe. We cling to the book that gives birth and inspiration to these things because the world cannot do without them. Then, too, we must have the Sabbath, with its blessed rest; the Sabbath, which survives because it is the fittest day of all the days to survive; because the human body physically needs rest, because the human mind needs rest, because the human soul needs the opportunity of undisturbed repose and communion with God.

And, lastly, we cling to this Bible because we know that we are pilgrims and strangers, as all our fathers were, and we would find the rest into which they have entered, the home in which they dwell. And the Bible is the only book that assures us of such a home. "In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you" — and such is Christ's love to his people that he cannot bear to be separated from them forever — and so he adds, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

Therefore, do you wonder that the Apostle should set this gospel far above everything? What was the last verse of the hymn that we sung?

"Should all the forms that men devise
Assault my soul with treacherous art,
I'll call them vanity and lies,
And bind this gospel to my heart."

VII.

THE SILENCES OF SCRIPTURE.

“And many other signs truly Jesus did in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.”—JOHN XX. 30.

THERE is something exceedingly impressive in the silences of the Scriptures, as well as in the utterances of the Scriptures. We scarcely know which to wonder at the most; at what the Scriptures reveal, or at what the Scriptures conceal. Inasmuch as all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, it is perfectly plain that there is no department of human knowledge about which men have any curiosity or feel any interest which these Scriptures could not have cast light upon. If it had so pleased God, they could have foretold all the wonderful discoveries of modern science, all that subordination of the great forces of Nature to the use and convenience of man that constitutes the marvel of the century in which we live. There is no truth in science upon which inspiration might not have cast an all-revealing light; and there is no invention of human genius that inspiration might not have anticipated and revealed. And not only that, if God had so willed it, it would have been easy to give an explanation in his Word of those great insoluble problems that rack the intellects of men, and oftentimes have clouded the faith of men. If God had been pleased, he could have told us something about the origin of evil—that one problem that has baffled the researches of the human race. I do not know whether the wings of this church, if converted into a library, would hold the books

that have been written in discussion of that recondite and most mysterious of all the subjects that have occupied human attention: how sin came into the world, and why God, the omnipotent and the all-benevolent, should have permitted the entrance of moral evil! There is not a solitary syllable on that subject in all revelation. And then again, when we think of what conflicts and controversies there have been in the schools theological in the endeavor to reconcile divine sovereignty and human agency, free agency — two truths that seem to be one as distinctly revealed as the other, and yet one apparently incompatible and irreconcilable with the other. These two truths of human agency and divine sovereignty rise up like parallel pillars until they get out of sight. Beyond our sight I have no doubt they arch and meet somewhere in the infinite space, and God knows how to reconcile them at last; but he does not reveal the method to human comprehension.

And then again, only think of the small information, the meagre information, it has pleased God to give us about the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, in consequence of want of information on this subject, you will find those that look for the personal advent of Christ upon the earth, that believe he will come again, even as he came once in the flesh, and reconcile all the antagonisms of society and dissipate all the miseries that afflict the world. The second coming of Christ! What that is precisely, and how he is to come, and how the new heavens and the new earth are to be organized, is something about which the Scriptures are profoundly silent: they only give us hints that these things will be — but how they will be accomplished, not a syllable of revelation!

And we wonder that so little is told us about the

future life. That is a great mystery. There is a great deal told us about this present life, and yet we know how insignificant this present life is, compared with that future life: insignificant because of its transitoriness — we take a few breaths, a few turns through the world; we form a few associations, we gather into families, and we enter into certain lines of business; and by the time we have gotten well started and have begun to get a little experience, the flood comes, and we are carried away! “In the morning we are like the grass that groweth up; in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up; but in the evening we are cut down and wither.” And yet a great deal is told us about the present life, and very little about the future life. We are told that there is a future life, and that it will consist of two great departments: the heaven for the good, and the world of woe for the finally impenitent. How little we know about the method of intercourse and association among souls until the resurrection shall come: how one spirit will recognize another; how little we are told about the occupations of heaven, and the employments that shall fill up the eternity of the redeemed! Inasmuch as these employments are to be perpetual and never come to any end, we would think, according to our method of reasoning, that upon such subjects a great deal would be revealed — that much would be told us with regard to its associations, its employments, its holy pleasures. Yes, the silence of Scripture is very wonderful, as well as the revelations of Scripture.

“Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.” And what is true of the signs is true of everything else relating to the life of Christ. I take the word “signs” here as a word that stands for all the manifestations of Christ — for

what he said, and did, and was, so far as he manifested himself to the eyes of men; and it is true of all of these, the great majority were not written in the book — not the Gospel of John, not anywhere in the New Testament, and not recorded in any book by any author. With regard to the miracles of our Lord, we have on record a few. But of those miracles which are recorded there are only enough to give us illustrations of the great doctrines of grace. There is not a miracle among all the miracles of Christ that was intended to be a mere exhibition of omnipotent power, they all had a beneficent purpose. And we may judge of the great number of the unrecorded miracles of Christ when I read from the fourth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people; and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those that were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.” Then we learn that among the miracles that Christ wrought, only a few were selected and put upon record; and we also learn that of the discourses and sermons that Christ preached only a few of them were preserved. We are told in the passage I just read that Christ preached in all the synagogues, while we have only an account of his sermon in one synagogue — when he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and was handed the word of Esaias, and when he stood up and read, and when he applied the passage to himself, and said, “The Spirit of God is upon me; and this day this scripture is fulfilled in your ears.” And they all wondered! If Christ went through all the villages and synagogues teaching and

preaching, what a small proportion of all his utterances have we upon record! We have the Sermon on the Mount; we have the long discourse that he delivered to his disciples as recorded in the fourteenth chapter of this Gospel of St. John; and then we have a few extracts from the discourses that Christ delivered, and a few conversations that he held, and that is all. Truly there were many things which were not written in this book!

And the silence oftentimes occurs just where we would expect revelation; the silences occur just where our curiosity is oftentimes deep, and just where we crave information. For instance, we are told of the prodigies that attended the birth of our Saviour. Glittering in the heavens was a guiding star. The birth was very lowly; but I should like to know over what other prince did a new star glitter in the sky? The wise men in the East were attracted from their distant homes, and came to his cradle to offer their homage. And then we would suppose that after events so astounding as those, that wise men would come from all lands, that people of all classes and callings would flock to the cradle of the infant Christ; that there would not be a day in the year in which men — not only from the East, but from the North and the South and the West — would go to the place where Jesus was growing up in his home; and yet there is a perfect silence; a hush falls upon the history from the time of the birth to the time when his parents took him at twelve years of age with them on their journey to Jerusalem; and there we have a brief account of his interview with the learned men he encountered in the temple, and how astonishing were the questions he asked and answered; and then the most extraordinary silence of all occurs, and the more we think about it the more our wonder grows, that for eighteen years — oh! what a large section that

is in the human life; for eighteen years we hear no more of Christ. Eighteen years! And what makes us wonder most is when we remember the errand upon which Christ came into the world, that he should have attained the age of thirty years before he should have entered upon the work that he came to accomplish; when we remember that Christ was the "Desire of all Nations," that the world for four thousand years had been waiting for him; when we remember that he was the theme of all prophecy, that all the types and ceremonies of the Old Testament worship centred upon him, and were meaningless without him; when we recollect that he came to redeem the world, and that he saw how this whole creation groaned and travailed in pain because of the curse that had smitten it; that during these awful throes through which the guilty world was passing, the miseries that were making the human race wretched during those years, Christ should have been silent! Yes, the silences of Scripture, the things that are not written, are the things that fill us with amazement.

Again, when we remember that one-half of the Christian world worships Mary, I have often wondered that so little is said of the parents of Christ after his birth. We have one view of his mother, standing at the foot of the cross, when her dying Son committed her to the custody and love of his disciple. Then she disappears.

Stranger still, not a word is said about the history of his reputed father, and no one knows where Joseph lived or what his history was, or where he died, or anything about him. He appears in connection, and this connection was wonderful and glorious for a while; and then he goes — like a torch quenched — he goes out into oblivion and total darkness.

The same thing is true with regard to his apostles.

Now I am entering upon another of the extraordinary fields that interest us when we begin to investigate them; and that is how strange it is that when our Lord, out of the whole world from which he had the power to select, selected twelve men to be his apostles and to be the foundation upon which his kingdom was to be built, he being the chief cornerstone, that only six of them received any mention, except in the catalogues that give their names! You would think that something would be said about six of the most illustrious men of the world — illustrious they were; so far as the task which was assigned them was concerned, so far as the place they occupied in the establishment of the kingdom of Christ was concerned, they were among the illustrious men of the world; and yet who knows anything about them? We have a catalogue in the Acts of the Apostles where the names of the twelve occur, and then six of them pass into absolute obscurity; and of the others, their histories break off just exactly where we want them to continue, and that is another mystery and marvel. Take, for example, the history of Simon Peter. Why, the first chapters of the Acts of the Apostles are absolutely resplendent with the work and with the sermons of that great champion of the truth. Then all at once he is dismissed, and you never hear of Peter any more until you find him in the Council Hall at Jerusalem, and that is the last favorable mention we have of him. Who would not like to know the whole biography of that wonderful man? And who would not like to know whether he was ever in the city of Rome or not? You know that is one of the great controversial questions among ecclesiastics, whether he was ever in the city of Rome or not. We would have been very glad to have had some more chapters added to that history: whether he ever went to Rome; and if he did,

whether any peculiar honors were heaped upon him that distinguished him from the rest. And we would like to know where and how Peter died. There was another disciple that was often mentioned with Peter, and that was James. Did you ever notice what a singular thing it is — James was killed off in a parenthesis! McLaren says that James was killed off in a parenthesis — that is to say, the narrative was going on, and simply says, “And he killed James with the sword.” That is the beginning and the end of that martyrdom. And what shall I say of John? Well, we have the tradition that he attained to old age; that he went to live in the city of Ephesus; and we have some beautiful traditions with regard to him, and feel that the concluding history of the disciple that Jesus loved would have been most interesting. We would like to have had some details of the dying exercises of that disciple — the only one that attained to old age; what was his testimony with regard to the love and faithfulness of Christ, what comfort was there in the dying hours of the holy man of God? But we have no record of the kind. And then take one more illustration, and that is the case of the Apostle Paul. When Peter disappears, suddenly dismissed without any explanation of his going, Paul comes to the front, and then we have chapter after chapter full of information, full of the most delightful detail with regard to the labors and success of that great man, until we come to an account of his imprisonment in the city of Rome; and, oh! if we only knew as much about Paul’s last sayings as we know about the sayings of hundreds of men that have been imprisoned for conscience’ sake, and have been brought out to taste a martyr’s death before they wear a martyr’s crown! How we would have revelled if we could only know what Paul felt and said! And now, just as we are anxious to know

what comes next, there is no next, and the history ends without any end.

And what do we learn from these things; what are the lessons taught us? I think, with regard to the solitude in which Christ lived for so long a time, a great lesson is taught us, and that is that the preachers of the Word and the men that are training for the holy office ought to have a long time for study; that the men who are to be the spiritual guides of their fellow-men and the teachers of the church ought to be men who take the years of toil that qualify them to the right discharge of their office — not having our pulpits filled with novices and itinerant evangelists that carry about fragments of the truth, that oftentimes lack judgment and discretion with their zeal, and who oftentimes only leave the condition of the churches in which they labor more unhappy and more fruitless than they found them. We are taught the lesson that sometimes patience is the greatest virtue that can be exercised — not to anticipate, but to wait God's time, until he pleases to call us into his service; and I know of nothing that is more impressive than the calmness of Christ during those years of preparation. They were not lost years, for when he did come forth he came forth to speak those words which are spirit and which are life to the souls of men, as he will speak those final words which will decide the destinies of men for ever and ever.

We learn something else from these silences of Scripture: that it was never the intention of revelation to give us the full biography of any man. Why? Because no man's history and no man's doings are of any account except as they stand related to Christ; and, therefore, instead of filling up the pages of Scripture with those events which only gratify curiosity, the only things that

are mentioned about the men are things that have some bearing upon Christ, and it is because of the man's relation to Christ that he has any mention at all. And the object of the books of Scripture is never to magnify the writer of the book; he has one theme, and self is hidden behind the glory of the topic which he has to present. And that is particularly true of this Gospel of St. John, for he does not mention those things that the other gospels mention with regard to himself that might reflect honor upon him—he is silent about his own deeds and his relation to Christ, and leaves that to the pens of others.

But after all, the great reason for the silence of Scripture is that the world may listen to one voice, the only voice, the one saving voice that sounds from heaven, the one voice that is entitled to the reverence of all that hear: men vanish from the scene, but Christ remains—the central figure to occupy the mind and heart, as well as the eye and the ear of the world.

And there is one thing that we need not fear and need not feel unhappy over, and that is that so many of the great workers in connection with Christ should be summarily dismissed, that they should be thrust aside like actors that have performed their parts, and disappear as if they had been dropped down through a trap-door on the stage, and never make another entry. It looks to us sometimes hard that no mention should be made of the faithful men that toiled on and toiled to the end without the world ever having any information of their successes and their recompense. But I will tell you where the compensation comes in. Did I say one-half of the apostles received no mention after the final catalogue of their names is presented? I would like to know what difference it makes? Suppose their names had all been con-

nected with immortal histories; suppose their names had been connected with their career of service and usefulness to the time of their death? What difference would it have made? After all, any real reward would not have been in such recompense. I do not know of anything that human hearts have craved for that is so worthless as fame. Nothing! And there is nothing so unsubstantial, either. The world has a short memory, and the greatest and the best of men that live in it are soon forgotten. They go into the land of silence, and the world gets silent about them. What difference does it make? What is the value of all the applause that the world may lavish upon them? This music does not penetrate the dull, cold ear of death; this applause of the world never stirs any sweet emotions in the heart after it is chill and still in the coffin! No, God does not intend that the recompense of his children shall come in the shape of earthly recognition and honor. And if you want the demonstration of it, here it is. I said the history of the apostles was dropped suddenly. Yes, and just as abruptly it is resumed again — just as abruptly it is taken up again, and what do we learn? We learn in the description that is given of the city of God, the New Jerusalem, that recorded in the foundation of those celestial walls are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lord. The tombs that are built on earth over the graves of eminent men yield by and by to the touch of Time, the great destroyer, even the most solid and enduring structures that ever are reared; the epitaphs by and by are obliterated by the work of the elements and the corroding hand of Time. But there, upon those imperishable foundations of the Eternal City stand, in letters of light ineffaceable, the names of all the apostles, the humblest of them and the most obscure, as well as the most illustrious. So God gives the final

recompense. Therefore, beloved friends, let us not be so much concerned about the position we occupy in the church of God as about this point: whether we are filling the situation in which God's providence has placed us to the very best of our ability. The perfection of the circle does not consist in its size; it consists in its roundness, and the ring upon your little finger may be as perfect a circle as that which is described by the revolution of any of the orbs that gravitation wheels through the infinite space. The great question is how we are discharging the duties of the sphere in which we are placed, whether it be conspicuous or humble; and I think it ought to cheer a very large proportion of the people of God to know that the smallest service sincerely rendered out of love to Christ is just as much a matter of his regard and appreciation as the most splendid service that the greatest champion of the truth ever performed. Oh! thank God that the saying is recorded that "a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple shall not lose its reward." When they were building the temple at Jerusalem there were men cutting cedar trees away up on the seacoast, and there were others in what now forms the subterranean chambers beneath the city of Jerusalem quarrying stone; and by and by the day came when the temple was completed, and there were some men that put pinnacles upon it and gilded those pinnacles; but the men that laid the first stone in the foundation, and Hiram's wood-cutter in the forest, had their part in the building of the temple as much as the man that stood in the portico at last, and announced its completion and turned it over to the church. It does not matter in what part of the structure we work, the question is, "Have we turned our advantages to the best account, and are we filling the sphere, great or small, with a sincere desire to do all that in us lies to advance

the kingdom of the Master and the welfare of those to whom he has bound us and made the objects of our care and love?" That is the question. Therefore, we can afford to be humble; we can afford to take our place among the unrecognized, among those who are not observed; because the time of final recompense will come; the time will come when our Lord, sitting upon the throne of his glory, when all men are gathered before him, will say, "I was sick and in prison and ye visited me and ministered unto me; I was a stranger, and ye cared for me; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink." And the surprised auditor will say, "Lord, we would have been very glad to have done this, but we never did it. We did not even live during the century in which thou didst need these ministering services on the part of those that loved thee." And he will say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my children, my needy ones, my suffering ones, ye have done it unto me. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

VIII.

“BUT THESE ARE WRITTEN.”

“And many other signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.”—JOHN XX. 31.

IN my discourse this morning I stated that all that Jesus did and all that Jesus said was not recorded by either or by all of the evangelists; that there were many miracles which he wrought of which they took no note; many conversations and discourses which he delivered of which they made no record; that there were a multitude of great unsolved problems upon which the Bible did not cast one solitary ray of light; that nearly all the biographies of Scripture were fragmentary, and oftentimes broke off just at the point where we most wished to have the continuation; and that these things showed that the object of Scripture was not to teach us science, and not to gratify our curiosity, and not to enable us to indulge in vain speculation; but to concentrate our minds and our hearts upon the one great object, and that it is the purpose of these Scriptures to disclose Christ as the subject of our faith, the object of our perpetual allegiance in this life, and the theme of our praise in the life to come. Many of the things, therefore, about which we would desire to have more information are not recorded, but the text says, “These things are written.” Whatever has been put upon record has been put there that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that

believing we might have life through his name. We learn, therefore, that everything that is essential to our interest, to our welfare, has been recorded; that everything that makes the way of salvation plain has been written, and that the method by which we may obtain a personal interest in that salvation has been disclosed to us, and that all those things that are essential to the imperishable interest of human souls have been recorded by holy men who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Even we, with our limited comprehension of things, can see how the divine wisdom shines in this order that all the essential truths which concern human salvation should have been written. That which is written remains; it remains unchanged; it is in such a form that it can be transmitted, from age to age, through all the centuries of time. But if everything that our Lord did in the way of wonderful works; if all that our Lord spoke in his conversations with his friends and in the public discourses which he delivered, if these had all been recorded, if we had had a complete biography of all the illustrious men whose names are mentioned in the Scriptures, and whose histories are oftentimes very abruptly broken off just at the point where we have an intense desire to know what comes next — if all these things had been recorded, then the Bible would not have been the convenient book which its great author designed it to be: the book which has been transmitted to us in the form that is so easy for us to profitably use; the book which we can have in our houses; the book which the mother can put in the satchel of her boy when he is leaving home to engage in some new occupation, it may be in some distant part of the country; the book that the sick man, lying upon his bed, can still hold in his hand and peruse; the book which can

be so easily distributed in consequence of its size; the book so easy of translation, and so easy of distribution. It is well, therefore, inasmuch as this book is intended to be circulated through all lands, and become the property of all that can read, and can learn to read, and wish to learn the divine will, and the divine wisdom shines in the fact that we get the book in such form that all these things are possible and practicable.

Then another thing is true with regard to what is written. What is put upon record cannot be changed. It can be handed down to coming generations. What a wonderful saying that was of one of the wisest of the English authors, when he said that if ships convey the commodities of one country to another, so that people living in one land can be supplied with what is produced in another land, and then can send back commodities which that land does not possess, how much more can we wonder at books, which are the ships which sail down through the centuries, and bear to men the noblest thoughts of the best thinkers that have lived, and whose office it has been to instruct mankind. This is pre-eminently true of the Bible. It is because what God revealed to men has been written that we have the only authentic history of the very earliest periods of the life of the world in which we live. It is because of this fact that we have the history of the creation itself; that we have an account of the first divisions into which the families of mankind were separated one from another. There is a single chapter in the Book of Genesis that gives the names and the characters of the primitive nations of the world, and the great scholar Bunsen says that it is the most learned of all the ancient writings, and the most ancient of all the learned writings; and that it contains information that all the historians that lived

afterwards could never have given, could never have supplied to the world. Moreover, it is a great thing that we possess a history that antedates all other history. The single fact recorded in the Old Testament of the migration of Abraham is the most important fact that is connected with the history of any man that ever lived. The migration of that man was the beginning of a new era in the world's spiritual life. He became the progenitor of the nation that God made the depository of his truth, and upon which the light of revelation was shining brightly at a time when all the rest of the world was in the valley and shadow of death. The history we have of the conquest of the land of Canaan by Joshua is the history of the providence that God ordained in order to establish his people, and the manner in which he desired to be worshipped at a time when all the rest of the world was in idolatry; and those ten commandments, written by the finger of God, first upon tables of stone, and then recorded by the hand of Moses in this imperishable record — that comprehensive summary of all human duty, has had a greater influence upon the development of civilization, upon the establishment of justice, than all the codes, than all the Pandects, the institutions of Lycurgus, and Solon, and Justinian. And when we come to look at some of the names that are written in this book, we find in those men the true fathers of history, and the men who have continued to exert the most salutary influence upon all the generations that have succeeded them — such names as those of Abraham, and Moses, and Samuel, and David, and Elijah, and Daniel.

Then we have the record of the earliest metrical compositions that were ever framed and ever used in the devotions of the people of God, and the Psalms of David have given inspiration to all the holy hymns which have

been sounded through the church in all generations of the world; and those Psalms of David still are the channels through which the purest and sweetest adoration of God's people ascend to the heavens.

And this is because these things have been written. The Bible is possibly the only absolutely imperishable book. Whether that be so or not, this is true surely, that never, never, by any possibility can it be lost. If every copy of the Holy Scriptures in circulation through civilized countries were to be destroyed, we could still reproduce the Bible immediately from the translations into which it has been made in all the heathen, pagan nations of the world, for into between two and three hundred languages this Bible has been translated. If throughout Christendom — by some catastrophe, which we can only imagine, but which could never be true — all the copies of the Scriptures should be annihilated, immediately they could be reproduced from the heathen nations into which the Word of God has been translated.

I pass now to another great division of my theme, and to another point which illustrates the divine wisdom and goodness in giving us a written revelation. It is this: A written revelation saves the world from the uncertainty that attends all tradition. There are only two ways in which truth can be transmitted from one generation to another, and they are orally or in a written form. But the memories of men are too treacherous to be trusted with a depository so sacred as that of God's will to mankind. And not only so, not only are the memories of men treacherous, but what a proneness there is on the part of men to suppress and to silence what is uncongenial to the natural heart, and how many of the unwelcome truths of the Bible would have been silenced and suppressed if oral transmission were the only method by which these truths

could be handed down from one generation to another! Men are too fond of their own inventions — they are too ready to amend what they think ought to be amended and improved in the Holy Scriptures; the world is too full of prejudice and sectarian bigotry to entrust with the transmission of the divine will through all the nations of the earth, through all the ages of time; and, therefore, it has pleased God to put upon record that which it is essential to know. Tradition is ever shifting, ever changing, ever fluctuating. Tradition is like the mists that gather on the mountain top; the written word is like the steadfast mountain itself. Tradition is like the clouds that float through the sky; the written Word is like the stars that burn in their imperishable lustre in the eternal heaven above the clouds. Therefore, we are filled with humility and adoration when we recognize the divine goodness in putting all things it is essential to know upon record. "It is written!"

I wish to call your attention to another illustration of this most interesting theme. I want to remind you of our Lord's reverence for the written Word. In the introductory service of this afternoon I read to you a portion of the fourth chapter of the Gospel of St. Luke, containing the account of our Lord's temptation in the wilderness. Just before he entered upon his public ministry, and just after his baptism, it pleased God to cause him to pass through the successive trials that are recorded in that chapter and in the fourth chapter of St. Matthew. There he was confronted with the great adversary of God and man; and after forty days in the wilderness, when he was a-hungred, then the devil said to him, "Command that these stones be made bread." What was our Lord's answer? It was, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the

mouth of God." And next we read that when he was taken and placed upon the pinnacle of the temple, and told to cast himself down, and Satan himself quoted Scripture, and said, "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Not only did Satan quote this Scripture, but in the quoting it, satanic like, he perverted the quotation, and did not give it in its true form. You may never have observed, but he left out a clause in the passage which he quoted from the ninety-first Psalm. Turn to the eleventh verse, and you will find the original, and there the Psalmist, speaking of God's providence over the good man, said, "He shall keep thee in all thy ways." He left out that clause; that is, in the ways of duty — not authorizing running into unnecessary danger and tempting Providence, and then calling upon him. He left that phrase out, and said, "He shall keep thee and bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." What was our Lord's reply? It was this: He said, "It is written again." Notice, he said, "Again" — you have made one quotation, a misquotation; now I make another, a true quotation, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Once more. When he was carried to the summit of the high mountain and shown all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and was told that all this power, and all this glory should be his if he would fall down and worship the tempter, then he said, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." And then the devil leaveth him and angels came and ministered unto him, and so that narrative closed.

Now the thing to which I wish to call your attention, and which I hope you will fix in your memories, is this, that when our Lord was tempted, was exposed to the malice of the tempter, who was permitted for a season to

try him in these various ways, the only weapon which he used to drive him from his presence was a quotation from the Holy Scriptures, and three times he used exactly the same words, and said, “It is written.”

“These things,” says the text, “were written”; and how the wisdom of God shines in putting upon a permanent, imperishable record the things necessary to human happiness and human salvation. Once more. It is an unspeakable blessing to the church that all the creeds and all the confessions of faith which are formulated by councils or by assemblies owe their authority entirely to the fact that they are in direct accordance with what is written. Sometimes it is said that the churches are ruled arbitrarily by creeds and by confessions. There is not a Protestant church in all the world that recognizes the right of any council or any ecclesiastical body — no matter what its name may be — that recognizes its right to impose any creed or confession of faith upon the church. Men do not test the Scriptures by the creed; they test all creeds and all confessions of faith by the Scriptures; and during the great Reformation all the reformers in turn made plain that truth, namely, that no formulated articles of belief were binding upon the church because of the ecclesiastical authority that communicated them, and that they were only binding so far as they were in accordance with what is written. And, therefore, when new heresies arise, or when creeds are written that contain false articles of belief, we have at once the correction: we bring them to this touchstone, and we try their merits, and we ascertain their warrant to be promulgated and believed simply by comparing them with what is written in these holy Scriptures.

Hence, I conclude what I have to say upon this subject by reminding you that the text goes on to teach that

all these things have been written, that believing, we might have life through his name. The great object, then, of the written revelation is to establish and fortify the faith of the church. "It is written that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Now, if this house were filled with people instead of having this limited audience (a very sufficient one for this inclement evening — I am not complaining of that), and if I could leave this pulpit and go from one to another and say to this and to that one as they sit in their pews, "Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" I take it for granted that ninety-nine out of one hundred would say, "I never doubted the divinity of Christ." I believe that the men that gave that answer would be sincere in saying that they believed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Then, does it not follow logically that if this is their belief, then they ought to recognize that Christ is their personal Saviour; that they ought to identify themselves with his cause; that they ought to profess his name, and consecrate themselves to his service and to the extension of his kingdom in the world? But a man states that he believes that Jesus Christ came into the world to reveal great, indispensable truths, and that all a man has to do is to believe, and stops there — oh! is there any inconsistency compared with the inconsistency of the man who says, "I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was commissioned to come into this world to tell me how to make my peace with God, secure my salvation, and make my immortality a happy one," and stops there? Does he not convict himself of the greatest of all possible inconsistencies? What does our Lord say when he comes and confronts such men with statements like these: when he says, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God"; when he says, "One thing is needful" — there are many things

that are important, but there is only one thing that is necessary; there are many things that are desirable, there is only one thing that is indispensable. And the man, while Christ, the divine Teacher, is telling him that life, so far from becoming a blessing, will become to him the most dire of all calamities; that it will be the most fearful of all curses, unless he seeks that new birth, that regeneration; unless he attends to that one indispensable thing, the interests of his soul. If that man says, "I believe that Jesus Christ was a teacher sent from God," and stops there — can there be any inconsistency like that? The man that believes that Jesus is what he professes to be, and yet does not immediately and earnestly seek him, who does not immediately lay aside everything else and sacrifice everything else, and give himself no rest until he seeks and obtains an interest in that great salvation which Christ has made possible by his death on the cross! "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" — and then recognize and respond to the single enduring claim that he has upon every man's service and upon every man's love. "And that believing ye might have life through his name." The great end, then, of this written revelation is to show how we may obtain that new, divine life. I cannot in the conclusion of this discourse attempt to unfold that great theme, the method by which we may obtain that divine life. Let me but say that the simple exercise of faith unites us to Christ and makes us one with him. The moment I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and give my heart to him, and consecrate everything I have to him, that moment a new tie is established between myself and my Lord. Faith is receiving Christ as the free gift of God, and resting upon him for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel. The moment I receive

him, and rest upon him, that moment he receives me, and the moment he receives me I become an adopted child of God — “For as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on his name.”

Well, if I am made one with Christ by that bond of faith, then as he has life in himself, do you not see I am obliged to partake in that life, and though a little while ago I was among the spiritually dead, I have now been quickened, and I can say, “I live, and yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me.” I am made a partaker of the divine nature, and just as the branch abides in the vine and draweth from the vine its nourishment, and becomes fruitful and beautiful, I being grafted in Christ, abide in Christ, and am sustained by him; and his Spirit sanctifying me, makes me like him in life as well as character — makes me like him in outward life, for every life that is a true life manifests itself outwardly; and the great end of revelation will be accomplished, the great end for which I was born will be accomplished. It is a great thing that God has brought us into being, and made us living souls; but, oh! what is that compared with the greater boon, the greater blessing of so quickening our souls that we are made partakers of the divine life and our immortality an immortality of blessedness and glory. These things were written that we might live in Christ, and have that life abundantly; and any man that wants it, that sincerely wants it, and earnestly seeks it, will find it, for Christ is just the Saviour that every sinner needs, and all the sinner needs is to say, with humble faith and confidence —

“Just as I am, for love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be thine, and thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come!”

IX.

THE UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

“That thou mayst know the certainties of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.”—LUKE i. 4.

MY theme for two Sunday afternoons was “the certainties of religion,” and those who were present may remember that I had occasion to allude to a very pathetic incident in the history of one of the most eminent citizens of this commonwealth — a man of the staunchest patriotism, a man of the most indomitable courage, and who was honored by his fellow-citizens with one of the highest offices within their gift. He was sadly troubled with skeptical doubts, and one day, in conversation with me, he told me of the particular one that greatly distressed him. He said that if Jesus Christ was what he represented himself to be, that the birth of the Son of God was the most important event in all the procession of the ages; that if Christ died on the cross for the redemption of the world, then there was no fact comparable to that, either in this world’s history or the history of any other world, because the birth and death of the God-man, of the Redeemer of the race, was the greatest fact that could possibly exist in the universe of God. “But,” said he, “if such marvellous events as those occurred, why do we only have the account of them in the Scriptures? Why did none of the great secular writers, the renowned historians that were contemporaneous with the evangelists make mention of those stupendous events?” It was my privilege to tell him that they did;

it was my privilege to tell you last Sunday afternoon what were the testimonies that have been borne to the Christ, who was born in Bethlehem, and died upon Calvary; the testimony, not of men who believed in his divine birth and mission, but of men like Tacitus, the impartial Roman historian, the testimony of the elegant Pliny, the testimony of the infidel writers of the time — men who never pretended to deny the birth of Christ, who did not deny that he wrought great miracles, although they attributed them to satanic influence; men that did not question the purity of his life, or the fact that he was crucified, as his disciples said, “for the sins of the world.”

There is something very interesting in this; and how many young men in our city and country, whose reading has not made them familiar with these writers, are ignorant of the fact that there is not an important truth, not a statement made in these Scriptures with regard to Christ, that is not corroborated by the testimony of skeptical writers that wrote against Christianity in the first century! I could take the writings of Celsus, and Porphyry, and Julian the Apostate — the Emperor Julian — and reconstruct a large portion of the life of Christ, and what is written in these New Testament Scriptures.

Then again, in speaking of “the certainties of religion,” I showed that the world had *one perfect ideal*, one example that was worthy of imitation, one teacher that was infallible, one that illustrated all possible virtues, and that the ideal which was presented by Jesus of Nazareth was just the ideal for which the world had sighed. How did I attempt to prove it? Not by quotations from these gospels, but from the writings of writers of all ages, who have paid their tribute to the matchless beauty of the Saviour’s character — men who have differed in all else, but have united in paying homage to Christ; men of

different nationalities, different degrees of genius and education, men of all faiths and of no faith; men that differed in everything else, yet united in admitting that the Son of Mary was the most faultless model that had ever been presented to humanity for its study and imitation; and oftentimes these men, when they came with their inquisitive, prying eyes in their great desire to detect some flaw, some blemish in the character and life of Christ, went away filled with a genuine, irrepressible admiration to testify that he was the ideal of matchless loveliness, who alone could satisfy both the intellect and the heart! Among the skeptical writers quoted were Spinoza, Strauss, Goethe, Kant, Schiller, Diderot, Marat, Rosseau, Renan, Carlyle, Buckle, Lecky, and John Stuart Mill.

1. To-day I discuss the subject upon a new and totally different line: my theme this afternoon is that the Christian religion is the only religion in the world that, by any possibility, can become a universal religion; the only religion that has a prospect, an assurance of being the religion of the world. This is so, in the first place, because of its power of adaptation to all the races, to all the families of mankind, dwelling in all the latitudes and longitudes of the earth, whether they live upon the great continents or upon the islands of the sea — its perfect adaptation to all kindreds, and tongues, and tribes of the globe; and its freedom from all that would restrict its influence or hinder its progress.

Had it identified itself with any one race, that would have excited the antagonism of alien populations, and that very fact would have caused them to reject the religion that had allied itself with a hated race. Christianity did, indeed, appear in Palestine; it is true its founder and apostles were Jews; but it is equally true

that it was never their purpose to confine their religion to the narrow limits of Palestine. Its Founder himself, in giving his instructions to his disciples, told them to "go and preach the gospel in Judea, and in Samaria" — poor little provinces; and a miserable outcome that would have been if it had been all! But what did he add? "And unto the ends of the earth." One of the early heralds of Christianity was a man who prided himself upon his Jewish ancestry, his Jewish education; but when he entered upon his new career he tells us that on one occasion when he was meditating, he had a vision of a man from Macedonia, and across the waters came the cry, "Come over and help us." And, obedient to the call, the Apostle crossed those waters, and landed upon the European shore, and preached the first sermon ever heard in Europe. Oh! how marvellous from that moment was the expansion of the church of God. First, the light rose in Palestine, but it went up to the zenith, that it might illumine all the nations. Westward the star of empire took its way, until the star encircled the globe, and came back to shine again upon the place where the infant Redeemer lay in his cradle! Europe became Christianized, in the providence of God, that its enterprising nations might become the great missionaries to all the rest of the world. The Christianization of Europe made the Christianizing of these United States possible. Missions have ever been the mother of churches.

Thus we see how, in the providence of God, Christianity, so far from allying itself to any particular family or race of mankind, was never local, never sectional, but always cosmopolitan. Had it linked itself to any single race, or particular form of government, or to any system of philosophy, or to any physical science, it would have been thereby limited and hampered in its progress. But

it is equally adapted to all the tribes and kindreds of the earth. It can flourish under any form of government, giving strength and stability to that which is good, and steadily, silently counteracting and undermining that which is evil; nourishing and developing what is fit to survive, and accelerating the decay of what deserves to perish — pronouncing in favor of no one form of government in preference to another. It has identified itself with no system of philosophy, with no school of science, with no theory of political economy; so that by none of these can its marvellous growth be impeded. Had it ever linked itself to any one of these, it would have been fatal to it. Suppose the Scriptures had taught that the Ptolomaic system of astronomy was the true one. When the Copernican system was established and the Ptolemaic overthrown, the Bible would have been overthrown with it. If it had been a matter of revelation, when the falsity of that system was demonstrated, revelation would have received a shock from which it could not have recovered. The same thing would have been true had Christianity allied itself with any of the great forms of philosophy. For example, take the splendid philosophy of Aristotle, which for centuries held the intellects of men in unquestioning submission, but by and by Bacon arose with his new system of induction, and overthrew it. How fortunate that none of the writers in these Scriptures said a word about these systems; therefore, Christianity has gone on in its imperial march. God has been pleased to keep his Word entirely separate and distinct from every one of these things, which would have crippled it, and rendered its progress to the universal conquest of the nations impossible.

2. All the other great religions have in them, or attached to them, institutions or forms of worship, or car-

dinal articles of belief which make them *local, limited, and incapable of universal expansion*. Take, for instance, that wonderful country that now is perplexing all the people that read and write and think about it — that vast Empire of China, with its population of five hundred million. There Confucius sways his sceptre; but the faith of Confucius means the worship of ancestors, and the worship of ancestors means the bondage of the living to the despotism of the dead; makes anything like progress absolutely impossible, and links that great people irrevocably to the past — a narrow, ignoble past. In India Brahminism dominates, but with its pitiless tyranny of caste makes freedom, brotherhood, community of interests impossible. In other parts of Asia Buddha reigns with a gentle sway; but it is a religion without hope, except the hope of finally escaping the miseries of life by escaping from conscious being. Over a large portion of Asia and Africa Mahomet sways his despotic sceptre; but Mahometanism means the degradation of woman, it means the control of manhood by inevitable, irresistible fate — not providence, but inexorable fate.

These religions all have in them peculiarities, characteristics, which confine them to certain latitudes or zones of the earth, and which, by necessity, prevent their spread in climates where their rites cannot be celebrated, or among races made antagonistic by alien blood and physical dissimilarity. But the soil has not been found where the seeds of Christianity cannot be planted, nor the climate where its vigorous plants cannot flourish. There is scarcely a language into which its sacred books have not been translated; and no tribe where its converts may not be counted. There are those in this audience who have seen its mission stations on the banks of the Nile, its Christian colleges on the shores of the

Bosphorus, and its churches in Calcutta, Bombay and Damascus.

3. Christianity is destined to be the religion of the world, because it is the religion of *the only progressive nations*, by which I mean the colonizing, enterprising nations, those who are making advances by reason of free institutions, just laws, useful inventions, sound learning, and ever-increasing commerce. If you are interested in an illustration of the rapid progress of Christian civilization, let me remind you of what has been accomplished during the present century. We are now near the end of the nineteenth century; the twentieth century will soon begin. One hundred years ago, as the eighteenth century was drawing to its close, the republic of the United States was born, and already this imperial confederated empire of States has attained to such prosperity and power as to make it evident that by the middle of the century just at hand it will be the dominant nation of the world. Another continent, Australia, has been populated by a Christian people, and will soon become another of the great representatives of modern civilization. One hundred years ago Europe had little intercourse with the Oriental world, and no influence over its vast territories, with their incalculable populations. But now behold the magnificent Empire of England in India, with her laws, her schools, her literature, her religious faith, quickening into a new life that mighty realm of immeasurable possibilities of future greatness under the transforming power of the gospel of Christ. Great Britain, at the beginning of the century, was but a prophecy of what it is to-day in population, wealth, commerce, all the elements of national greatness. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there was not a railroad on the earth, there was not a steamer on the sea, there was not a

telegraph line in any country. Franklin then had not even evoked a single electric spark from the thunder-cloud; and now that mysterious element is becoming the motor power, which is destined to supplant steam, the brilliant irradiator, and replace all other modes of illumination. All these discoveries, all these subordinations of the forces of nature to the use, convenience, and comfort of mankind have burst upon the world almost in our own day. And these are but the minor factors of Christian civilization. The gospel is the world's true reformer, the one great factor of the nobler civilization that we call Christian.

Once the world was startled by the dismemberment of one little nation — the partition of Poland between three great powers — but now just at hand is the dismemberment of two great continents, Asia and Africa. Their dismemberment and disintegration has already commenced. China, already humiliated by defeat, torn by internal dissensions, with no cohesive principle, with no settled autonomy, will soon be an outlying province of Russia. Germany, France and England are dividing Africa between themselves: one takes five hundred miles of coast, another a thousand miles of coast, and fortifies itself in the interior. How long it will be before letters of administration will be taken out on the estate of the Sultan of Turkey it is impossible to say, but probably in the near future. Constantinople trembles as she feels the pulsations of the coming earthquake. Between the beak of the Russian Eagle and the claws of the British Lion, Turkey, exasperated by being compelled to submit to the most trying humiliations, longs for the return of the good old days when Suleiman the Magnificent carried his conquests far up the Danube and thundered at the gate of Vienna — days never to return; for it cannot be

long before the beautiful throat of the Bosphorus will be no longer grasped by the leprous hand of the Turk, and when a Scripture verse in Greek, carved on what was once a Christian church, but now a Mohammedan mosque, "Thy kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting kingdom; to thy dominion there shall be no end," shall find its fulfilment, and when the Ottoman Empire will form a part of the dominions over which he who has a right to reign will sway his sceptre of righteousness and peace. Four hundred millions of the human race are already under the control of Christian nations, and the church is now girding herself for new conquests and preparing for an extension more vast and rapid than has ever been known.

4. Consider, too, what is involved in the fact that the English language is fast becoming the dominant language of the world. The significance of that fact is evident, not only because it is true that the English language is the language of commerce, of diplomacy, of international arbitration; but because it is the language in which more copies of the Holy Scriptures are to be found than in all other languages together, and because more missionaries of the cross are proclaiming their messages of salvation than in all the other tongues of the world combined. No other language, ancient or modern, is resplendent with such a galaxy of historians, orators and poets. Once the Greek literature was the noblest in the world; but in its palmiest days it did not boast of such a constellation of noble writers as now illumines the literature of the world. The Greek language, with all its flexibility and beauty, compares with English as Homer compares with Shakespeare — a noble writer, indeed, justly entitled to enduring fame; but how limited his range, and how ethically inferior to that king of thoughtful men. And, above all,

it is the English language that bears the ark of Christian civilization all over the world.

No, it makes no difference where a man was born; the gospel comes to him and plants the seeds of glory in his soul, and transforms him and makes a new creature of him.

There was a scientific association in the city of Edinburgh, which was composed, for the most part, of physicians. At one of their meetings a discussion came up as to whether there were not some nations so degraded and morally embruted as to be incapable of civilization. Quite a number agreed to the proposition, and one gave as an illustration the diminutive, stunted little Bushmen, about the Cape of Good Hope. It was impossible, he said, to civilize them—even Christianity would be a failure among them. There was a stranger present, and he got up and asked if a stranger might be permitted to say something about the subject under discussion. He was told he was at liberty to take any part he pleased in the discussion. He said he did not pretend to dispute with those learned gentlemen. "But," said he, "as I once lived at the Cape of Good Hope among these people, whose civilization you think impossible, I would like to tell you a little incident. There was an English officer, a stranger in the country, a man of splendid physique. One day in riding through the country he lost his way in the jungle and found it impossible to recover the route he was travelling. Finally, through the thick undergrowth, he caught the gleam of a light, and following the light, he found himself opposite the cottage of one of these Bushmen. Hearing the clatter of horses' feet, the native came out, and seeing the tall Englishman, with brilliant uniform, and his sword girded on his side, made him a low salutation, and asked him to condescend to

come in and take such shelter as his humble roof would give. A frugal meal was prepared. After it was over, the Bushman said, 'My wife and I have a custom of reading a chapter, and having a prayer together; it would embarrass me to offer a prayer in your presence, but we are glad that you are here to conduct this service for us.' The Englishman said that he had never learned to pray himself, and could not conduct the family devotions, but would be very glad to unite with them. The Bushman read a chapter, and then he kneeled down and made a fervent, humble prayer in which he prayed God to bless the stranger that was under his roof, and permit him to once more return to his home. And when the prayer was ended, the Bushman discovered the Englishman was still on his knees; and thinking, in consequence of the fatigues of the day, he had fallen asleep, he went to him. But he found that he was weeping. At last he rose, and said, 'I came from a Christian land to this heathen country, but I came to find myself a heathen. And now, God's grace helping me, I promise here under this roof that I will endeavor to pass from heathenism into the hope of Christianity.'" Having told this story, the stranger sat down. Nobody attempted to refute it. The religion that could take one of those brutal men, those diminutive, stunted apes, as they were called, and make him a model to the Englishman, is a religion that speaks for itself.

All the nations shall ultimately be gathered into one common brotherhood.

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

Never was there a time when life was so well worth living as to-day; never a time when a young man's op-

portunities for usefulness were so splendid as to-day; and, oh! how much to be envied is that young man who knows what the possibilities of the future may be, and who consecrates himself to God, and is, by God's blessing, enabled to spend a long and useful life in the service of his Maker and Redeemer, and the service of his fellow-men. The songs that we have been singing to-day are beginning to be echoed throughout the earth, and before long one song shall employ all nations, and the praise of one Christ shall be heard encircling the globe.

“ Oh! may I bear some humble part
In that immortal song.
Wonder and joy shall fill my heart,
And love command my tongue.”

X.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

“THE SPIRIT AND POWER OF ELIJAH.”

“And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah.”
—LUKE i. 17.

IN every generation, the great God who walks through human history unseen, and whose invisible hand directs human affairs, has raised up men to meet every crisis involving human progress, and the ultimate redemption of the race. In a monarchical government, men are so trained that they are led to expect leaders, and not to act independently as individuals. In governments called paternal, the people are not educated to think for themselves, or to lay plans for their own government, but are expected to submit to the laws, and to follow the dictation of those who are supposed to be capable of directing them. And even in a republican government, the mass of the people, from conscious ignorance oftentimes of the true inwardness of great questions, and of what would be best as lines of national policy, prefer to be led by those in whose experience, whose wisdom, and in whose patriotism they have confidence. There is an unconscious element in humanity that leads us to rely upon men of superior strength; men who are supposed to be capable of relieving the masses of the people from the evils which they fear, and of conducting them to the goal of good to which they aspire; men who are supposed to be capable of vindicating their rights, and redressing their wrongs. Decision, courage, inflexibility, determi-

nation — when qualities like these are consecrated to noble ends, then the man who possesses them will always have a following. The man who is believed to represent great principles is the incarnation of the power that others respect, and he is the man who touches the popular imagination, and inspires popular enthusiasm. Such men are welcomed by the people with open arms, and are elevated to the highest positions of influence and trust; they are supposed to be capable of marking out the true policy for the great majority over whom they have influence, and such are the men who not only develop what is good, and what must be developed in national resources, but they are the men who leave the imprint of their own personalities upon the generation to which they belong; and not only so, but they are the men who transmit the influence which they exert to ages which will come after — we know not how many generations of the world.

It is very interesting to notice the great variety of men who have written and thought upon these subjects, and to see how they unite in their opinion. Last Sunday I had occasion to quote the terse and comprehensive saying of Carlyle, when he declared that universal history is but the history of the great men who make history. Can you think of any one more unlike Carlyle in sentiment, education and character than Goethe? Yet he says there never was a great reform inaugurated or consummated by the people, but always by one who acted for the people as their representative. John Stuart Mill, in his treatise on "Liberty," says the great majority of the people in any land represent only mediocrity, and mediocrity is not competent to lead.

And so we see, when men travel, and reach the vast tablelands that stretch almost across some continents, the journey and the view from day to day is one of extreme

and wearisome monotony; but when there are mountain peaks that rise snow-capped and glittering in the sun, then there is something to rest the eye, and absorb the admiration; and great and good men rise from the tablelands, even as the mountain peaks that condense the clouds and make the showers to furnish the fountains, from which flow the waters that irrigate the plains and the valleys of the earth.

Half way between Moses and Christ — one thousand years before Christ was born — there suddenly burst upon the vision of the world the old prophet Elijah. There is no character more distinctly prominent in all its grand and rugged features than his. There is no life more unique than his. He came from what ancestry? Nobody knows. Other great agents of God's providence had family ties: we know something about their households, and their kindred. Of Elijah we know absolutely nothing in these respects. We only know that he was a native of those wild countries beyond the Jordan, in the land of Gilead, which stood in about the same relation to the rest of Palestine that in ancient times the North of Scotland, inhabited by fierce Highlanders, stood to those who inhabited the cities and towns and farmhouses of the low countries. This man, born and bred in solitude, amid the wild fastnesses of Gilead, was utterly unknown until he burst out with that unexpectedness which always characterizes movements at a great crisis in the history of Israel. He came to represent a great truth. When I tell you what the truth was, it will not impress you very much perhaps, because it is something with which we are so familiar; it is something we think so essential that we almost take it for granted that it is a truth everywhere believed, and everywhere leaving its impression. Elijah came to represent the great truth that the Lord God was

one God, and that there should be no other gods before him.

At the period when Elijah made his appearance as the vindicator of this great truth, Israel was in danger of utterly losing the last shreds of belief in the supreme, spiritual God that rules the world by his providence. That was the time when Israel, or what few devout men lived in Israel, saw with consternation an idolatrous king sitting upon the throne; and not only so, but an idolatrous king who married an idolatrous wife, and she the daughter of Ethbaal of Tyre, a great patron of polytheism in that adjacent land. The father of Ahab obtained the throne by the murder of his brother, and the daughter inheriting the cruelty, and the genius also, of the long line to which she belonged, the moment she became the wife of Israel's king began to use her influence, and her fascinating power, in the establishment of idolatry throughout Israel.

I have not time this morning to speak of the pomp and imposing character of the ceremony. I must say, however, that the deities worshipped and introduced by Ahab and his wife were Baal and Astaroth — Baal, the God of Sun, and Astaroth or Ashtoreth — which filled the land with voluptuous, cruel, abominable, unmentionable worship. Such was the position of things. And this was the great occasion which Providence selected for the certain introduction of this man into the presence of the king, and when he came, he came first into contact, not only with the throne, but with the power that was behind the throne, which was a great deal stronger than the throne itself. There is no power in the world so dangerous, and so fatal, as the power of a wicked woman, when endowed with great intellect, ambition and determined will, and when these gifts are united with per-

sonal charm and captivating manners. When Elijah came into contact with Jezebel, it was a great crisis in the history of Israel's people. It was the conflict of one strong, indomitable spirit with another spirit equally as strong and indomitable, with this difference, that the one spirit was inspired from above, while the other was a spirit in alliance with the prince and power of darkness.

Elijah was the man for the time. Probably in the whole land he was the only man fitted, and he came to uphold the great truth, which was a vital truth, or foundation truth of theocracy, that God ruled, and that Israel was his people. You talk about the union of church and state. What do you mean by that? You mean that the state, which is one organization, and the church, which is a totally different organization, have entered into a compact, and promise, by which they shall unite their forces for certain purposes. There was no such union as that in ancient Israel. It was not a union between church and state, because their church and state were one, and never anything else but one; no organization to the right, and none to the left, but one organization that included both; so that the state was only one manifestation of theocracy, and the church another manifestation of theocracy, and God underlying all; God distinct in all, and God making himself manifest in all. That was the great truth that had to be vindicated in the age in which Elijah lived, and if that truth had been lost, in vain would have been the attempt to continue the succession of the church, and Christianity itself would never have been born.

And so among the old reformers, you see that Elijah stands the impersonation of the principle, the representative of the great cause, just as Athanasius afterwards stood to uphold the doctrine of the Godhood of Christ, as Luther afterwards came representing another principle —

the principle of justification by faith, and that the soul needs no mediator between man and God, save Christ Jesus; that the priesthood is abolished; that the conscience is free, and that the open Bible, held reverently, with prayer to God for the Spirit's illumination, is the soul's only needed guide to truth and heaven. At one period of the world Elijah represented the truth that lies at the foundation of both these other truths to which I refer; for if the world had lost its belief in the existence of an intelligent, personal, loving God, and had a vicegerent on the earth prepared for both, and intended that both should triumph at the last, then Athanasius would never have had an inch of ground upon which to stand, and there never would have been any room for Luther, and the world would never have heard of either.

And so it came to pass that Elijah was a sort of introduction, sort of forerunner of all the reformers and upholders of the truth that came after him. He possessed just the qualities that were necessary for a man who had to meet such exigencies as those which confronted him. If you ask me what those qualities were, I will answer, in the first place, his great, predominant qualification was courage — moral courage. There is a difference between courage and bravery. Bravery is the result of the physical constitution. Some men are naturally brave, with their developed muscles, and strong nervous system, and perfect balance through all the various functions of the frame which their souls inhabit — and the result is bravery. But there is something higher than this, and that is courage. Courage is the moral quality, and some men who are not brave are courageous, because the moral quality is the ascendant and the regnant faculty controls the natural fear. You remember when an officer spoke sneeringly of a younger officer who in battle showed

signs of trepidation, and mentioned it to the commander, the commander answered, "Yes, and if you were as much frightened as he, you would run away, but you will see that he will stand his ground, for he has moral courage." There is many a man whose physical make-up is such that he may tremble in the presence of danger, but who has within him the inflexible sort of spirit that he stands his ground to the last. That is moral courage. I call it moral because it is that in a man which leads him to abhor the wrong. There are some things which it is right to hate. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. The moral attribute of which I speak is that which leads men to abhor injustice, oppression and wrong of any character, and which leads them to admire and uphold the right. Then courage becomes tinctured with principle, and when imbued with principle it becomes a moral quality, and the men who have moral courage are the men who, when they espouse a great cause, are loyal to it to the end, without regard to personal consequences. That is another element of it. I say they are loyal to their principle to the end, without regard to personal consequences; they have given themselves to the cause, and the cause possesses them, has taken possession of them, and so they mean to maintain it at the cost of any sacrifice, or at the cost of any peril that may happen to themselves.

Ah! how rare such men are. Sprinkled here and there over the wide, wide field of history, you see one and another — but how few. How few will stake all on a principle, and die for it if need be, rather than desert it? Such was Elijah, and as a second evidence I will mention the conviction that he had that he was God Almighty's representative, and that he was the Lord's agent — an incident in accomplishing a certain work. Says David in

one of the Psalms, "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved." Who does not know that if a man believes there walks at his side through all the days, and through all the duties of life, an Omnipotent One who is his friend, that that man will have all the strength that can be infused into humanity? It was so with Elijah. His ordinary introduction, when he presented himself, was, "The God before whom I stand," "The God in whose name I come," "The God upon whose strength I lay hold." When John Wesley was dying, one of the last things he said was, "The best of all is, God is with us." Yes, my friends, that is the best of all. And the man who has the conviction that God is with him, and that God is smiling upon him, and that God at last will recompense him, is the only man who is invincibly strong, and the only man who will probably succeed, because he has the courage of the highest and holiest conviction that can animate the human heart.

The third element which Elijah had which fitted him for the age in which he lived, to do the work he had to accomplish, was that he lived in such communion with God that whatever was most elevating and noble in its nature was developed, until he acquired that force that the highest spirituality always invests a man with. When the greatest of modern soldiers was speaking of a young officer in the Austrian army, he said, "One thing about that man, he is a thoroughly good man, and that is worth everything else." That is a great deal to come from the lips of the First Napoleon, that he should recognize the inflexibility of goodness, and put it in the forefront of the battle of the right for the world.

When Walter Scott was dying, he said, "Lockhart, be a good man; that is worth all the rest." Says the man

of many books and wide operations, the man that had studied human nature and knew it well, and the man who recognized the fact that after all, the greatest force of the world was the spiritual force of a man that lived in communion with God.

When Elijah was about to go away, he took off that rough mantle which he had been in the habit of wearing, and wrapped it together like a robe, or a scroll, and divided the river, and then when Elisha had crossed over with him he unfolded the mantle and threw it upon the shoulders of Elisha, and Elisha became his successor, and it was said he inherited the spirit of his master, Elijah, and this was written about him, "I perceive that thou art a holy man of God." Among all the titles that can be written under the name of the man, or above the name of the man, or around the name of the man, is that of "holy man of God." "A man of God" is a great thing, without the "holy." We say of certain men who have great experience, great knowledge of human nature, great acquaintance with the affairs of the world — we say of one man, he is a man of the world. That is his title. Of another, we say, he is a man of affairs. We say of another, he is a man of pleasure — a man who devotes himself to the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life — he is a man of pleasure. Of another man, who is capable of laying down plans for the guidance of the coming generation, and who knows what are the essential principles of an enduring free government, we say he is a man of the state. But the greatest thing of all is to call a man "a man of God," and when, in addition to that it is said that he is a "holy man of God," then that man exhibits something of the divinity which stirs within him; that man emits something of the divine power in him, and for that reason he has to make his

impress upon the generation of which he forms a part.

It is something very interesting to notice that a man of such qualities not only is able to exert influence which spreads all around him — just as when you throw a pebble into a smooth pool, and the circles widen and widen until they touch the brink; but they have a projectile influence — a projectile power, a propulsive power, which sends that influence down through the ages. The first illustration we have of that is about what I have just mentioned, that the spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha. The next is, that all through the Oriental lands there was a strange superstition about Elisha, and that was, that he was to appear in the world again, not only once, but as often as he might be needed. Did you know, my friends, that the Jews, for centuries, when they celebrated the Passover, had a cup filled, and a chair ready for Elisha, in case he should enter and partake of the sacred banquet? Did you know that among the Bedouin Arabs there had always been a tradition that Elijah had always been travelling the earth in the form of an Arab merchant, appearing for the defence of the weak, and the overthrow of the wicked? Do you remember that Abdul Pasha, of Persia, almost died of fear, because he fancied he had a vision of Elijah upon Mt. Carmel? And so the feeling has grown, and continued to exist in the world, that a time would come when upon some mountain, exceeding great and high, Elijah would be seen again, as he actually was seen when Christ was transfigured. Such, my friends, is the history of this reform, of this representative of a great truth of his day: of this great herald of the prophets, and of the reformers, and of the martyrs, and of the confessors. Now I close my sermon by saying that we may look through the history of the world, and we

will always find that this has been the plan. When Israel was enchained and debauched by oppression, Moses was raised up to bring the people out of their bondage, and when during their forty years' marching and wandering through the wilderness they relapsed into idolatry, and the plague was sent among them, he stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed. And when the particular time came Elijah was raised up, and he prepared the way for Isaiah, and he for Jeremiah, and for the minor prophets, and for Malachi, whose last chapter says that one shall come in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest he come and smite the earth with a curse.

Oh! my friends, this is a very impressive truth, and it is that during all these generations the men that have been raised up — the men in patriarchal days, the judges that ruled Israel, and then the prophets that remonstrated with Israel for their sins, and then in the days of our Lord the disciples he called around him, and after them the confessors and martyrs that followed him — that is the sad line of truth that runs through this history. You ask what it is? These men were never recognized, never appreciated for their true worth, by the generations to which they belonged. Oftentimes — always, we may say, with but few exceptions — their whole history is summed up in that wonderful statement of the Apostle Paul, when in describing the true heroes of the world, he says they were stoned; they were sawn asunder; they wandered in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, tormented and afflicted, and then when the ages passed by, after the people slew the prophets, they built tombs for them, and gathered around them, and paid them almost divine honors. But what a lesson it is for men to appreciate the

good of those who live among them, while they live, and not wait to pay them posthumous honors when the world is made poorer by their departure and is bereaved by their loss. And we must not be discouraged, my friends, if in this great fight of what is wrong in the world, if we are misrepresented, if we are misunderstood. Let us not be discouraged. There has always been something impressive to me in that picture of the Mohammedan religion, showing that those who cross the bottomless gulf on a long bridge to enter into Paradise, have to march one by one through an arch of crossed scymetars — reminding them of what their earthly conflict must be — swords crossed above them, and beyond that archway Paradise. Thus it has been. Other men have labored, other men have suffered, but ye have entered into their labor. Please recollect this, that we can never recompense those people, when they are gone, by any honors which we pay to their memory; our applauses never go down, never reach the cold shades of death. When men lie in their coffins they do not hear our praises, and our praises never ascend to the realms of light and glory; they cannot reach that height, and the only return we can make to those who have labored and suffered and triumphed for us in contending for the right and truth in the world, and the only true way of showing our gratitude, is to fall into line ourselves, and join the great procession of those who have been trying to maintain the empire of principle in this world. Let the torch of truth be transmitted from hand to hand, and from generation to generation, until it shall illuminate the earth. This is the way, my friends, in which we may show our gratitude to those who are gone, by inheriting their spirit, by walking in the light of their holy example, and by waiting for God's own time in which to bestow upon us the recompense and the reward.

XI.

LIDDON, BERSIER, SPURGEON.

“And Samuel died, and all the Israelites were gathered together and lamented him.”—I SAMUEL xxv. 1.

THE book that records the lives of the regnant men of the world, the men that I choose to call the kingly men of the world — not because of their rank or hereditary power or riches, but the kingly men of the world because of the services they have rendered to their race, services patiently, untiringly and sometimes heroically rendered — does not contain a biography more beautiful than that of Samuel, the prophet and priest of the Lord.

While he was yet a little boy his mother brought him to good old Eli as he ministered in the sanctuary, and she said, “I have lent him to the Lord as long as he liveth.” That dedication on the part of his mother was followed by an audible call from Jehovah himself. In the stillness of the night, before the last lamp had been extinguished in the temple, the little child heard the voice calling him, and his response was, “Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth.” Samuel hastened to fulfil the vow which his mother had made on his behalf by his own personal consecration. Oh! what an auspicious beginning, what a calm and beautiful life followed that beginning. No stain rests upon the record of Samuel’s piety. After long years spent in the service of the God of his boyhood, he died in peace, and all Israel gathered together, and made great lamentation over him. Noble life, peaceful death, blessed memory! It was a morning without a cloud; his youth-

ful piety was the bright and morning star that dawned before the sun arose, and when that sun went down in peace and splendor it left an afterglow behind it, the trailing glory that still lights up the skies.

When a private citizen dies, if he is a truly good man, his loss is bewailed, first in the family, in which a light has been extinguished no more to be relumed on earth; and the loss is one that is deplored, too, in the community, by his neighbors and acquaintances. When a man of prayer is taken away, a man whose example and whose consistent living was a guide and blessing to others, then the entire community laments the loss. Just in proportion to the eminence of a man's position, just in proportion to the wideness of the influence which he exerts, if that influence is a beneficent one, and his elevation is one that Providence has caused for wise and good purposes, there are many families and many communities bereaved. It is no longer like the narrow circle of mourners when the private citizen goes, but it is a circle which widens until it takes in a state, an empire — until it takes in, it may be, Christendom.

We are told that not many mighty and not many noble are called into the kingdom of the Lord. This assertion refers to men of noble birth according to human gradation of rank, and to men of might according to the world's estimate of might. There is no might like consecrated genius. There is no nobility like spiritual excellence, there is no power like goodness in the world. We have reason, my friends, to be very thankful that, when estimated by this test, the church of God has been blessed in all generations with the truly mighty and the truly noble from the days of Origen and Cyprian, Justin Martyr and Tertulian, Chrysostom and Athanasius, Augustine and Luther, Melancthon and Zwingle, Calvin and Knox, Ba-

con and Milton, Whitefield and Chalmers, and Liddon, Spurgeon, and Jonathan Edwards. I do not know of any men in history that deserve the title of "noble and mighty" as do these men, splendidly endowed by nature, with all their powers strengthened and developed by learning, and consecrated to the service of God and the highest interests of humanity. There are some men whose endowments are such, whose natural and acquired gifts are such that they are compelled to occupy stations of great eminence. Their own humility, perhaps, would induce them to prefer obscurity, but those who recognize their capacity for usefulness will not permit them to remain in obscure stations, and when once raised to elevated positions, they are never allowed to abandon their posts. They stand the acknowledged leaders in the state, lights and landmarks of the church, and the pillars in the great temple that God is erecting on this earth to the glory of his grace.

When such men are called away, the people feel and recognize the great chasm, the great blank that has been made. When those who have left their impress upon their generation are called away, then the involuntary testimony of the bereaved people is, "A great man and a prince is fallen in Israel!"

The regrets when eminent and good men die are never confined to the particular church in which they were reared and to which they ministered, and the reason is that the church — I am speaking now of the whole company of the redeemed on earth, those whose lives are united by faith in Jesus Christ — knows no geographical boundaries. It is not so with the earth. Either by natural or artificial lines states are marked off, with sometimes mountains or rivers for their boundaries. We are told that, "Mountains interposed make enemies of na-

tions," to the infinite folly, the unutterable folly and misery of mankind. The people that live on one side of a mountain slope are filled with bitter hostility to those who live on the other side of the mountain slope, and so we are told by the bard that "Mountains interposed make enemies of nations." There are no such geographical divisions in the church of God. It constitutes one brotherhood, one community of sympathy and of common interests. Therefore, when a great missionary, for instance, is suddenly taken away, a man like Martyn, or Cary, or Moffat, that death is first bewailed by the heathen converts that have been brought out from the darkness in which they were born to the light into which they were reborn, but the mourning that begins in that little circle of converted pagans spreads widely, and the tidings of that death touch a sympathetic cord throughout all Christendom, and the church feels that it has sustained a common loss.

I do not remember any period in which the church has sustained heavier bereavements than it has during the last three or four years; and it is well, my friends, when these events occur, that we should commemorate them, because such tributes are due to the men themselves. And then the taking away of such men, if we only knew it, marks great epochs in the history of the church. Moreover, it is a sweet duty to gather up and perpetuate the things that made them deservedly honored and dear to the communities in which they lived and labored. When we treasure up these things and transmit them, we hand down what becomes a precious legacy to the coming generation.

First, I will mention in this list of eminent lamented the name of William Perry Liddon, a man whose reputation is world-wide among scholars, but, for reasons I

may presently mention, he was not so popularly known. His is not a familiar name nor a familiar history to the great multitude, even of intelligent and reading people. Canon Liddon was such a man as only a country like England can produce, such a product as can only come from one of its cloistered universities with a long classical training, beginning in childhood and continuing for fifteen or twenty consecutive years in the great schools and colleges, finally in the universities and afterwards in the fellowships that are bestowed upon the eminent scholars who live as celibates in those universities, without ever marrying, as was the case with Canon Liddon. It was a rare and beautiful cultivation which he possessed. It was a great and splendid scholarship which he mastered, yet being destitute, to a large extent, of those popular elements which touch the imagination of the masses and arouse their enthusiasm, it so happened that he was better known to scholars and reading men than to the world at large; and yet his is a name that deserves perpetuation among those who have served their generation. I suppose Canon Liddon is better known by his Bampton Lectures than by any other of his works. Those Bampton Lectures which he delivered are believed to contain the completest and most satisfactory vindication of the divinity of Christ in the English language. That is a great thing to say. It was the delivery and publication of the Bampton Lectures that laid the firm foundation of his fame. After that he became one of the preachers in the University of Oxford, and there he had just the kind of an audience that suited a man of his genius and training. It was a very limited audience as to numbers, but, my friends, you must not underrate its importance on that account. Whenever Liddon preached, he preached to the educated men whose influence was ulti-

mately to be felt all over Britain. And the man who can control the thought and shape the principles of the educated, is the man who takes hold most effectually of his generation.

In the discourses which Liddon delivered in the University he weighed one thing very carefully. I do not suppose there has been a man in the last fifty years who has studied what I might call "the spirit of the age" more closely and intelligently than he did. I mean by that, particularly, that he studied all the phases of doubt, all the shades and forms of skepticism to which cultivated men and scholars were peculiarly liable; not the popular objections of the rabble and crowd, but those refined and subtle difficulties which oftentimes are aroused in the minds of the most cultivated men. He watched all that with the most assiduous care, and the sermons that he delivered, entitled, "University Sermons," are discourses adapted to that class of men, and in the day in which we live, perhaps, they have done as much as almost any other sermons which have been delivered to scatter the doubts of scholarly skeptics.

Another great portion of the life of Canon Liddon, of his active public life, was when he became a preacher in St. Paul's Cathedral. There he was perpetually handicapped. A cathedral is something made for show. It is a great structure elevated above all the surrounding buildings to remind people of worship. It is a kind of architectural tribute to religion. So far so good, but there can be nothing worse in its adaptation for public service, such as prayer, praise and preaching, than a great cathedral. It was very painful to sit near Canon Liddon as he preached in St. Paul's Cathedral. Every muscle of his body was put to the utmost tension. His countenance was oftentimes distorted, and every one could see that he

was watching to ascertain, if possible, whether his words reached the limit of the great assembly. It was one perpetual strain, from the beginning to the end of his discourse, to make himself heard. There he stood in his little pulpit, with a massive dome, like the dome of the sky, above him, with his voice interrupted by the impertinence of hundreds of arches, columns and pillars. I remember one Sunday afternoon, when I had gotten a position not very far from the pulpit from which he delivered his sermon, I was deeply interested when he took his text, because it was a very difficult text, and one upon which I wanted to hear his opinion. I never listened more attentively, and never had a greater disappointment. When the sermon was one-third through I ceased even to try to hear him, and there was one strange thing I noticed. It was that diminishing echo that could be heard through all the chapels, through all the aisles of that great edifice — a *diminuendo* note. After the preacher had sounded the word, you would hear it repeated, fainter and fainter, until the echo died away; and the confusion of sounds rendered it impossible to hear the sermon, although articulately delivered. Such was the man, and such were the labors of the man. He puts us out of sympathy with him when we remember his intense ecclesiasticism; indeed, he would have cut himself off from the sympathy of the whole dissenting Christian world by his intense ecclesiasticism if it had not been that he was one of the most evangelical of preachers. He loved Jesus Christ, and notwithstanding the churchism that was made so prominent in his discourses, there was breathed through them, from end to end, a devotion to the glory of the Lord, and tender love for the souls of men. That makes his memory, after all, a precious memory to the whole church.

Among the bright, genial and loving men that the Church of England has produced, there was no one that was more distinguished for these characteristics than Arthur Penrhyn Stanley. He was one of the favorite pupils of Arnold of Rugby, and some of the most beautiful tributes that a great master ever paid to the virtues of a boy, while at school, were the letters that Arnold wrote to Stanley's mother while he was still at Rugby. From that school he went to the University of Oxford, where he soon took a very high position, and where, as soon as he took holy orders, he became a member of the circle such as few were ever admitted to even in England. He was a great personal favorite of the Queen. He had the *entrée* at any time to whatever palace at which she happened to be residing. Notwithstanding the fact that he had such a social position as this, in all probability there was not a man in Great Britain who was simpler in manners, plainer in dress, more entirely natural and more truly unaffected, more ready to converse with the humblest and the poorest, with whom he might be cast. During his visit to this country I had a most interesting opportunity of knowing the man. I had just returned from England myself, and when introduced to him, some one mentioned that fact. He said, "When you were in London, whom did you hear preach?" I said, "The last person I heard preach in London was Dean Stanley." He had just crossed the ocean himself, and we made the voyage at the same time, but on different vessels. Said he, "Why did you not come up at the conclusion of the service and introduce yourself to me?" "Oh!" I said, "there are many reasons why a stranger would not do that." "Well," said he, "the next time you come to London, if you will give me the opportunity, I will show you something that no one else in England can show you, that is Westmin-

ster Abbey." That sounds strange, doesn't it? Why, I had been going to Westminster Abbey for twenty-five or thirty years. I once spent two weeks in the hotel directly opposite the Abbey, that I might go into it once or twice every day; but when Dean Stanley said, "I will show you Westminster Abbey," I well knew what he meant, and what a great promise and treat were shadowed by that invitation. Those of you who have seen the two splendid, illustrated volumes written by Stanley with regard to the Abbey, have some conception of what an honor and privilege it would be to have such a guide through that most historic building of the world; a man who knew every tomb and every shrine, and who knew the history of every illustrious man whose dust sleeps within those walls. I accepted the invitation; but I do not know of anything that ever gave me a much deeper impression of the vanity of all human expectations than what I am going to tell you. It so happened that I returned to England the very next summer. A few months after this interview I went to Westminster Abbey, but I went alone, and you may imagine my feelings when, as I walked alone through the Abbey (it so happened that there was no one in sight just then), I stopped suddenly over a new flagstone in the pavement, and on that stone was engraved "Arthur Penrhyn Stanley." The man that had offered to conduct me through that building was sleeping unconscious of all the crowds that walked over his silent dust!

I have not time this afternoon to speak of Rev. Prof. Theodore Christlieb, of Bonn; I wish I had. But let us cross the Channel, and enter a church in Paris, a church not in the fashionable quarter of the city either, and there we will find standing in the pulpit Eugene Bersier, a man of noble stature, a man who gave an intimation to the world in his very countenance and demeanor of every-

thing that is refined and noble in the human character. A silver halo crowned his head, although he was not fifty years of age. He was a man of benevolent aspect, and wonderful geniality and grace.

L'Eglise Evangelique was the church in which he ministered, and there I heard him deliver a funeral discourse in French. He was a member with me of the great Council of Reformed Churches, which met two years ago in the city of London. There I had the opportunity of hearing Bersier speak, and one evening, to my great delight, I was the guest of a gentleman, and Bersier was the only other guest besides myself. There we spent a delightful evening together.

Eugene Bersier, of all the modern preachers that France has produced, comes nearer to the great triumvirate that flourished in the days of Louis XIV.; next to Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Massillon. Bersier comes in fourth. For splendor of genius, for beauty of diction, for sweet sympathy, and for all the charities of the gospel of Christ, there was no man of his day that transcended him. My friends, it is one of the saddest of all thoughts that a man who seemed, by the very constitution which God had given him, destined to live a long life of continuous labor, perhaps until after three-score years and ten, should have been stricken down in the very flower and glory of his vigorous manhood. If in any of the book stores which you chance to visit, you see a volume of sermons with the name of Eugene Bersier upon them, you cannot do better than to add them to your library.

It was a great loss to our struggling Presbyterian Church in France when Bersier died. We do not know how sufficiently to deplore these losses. Here I am going to say a word or two — not of a controversial character, but as somewhat of a contradiction to a very common

impression, and a very common remark that is made. You frequently hear such statements as, "The workman dies, but the work goes on." My friends, the workman dies, and I know that God, in his sovereignty, can carry on his work by any agencies that he pleases, and it is true that, in the long run, the work will go on. It is true in the sense that the truth will finally triumph and prevail, but it is not true in the ordinary acceptation, that when "The workman dies the work goes on." The death of the workman often arrests temporarily the work itself, and puts it back. There are some men who die, and whose places are not filled for generations to come. No man has taken the place of Thomas Chalmers in Scotland. No man has taken the place of Bersier in France, and, were it proper, I could mention the names of men that have been lost, not only from our own denomination, but from others in the United States, whose places have not been supplied. When you hear that the work goes on, you hear half the truth. The work does *ultimately* go on, but oftentimes it is in the church just as it is in the state. You know the death of a great statesman oftentimes arrests a vast movement that would have been accomplished for the good of the whole land, but for his taking off. You know very well that the sudden and unexpected death of a great general of an army makes victory impossible, in the history of that people, for all time. So that it is not worth while to say that such a man is not a national or world-wide loss. The man is missed, and it is a great while before another man comes that has any tendency to take up the work and exert the power which he wielded. Only think of what was the result when the great Huguenot leaders in France fell in their struggle for the liberty which they did not get. That was an instance in which the truth was mighty, and *did not*

prevail. It was crushed beneath the iron heel of tyranny! There were at least a dozen attempts at a reformation before Luther was born, and every one of these attempts was put down. Some of the noblest reformers that ever lived, when they were taken away, had no successors. Before they died they did their whole work, but they were arrested in their career and silenced forever. Huss was put down, as were also many other noble reformers; and after Luther, the persecutions suffered by the church in various parts of the world arrested the progress of the Reformation; and, therefore, it is true that in the end God means that his church shall be victorious, but I assure you that the loss of individual and particular men is often a calamity far greater than it is ordinarily recognized. Now when I look abroad, I see no men who have the rank and the capacity for usefulness like the men that I have named this evening. I could have named others like Christlieb in the University of Bonn, Bersier in Paris, like Canon Liddon, like the Bishop of Peterboro (Dr. McGee), who has lately died. These are some of the losses which all Christendom deploras with a common grief.

One of the greatest lessons that I want to derive from this discourse, and one of the greatest truths that I want to impress is this, that there ought to be a very earnest looking for a different class of men from many of those who are coming upon the stage now, and we ought to be praying that God will raise up men of great endowments, of splendid gifts and large scholarship, and devoted consecration to his cause; men qualified to become the leaders of the great sacramental army for the conquest of the world. There never was a time perhaps when there were as many mediocre men as there are now, men who do not attain, and who have no prospect of attaining to

that learning which makes the leader in the church, and which makes the whole church to rejoice that God has honored such men with such powers. That is the great want of the day in which we live.

I have often had occasion to remark that I regarded Spurgeon as the most widely useful man living, the greatest power for good in Great Britain, and now that he has been removed from his great sphere, if I were to say that he is lamented by all to whom he was known and honored, it would only be another way of saying that he was lamented throughout all Christian lands; for where was he not known, and where was he not honored? That this is not an extravagant estimate I think will be evident when we consider into how many departments of useful labor he was permitted to enter and manifest the greatest efficiency and success. He was one of the few men of whom biography gives us any account, who was able to maintain his popularity from year to year without abatement. His was a popularity which, so far from weakening, grew and advanced with successive years. There never was a time perhaps when there was more originality, more freshness and power, more that makes a sermon rich and good, than during the last years of his life. It is not extravagant to say that he was the greatest power for good in Great Britain, when we remember that his church, or tabernacle, on the Surry side of the Thames, had in it six thousand sittings, and it often held a larger number of people than that, for many could not get seats, and were obliged to stand; when we remember also that these sermons, every one of them, was reported and published that very week; when we remember that sixty volumes of sermons were issued during his life; when we remember that they were read, not only throughout Great Britain, but through Australia, Canada, the

United States, West Indies, and wherever the English language is spoken — when we remember, again, that they were translated into a number of modern tongues, and thus went all over the reading world. That was but *one* of the departments of his great life work; and, therefore, it is not an extravagant statement that was made by my nearest ecclesiastical neighbor, my brother of the Second Baptist Church, in an article which he published in the *Religious Herald*, in which he stated that, “England was but the platform on which Spurgeon’s pulpit stood, and his audience was the world around.” I have read many noble tributes to the memory of Mr. Spurgeon. I have read none finer than the one to which I refer by my Baptist brother.

But this was only one avenue of his access to the people. Look at the great orphanages which he founded, and which he found the means also of maintaining. Hundreds and hundreds of poor, degraded and destitute children were taken from positions where they would have died in vice and squalor, and trained them to occupy places of usefulness and respectability in the world. Then remember that theological school which has, I believe, seventy or eighty students every year, young men whom he has sent out, with the impress of his own example and spirit upon them, to preach the gospel, as far as in them lay, just as he preached it. When we remember these things, we have some idea of the channels through which he reached the great outside world. I do not know of any history more instructive in another aspect than his. It shows how a man with the courage of his convictions, how a man who is intensely loyal to the truth, and fears nothing but what is wrong, will at last triumph over all opposition. Very few men have lived in England that were subjected to the ridicule and misrepresentation Mr.

Spurgeon was during the early years of his ministry. Hundreds of stories were invented reflecting upon his manners, reflecting upon him in every way, and yet he pursued the even tenor of his way without even a murmur, with his bright, genial spirit unchilled by the abuse that was heaped upon him. He went on quietly, with the pluck and perseverance that characterized him, until the time came that he won over to himself all the parties in England, and not only all the parties, but all the different classes of society. The upper class, that at one time scorned him, recognized his worth at last. Men in the highest positions, in Parliament, and men of great learning recognized his virtues, and the great indebtedness Great Britain owed him, and acknowledged it in their public letters. He won, not only the regard of all classes, but the regard of all sects, which was a great triumph in a country like England, and perhaps no man has ever lived who has done more to bring all the people in harmony with one another, and promote good fellowship and kind Christian regard among the different denominations than he. It was his joy to know before his death, by the public testimony of the most eminent men in Great Britain, how he was esteemed by the men most qualified to speak on such subjects, both in the church and in the state.

I have, of course, my friends, been compelled to make this discourse much longer than I usually make my Sunday afternoon sermons, and I have protracted it more than I intended, such is the richness of the theme. You will see that I have tried to condense, as I went along, in order to compress into the limits of the discourse what I had to say in connection with those to whom I have called your attention this evening.

There are one or two other facts in regard to this

man's great usefulness in the world. It is sometimes said that Calvinism is dying out, that the world is abjuring Calvinism. My friends, I do not care to defend Calvinism this evening, because that is not my object or my present purpose. I want to say that the *most popular preacher in the world was the most pronounced Calvinist in the world!* No man has preached to as many people in the last twenty-five years as Charles Spurgeon. No man who ever lived during all the ages, during all the centuries has, during his life-time, come into contact with as many of his fellow-men on religious themes as Spurgeon; and, during all that time, he has not preached a sermon perhaps in which Calvinism was not the fibre and the spirit of the discourse. Don't tell me that Calvinism is becoming unpopular, when the man who could draw more people than any other man on earth was sure to deliver a Calvinistic discourse. When a conceited young theological candidate once made a disparaging remark about Spurgeon to a distinguished prelate in the English Church, he said, "Stop, young man; there are eminent men in Great Britain, but the only man in England that can get an audience, if he choose, of thirty thousand people, in twenty-four hours, is Spurgeon."

Then, another thing that deserves our attention is this. Such was his loyalty to the truth that he would sacrifice friends for it if need be. There never was a man more affectionate or loyal to his friends, but if need be, he would sacrifice friends before he would sacrifice a principle. That is a very rare thing in this world. He withdrew from the Baptist Union, three or four years ago, and in making the separation he parted from some of the most intimate friends of his youth and manhood. Inasmuch as he thought they held erroneous views, especially with regard to the divinity of our Lord, that was some-

thing he could not brook; and therefore, while he never lost his respect or regard for them as men, yet ecclesiastically there was a separation.

It so happens that I have spent more time in London than in any city in the world except Richmond. There is no city that I know as well. Three months, at one time in my life, I did not go out of the city, and for thirty years I have availed myself of every opportunity that I could get of hearing Mr. Spurgeon preach. I have heard him oftener than any man south of the Potomac, and I think, therefore, that I have had some opportunity to judge and some opportunity to speak with the confidence that I have spoken with regard to this man. And strange to say, during all these years, I never sought to make his acquaintance, though I had hundreds of opportunities for so doing. The sole reason was that I did not want to encroach upon that time, for every moment of which I knew he had imperative use. The only interview that I ever had with him happened on this wise. I was at his church one Sunday, when he gave notice that immediately after the service the sacrament of the Lord's Supper would be administered. You are aware that although he belonged to the Baptist Church, he was in favor of open communion, and on that occasion he gave an invitation that was so tender, to all Christians of all denominations that might be present, to unite in celebrating the sacrament, that I remained. When the service was over, as I was going out, and was passing down the aisle, I went within five or six feet of where he was sitting in a chair on the platform, and I went up and said, "Mr. Spurgeon, I have been a hearer of yours for thirty years, and I now embrace this opportunity of introducing myself, and of giving you my best wishes." He asked me my name, and his reception was so kind and so affectionate that I have

often regretted since that I did not avail myself of the many opportunities I had of knowing him personally.

I will never forget the first time I entered his church any more than I can forget the last, which is the time of which I have just spoken. The first time I visited his church, it so happened that I arrived a little late. Every seat was taken on the lower floor, as well as every seat in the first gallery. There are two galleries, one above the other. I went into the upper gallery, and succeeded in finding a seat at the farthest point that I could have been (almost in the roof of the house) from the preacher on the rostrum. He had not been preaching more than ten or fifteen minutes before I heard a stifled sigh or sob from the man who sat next to me. I had not noticed this man before in the great crowd, but I looked at him, and he seemed like a man whose business was in some menial occupation, dressed in his Sunday clothes. He was coarse and vulgar looking, with very hard features; but the tears were streaming down his cheeks. He was quivering with emotion, and I said to myself, "If Mr. Spurgeon, standing at that vast distance, can so preach the gospel in its richness and sweetness as to cause every fibre in that man's heart to vibrate, then he is preaching right, and that man is my brother in Christ Jesus," and I felt like taking him by the hand, and telling him so.

Such is the man who has been taken away from us. If we regret that we did not avail ourselves of the opportunities we had of knowing personally the good and great that have lived to bless their generation, there is one compensation and one anticipation — in the long hereafter there will be time enough. In the world of recognition, in the world of reunion, in the world of holy fellowship, in the eternal future, there will be time enough to make the intimacies of an innumerable multitude of those who

have so lived in this world as to bless their generations, and then gone home to the rest and recompenses of the eternal kingdom, into which kingdom and rest and joy may the Lord, in his infinite mercy, bring every one of us at the last, for his dear Son's sake. Amen!

XII.

“MY MOTHER AND MY BRETHREN.”

“There came then his brethren and his mother, and standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

“And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

“And he answered them saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.”—MARK iii. 31-35.

IT deserves our attention that this most impressive incident in the life of our Lord is mentioned by three of the evangelists. The account given by each is substantially the same; the slight variations add to the interest of the narrative. Matthew says that when the information came to him that his mother and brethren were standing without seeking for him, that he stretched out his hands towards the disciples, and said, “Behold my brethren.” Doubtless, by that gesture he intended to include not only the twelve disciples, but all that were present who loved him. Mark says in his narrative, that our Lord declared whosoever did the will of God would sustain the closest and most intimate of relationships with him; but Matthew says, “Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my mother, and sister, and brother.” Mark is always concise, and never amplifies; and, therefore, he simply says, “God,” while Matthew says, “My Father which is in heaven.” And Matthew alone says that all this took place

while our Lord was talking with the people; and that gives us an idea of the manner of Christ's preaching. Perhaps there was an element in it that should be more observed and imitated at the present time: Christ spoke in a conversational way, a more familiar address than the stately style of the pulpit in the days in which we live; and it was a manner better calculated, perhaps, to arouse the attention and impress the minds and hearts of those to whom he spoke—a more loud, vociferous style of speaking came to the pulpit afterward. He was “talking” to the people when the message came, when he made a new revelation of the relations he sustained towards all that believe on him, when he declared that all that did his Father's will were his brethren, his sisters, and his mother.

When our Lord was informed that his mother was standing without, unable to get into the apartment where he was because of the multitude that filled it, he said, “Who is my mother?” Do you detect in that any tone of disregard or disrespect? If you do, you mistake the tone. Our Lord does not dishonor; he does not disparage his mother or his earthly relationships; his object is not to do that, but to exalt those relationships which are highest and most sacred and most endearing. Least of all would our Lord say anything or intimate anything that would lessen our reverence for the family relationship. Of all persons who ever spoke, he would be the last to take down that which the providence and Word of God has endeavored to build up. This Word teaches us that the very first of all relationships formed between immortal beings in this world was the family relationship. It is a tie that has survived all the revolutions of time throughout all the centuries; whatever else of organization has perished, it has survived. For a long time, for centuries in

the history of this world, the solitary tie that bound men together in any system of order and harmony was the family tie. During all the lives of the patriarchs it was the family institution that ruled the world — before the tribal was known, or the national had been conceived of. The family relation is one that exists, not only throughout all the centuries, but in all the lands, in all the nations of the world, in all the forms of government known to men — it matters not whether it be the democratic, the aristocratic, or the monarchical — it matters not, there the family is; and in all those great revolutions that have come, when war has come and shaken down great empires, then the family relation was the first to reorganize and bring back the order which was lost by revolution and rapine. These words must not be taken to indicate the slightest disregard, on the part of our Lord, of the ties of natural affection. His address to John was, “Behold thy mother!”

In the interpretation of this passage we must never forget — in fact, it is a key to the understanding of all of it — we must never forget that our Lord assumed the family kindred in order that he might establish that higher and nobler relationship that belongs to the universal church of God, in all the world, and in all the ages of the world. The only reason why Christ had a mother was that he might take upon him our humanity, and be the Son of man as well as the Son of God. Unless he had become the Son of man, he could not have sympathized with us as he did, having passed through all the experiences of life; had he not been the Son of man he could not have sorrowed in the garden, he could not have bled and died upon the cross. And he became the Son of Mary in order that he might be the Saviour of the world. And when he came with joy to fulfil the Father’s will,

he cried out, “In the volume of the book it is written of me, I have come to do the will of God, who had a body prepared for me.” It was because God had provided for him, prepared for him this humanity, that he became the dear and tender and loving Saviour, in whom we trust, and to whom we can go for comfort in all our sorrows. Our Lord took this sacred relationship in order to illustrate a kinship that was nobler, that was more spiritual, that was to be eternal. And this was in accordance with all Christ’s teaching and his preaching all through his life — he invariably took the lower, whatever it might be, in order to illustrate and enforce the higher. That was always the tendency of our Lord’s mind and heart — to glance upward from the terrene and perishable to the celestial and eternal; therefore, everything that he saw here upon earth about which he spoke furnished him with a theme that was higher and nobler than that upon which he at first began to speak. We see it in the parables of Christ, when he took earthly things to illustrate the heavenly. And that was not simply because Christ saw in earthly things objects that were more suitable as illustrations; it was not because he saw a fitness, an analogy between earthly and heavenly things, but because earthly things were made at first for the purpose of furnishing these illustrations of heavenly truth. I believe that when God made the world he made it that all the world might be a great hieroglyphic in which people might read greater truths than those that relate merely to our earthly history. When you look out this morning, and behold the splendor of the sun in the blue heavens, you need not imagine that God put it there simply to illumine the earth; it stands as an emblem of the Sun of Righteousness, whose light not only enables men everywhere to see, but of that celestial light that kindles the

souls of men, and prepares men for the higher worship of the skies. There is no element so universal as water. Down in the deep chambers of the earth, in great unopened caverns, in the springs that gush from the hill-sides, in the artesian wells which men dig with infinite toil and patience, in the clouds that float over the earth, and distil the early and the latter rain — all are illustrations of the boundlessness of God's salvation. Therefore, that which is most universal in its use is taken for the type of that salvation which is offered to all who will accept it. Never was there a better illustration of what Christ has done, and is doing, than when he said, "If any man thirst" — and there is no one who does not — "let him come unto me and drink."

And so we now find Christ taking the family relationship, with all its tender associations, in order to remind us of that other family that constitutes the true church of God in the world, that other family that is separated and distinguished by the solitary test of the true church which is mentioned in this chapter — that its members are those who do the will of their Father which is in heaven. That is the great principle that the text reveals to us. We are taught here what is the foundation upon which the church rests; we are taught here what is the principle of unity that binds God's people together, what is the tie that shall survive even the stroke of death. And what are those happy, sanctifying relationships that shall survive the stroke of death, and have a resurrection beyond the grave, and spring up beautiful and immortal in the paradise of God? "If any man will do my will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. If any man will do my will, the will of my Father which is in heaven, he instantly is related to me by a kindred tie stronger than that that exists between brothers and sis-

ters, and children and parents, in the family. “Whosoever will do the will of my Father in heaven, the same is my sister, and brother, and mother.”

What mistaken ideas some men have of the will of God! The moment the will of God is mentioned, the natural mind shrinks back as the sensitive plant does when approached by the finger. “The will of God” — as if there was something tyrannical in it, something arbitrary, something calculated to abridge human happiness, human freedom; whereas the will of God simply means the harmony of the universe; the will of God is always right, always just; and not only so, the will of God is always love. Whoever is brought into conformity with the will of God is brought into that which preserves the harmony and secures the happiness of all, for all are truly happy just as they become absorbed in the passionate desire to do the will of God.

When we talk about doing the will of God, this means, first, that affectionateness of disposition which characterizes the adopted children of God. “I call you not servants, but friends; for the servant knoweth not what the master doeth, but I have made known to you my wishes and my designs, and I have kept nothing back from you that you can comprehend and that you ought to know.” And, therefore, when God bestows upon men that wondrous gift, the grace of adoption, immediately there springs up in the regenerate soul that passionate desire to be brought into perfect harmony and conformity with the will of God. It means affectionateness in our service; it means an answer, an echo, to what our Lord himself said when he declared, “I delight to do thy will, O God.”

And those who feel that way about it do not pick and choose among the commandments. It is an impartial obedience; and yet how many there are who fail just

there, and flatter themselves that they do the will of God because they do the things that are easy and pleasant. You must perceive that a voluntary disobedience to any of the requirements of the divine will vitiates the whole obedience to the rest. There are some that profess great reverence to the Ten Commandments, and yet they travel on a Sunday, and do secular work on a Sunday, though God said, "Remember the Sabbath day." He said it in the same tone in which he said, "Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not kill." If we obey any commandments in a way that is acceptable to God, it is because we do it because God has required it of us. If I say I am going to do God's will, but am going to make an exception this time, and do my own will, it is no obedience. I do not know where in the Scriptures one can find one intimation that the commandment that requires us to remember the Sabbath day is any less binding upon us than the commandments not to kill or steal. It is a link in the great chain. If a man, in one of those huge boxes in which men descend into the bowels of the earth—if, when carrying its cargo of life down into the depths, a man should sever one of the links, and say, "I do not want to do any damage to these men that are suspended above the darkness into which they are descending"—does his saying that save them; does not the severing of one link precipitate the living men down to the death below? So the Apostle says that he who breaks one of the commandments breaks all, because he is striking a blow at the principle that underlies the whole. If we are going to do the will of God, we must do it impartially; and when we hear the words, "Thus saith the Lord," we have nothing to do but render a strict and immediate obedience.

When we talk about conformity to the divine will, it is generally something passive, it means simply resigna-

tion; and when people say, “Thy will be done,” they think it means simply, “Keep me from murmuring, and do not let me repine or rebel under this sad dispensation.” This commandment is not a sigh from Gethsemane; it is not the wind that wakes the harps that hang upon the willows while God’s people sit and weep as they remember Zion. It includes that, but that does not complete the definition of obedience to the divine will. And yet I would not pass it over lightly. This submission under sorrows and bereavements is a large component part of that obedience which God requires and which God expects. It is a very difficult thing to say from the heart what is so easy to say with the lips, “Thy will be done.” It is very easy to say, “Thy will be done,” when we are succeeding in our plans, when we are prospering in our worldly callings, when we are happy now, and think we are going to be happier presently, and when joy after joy arises in endless perspective! Oh! yes, nothing is easier to say. But when those disappointments come, those blasted aspirations! Sometimes men stake everything on the attainment of one object, and when that is lost everything is lost, and the color goes out of the landscape, and the music out of life; and the greatest triumph of grace is when the man, with all his household gods shattered around him, cold his desolate hearth, can say, “Thy will be done.” You have heard of the man who put a weathercock upon one of the buildings near his house, and on the vane by which he could see the direction of the wind he had a motto, and the legend he put upon it was “God is love.” One of his neighbors said to him, “You have put on your weather-vane, ‘God is love.’ Do you mean that God is fickle as the wind?” “Oh! no,” he said, “I mean by that that whichever way the wind blows, God is love; I mean that all winds, from all quarters waft blessings to

the trusting soul. God is love just as truly when the rude wintry winds blow as when the gentle spring zephyrs fan our cheek." And not long after, when the man that put the motto there lost the most beloved member of his family, the neighbor came and asked him, "How now, my friend?" He answered, "I can say now just as heartily as before my affliction, 'God is love.'"

A man came to a prisoner in the days of the persecution in Scotland, and he had a basket with a cloth over the basket. He took off the cloth, and said, "Mr. Campbell, do you recognize this?" and he took up the head of a fair young boy, with beautiful auburn ringlets — a fair young boy that had been executed — "Do you know this?" "Yes, I recognize the face of my dear boy," and he added, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord!"

We have to go to the Old Testament to find some of the finest illustrations of faith, and the greatest illustration of faith this world ever saw, from the time God made it to the time when Christ came to redeem it, was the faith exhibited by the patriarch Job, when absolutely everything that made life desirable was taken from him, and when he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

But this doing the will of God is not simply submission and resignation; it is a willingness that God shall direct our future; it is a willingness that God shall be our guide in all the time to come — although we prefer very much to guide ourselves, we prefer very much to choose our own paths; it is the wish of the natural heart to carve out by one's own strength the career that leads to success, to stand self-centered, self-sustained, and by innate resources to accomplish the design upon which the heart is set. Man proposes — but oh! what a triumph of

obedience to the divine will when after man proposes and God disposes, the man can say, “Well, after all, thy way and not my way.” Say, as good old Baxter said, “As thou wilt, and where thou wilt, and when thou wilt!” As, and where, and when, even to the last!

Christ is the leader and the commander of the people. Well, what is a leader worth if those who are his disciples and profess to be loyal to him do not follow him? The hymn we sang this morning contained a good expression of what ought to be the faith of every child of God with regard to the entire future. And if we can lay hold upon and grasp that most comprehensive and sweetest of all the promises, “All things work together for good to them that love God,” then we are ready for anything that lies in the future, and we are only too glad that God condescends to be our guide, and we will let him have his way with his own.

Think how much comfort there is in this subject thus unfolded in these sayings of our Lord with regard to the tie that binds him to his people. We know how much he loved his mother; he was constrained by that love to submit himself to that mother; he was obedient to that mother; and when he was dying on the cross, he made provision for that mother by committing her to the care and love of his dearest disciple; and yet he said, “Who-soever will do the will of my Father in heaven, I feel towards him as to my mother; and I use that illustration to give you some conception of the strong and tender tie that binds my heart to yours, and links my life to yours forevermore.”

There are a great many lonely people in this world, and not always the old people. Sometimes you find in the family a maiden. There devolves upon her the care of some relative, sick with a disease impossible to cure,

and petulant, never satisfied; and that girl watches and nurses and loves with a patience that knows no intermission. She could have a home of her own, she has been besought to link her life with one who could give her a happy home; but duty binds her, and there she spends her life for one who makes no return. Is she lonely? No, not quite; a voice whispers in her ear, "Child, thou art not alone; I, Jesus Christ, am thy brother." There is another lonely person. It is when a mother who is a widow loses her only child. She nearly buried her heart in the coffin when her husband was lowered into the grave, but she still had a prop to lean upon — her manly son; and when he was stricken down — ah! is there any desolation like hers, any loneliness like hers! It would be unbearable but for the fact that one comes into that darkened chamber and says, "Mother, let me be your son" — and it is Jesus that speaks, it is Christ that says, "Let me take the place of your departed boy. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

We get an idea from these Scriptures that the church is a much larger organization than we are in the habit of thinking it to be. There are a great many people that limit their idea of the church by the denomination to which they belong, and have little thought and little care of what lies outside of the pale to which they belong. There is not a visible church on earth that contains all the truth, and our Lord recognized that fact, and gave us a principle by which we may judge of what the true church is; and how comprehensive that principle is, how much it includes! It includes people of all denominations throughout the entire world, the people that do the will of God. Do not tell me that any name by which any denomination is called is so sacred as to demand the exclusive regard of Jesus Christ; it includes all throughout

the world that do the will of the Father who is in heaven. Not that denominations are wrong; on the contrary, it is a wise ordinance of providence that the Christian world is broken up into denominations — a great many good results may come from it; instead of denominations leading to confusion, they ought to lead to harmony, because separation oftentimes brings peace. People who agree upon a form of government, or a system of doctrine can live together as members of one denomination more comfortably than people who have opposing views. Therefore, separation leads to peace and harmony, except when bigotry steals into the church, when its leaders become arrogant and exclusive, and want to domineer over the faith of all professed believers throughout the world. It is that that fills the church with discord. What a rebuke to those who would arrogate to themselves the adoption, and the covenants, and the glory — those who believe that others who do not believe in the doctrines of their own church are outside of the covenants of Christ; those who believe that God may love others enough to save, although they do not belong to the same church, yet they take care not to recognize them as brethren or give them any expression of their love. Intolerance, selfishness, arrogance, bigotry! These are like the wintry frosts of the week through which we have been passing, that arrest the rivers in their flow, that prevent even a ripple in the great lakes, that seal up all the springs that water the earth, that arrest the flow of the water, even in the houses, that is brought artificially from the reservoirs — that hold everything in their icy chain. This is what wounds Christ in the homes of his friends. Not the light that comes on a day like this, but the warmth that will come a few days later. To-day icicles hang from the eaves, long pendants from the churches and houses; but by and by the soft

breath of spring will be felt all over the land; the little flowers will show their heads above the ground; presently a voice will be heard, "Lo, the rain is over and gone, the winter is past," and the voice of melody is heard through the land, and beauty and fertility are all over the land. Thus it is when the love of God fills the heart, and men feel the bond, not only to those of their own denomination, but to all that love the Lord God in sincerity and truth. That is the highest and noblest of all affinities.

So I close by saying that we do not know how many relations we have. We belong to a family — it is a very distinguished family. People are very proud to be associated with those in whose veins the blood of renowned ancestors flow. I do not know of any dignity comparable to the dignity of an adopted child of the Lord Almighty. "Behold, what manner of love is this, that we should be called the children of God; and, if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." The church is very large, after all; it is composed now of two parts; we call one the church militant, and one the church triumphant, and yet the Lord Jesus is head of the family, whether it be in heaven or on earth —

"The saints on earth, and all the dead,
But one communion make."

And when we finish our course, if we have kept the faith, then we will become members — not of this struggling, discordant church on earth — but we will become members of that great company which no man can number, the church of the redeemed and glorified, an immortal and rejoicing Saviour reigning over an immortal people:

"Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Transported their brethren and Saviour to greet;
Where the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul."

May God bring us to that blessed consummation, and make us members at last of that household, where, I trust, those households that composed our families will be found, without one dear member absent or missing — that in society most dear we may spend our eternity in praising him who sits on the throne, and in giving the homage of our hearts' affection to him that loved us, and gave himself for us, and washed us in his own precious blood, and makes us king and priests unto God!

XIII.

KIND WORDS TO A DOUBTING HEART.

“Now when John had heard in prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another? Jesus answered and said, Go show unto John the things which ye did hear and see; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them.”—*MATT. xi. 2-5.*

I DO not ever remember to have spoken an impatient word to a doubter. I have too often fought with that beast of Ephesus myself not to have the sincerest sympathy with those who are troubled with doubts, either with regard to the inspiration of these Scriptures, or with regard to their acceptance with God. Men in the olden time were tormented with devils: doubt is a devil that torments men now, and a more unhappy state of being can scarcely be conceived of. Doubt continued means suspense, and we all know how wearing and trying, what an exhausting thing it is to be in suspense — in suspense about great, vital interests; above all things, to be in suspense with regard to the soul’s future destiny. Even with regard to worldly interests suspense is often so trying that people say, “Oh! let me know the worst; tell me at once, and let it be ended — anything rather than this intolerable state of suspense!” Doubt upon the subject of religion is to be greatly deprecated, because it does not help people to the attainment of the great ends that should be paramount and supreme. I do not mean that it is sinful to doubt; I do not mean that saintly people may not doubt; Asaph doubted, David doubted,

Isaiah doubted, John the Baptist doubted, and you cannot read the biographies of the great and good men of modern times without observing how often there were seasons of despondency and spiritual depression. It may be that these visitations are unavoidable. While there is nothing sinful in doubt, there is something sinful in surrendering to doubt, in not making every effort to emerge from it into the liberty of something assured, something positive, something satisfying.

We may wonder when we see a great, inflexible soul like John the Baptist giving way to distrust, and saying, "Lord, art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" He did not mean that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world — he did not doubt that he had come; John was not going to retract the noble testimony he had already borne to his Christ: but John did not yet comprehend the spirit of the Master, and in the midst of the season when he pined in the prison and the Lord did not come to his relief, did not even send him a message to cheer his servant in the terrible environment in which he was placed — when John witnessed the slow progress of the kingdom of Christ, and Christ's failure, as he thought, to take advantage of great opportunities for announcing himself publicly as the promised Messiah, and demonstrate it by works which no man could dispute, and by those triumphs John knew Christ could inaugurate — he grew impatient and sent him the message recorded in these verses. And then it was that the Master sent him the answer.

The beautiful thing with regard to this whole narrative is that John went to the right place for the solution of his doubt; although he could not go in person, he sent his representatives to Christ with the inquiry that bur-

dened his soul, knowing that Christ was the only one in all the universe that could give a satisfactory answer to that inquiry, and give that rest and confidence to his soul which he craved.

The man may begin in doubt, and be benefited by the struggle. Doubt is an exercise when faith conquers it; and the man that was shaken before, that lived in a state of unstable equilibrium, after the experience through which he has passed, finds himself planted more firmly than ever upon the imperishable, immovable rock; but to dwell in doubt is to dwell in darkness, and to end in despair.

I gave you this morning, in discussing the inquiry of John, some memorable instances of the advantage of a strong, assured faith. The biography of the world is not enriched, it is impoverished — it is made sadly instructive, however — with the histories of the men who did live in doubt, and never got beyond. I think in some of the old Italian towns you find the greatest solitudes that can be found in all the earth. All of our American towns are in touch with one another; by railroad communications, by telegraph communications, by the constant, restless movement of the people, they are brought into constant touch with one another. Some of these old Italian towns are like lonely islands away off in the sea, out of the track of any vessel and scarcely ever visited. They contain old-fashioned houses, dilapidated, and going into ruin. And the people lead monotonous, uneventful lives. In one of these cities, in the last century, a man by the name of Leopardò was born. He was the son of a count, who had the advantage of a noble library. He was possessed of great genius. In the solitude in which he lived he had but one resource. There were no companions worthy of his regard, he had no intellectual equal

with whom he could have any pleasant association, and, therefore, his one solace was in books, and he mastered all the classic literature of antiquity, and read all the old classical works that his father's library contained; and in the midst of that plenty, that opulence, that the wide, exhaustless field of learning afforded, we have the spectacle of a thirsty soul, famishing for the pabulum of something that should nourish. I know of scarcely anything so sad as the career of that young man of extraordinary, almost imperial genius. He grew by and by to doubt the only form of religion that ever was presented to him by the two priests that were his tutors: they could not graft the system of ceremonies upon the soul of the man that inquired into the reason of things, and could not be satisfied with outward forms. The first thing upon which he came to any decision was that the church was a miserable imposture, an invention of priests for the purpose of oppressing the multitude; and this skepticism having taken root in his soul, he learned to doubt everything he looked upon: Nature was a pitiless machine, invented by some — not benevolent — power, but some mighty power that could construct a vast agency that went on its remorseless way, regardless of the suffering that it might cause by the execution of its pitiless laws; the heavens above him were brass, and above those brazen skies there was not even an autonomy, not even a cosmical God. He distrusted human friendship, he doubted woman's love and fidelity; he questioned whether there was any such thing as virtue — whether truth was superior to error. And so, through the weary years allotted to his life, he went on in this sepulchral gloom; and that man always rises before me as the image of what doubt will do in blighting a noble soul, and how despondency, depression and darkness end in despair and death!

"It is not love; it is not hate,
 That bids me loathe my present state:
 It is that weariness that springs
 From all I hear, from all I see;
 It is that ceaseless, settled gloom
 The fabled Hebrew wanderer bore,
 That will not look beyond the tomb,
 And cannot hope for rest before."

I do not know whether, in the human language, you can find a better definition of a soul in Bunyan's iron cage of despair! Ah! we have reason to pray for deliverance from doubt, when it gets such a lodgment in the souls of men, when men sit down and say, "It is no use any longer to struggle!"

The Bible commands us to believe; but how can we believe because we are ordered to do so? The Bible commands us to love; but how can one command love? Love is free, we love those we want to love, and we believe what we must believe, and we won't believe or love anything else. The natural man will not allow that sort of reasoning in the actual affairs of this life. What father would be satisfied with the logic of his son who should say — I am speaking now of a father who was judicious, faithful, kind, gentle, affectionate, that had studied his son's happiness, that had made every sacrifice to secure his son's highest well-being, and who almost lived for that boy, and whose most impassioned longing was to see him all that could gratify his father's pride and love; if such a son should come and say, "My father, I have formed associations in life, and habits that have alienated me from you; now I do not hesitate to tell you, that inasmuch as love is an involuntary thing and cannot be controlled, I am entirely excusable for the fact I am going to announce to you, that I do not love you at all!" The doubtful have not, often, a better logic than that, and

that is what the man says that looks up to Christ, that looks up to God, the eternal Father, and says, "I cannot command my love; I am ordered to love, but I must love as I can, not as I would, and I do not love you." Every right-minded and right-hearted man in the universe recoils with horror from statements like these; and, after all, it is the moral condition more than the intellectual that creates this condition of skepticism in which the majority of men live.

There is a wonderful foresight in unregenerate men. Many a man that knows what is right sees clearly that if he does the right he has to do it at a sacrifice he is unwilling to make. He won't renounce that sin, he won't break that habit, he won't change that wrong method of doing business which his conscience rebukes; he won't make the sacrifice, and therefore he cherishes the doubt as an opiate, as a silence to his guilty conscience.

These are some of the dislocations in man's moral nature. When we seek a remedy, in what direction can we look? There is but one only. John sent his disciples to Christ, and Christ sent back the answer to John, and the answer was, "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, and the deaf hear, and the lepers are cleansed, and the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Well, if there were a doubter here, I would do as John did — send him to Christ.

Some have said that Christ attempted to convince John by miracles; but no manifestation of power will convince me when I doubt — power cannot control my free soul. That is a miserable, inexcusable travesty of the whole spirit of the answer which our Lord gave to John. He never intended to convince men by the arbitrary power of the miracles. There is no moral appeal in the mere exhibition of power. But, oh! the heart of love

that throbbed through the miracles of Christ, the spectacle of Christ himself becoming the greatest sufferer in the universe, although the most innocent being in the universe: God having a sinless Son, and that Son the greatest sufferer in the universe because of pity for sinful man! That is the unanswerable power that speaks, that manifests itself, that shines, that irradiates and glorifies the miracles that our Lord wrought.

“The blind receive their sight.” Ah! these miracles of Christ — what did they mean? What good did it do to heal a blind man when there were ten thousand other blind men in the country that were not helped? What good did it do to unstop the ears of a deaf man, when all through the land were thousands that could not distinguish between the sound of thunder and the voice of an angel? The glory of the miracles consisted in the fact that they were but types of the deliverance which our Lord came into this world to work, emblems of the inner transformations which were wrought by the manifestation of his gracious power. What is the opening of the eyes of a blind man? A good surgeon can do that; often, by skill and delicate manipulation, he can take a cataract from the eye, and nature stands again disclosed in its freshness and beauty. But, ah! the film that settles on the eye of the soul, that opaque integument through which not even a celestial ray can shine! Ah! when the divine touch removes that veil so that the soul looks out and sees forms infinitely more beautiful and glorious than any that were ever disclosed to the natural eye — not only forms of beauty and glory here upon this earth, but those transcendent forms of loveliness that the heaven of heavens contains! What a revelation it is when such sight is communicated to the darkened soul!

It is a mercy to unstop the deaf ear. We have pity

for the people that sit sometimes in the house of God, and who cannot hear even the thunder of the organ, much less the voice of prayer or the songs that we may address to the throne of grace. But, ah! how much more wonderful the unstopping of the deaf ear of the soul, that it may appreciate the harmonies that the harpers standing upon the sea of glass in the heavens strike from those harps with their celestial touch—the harmonies that ravish heaven! The opening of the eyes, the unstopping of the ears, the healing of the leper!

A leper is a loathsome thing, from which humanity recoils; and yet we had better take a leper to our embrace than allow a leprous soul to dwell in the clay tenement that bears it about for a little season before it is damned eternally! A leprous soul! Ah! when that healing touch comes, so that no infant in its sweetness and purity, no angel in its ineffable grace and sweetness, is freer from taint than the regenerate soul through the triumph of Christ's beneficent power when he cleanses the leper and makes him whiter than snow!

And the dead are raised up. Inspiration does not exaggerate, but inspiration uses a very terrible word in describing the spiritual condition of the unregenerate man. What is that word? I happen to know three or four words in different languages that mean death; and I do not know why it is—it may be association—but every one of them—I do not care in what language—every word that expresses what we mean by "death" has in it a sound that jars upon the ear with a discord that grates and wounds. Dead! dead! And not only dead, but buried; and not only buried, but corrupt, with an unmentionable, unimaginable corruption of the grave! And when Christ comes and raises such a soul—when, by the power, the resurrection power of the Master, such a one

is called forth from the tomb, in the very beauty and glory of the Almighty Saviour that calls him forth, when this mortal has put on immortality, when this dishonor has been crowned with glory, then you will see the transformation effected by the Master when he raises the dead and buried and putrified soul to the beauty and sweetness of immortal life.

And the climax of it all is that "the poor have the gospel preached to them." It looks to you like an anti-climax. It is not. The subject has been rising all the while until it has touched its zenith, when Christ is declared to have come on a mission to the poor: that included the destitute of this world's goods. It comforts the poor in spirit, the neglected, the despised, the down-trodden, the uncared-for of our humanity; our Lord, forsaking the adoring ranks that gave him homage, divesting himself of those robes of glory which he wore, and took upon himself the form of a man, of a servant, and came down to be a partaker of their cares and sorrows and privations; he was rich, yet became poor, that he might make the uncared-for millions of the world know that there is help from heaven, and help for them. The great majority of our race, the overwhelming majority, live in penury, in grinding poverty — the great majority have ever done so, and will ever do so. And what does the world propose to do for their relief? What has the gospel of the socialist, what has the gospel of the anarchist, what has the gospel of the materialist to say to this great, uncounted class, the unnumbered millions of the poor of this world? The gospel of the one says, "You live in a world where injustice is supreme, where selfishness is dominant, where rich men band together for the purpose of crushing down the poor; and you want a reign of liberty, of equality, of fraternity. Then perish

the existing order of things; let us have a new deal, and divide the world into equal parts, and then the millennium will come" — and a greater, grosser, more dastardly lie was never uttered in the ears of humanity. It overlooks the fact that the purpose to reconstruct society out of that sort of corrupt humanity could only result in failure. They would take the world as it is, and simply by mechanical arrangement bring humanity, equality and peace to all men, forgetting that the elementary principles have not been eliminated, that that same injustice and greed and power would reproduce in a single generation the very order of which the anarchist complains as the result of human selfishness and human rapacity.

And then comes another gospel from a new and different source. It is the gospel of the scientist that recognizes all things as under the reign of an inflexible law, the law that only contemplates the survival of the fittest, the law that makes humanity grow by a blind selection, and which says that it is the order of the world, it is the best thing that can happen for the world, to let the weak go to the wall, the people that cannot protect themselves succumb to the rest; that it is the fixed law of society that they shall go on until the weak and the helpless are crushed out, and a better order of humanity is developed and encouraged to take the place of those that perish, because they were not fit to survive!

The gospel comes with this statement of the case: "The poor ye have always with you, and I am one of the poor; I was born of lowly parents; I have never had a home, I have gone about depending upon the charities of others, and when I die I expect to sleep in a borrowed tomb. I have come down to put my great, loving heart under this vast immeasurable mass of suffering men — I have come to identify myself with them, and to tell them

of Heaven's sympathy with the poor; and I am going to begin a process of relief by teaching the poor how to emerge from poverty by the avoidance of those vices and those indulgences that fill the world with poverty, and, by the cultivation of those habits of industry and self-respect and self-control, by which men can rise and better themselves, and occupy a better position; and, better than that, I have come to tell the poor, that while their struggle is going on, they have the sympathy of all the purest and best in the universe, and while they may be destitute of this world's goods, they may be rich in faith, and have the accompanying solace of the gospel, heavenly in origin and heavenly in nature, such as gold cannot purchase, such as all the gold of Golconda cannot buy." Christ comes and says, "My gospel is not for the man that sits there on the throne, who rejoices in abundance of possessions, but for the poor; the man that trembles at my word I take to my arms and to my heart; and the triumphs of the cross are to be manifested — not in the ranks of those that make social supremacy their ambition — but those that listen to the voice that says, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

I close my sermon by saying that those that believe these things inherit something of the spirit of the Master; they practically reproduce his life in their lives in the world. And here is something that I think cannot be denied, not even by the skeptic, and that is, that all the organized forms that this world contains for the uplifting of the down-trodden and for the amelioration of the wants and woes of suffering humanity, are the result of the spirit which Christ breathed into the minds and into the hearts of his disciples. Who have been the champions of the right in every form? Whenever the right to

worship God according to the dictates of conscience has been questioned, who established it, save the heroes of the cross, who have been ready to sacrifice all for the sake of principles so dear! Who founded the first colleges in the colonies that grew into the imperial States of this great republic? Christian men. Who organized the great Bible Societies of Great Britain and America, that scatter throughout the world the leaves that are for the healing of the nations, except men that have reproduced in themselves the spirit of the divine Master? Who are those that are doing most for the uplifting of the uncared-for, dangerous class that are a menace to the social order, and to civilization itself, except the men who devote themselves to missions and to individual activity in their efforts to bring men out of the depths of poverty and misery — the men that have imbibed the spirit of the Master, and have gone about doing good?

This is the answer to the question, "Art thou he that should come; or look we for another?" And until infidelity finds a better substitute for the wants of the world — until infidelity finds a better object for the adoration of humanity than this — until that day comes, we will take this gospel, and say that —

"All the forms that men devise,
I will call them vanity and lies,
And bind this gospel to my heart."

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
All in all in thee I find!"

XIV.

GOD'S TENDER MERCY.

“Through the tender mercy of our God, the dayspring from on high hath visited us.”—LUKE i. 78.

I HAVE oftentimes been asked what book I found most useful to me in the study of the Scriptures. I never take very long to answer that question; the book that I use most frequently and with the greatest advantage is the Concordance; and if there is any Christian without a Concordance — either that of Young or of Cruden — let me advise him to make that addition to his library without delay. I looked over my Concordance to-day; I turned to the word “mercy,” which is the theme of this sermon, and I noticed that there were four columns in the finest print, occupying an entire page, quoting verses from the Old Testament and the New in which the word “mercy” came, or in which something was said about the divine mercy. And not only that, but there is a division in one of the columns giving us the passages of Scripture that contain the two words “tender mercy.” You observe these in the text, “Through the tender mercy of our God, the dayspring from on high hath visited us.” Only see the beautiful passages; let me refer you to some of them, in which the tender mercy of God is referred to. In the twenty-fifth Psalm we have, “Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies, for they have been ever of old.” In the fortieth Psalm we have, “Withhold not thy tender mercies, O Lord; let thy loving-kindness and thy truth preserve me.” In the one hundred and third Psalm we

have this, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies." "Who crowneth thee!" I suppose that is where Oliver Cromwell got his favorite word, when in his speeches and his letters he so often talked about "crowning" mercies. In the forty-third Psalm we have, "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." And so in this long chapter, in this seventy-eighth verse of this first chapter of the Gospel of St. Luke we have these words, "Through the tender mercy of our God, the day-spring from on high hath visited us."

There are few words more frequently used in our preaching, and few words that more frequently occur in all our religious reading than the word "mercy"; and yet, familiar as the word is, we do not always understand the exact import, the precise meaning of it. Mercy is goodness softened by compassion; mercy is the tear that trembles in the eye of goodness when goodness looks upon suffering. Mercy is favor shown to the miserable. But as sin is the cause of all the misery in the world, mercy means favor shown to the sinful, to the unworthy, to the ungrateful. Perhaps you have in your library books of synonyms. Well, there are no synonyms, strictly speaking, in any language, although there are words very near in resemblance to others in meaning: there is no synonym in any language for the word "mercy." The word "goodness" comes very near to it, but goodness is something different from mercy. The angels rejoice in the divine goodness; they know nothing of the divine mercy; goodness they always enjoyed; mercy they never needed. The word "grace" is also very near to mercy in its signification, and yet there is a distinction between grace and mercy. Grace means God's free, spontaneous, unmerited, unpurchasable favor to those upon whom he

fixes his regard; but mercy has respect to the object of that regard. Grace has reference to the disposition on the part of God to show a kindness; mercy is the gift that the poor sinner receives from the Almighty hand and heart. "When we look at God we call his mercy 'grace'; when we look at the sinner we call his grace 'mercy.'" It is with grace and mercy just as it is with some of the great rivers of the world: some of them have one name at their source; they have another name where they empty into the sea. God's benevolence is grace when it issues from his throne, it is mercy when it reaches his footstool on which we poor sinners dwell. And, therefore, you see, close as the analogy is between these two words, there is a distinction between them, because when we think of grace our reference is to the great fountain of all good; and when we talk about mercy, we think of the miserable men that need the divine pity.

Let us fix another distinction clearly in our minds: mercy excludes all idea of merit on the part of one who is the object of it. Indeed, merit makes mercy unnecessary; merit makes mercy impossible. A man may merit justice: a man never merits mercy. If a man were justly condemned to die, the act of the executive in giving him pardon would be an act of mercy. If the man were not justly condemned to die, and were conscious of his innocence, if he were a brave man he would scorn to ask for mercy, he would demand justice and not mercy. Therefore, you see how important it is to ascertain exactly the place and the meaning of mercy, that we may have a clear understanding of the way of salvation.

There are so many who profess to be the children of God who have some latent idea of personal merit, and who have a sort of complacent regard for their own reading and study of the Scriptures, for the regularity of

their devotions, and for the constancy of their religious services. All that is right and proper, so far as cherishing this reverence for the Word of God, and for the obligation to lead consistent and useful lives, is concerned; but alas! for those who think that all this service and all these sacrifices have anything to do with their justification as sinners in the sight of God. The truth is, there is no such thing as salvation partly by works and partly by grace. If there is such an idea as that, it exists only in the deceived heart of the man who is so unfortunate as to cherish it. Salvation is either a gift, or it is a debt: if we have gained it, then will God pay his debts; if we do not merit it, if we are undeserving, rebellious and ungrateful, then nothing but mercy can give us ground of hope. If I worked faithfully for you for a stipulated price, and you pay me what you owe, I will not allow you to call it a gift. If I give to a man out of compassion — to a man who has done me no service — I will not allow him to call it a debt. Precisely so it is in the matter of salvation. When a man can be found who is so just, so pure, so holy, so unblemished in heart and life as to come before God, and raise his hands and say, "These are clean hands, and this is a clean heart"; then, if he dare, let him appeal to justice, and demand salvation as the reward of his purity and piety; but if a man be spotted with the sins he has committed, his soul darkened and defiled by transgression, and if that man has been cleansed in the precious blood which has been shed for redemption, and purified by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, oh! let him beware how he trusts in anything he has ever experienced or done, let him cast himself wholly upon the mercy of God in Christ; and then he rests upon a firm foundation, and then only. The Pharisee in the temple justified himself, and went down

to his house condemned. The poor publican in the temple condemned himself, and went down to his house justified.

During the reign of the first Napoleon, a man was tried and was sentenced to death for an offence he had committed against the government. The daughter of this man, but a little child, forced her way through the guard around the palace, and then threaded her way through one apartment and hall after another, until at last she reached the Emperor, and fell down at his feet, and said, "O sire, have mercy on my father!" He asked her what her father's name was, and that name was fatal to her hopes, for said the Emperor, "This is the second time he has committed that offence, and it is just that he should suffer." "Ah!" said the little child, "It is not justice, it is mercy that I plead for my father." The Emperor's lip quivered, and the tears came into his eyes, and he said, "Well, child, for your sake I will pardon your father. Now go away and leave me." That must be our plea — "O Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servants, be not strict to mark our iniquity; but have mercy upon us according to thy loving-kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out our transgressions!"

There is a very interesting account given us in the New Testament of the service that was rendered to the Apostle Paul at a critical period of his life when he was a prisoner at Rome, and when a man called Onesiphorus came and showed him kindness and espoused the cause of this prisoner at a time when odium was attached to the Christian name; and not only was odium attached to it, but there was danger in befriending a Christian man who had incurred the displeasure of the authorities. Onesiphorus was not ashamed to espouse the cause of the Apostle, and, as the Apostle said, he was not even ashamed of the chains he wore. And when Paul wanted

to express his gratitude to Onesiphorus he did not do it as a worldling would have done — he did not wish for him long life, or wealth, or success, or pleasure, or preferment; but he summed up all the desires of his heart in one strong petition; he said, “The Lord have mercy upon him in that day.” That always was a very impressive prayer to me, because the Apostle does not say what day; there is something very eloquent in the omission. There is but one day — one day for which all the days of time were made! “That day” — the Apostle knew that none could mistake his meaning — that day, when all the nations are assembled at the bar — the day of final judgment of the world! The Lord grant that we may all obtain mercy in that day! Mercy, then, will be worth all the universe besides.

But the text speaks of “tender mercy”; and now when I come to this branch of my subject I am very much embarrassed; I hardly know what thread to take up; I hardly know in the multitude of illustrations that come to me what is most worthy of attention in illustrating, not only the mercy of God, but the tenderness of that mercy. Very often when we contemplate a being like God, we are apt to think that because he is so great and so infinite in all his perfections, because he is so supremely glorious, that he cannot be a tender being; we do not naturally associate tenderness and power together, and yet it is the greatness of God, it is the infinitude of his wisdom and power that makes him the tender being that he is. Do not mistake, and suppose that greatness is incompatible with tenderness, with sensitiveness. What do you see in Nature? The greatest object that you can contemplate is the ocean. There is nothing more sensitive than the sea. If it is calm when night comes, all the constellations of heaven are mirrored on its surface; in the day-time when

it is calm, if a fleecy cloud flits across the blue, there we may see the cloud floating down in the depths. The ocean is exquisitely sensitive; it is the great daguerreotype gallery of the world, and there is nothing so delicately photographed in her as everything is photographed on the surface of the deep, wide sea. The mountain is an emblem of greatness, and when you stand at the base of a great, beetling crag, you say, "This is an emblem of all that is stern and strong"; and yet if a little bird happens to perch upon a crevice of the rock and break forth into song, the great rock echoes back the music of the bird. If a little child should happen to cry at the base of that frowning crag, the cry of the little child would be repeated by the rock. If it is one bird singing, you imagine there are two; and it is the singing or the sighing rock that echoes back the carol of the bird or the plaint of the child. So it is with God: his greatness does not make him any the less tender. There is one figure, that occurs very frequently in the Scriptures, that gives a very pleasing, a very striking illustration of the divine tenderness, and that is that God takes his unprotected and defenceless children under the covert of his wings. I have always been very much touched by those passages of Scripture in which that figure occurs. The feathers under the wings of a bird are always the softest; and the little bird takes her young under her wings, near her heart — so near that they may feel its beatings. And so it is with us. It is an exquisite figure our Lord himself used. When he was weeping over Jerusalem, he said, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." And so when I look in the seventeenth Psalm I find this, "Keep me as the apple of thine eye; hide me under the shadow of thy wings." The most sensitive

part of the human frame is the eye; and the most sensitive part of the eye is the pupil, the apple of the eye; and God is said to care for his people as for the apple of his eye, and under the shadow of his wings he hides them from all that would harm them. And in the thirty-sixth Psalm I find this, "How excellent is thy loving-kindness" — not kindness, but loving-kindness. Then I look in the fifty-seventh Psalm and find this, "O Lord, be merciful to me; my soul trusteth in thee; yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast." And in the ninety-first Psalm I find this, "He that dwelleth in the sacret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in him will I trust." I think we have some very charming illustrations of these passages of Scripture in our Hymn-book. In the fifty-seventh Psalm we have this:

" My God! in whom are all the springs
Of boundless love and grace unknown,
Hide me beneath thy spreading wings,
Till the dark cloud be over-blown."

And in the best of all the hymns that have ever been written —

" Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on thee;
Leave, ah! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on thee is stayed;
All my help from thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of thy wing."

Ah! this is just one of the illustrations the Scriptures give us of the tender mercy of our God.

And now I must take for my last illustration one of

the promises that are made in the Old Testament prophecies. In the Book of Ezekiel, where he said, "I will be to you a little sanctuary," I want to show you the inimitable tenderness in these words. At first it does not appear obvious, but it will appear very obvious. When the people were carried into captivity we are told that their enemies taunted them, and said to them, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion." But they said, "How can we sing in a strange land?" They wept when they remembered Zion, when they remembered the temple where the tribes went up, and where the multitude went to keep holy day. Part of their desolation consisted in the thought that they could not meet with their brethren, and unite with them in the worship of the temple; and how does God comfort them? He said to them, "I will be to you more than the long line of the priesthood; you need not the golden altar; I will be to you a little sanctuary; I will gather you to me, gather you closely to me, and in the secret of the tabernacle of my love, in the tender pavilion of my heart, I will hide you; there you may wonder, and worship, and love!" How did the patriarchs do before there was a church or temple in the world? Did God leave them without any consolation? We read that one of them, indeed, laid down at night on the ground, with a stone for a pillow, and he had such a vision that he said, "This is indeed the house of God, the gate of heaven." There was no "house," no "gate" there. What did he mean? He meant that God revealed himself as a dwelling-place, a shelter, a home, and that the love and kindness of his God was the gate, the door in which he entered and found mercy.

Then, again, you must recollect how many there are in our own country who are destitute of the privileges of the house of God, because they live in those regions

where the population is very scarce, and where the people are very poor, and they are not able to support the ordinances of the ministry and the regular worship of God; and many of them are amongst the most devout people of the world — some of your kindred may live just there. Do you suppose God leaves them because they have no house of worship in which to gather? Oh! no; he says, "I will be to you a little sanctuary." And even when there is no house in the neighborhood where the people may gather, there is often a church in the family, where the father is the priest, the members of the family the congregation, and where God comes down and visits them with his grace.

And then think of the multitude who have no settled home in the world. You know there are occupations that keep men continually upon the water or upon the road. They have no settled habitation or place of worship. But among these, how many there are to whom God is a little sanctuary.

I am very much interested in a society located in the city of Baltimore, a society of people who travel upon our railroads. Hundreds of times these people, who have no opportunity, such as you now have, of sitting in God's house and listening to God's Word, long for the privilege. But God does not give them up; he does not deprive them; he says to them, "I will be to you a little sanctuary." I thank God that the sailor in the fore-castle, smelling of bilge-water and clothes hung up to dry — even there upon the rolling deep, he hears God say, "I will be to you a little sanctuary; tenderly I will come to you, and will protect and cherish you."

There is a newspaper called *Shut-in*; it is published for people who are invalids, and cannot leave their homes. There are a great many people in that situation, who

would give anything in reason to sit, as you are doing, and listen to the sermon, but, because of duty or sickness, they cannot leave the chamber where they are confined. I do think if there is any place where God's mercy becomes tender mercy, it is to the people I am describing. Our dear aged friends, and those who are afflicted with incurable maladies — do you think God excludes them from his love and favor because they cannot meet in the church? He has his eye upon them, and the chamber in which they are confined is dearer to him than any cathedral upon the earth, unless that cathedral be consecrated to pure and spiritual worship. I think some of the most beautiful examples of Christian resignation and Christian grace I have ever witnessed, and some of the sweetest testimonies to grace I ever heard came from the lips of people shut in from the world, but not shut in from his tender mercy.

And then when people come to the last scene in life, they find a fulfilment of the last part of this text. "The dayspring from on high" visits them. It is a beautiful picture of the dawn of the day, before the sun gets to its zenith — "the dayspring from on high hath visited us!" Ah! how many there are, who, when they come to the last scene on earth, when they are passing through the valley and the shadow of death, can say, "I fear no evil, for thou art with me" — in the darkness there shines a steady, celestial light? How many can say:

"Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee.
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!"

Oh! "how bright the unchanging morn appears" to one upon whom this light has dawned, and who is just

about to bid the world farewell, and to go from the "little sanctuary" here on earth to the great sanctuary in the skies, where the multitude of the redeemed dwell in the light and joy of God's presence, irradiated by his glory for evermore!

XV.

WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM.

“And when he was come near he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eye.”—LUKE xix. 42, 43.

THE Oriental world is full of buried cities, the history of which, and the mounds which mark the spots where they stood, are of the deepest interest to the antiquarian and the scholar. Among these I mention, first, Ur, the city of the Chaldees, the centre of a splendid civilization, the people that gave letters to the Phœnicians and to the Greeks, the people that had mathematical and astronomical tables, that calculated the eclipses and the spots on the sun — the city most memorable as that from which the patriarch came, whose faith triumphed over time, so that he beheld that other city that hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God. Then I might mention Nineveh, standing upon the banks of the Tigris, the city of iron chariots and of ambitious soldiers, the city where the most splendid palace was built, save one, that mortal eye ever looked upon; the city whose kings and generals were more feared by the world than Napoleon was feared by the states of Europe in his desolating career of conquest; the city that, in the zenith of its rapacious power, heard the voice of the solitary, lone prophet, crying out, “Fear her not, for as the grasshoppers camp in the hedges in the cold day, and when the sun riseth flee away, and no one knows whither they are



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gone, so it shall be for longing." Sixty years afterwards that prophecy was fulfilled. Nine hundred years afterwards, when Alexander fought the great battle of Arbela, neither of the armies knew that underneath the spot where they had their conflict was the dust of the buried city. For a thousand years silence reigned until the disinterred stones told the story, and confirmed the saying that "they that take the sword shall perish by the sword."

We might mention Babylon, the city of sensuality, that fell by its own corruption; we might speak of Memphis, the city of the dead, the mausoleum of ancient Egypt; we might speak of Tyre, the city of fleet and merchant princes; but the text calls us to speak of another Eastern city, more interesting to us than any, than all, to which I have made allusion — Jerusalem, standing, not upon a great river like the Tigris, nor upon the arm of any sea, but standing isolated and exempt from the great debate of the world, from the world's ambitions and the world's enterprises, and I might say also from the world's prosperity, yet the shrine that has been visited by pilgrims from all climes and centuries, the city dear alike to the Mohammedan, to the Christian and the Jew, not because it stands upon the banks of a navigable river, or because a fine harbor opens from it into the sea, or because a thoroughfare passes through its gates for the commerce of the world, but because it contains an empty tomb, and because along the dolorous way there once walked those feet that two thousand years ago were nailed for our advantage to the bitter cross. It is to this city that the text directs our attention to-night, by the mention of something most wonderful, for here we have the record of the last visit that Christ ever paid to it; here we have the record of his divine sorrow, and here that pathetic address

that sounded the city's dirge in notes of immeasurable woe. O that with reverence to-night we might consider the causes of these tears, the meaning of this outburst of sacred grief! And what, perhaps, first arrests our attention is the strangeness of it, the unexpectedness of it, the contrast which it presents to everything that surrounded Christ, and that was happening in the city at that very moment. It must have been a wonderful sorrow that overmastered all the ebullitions of joy, all that was jubilant in the whole city at the time when Jesus was the only weeper. How strange it was that when he got to the descent of the Mount of Olives, and was just going to enter the city that was endeared to him by a thousand tender associations, the city to which his parents took him when he was a little child, when he paid it that ever memorable visit; that he was just about to enter the city where he had delivered some of his most impressive discourses, and where he had wrought some of his most splendid miracles — that the very sight of it all at once should have set him to weeping! Ordinarily, when a visitor is about to enter a great city, he is full of excitement, he is full of pleasureable anticipations; he is looking forward to the revival of old memories, to the delight of inspecting scenes of former pleasure, and to the renewal of happy intercourse with the friends from whom he has been separated; but now Jesus weeps, and what is stranger still, he shed those bitter tears in a time of general joy. The inhabitants had just tendered him a great reception; some of them had cut down the branches of the trees to strew them in the way, and others threw their garments in his path. Everywhere the hosannas were sounding from the populace gathering all around, some marching in the front, and others following in the rear, all crying out, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of

the Lord. Glory in the highest!" And yet, in the midst of these acclamations of a rejoicing people, Jesus wept, not with those silent tears he shed at the grave of Lazarus. I am so thankful, oh! so thankful, that there is no sin in tears —

“When sorrowing o'er some stone I bend,
That covers all that was a friend;
Thou seest, dear Lord, the tears I shed,
Who wept thyself o'er Lazarus dead.”

Oh! Christ will not rebuke your grief; when you go to the cemetery, he would rather go with you and mingle his tears with yours. But these were not silent tears, like those that he wept at the grave of Lazarus; they were accompanied by broken utterances, a few words at a time, with a sob at every step. Listen — “O that thou hadst known — even thou — at least in this thy day — the things that belong to thy peace — but now they are hid from thine eyes.” Oh! when strong men weep, there must be some reason. Oh! there must have been some cause for tears like these. They were not such tears as Tennyson speaks of in the well-remembered passage —

“Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean.”

These were not idle tears, and we know what they meant, or something of what they meant, for they came from the depths of a divine despair; the tears that formed first in the heart, and then ascended to the eyes; the tears that were wept over days forever gone.

“And when he drew near he beheld the city,” and all at once such were the demonstrations of his grief that he converted that great pageant into something like a funeral procession; he converted that wonderful festival that the people were then holding into a tragedy. But let us

go back a little, and see what Christ was doing before the curtain rises on this lamentable scene.

He had been down toward the sea; he had been walking through the eastern part of the land, and as he returned he passed through Bethany without stopping to speak with Martha and Mary, whom he loved. He climbed the eastern slope of the hill of Olives, until he reached the summit, and as he approached he was met by the jubilant crowd, some of them rejoicing with nothing to do but rejoice in the King that was coming in the name of the Lord, but others rejoicing in anticipation of what that King would do for them, and blind men came staggering along in the hope that their eyes might be healed, while kind people carried upon a litter the lame man or the paralytic who could not walk, and when mothers came carrying their sick babes lying like withered flowers in their bosoms. It was then, when the multitude thus approached Christ, and when he got to the summit of the hill, and looked down from the Mount of Olives, he saw the city spread out in all its extent and beauty before his eye, and down there where the Kedron flowed was the deep valley, not dark and repulsive as it now is, but all filled with terraced and beautiful gardens, and among the gardens, Gethsemane. And then, when he looked across the valley, there upon Mt. Moriah he saw the goodly temple, standing like a mountain of alabaster, with a roof fretted with gold; and beyond the temple, to the left, he saw Mt. Zion, and to the right, beyond the city wall, he saw that mound just peering over the top of the battlements called Calvary. This was the scene that was presented to him, and then, while all the children were singing, while all the flowers were blooming, and while the air quivered with the melodies of the multitude, then it was that Christ was arrested in his progress, and

stood rooted to the spot, and began to weep as he said, "O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eye." Oh! we would very much mistake our blessed Lord if we were to suppose that he had no sympathy with the people were were giving him this welcome — that he had no sympathy with the dear little children who were shouting their hosannas. Oh! he was too kind and tender for that, for he was the Good Shepherd, and those children were the lambs of his flock. The rejoicing people were the people of his pasture, and all of them who had any just ideas of his character or the purpose of his descent into the world — all were Christ's, and he rejoiced at the time when he wept. Again, it is evident that such a strange commingling of emotion in the mind and in the heart of Christ, and something so contradictory to ordinary experience, and to all that we would have anticipated, that we cannot too carefully try to ascertain what could have been the causes of these tears, and what was the meaning of this lament of Christ.

The first thing that impressed him when the view of the city met his vision was the melancholy change that had taken place in it. It was still beautiful for situation, but it was no longer the joy of the earth. The temple was still standing there, but it no longer contained the semblance of the divine presence; it was no longer the house of God, and the gate of heaven; a superstitious, avaricious priesthood ministered at its holy altars; the glory that once irradiated the cherubim had departed; the tribes still came up to worship there, but not with the old devotion. Surrounding that temple was a turbulent people clamoring for a temporal deliverer, and just ready to reject their own Messiah, and to crown that rejection

with the saddest tragedy that the eye of human ever beheld since God made the world. And when Jesus looked, his eye affecting his heart, he wept, as he saw the city almost universally opposed to himself, and to the salvation that he came to offer. Oh! how hard it is to bear rejected love, love scorned, love trampled upon. There never was love like his, never tears like his, when sorrow and love flowed mingled down, and when his heart was almost breaking at the thought that in vain had been his assumption of our flesh, in vain that lowly birth at Bethlehem, the straw, the manger, the cattle, the darkness and the midnight cold; in vain those weary years when he walked the earth without a place to lay his head, in vain his tender entreaties, in vain his miracles of power, all of which were miracles of benevolence and love; few were his friends, and bitter and relentless his enemies. And now Christ was to be rejected with a super-added sadness; that he came to his own, and his own received him not, and seeing this, he beheld the city and wept.

That reminds me that there was a class of people that once lived (I hope they have left no descendants), who said that it was a weakness in Christ to weep; that it was a pity there was any record of his tears left in his biography. Oh! my friends, what strange ideas some persons must have had of what constituted true manhood. What a strange idea some persons have of the elements of the truest greatness, and the very strength of the omnipotent God. Never was Christ brought nearer to us, never did he stand in an attitude more touching than when he stood there, on that festive day, the only one that was filled with speechless woe, or if not speechless, expressed by broken words that could only half give utterance to the sorrow that filled his heart.

I remember, too, when Titus walked round the city of

Jerusalem, after its capture, and saw that valley to which I alluded just now, filled with the dead bodies of the slain, as he contemplated the magnitude of that atrocity, so much affected was he, hard Roman as he was, that he wept, raised his hands and eyes to heaven, and declared that he was not responsible for that awful scene. It was David's great ancestor who once wept on the very spot where Jesus now stood weeping, for when David was driven from the city in that great flight which he was compelled by his subjects to take, as he passed the brow of this same Olivet, he threw dust upon his head, and went weeping and falling on his face.

There is something else, my friends, that arrests our attention here. There was one burden that Christ had always to bear—and he was the only one who ever walked the earth who had to bear that burden—and that was the cross. He foresaw the future, and all that was in the future, with the distinctness of present vision. Oh! let us all thank God that it is not so with any of us, that an unlifted veil hangs over the future. Oh! could the youngest and the happiest of us all only see the disappointed hopes, the wrecked aspirations, the darkness and the desolation of coming bereavement, would it not take all the music, and all the sweetness, and all the fragrance out of life? Let us be thankful that we cannot read the future. It was not so with Christ; he saw it all, as I have said, with the distinctness of immediate vision; and, therefore, at this very time, while the birds were singing, and while the children were rejoicing, and while the multitude were uttering their acclamations, while the trees were waving in the wind, and while the leaves were glittering in the sunlight, Jesus wept and said, "O that thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid

from thine eyes," because Christ saw, at that very moment (while to other eyes the skies were blue), the cloud that was fringing that distant East; he saw the storm that was brewing; he heard the distant moan of the thunder all around the horizon, and he knew that, in a little while, around Jerusalem a trench of death should be dug, and that its people should be pressed on every side; that there should not be one stone in temple or house that should not be thrown down, and that the day was coming when fathers and mothers, when husbands and wives would fight each other, each snatching for a fragment of that food which they were striving to wrest one from the other — and that food the mother's own babe. Christ saw the desolation that was approaching, and saw it just as clearly as if he had been a spectator — the time when there was not wood enough growing around Jerusalem to furnish crosses on which to hang and crucify its population. When he saw this, do you think words could give adequate expression to the infinite woe that filled and thrilled his heart?

And now suppose some one should say, "What is all this to us?" It is all to us that it was to the people over whom Jesus wept. We have just as much interest in that Christ, and in all that he taught, as the inhabitants of Jerusalem had; and it is just as true of these preachers in the house this evening, and of all the people of God of all the churches represented here this evening, and of all my dear impenitent friends — it is just as true as it was of that generation, that we will altogether be ruined unless we find out the things which belong to our peace, and unless we secure them now. Christ said, "Thou" (Jerusalem) — not some other city, but "Thou" — "O that thou hadst known" — Jerusalem might have known. We will not speculate about what will finally become of those

who never heard the name of Christ, and who did not know that there was a salvation provided for men, but oh! with regard to those whose ignorance is wilful, who have eyes, but will not open them, and ears and voluntarily stop them, whose ignorance is not necessitated, but preferable, ignorance in which they choose to live! Oh! my friends, what shall we say of those? "O that thou hadst known" — O that thou who dost know, and do not care! That is the difficulty, that is the reason we are holding these services; it is because of the multitudes of those who were born in this Christian land, born of Christian parents, who have lived all their lives under the shadow of the sanctuary, and who have been listening since childhood to the sweetest sounds that mercy utters from the cross, and yet will not embrace the Saviour who died on it — oh! it is because they will not care for these things that we come night after night with our appeals, and with our entreaties, and with our prayers to God to help us. "Oh! that thou hadst known the things which belong to thy peace." I could not enumerate what these things are. This congregation is so well instructed that any of you could say what they are. You know the things that belong to our peace are repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You know that these are both the gifts, the free gifts of God to every one who asks them. We all know that although we are great sinners, Christ is the greater Saviour. We all know that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. Oh! well do I remember that good man who used to walk our streets, and worship in our churches, who sometimes would say to me, "If that text had not been put in the Bible, I do not know that I ever would have been a Christian; but I know that, although my guilt has been aggravated, and so enormous and inex-

cusable, there is nothing beyond the uttermost." I believe the Apostle meant it when he said, "And there is nothing beyond the uttermost. I cling to Christ, and know that I will be saved." Talk about peace, there is no peace, there is no peace with your own conscience, wicked man. You know there is no peace, and there never will be peace until God is reconciled, until you have an assurance of forgiveness, until you are an adopted member of his family, until you have the pledge of future guidance of the Spirit, of victory over the last enemy, and an abundant entrance into the kingdom of Christ, and a place in glory everlasting. These are the things that belong to your peace, and these are the things that you neglect, and these are the things, which, because of that neglect, compel us ceaselessly to stand before you as God's ambassadors, and beseech you in Christ's stead, and as you value your own souls, to be reconciled to God.

Everything is beautiful in its season, but I do not know of anything so beautiful in any season as the day of grace; so Christ says, "In this thy day," when the Sun of Righteousness is shining; "In this thy day," when God the Father is inviting, when God the Son, with tenderest importunity is pleading, when God the Spirit waits in order that you may come and find all the hope that you need to become a true, loving, happy, rejoicing Christian. Oh! the sweetness of the day of grace. "In this thy day" — that day is limited, every day is limited. That day will end just as certainly as this Sunday has ended. Even Christ said, "I must work while it is yet day, for the night cometh in which no man can work." Oh! dear, impenitent friend, your night will come just as certainly as this Sunday night has come, and if you trifle away your day of grace, and do not get the things that belong to your peace, that day will be followed by night, rayless, impene-

trable, eternal night. The man who trifles with conviction is running a most dreadful hazard. The keen vibration of bright truth is hell. There was an instrument of torture once, when a man was laid down on his back and strapped to a board. There was a pendulum that was set to swinging right over his head. The edge of it was sharp as a razor, and it was worked by a kind of clock-work, that let the pendulum down with every vibration, and it came nearer and nearer. It was right above the man's eyes, and as he watched it with every vibration, what a shudder when he saw that pendulum blade coming nearer and nearer, and when he knew that presently it would strike across both eyes; and as he watched the gleam of that fatal, infernal instrument of cruelty, it reminds me of what the writer means when he says, "The keen vibration of bright truth is hell." There is nothing so dangerous as for a man to trifle with conviction, except to trifle with the Spirit of God. I preached once in a neighboring county, and there was a man over fifty years of age in the congregation, with whom I went home to spend the night. He was not a professor of religion, but had been attending church all his life, and when we got by ourselves, the first thing he said was, "Did you say in your sermon that it was possible to grieve away the Spirit, and that the Bible said, 'My Spirit shall not always strive'?" I said, "Yes, I said that. Why do you ask me?" "Well," said he, "I never heard that before." What amazing mental indolence must fill the minds of some people when they listen, as that man had been doing all his life, and had never heard that that statement was in the Bible. When I said that it was, he said, "That is the most solemn thing I ever heard since I was born." "Yes," said I, "it is a very solemn thing for you, who have passed the meridian of life, and have never yet

obtained a hope of salvation. It is a very solemn thing, 'My Spirit shall not always strive.' That man was thoughtful, oh! so thoughtful, all the remainder of that visit. But the man who persists in trifling with conviction, by and by will not have any convictions. Oh! my friends, I am almost afraid to touch on this subject for fear that some that hear will be affected by it for the moment, and then dismiss it. The man who trifles with conviction, and who keeps saying to the Spirit, "Go thy way; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee," by and by loses the possibility of feeling any conviction. All the avenues by which eternal truths may come into his soul are stopped up; he bars and locks the gates of mercy against himself, and he gets into that fearful condition described in two words by the Apostle, "Past feeling." I do not know what is the most solemn verse of the Bible, but it may be that there is nothing more solemn than these words, "Past feeling." My hearer, will you not help me now a moment, while I try to describe your case, and reveal it to you? Can you not remember the time when your heart was tenderer than it is now? Can you not remember the time when there was a certain text, certain verses that you could not read or hear quoted without some emotion? Can you remember, perhaps away back, in those childhood days when you stood at your mother's knee, when she looked at you with her angel face, and talked with you about Jesus, that the story seemed sweeter than it has ever seemed since? Oh! can you not call to mind some precious revival of religion when you were almost persuaded, and when you were so thoughtful and anxious that you went and saw the minister, and asked him to tell you what you must do in order to be saved? Have not all these seasons gone by, leaving you just as far away — not leaving you just

as you were, because it is harder now to awaken your interest, and to touch your heart than it was then? Oh! brethren, what shall we do with these people? Lord, teach us what to do, and what we must say, what we must say now, and say it earnestly, and say it lovingly, while you can hear it, and before death stops the mouth of this speaker, and stops the ears of these hearers? What shall we say? I will not say any more; I take you, one by one, by the hand, and I lead you into the very presence of Christ to-night. I put you under the very tears of Jesus, and when these tears fall on your cheek, if they do not melt your heart, then, my friends, I do not know what to say beyond that; but I think that if Christ himself were standing in this pulpit, and speaking to this congregation, perhaps he could not say a more appropriate or a more solemn thing than this, "O that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace." Lord Jesus, do not say, "But now are they hid from thine eyes"; wait a little.

XVI.

WHAT MEAN YE BY THIS SERVICE?

“And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?”—EXODUS xii. 26.

“**W**HAT mean ye by this service?” The service referred to in the text was the Jewish Passover, that had its first celebration in Egypt on that memorable night when the proud, imperious will of Pharaoh was at last broken by the tenth and most terrible of the judgments which came upon him, so that he gave his consent to let the people go, and commence their splendid march to the land of which the Lord God had told them; it was on the night of the exodus, of their going out, starting on their journey. It was on the night of the exodus, but inasmuch as it was to be a sacrament for all time, and for the generations of the world, even to the end of time (for I shall show you presently the Passover is yet celebrated, and ever will be); inasmuch as it was to be a perpetual ordinance, God gave the injunction, through the mouth of Moses, to this effect: that whenever the children in any Jewish family, after they were settled in the Land of Promise, when any of the children asked their parents what was meant by this sacrifice, they were to tell them. The word “passover” was taken from the simple fact that the angel of death passed over every Israelite’s house on the lintels and door-posts of which the blood of the lamb had been sprinkled, passing over the houses where they saw the blood. The ordinance which I shall tell you about was one which was to be observed through all successive

ages, and children would very naturally inquire of their parents what was its meaning, and what its significance.

Now I wish you to observe, neither Moses nor Aaron were commanded to communicate this, nor were the priests instructed to undertake to teach the children, but this the parents themselves were to do. In the beginning God, in the Israelitish family, caused us to recognize the parents as the spiritual guardian of their children. While the pastor may help, and the faithful Sunday-school teacher, and Bible-class teacher may help, yet the parents cannot delegate, believing themselves unable, the faithful instruction of their children. Therefore, the Jewish father was instructed to tell his children how this Pass-over originated; what was meant by it; how it was to be observed, and what blessings might be expected to come from the faithful observance of it. And, my friends, while, of course, the whole paschal ordinance was more interesting to the Jews of that age and time than it can be to us, yet it is of so much interest and importance to you that we do well to speak of it, especially of its connection with another ordinance, which has taken its place, which has been the continuance and perpetuation of the first Passover; another ordinance which has taken its place, and which we, in the providence of God, are going to celebrate this morning.

It was while the Israelites were groaning under their cruel bondage in the land of Egypt, that Moses was commanded to go to Pharaoh and proclaim the command to let the people go. Pharaoh said, “Who is the Lord that I should obey him; I know not the Lord, neither will I let the people go.” Then came the nine plagues; and then these nine were followed by the tenth, which finally crushed the imperious will of Pharaoh. That judgment which God kept in store was the smiting of the

first-born in every Egyptian house, and lo! there was not a house in which, when morning came, there was not one dead. The cloud of divine anger overspread the entire land, and the Jewish families were just as much in danger of destruction, the death of the first-born, as the Egyptian families, and they were only saved by a most extraordinary expedient, and that was that every family was to select a lamb, an unblemished lamb, and slay it, and take the blood and a little branch of hyssop, and dip the hyssop branch in the blood, and go and sprinkle it — notice, the command was to sprinkle it upon the side posts and upper lintel of the door, but never on the lower, thus teaching us that the blood was never to be trodden on; only to the left and right sides and above the door was the blood sprinkled, not on the threshold. Then, when “the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,” in the midnight hour, the hour of terrible judgment — for judgments at midnight are more terrible than those in the day — then it was that every Jewish house, on which the angel saw the sprinkled blood, was passed over, and all were passed over behind the sprinkled blood. This was the origin of the institution. Nor was this all of its significance; every Jewish man which took a lamb, and slew that lamb, said by that act, “I am a sinner, and deserve death, but God, in his infinite and adorable condescension and pity, has allowed me to take a substitute, a vicarious substitute, a type of the true Lamb, who was slain by the eternal purpose of God.” Every Jew who slew his lamb said, “I deserve this death, yet I hope to live, and know I shall live if I put my trust in God, and put the blood on the door.” Thus, at that early period of the world, men were taught that “without the shedding of blood there was no remission.”

Another great significance connected with this ordi-

nance was that those who partook of it were not allowed to eat of it seated. The lamb that was slain had to be roasted by fire; it then became the basis of the feast; they stood around the table with their loins girt about, with their staves in their hands as men ready for flight. Another significant fact is this, that when Israel had taken their flight, and crossed the Red Sea, they by that act declared they had left Egypt behind them, had renounced the land and everything in that land; by the crossing of the Red Sea, drew a line of demarkation; had left Egypt with its idols, and the hopes they cherished lay in the land that lay before; and, although that was a great deliverance when the old bondage was broken, yet remember, my friends, when they were brought out and delivered free men on the other side, with the whole world before them, recollect the great duties resting upon freemen. Before, they were passive subjects; they never had to think or act, and had no responsibilities; but now all the responsibilities of freemen devolved upon them; and if they had been loyal to the leader, if they had been faithful to the obligations upon them, had they been willing to separate themselves from all idolatrous practice, and all sins, and steadfastly pursued their march until the Jordan was passed, then the Apostle's prayer for Israel would have been answered, when he said, "My heart's desire and prayer for Israel is that they might be saved"; and they would have been saved had they been true to their responsibilities and trusts as free people. My friends, I scarcely know a more disappointing history, when I remember they had not gone three days' journey in the great wilderness before they began to murmur and to chide with Moses; when I remember what sins they fell into, what lusts debased them; when I remember, that that people even made to themselves idols, and said,

“These be thy gods, O Israel”; when I remember how they broke the covenant, and by breaking their most sacred obligations they were arrested on their march, and how that wide wilderness was sprinkled with graves, graves scarred every plain, so that the track of the march is marked by graves, by skeletons and bleached bones of those who had fallen in the wilderness. Just as in the grand march of Napoleon from Moscow, the route from Russia to France was traced by the stiffened bodies of French soldiers frozen in death — men who died on their way to the home which they never reached — the route all marked, for hundreds of miles, by the dead men, who lay on the interminable plains of frost and snow. These things the Apostle said were written for our admonition and our warning, and they were written for this purpose, my friends, to remind us that enlisting is not the way to make a soldier, enlisting is the initiation step; putting on uniform is not making a soldier; going through holiday drill is not making a soldier. You ask what it is that makes a soldier? I answer, it is the campaign, it is the march, it is the bivouac, it is the hunger, cold and thirst, it is battling with the storm, it is resisting the withering heat, it is the contest itself; it is the front of battle, it is not the bloody front, but the centre of the storm — these are the things. Let us impress the importance of making a profession of religion, but let us not lay too much stress on the profession itself. It is a noble thing to stand up and bear our testimony that we are on the Lord’s side, but that is only testimony of the lips, the life has to bear witness to the sincerity. And this is another significant fact connected with the Passover: it is a story, a sacred fragment of ecclesiastical history of especial interest to us, associated from the fact of its connection with the ordinance in which we have special and peculiar interest

to-day. I need not remind you that there was no sacrament instituted among the old Hebrews so important or so impressive as the Passover; I need not tell you it was a typical shadow of the coming Christ; it was a pictorial representation of what Christ would be; it was the great type which pointed forward to the coming Messiah, which should fulfil everything signified in the Passover; as, for example, it was the *lamb* which had to be slain, and who does not know that one of the favorite names sacred writers give to our Lord is that gentle sacred name? You recollect, when John walked up and down the banks of the Jordan, his eye was riveted by one approaching, and as Christ drew near, John bore testimony, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!” Then how often, through the various gospels and epistles, and then in the Book of Revelation, we find Christ in the figure of a lamb; and at last we see the throne of God and of the Lamb; and at last, when we see the company of the redeemed in glory, then it is the Lamb who feeds them, and leads them to those living fountains of water, which satisfy thirst forever, in that place where God wipes all tears from weeping eyes; it was the Lamb, the slain Lamb. And when the memorable time came in the history of our Lord, when he had fulfilled the great work for which he came into the world, with only the single exception of what was presently to take place in Gethsemane, and what thereafter took place on the cross, he gathered his disciples around him, and said, “With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” It was the last Passover that would be lawfully celebrated.

Children who grew up, and had been instructed by the parents knew that the Passover pointed back to their deliverance from the land of bondage into the admission

in the Promised Land; it pointed forward to the coming of the Messiah.

So the Lord's Supper, which pointed back, and would point back to the end of time to the night in which he was betrayed, when he took that bread, and said, "This is my body which is broken for you," also should point forward, not to his coming, for he had already come, but to his second coming, and this ordinance points to his second coming.

I also want to call your attention to this fact, which deserves more attention than is generally given it. I do not know any people I pity more from my heart than those people who tell me they do not care much for the Old Testament; when they tell their pastor this it grieves him from the heart, because he knows how much these people lose. Now, as an instance of this, when the Apostle says, "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast," you would never have understood that if it had not been for the Old Testament history; he might have used any other word — Arabic or Aramaic — and it would have had as much sense. You have to go back to this Old Testament history, back to the book of Exodus, and read these fragments which I read you this morning; in fact, the gospel is virtually the same in the New as in the Old Testament; the New Testament is contained in the Old, the Old is fully explained in the New. This sacramental supper, which our Lord instituted, was the golden clasp which bound together the old dispensation and the new; it was the bridge which spanned the gulf between Malachi and Matthew; it was the perpetuation of the Passover, not the abolition, as we are often told. When our Lord instituted this supper, you make a mistake when you say the Passover was abolished; it was not abolished at all, for the Apostle

says, “Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast.” It was abolished just in the sense that the sapling is abolished when it grows into a magnificent oak; it was abolished just in the sense that your babe is abolished when it becomes a grown man; it was abolished just as dawn was abolished when the sun rose from the eastern sky; it was abolished in the sense it was fulfilled and perpetuated. “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, and therefore let us keep the feast.”

And now, when your children ask you, “Father, mother, what mean you by this service?” oh! Christian parents, tell them what the Passover is, and what the Lord’s Supper is; what its blessings and benefits are; how it gives young men and women, youth and children courage, putting them right before God and the world. No man is right until he comes out on the Lord’s side. Tell your children this is their great opportunity of professing their faith in Christ, and declaration that they believe they are among those who have been redeemed; they want to bear testimony. Christians are purchased in order to dedicate themselves to his service, and spend long and useful lives in serving God and their fellow-men. Oh! beloved brethren, Christ our sacrifice, our Christ, invites us to-day.

It will add to the joy of a good many of these parents to know they will not come alone. It may be you do not have your children with you in the house to-day; never mind, they are somewhere; and if they are God’s children they are bound to you by a tie stronger than that of blood — the strongest ties are those that bind us first to Christ, then to one another. What a spectacle is a whole family united in Christian love! Do you know any spectacle more lovely than father, mother and all the children gathered at the table of the Lord’s Supper? Yes, my friends,

I can tell you of one more beautiful than that; you may be surprised to hear there is anything more beautiful than that, but I am going to tell you of something: it is when, at the marriage supper of the Lamb, when all of us are passed through the gates into the bright paradise beyond, when all the redeemed sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb, the sweetest spectacle will be witnessed there when parents sit down with their children, and turn to their great and glorious Lord and Saviour, and say, "Here, Lord, are we and the children whom thou hast given us." A family saved and communing together on earth is a beautiful spectacle, but oh! a family redeemed and sitting down at that festal board of heaven, over which is the banner of love and peace — oh! that is a spectacle that will give the joys of heaven new thrill, and the happiness of heaven's pardon a sweeter bliss.

XVII.

HIS HOUR AND HIS PRAYER.

“Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? No, but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.”—JOHN xii. 27, 28.

WHEN what Jesus called his “hour” approached, his dejection evidently increased; the sorrow that had shrouded all his life deepened as he approached the terminus of that life. There was no time when he did not walk beneath the shadow of the cross; it was not the shadow, but that which casts the shadow—the cross itself. But now he was in sight of that cross, and that very week he was to die upon it. One of the last sorrows which pierced him was the fact that he had come unto his own, and his own received him not: he had come to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and they did not own their Messiah, but rejected the great salvation which he came to bring. Just as the Jewish world closed against him, the Gentile world suddenly seemed to open its doors to welcome him. And then came the most extraordinary incident. At the very time when he was shrouded in this gloom, with all the agony of the garden and of Golgotha immediately before him, he had a visit from certain foreigners, who are here called “the Greeks,” who came from their remote homes with an ardent desire to have an interview with Christ; and, as the most natural thing in the world, they went to Philip to ask him to arrange for

an interview. And Philip went and told Andrew, and the two together went with the petition of the Greeks to the Lord, that they might have an opportunity of conversing with him. They said, "Sirs, we would see Jesus." This is a feeble translation of these words, because in the original it means the most intense desire, the most resolute resolve—that if it was possible they *would* see Jesus. And this is what I want to fix for the moment in your minds. This petition from these Greeks, which was brought by the two disciples who had Greek names (and the only two that had Greek names), produced a profound impression upon Christ himself, and marked a new era in his life, and a new era in the history of the world. He came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel — primarily that was his mission; but now, after this interview with the Greeks, we have brought to us the universality of his mission; the time was now coming when the house, the holy house in whose courts they were then standing, should be the house of prayer for all nations, and when he would be lifted up, and the spectacle of that elevation would draw all men unto him. We have now arrived at that period in the history of our Lord when his mission was no longer limited, but when the gates of gospel grace that had stood only ajar were thrown wide open to all the Gentile world.

There is a sense in which this great fact constituted an "hour" in the life of our Lord — as it marked the beginning of a new era — but this is not the sense in which he used the word; his immediate reference was not to an era of gladness, but of deepest gloom. It marks the time when he began to taste the bitterness of what awaited him when he went to Gethsemane, when he ascended the cross.

There is something very strange in this perturbation

of our Lord: the fact is, we cannot help being perturbed ourselves, being affected with a strong and solemn sympathy, when we hear Jesus say, "Now is my soul troubled," when we remember that he was ordinarily so calm, so unruffled, that he maintained such sweet composure during all the exigencies of his life. Oh! there is no trouble like soul trouble. "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say, where shall I look?" Not to his disciples, although they were ready, no doubt, to give him their tenderest sympathy; but what could their sympathy do for his soul trouble? What could it do when his soul was transfixed with that pang of anticipated woe? There was only one thing he could do, and that was to lift his eyes above the hills, even to God who made heaven and earth, and find his sweetest solace in remembering that God was his Father.

And now comes the question: Shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? The humanity of our Lord must have tempted him to offer that prayer — to offer the prayer that he might be saved from the approaching anguish that made his "hour" — hour memorable in the world's annals. But this he could not do: it was for that hour that he came into the world, and inasmuch as the object of his coming would thus have been thwarted, he could not ask to be delivered from the impending trial; and, therefore, he changed the tone of the prayer, and the entire subject of it, and said, "Father, glorify thy name." Oh! that I could make vivid to your consciousness the connection between the different phrases in this text — between the question he would not ask, and the prayer he did offer, "Father, glorify thy name."

What is it to glorify the divine name? I answer: In the Bible a name stands for a character — a name represents an attribute, or a cluster — a constellation of attri-

butes — just as in secular history a name is a synonym for some distinguishing characteristic. So we sometimes speak of Solon, and of Solomon as synonyms of wisdom; we speak of Aristides as another name for justice; and Howard, a name for philanthropy. And so we may go through secular and sacred history, and find that the mention of many notable names suggest the virtues ever associated with them. The same thing is true with regard to the divine name, and when the prayer, "Glorify thy name," is offered, it means, "Make a manifestation of thy character" — make such a revelation of thy being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth as to make thy name the centre of human regard; and not only attract human attention, but human affection and devotion. Let the whole world see something of thine infinite perfections, and so be filled with the adoration and love becoming those who can appreciate what is highest, purest and best in the universe. This is its meaning.

In order to impress us more deeply with the importance of this incident, we are told that heaven gave audible expression of its approval: when Christ offered this prayer, there came the emphatic response, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." On three most memorable occasions in the history of our Lord heaven bore an open testimony, that the world might hear and understand the sympathy that heaven had with the sufferer upon earth. At the time of our Lord's baptism, when that rite was concluded, we are told that there came a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." When he stood upon the Mount of Transfiguration with Moses and Elias, beneath the overshadowing cloud, out of that cloud there came a voice, saying, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him" — and at that moment Christ was inaugurated as the

supreme teacher of the world. And now, at the period he calls his "hour," when he put up this petition, "Glorify thy name," again the voice resounded through the heavens above him, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." First, by the river; then from the mountain top, and then from the temple did these responses come.

Yes, it was the supreme hour in the history of our Lord. I go a great deal further, and I say it was *the* supreme hour in the history of the world. It was the hour when all prophecy was finding its fulfilment. Those of you who attended to the reading of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah remember that the sufferings of our Lord were enumerated so minutely in that chapter that it sounds more like history than a prediction; indeed, the faith of the prophet transported him to the distant future; that he spoke in the past tense, although seven hundred years were to elapse before one of these sufferings were endured: he said, "He *was* wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities" — his faith overleaping the centuries, he spoke, not as a prophet, but as a historian. All these prophecies of ancient writ were finding their fulfilment at this memorable hour. And more than that: this hour was marking a new division in the religious condition of the world; now was taking place a separation between the old dispensation and the new; now the Levitical era was vanishing forever; now the gates of the gospel were opening for the entrance of all nations. A little while ago it was the paschal lamb; now it is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Under the old dispensation it was a smitten rock; now it is the shepherd of the sheep that is smitten. Under the old dispensation it was a brazen serpent lifted up; under the gospel economy it is the Christ lifted up upon the

cross, that he might draw all men unto him. Under the old dispensation it was Canaan, the land that God had prepared as the home of his rescued people; now the church is to look forward to a land of which that earthly Canaan was but a type, a clouded type — a land where the saints of all ages meet in perfect harmony, a land which shall be the home of the saved and the glorified. What a change was now taking place in the religious aspect of the whole world!

Such was his "hour." He would not ask the Father to save him from it, because if he had done so he would have failed to save the world; it was the hour upon which the salvation of the world was depending, and therefore it was that he said, "I cannot pray to be delivered from this hour, but I can pray, and do, that my Father's name may be glorified." Oh! I want you to notice the infinite pathos of that prayer, when you remember that the prayer might not be answered except by the crucifixion of the Christ that offered it. When our Lord said, "Glorify thy name," it was with the full understanding of the fact that that name could only be glorified by his transfigured hands and feet, and by the awful weight of wrath and woe that pressed down upon his innocent soul — only by the darkened heaven and the shrouding of the divine face that had always shed down the light of love upon him! This was the price at which God's name was to be glorified.

So we find that Christ took occasion at this very moment to give some instructions to his disciples that let in a new light upon their minds, a light that continues to shine for our illumination as well as theirs. He said, "You take a grain of wheat and put it in a casket, or in the wrappings of a mummy, and it will remain a grain of wheat for a thousand years. But put it in the ground;

it dies, but in time a germ comes from it, and up comes the blade, and the full corn in the ear, so that a single grain of wheat produces a hundred grains, and these hundred a thousand, and these thousand when sown produce food for men through all the cultivated, arable lands of the world. Such was to be the effect of his death, and therefore he said that he would be like a seed cast in the ground, from which would spring the tree whose leaves were for the healing of the nations—on Calvary he would plant the cross upon which he would be lifted up, and make it the centre of all attractive influences, and draw all men unto him.

Let us see how Christ illustrated this, and confirmed it by his own life: how did he teach that the glory of the Father should be the chief end of men in the world? He taught it by his own manifestation of the Father, his own personal representation of what God was. We talk about attributes, we talk about wisdom, and goodness, and justice, and love; we have vague and dreamy ideas of these abstract perfections. They become incarnate when we see the power of the God-man over the elements, the winds and waves, over diseases, and the power over the dead, power over all the realm of matter and of spirit; then you have an exhibition of the divine omnipotence with a new comprehension of its meaning. We talk about the goodness of God, of the love of God; but, ah! we cannot understand them until we see the Son of man pardoning the penitent, healing the sick, comforting the sorrowing; going about doing good, drying the tears of the bereaved, speaking peace to the troubled conscience. We cannot comprehend the love of God until we see the Son of God offering himself a voluntary sacrifice for the sins of the world, bearing the whole load of human guilt, that humanity may escape the penalty. The manifestation

of the Father in the person of the Son was made known when our Lord said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." I have no doubt that some of you, in some of the sculpture galleries of the world, have seen a marble figure with a veil drawn over the face, and that marble veil was so thin, so delicate — so exquisite was the skill of the sculptor — that you could see through it the sweet face beyond. In the humanity of our Lord this delicate veil was so transparent that men could look through, and see the perfections of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.

Christ also glorified his Father by giving the world a prayer that taught that the divine glory must come before everything else that can be asked for in our petitions. We call it the Lord's Prayer. There is one petition in it that is personal, "Give us this day our daily bread." This applies to our material wants. There is another, "Forgive us our trespasses"; and these are absolutely all we are to ask for ourselves in this prayer. All the rest refers to God, and the glory of his name. How does it commence? "Hallowed be thy name" — that comes before the cry for bread that sustains our bodies. "Thy kingdom come": here we are to seek that kingdom first. You would like to have your own way, but listen, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; for thine is the kingdom, and thine is the power, and thine is the glory for ever and ever." The Lord's Prayer is the most intense rebuke of selfishness that could be made in human language? Is there anywhere such a commentary on the command, "Seek first the kingdom of heaven!" It begins and ends with petitions for the manifestation of God's glory, and everything else comes in as an incident.

Christ glorified the Father, not only by giving us this model of prayer, and by teaching us how to pray in a

manner that would be agreeable and acceptable, but by his death; by his atoning death he made it possible for sinners to be forgiven, made it possible for unnumbered souls to be brought finally to glory.

I close my sermon by saying this: I have shown you how Christ manifested the Father, and the attributes of the Father's glory, and now I want to say something a little more personal and practical. I want to know what the specific instruction is to you, individually, and what concern you have this day, this moment, in the text upon which I am preaching. I want to say that oftentimes our prayers are intensely selfish, as we ask God to bless us and those of our household. All that is right, as far as it goes, and in all good prayers these petitions may appropriately come; but it is a very poor prayer that begins for ourselves, and never goes beyond the four walls in which our family resides. Our prayers for the church are oftentimes very selfish. People pray for the extension of God's kingdom: there are a great many so full of sectarian pride that that means only that God will bless the denomination to which they belong; some have the mistaken idea that they are praying for Christ's kingdom, when it is only a sectarian zeal, a denominational passion with them; it is a very selfish prayer, because it does not take in all the true, invisible church for which Christ died, and which he means to save. This text comes as a sort of check, to teach us that we must not limit our petitions to ourselves or those nearest to us, but must go beyond the pale of the denomination to which we belong, and take in all true Christians.

"Father, glorify thy name" — and only thine. In the day in which we live we are constantly impressed with the fact that the great fortunes that men accumulate oftentimes are dissipated just as rapidly, or even more so, that

they are acquired, under the commercial distress that prevails throughout the world. And there never was a time when men took the loss of fortune so much to heart as now. One of the most extraordinary things is that there are more suicides now for the loss of money than ever known since the world began. You read an account of a suicide, and then the narrative says, "He was very much embarrassed in his business affairs." There have been a hundred illustrations of it since this year began, although we are so early in it. Now when a man is threatened with the loss of property, he is threatened with something very serious. It is very serious; but the first thought of a Christian man ought to be, "Did I desire this simply to get out of it of my own pleasure, or as a trustee for him who gave it to me? Not only for the support of those depending upon me, and the gratification of my lawful wishes, but as an agent for humanity, to instruct the ignorant, to enlighten the darkened, to bring back the lost to the great salvation." The great prayer ought to be, "Father, so order this, and bring to a conclusion all the perplexing issues of life that my soul may be benefited, and thy name glorified."

Sometimes a man is in danger of suffering a prodigious amount of loss of standing by or espousing some unpopular cause, something that other people repudiate, a principle that he believes to be vital to humanity, and it requires true courage for a man to stand alone in the defence of what he believes to be right. Devotion to honor and principle is something that God himself inspires in human souls, and there is nothing that God gives men more honorable than this devotion to truth, and there are no more noble men than those that stand unflinchingly for the truth and the right. When a man is put in such a position, the great question is, "Is this

right in the sight of God? Am I standing upon the ground I ought to occupy? Father, so help me through this crisis, make me so true, and brave, and so careful of consequences, that I may glorify thy name." That is what every true reformer did, what Luther did when he was before the Diet. When he was commanded to recant, he said, "Here I stand, God help me; I cannot stand anywhere else." It was the courage of Knox, and of all the great reformers: they maintained the cause of truth, and, heedless of the world, prayed, "Glorify thy name." That was the spirit of all the martyrs: they were willing to go through fire rather than recant, and their supreme wish was demonstrated upon the scaffold and amidst flaming tongues of fire, "Glorify thy name; and may I be so loyal to the truth as never to be ashamed of it."

There is another way in which we may glorify his name. Ah! me, I will tell you when it is hard to say, "Thy will be done." It is when we are standing by the bedside of some sufferer dear to us, for whom we would willingly lay down our life, and when we see life slowly ebbing away. "O Father, save me from this hour; anything but this!" I do not say it is wrong to offer that prayer, to ask the God who gave us love to spare the loved one's life. He may not answer our prayer, because his will is always better than ours, and his love greater than ours. But never, never in the world do we so much glorify our Father's name as when in circumstances like these we say, "Thy will be done. Father, glorify thy name." I feel like I was standing on very thin ice — on holy ground — because if I ask myself the question if one dearest to me in all the world was slowly wasting away by some necessarily mortal disease, would I be able to say, "Father, glorify thy name," without saying, "Father, spare me"! I do not know; I can only pray he

would give me grace in that exigency. But this I do know, that we never glorify God more than when we say, "We do not know whether it is best for this loved one to live or die, but in either case, Father, glorify thy name."

These are some of the lessons of this most impressive, instructive portion of Scripture to which I have called your attention this morning.

XVIII.

HIS HANDS AND HIS SIDE.

“He showed them his hands and his side.”—JOHN XX. 20.

TWO of the Evangelists describe this manifestation of our Lord, this peculiar form of manifestation when he showed to his disciples his hands and his side. We find one of these accounts in the Gospel of Luke, in which we are told that on the evening of the day of the resurrection, when the disciples were all gathered together in very great trepidation, and in very great apprehension of what might befall them, that two of the number who had walked that afternoon to Emmaus had been joined on their walk by Jesus, that he had conversed with them, and opened their understandings to comprehend the prophecies of Scripture with regard to him, and that just as they recognized him he vanished out of their sight. What a parable that is of what has been happening ever since — that just as we learn how dear our friends are and how necessary to us, we lose them. Just as we have attained the wisdom which long experience gives, we die, and the world loses the benefit of all the lessons we might give. Just as we learn to appreciate any great privilege, in the act of recognizing its value and its sweetness, it passes away. He vanished out of their sight, but the wondering disciples, filled with the happy tidings which they had to communicate, came to where their brethren were gathered together, and told them that Jesus had appeared to them by the way; and while they were speaking, Christ himself suddenly appeared in the centre of

the group, and said, "Peace be unto you." Notwithstanding that tranquilizing benediction, they were affrighted, and thought they saw a spirit. Then we are told that our Lord showed them his hands and his feet, and said, "Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." This was his demonstration of his true humanity. This was the demonstration given to the world by the incarnate God, that he had a true body as well as a reasonable soul: that he was not only the Son of God with power, but that he was the Son of man, and that he took upon him our humility for the purpose of doing what Deity pure and simple could not do—the Spirit could not bleed and die upon the cross. Therefore, our Lord took upon him our flesh that he might make himself one with us, that he might be identified with us, that we might be brought nearer to him by the ties of sympathy, that he might feel with us and for us, that he might suffer for us, that he might die for us. He assumed our humanity to show what that humanity was before sin tainted it, and to recall to the world what redeemed humanity was to be when Christ should glorify it, and when glory should ennoble it.

One of the great essential doctrines of religion is the doctrine of the incarnation. I need not tell you that this doctrine is not peculiar to Christianity alone. All religions have had something of the kind, but no incarnation that could be subjected to the test of experiment, no incarnation that could be determined by the demonstration of those that could see and hear and touch. The classic republics of old, in their beautiful mythologies, told us of deities that assumed human form, but no Olympian Jove ever sat upon a mountain side with twelve disciples about him; no beautiful Apollo ever walked through the country or through the streets of crowded cities followed by

those who sought instruction from his lips; no wise Minerva was ever surrounded by those who watched her beautiful life or who tried to pattern after the model which she gave them of truth and goodness. None of these mythological deities was ever seen by disciples that professed to worship them, and none of the worshippers of the deities to whom I have referred ever pretended that they had held any converse with them, or that any one of them was betrayed by a Judas and crucified on a cross. Therein the incarnation of Christ stands single and alone in its mournful and adorable beauty. Christ is the Christ of history. His incarnation is one taken away from the great domain of fiction, and transferred to the great realm of fact. It is contrary to all that we would have anticipated: that one whose life was so lonely as that of Christ, that one whose nation and race was so abhorred of the world, that he was rejected of that very nation, rejected by his own people, and put to an ignominious death. It is truly contrary to all that the world ever would have imagined in the sphere of possibility; that his should have been an influence that ultimately pervaded the world, and that he who was elevated upon the cross should attract more human eyes, and draw to him more human hearts than all the kings and sages that ever have taught or tried to bless mankind. If you will take the trouble to look over the map of Europe, you cannot find a nation whose people do not regard the cross as the emblem of what is greatest and purest and best. Even among those nations which are most thickly overlaid, overcrusted with superstition, and where the falsest forms of religion prevail, still you will hardly find a citizen of one of these countries that would not be offended if you were to tell him that he did not care for the cross, that he did not belong to a Christian nation.

But there is a narrow circle within that wide, outlying circle of those who owe a fealty and an allegiance to Christ, whose strength cannot be surpassed by any of the bonds that unite human beings here upon earth, be the ties what they may. Christ died eighteen hundred years ago, and yet the memory of that self-sacrifice is so fresh that if it had happened yesterday human hearts would hardly be more moved by it than they are at present. If you want the demonstration of that, I have it. I have it in the fact that there are millions of men and women to-day who would go to the stake, and die a death of torture before they would renounce their allegiance to Christ, or deny the Lord that bought them. I do not care to argue when I have an overwhelming fact like that to defend.

The other occasion upon which our Lord manifested himself similarly was on the evening of the resurrection, as related in the Gospel of John, when the disciples were all gathered together, except one, and that was Thomas. It was a most unfortunate thing for Thomas that he was absent. I heard the venerable president of one of our colleges say that when he was a young man he made a resolution, and that was never to omit one of the appointed services of the church lest he might miss something that day upon which his salvation might turn. I know that there is a day when most people hear the sermon that God blesses to their conversion, and it would be a sad thing for one to be absent at a time when, if he had been present and listened to the appeal from the Word of God, made effectual by the Spirit of God, he might have been converted. Oh! sad for that man to be away without reason. Thomas had a week of darkness, of perplexity and unbelief and unhappiness in consequence of his absence. If he had been present, he would have met the

Lord. He missed the chance of meeting with the risen Christ, and when those days passed, and the disciples were gathered together again, and when they told Thomas of what had happened, he said, "Except I see I will not believe. Unless I put my finger in the print of the nails, unless I put my hand into his side I will not believe." And with the most wonderful pity and patience and condescension, our Lord told Thomas that if he chose he could subject him to the test. "Reach hither thy finger, and touch that wound. Thrust thy hand into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." I do not believe that Thomas had the hardihood to subject his Lord to that rude test, but I think that when the Lord showed Thomas his hands and his side, that Thomas was overcome, and cried out, with a rapture of faith, "My Lord and my God."

I do not believe that if men had invented the Bible, and had invented the history of our Lord's life upon earth, that they would have represented him, after his resurrection, as coming back to the world in a mutilated form, and bearing upon his body those scars that seemed to deform him, and at least to remind people of his humiliation and sad death upon the cross. Men would never have portrayed such a spiritual hero as Christ in that form. They would have said, "Oh! no, whatever he might have endured during his ministry upon earth, after he went through the ordeal of death, came back from the world of spirits, and reappeared once more among men before he went up to his heaven, let us efface every mark of that humiliation that would remind men of his degrading death upon Calvary." Not so; our Lord took pains to show his hands and his side. And what do I understand, my friends, by that exhibition that Christ made of himself? I understand, among other things, this,

that when our Lord came back from the eternal world where he had for a short time gone, while his body was lying in the cold tomb, he came back with precisely the affections in his heart that he had before he died upon the cross. If one of your friends were to come back from heaven, and sojourn with you here upon earth, and you knew he was coming, would you not be very doubtful as to how you could entertain him? Would you not be very doubtful as to what he would find in your house or in your conversation or in your life that would interest him, who had come down from excellent glory? Would you not be filled with wonderful perplexity to know how such a guest should be entertained? Oh! such changes must have taken place in all his views, in all his feelings about things that he can not now be interested any more in the affairs of this life! But when Christ came back he showed his hands and his side to remind the people that he was the same suffering Saviour that he was before he went down into the garden, and before he went up to the cross, and that he had not been changed at all by the dread experience through which he had passed — that awful experience which one has when his soul goes beyond the veil, and knows what is there. He came back and showed them his hands and his side. Thus we learn, my friends, that we have an unchanging Saviour; that he is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. One of the most delightful truths that we can know about Christ is this, that he not only brought back and manifested the scars and the wounds that he received in his conflict, but that he went to heaven in the same body; and we are told that he appears there among the heavenly worshippers as the Lamb that had been slain, still bearing the marks of the slaughter upon him. What does this teach us? It teaches us this, that Christ's death, so far from

being the end of his career, was only the beginning of it. When you die, your career is stopped. When they put you down in the grave and cover you up, you are done; but, my friends, Christ's history only began with his death. By his death he only entered upon a new sphere, and a new department of service. St. Luke said, when he began to write the Acts of the Apostles, "The former treatise have I written unto you of all that Jesus began to do and to teach," and that was what he recorded in his gospel; now he goes on to write the Acts of the Apostles, to tell what Jesus was still doing. We call his book the "Acts of the Apostles, and that will do for a name until you get a better one; but it is not the acts of the apostles, it is the acts of Christ through the apostles, Christ working for the establishment and extension of his church through the world, and having his appointed ministers ordained for that purpose. And when we remember that Christ, even in glory, wears the same body which was crucified, and that upon that sacred body there are the marks of the wounds in the hands and in the side, what do we learn? We learn the precious doctrine of his eternal intercession. It is not necessary for Christ to make vocal intercession. Sometimes prayer unspoken is the most powerful and prevailing. Every wound speaks of his love, and every wound appeals to the Father in behalf of those still here upon earth.

"Five bleeding wounds he bears;
They strongly plead for me.
'Forgive! forgive!' they ever cry,
'Nor let the ransomed sinner die.'

The fact that Christ came back after his resurrection with the wounds in his hands and in his side, and that he went up to heaven carrying the same wounds, is proof of

one of the greatest truths, that we have an unchanging Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and (blessed be his name!) the same forever.

The fact that Christ showed his hands and his side also teaches us another great truth. It teaches us how much importance he attached to his redeeming work. I pause just a second, until you get that idea into your minds. I want you to take the point and see it. I say, the fact that Christ took pains to exhibit his wounds shows what an importance he attaches to the redemption that he purchased for man by his precious blood. It shows that what Christ valued was not only his instructions, valuable as they were; not only his miracles, stupendous as they were; not only his beautiful life, lovely as it was; not only these, but that he regarded his death as the great fact of the world's history, and the atonement the central doctrine of the world's faith. He shows his hands and his feet and his side in order, in the last place, that in contemplating this sacrifice, in looking upon this reminder of how our salvation was purchased, we might have our gratitude awakened, our affections sweetly drawn out toward him, and that we might love him in return for a love that cost him so much.

He showed them his hands, the very hands that the mothers wanted him to put upon their babes. "They brought young children unto him that he should touch them." I love to see the children in the church, seated by their parents and listening to the sermon, and it is a singular fact that children oftentimes listen as well as their parents. They brought young children to Christ that he should put his hands upon them, those hands of Christ that were afterwards pierced. Every mother said, "If the dear Lord would lay his hand upon my Rachel, upon my Ruth, if he would only lay his hand upon her

head, would not the gentle pressure of that hand be felt by her in all her days?" Never does our Lord seem so lovely as when he permits the children to clamber up in his lap, and when he takes them in his arms, and presses the dear little ones to his heart. These are the hands that were pierced; the hands that broke the loaves and distributed them to the fainting multitude; the hand that reached down and grasped the dead hand of the little daughter of the ruler, and raised her up, and restored her to her father's love; the hand that he laid upon the bier and stopped it, when they were carrying the young man to his burial, and when the widow of Nain, his broken-hearted mother, was walking next to the bier the chief mourner. This was the hand that was pierced, the hand that was lifted up in benediction the last time the disciples saw him, when the cloud was about to receive him out of sight. When he shows us those hands, my friends, they tell their own story, and there is a pathos in the appeal which those silent wounds make.

He showed them his feet. Do you think there was a square acre in Palestine over which those feet, oftentimes in weariness, did not walk? He showed them his side, just under which beat that loving heart so full of sympathy that made him weep with the sisters when they stood at the grave of Lazarus, that made him mourn over ill-fated Jerusalem when he cried, "O that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes." Oh! my friends, this is the appeal of Christ when he shows his hands and his feet. That is the appeal he is making to us. Were you here the other day, when I preached on the text, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," in which I represented Christ as going around and knocking at every door; that is, at every avenue by which any entrance can

be obtained into the human heart, whether the intellectual avenue, the emotional avenue, at the door of memory, at the door of hope, at the door of gratitude? "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." My friends, that which is strange to me is that you are not more affected when Christ knocks there with a bleeding hand. That Christ should come and knock at the door of your heart with a bleeding hand, and knock so long, and be so patient with you, until you have reached the meridian of life, and are upon the downward slope, oh! wonderful patience! He stands with melting heart and bleeding hands, and says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." This is exhibited to us in a most impressive way in the sacramental service. There, if anywhere, our Lord re-enacts the scene that was witnessed by the disciples in Jerusalem. Take away that linen cloth, and what do you see? The broken bread that reminds you of the broken body. The wine poured out reminds you of the crimson flow of his blood. There his body on the tree! What an appeal this makes to Christian love! Oh! doubting, trembling believer, reach out the hand of faith, and touch that wounded side. Stretch forth thy finger, and put it in the print of the nails, and say —

"Jesus, thy feast we celebrate,
We show thy death, we sing thy name
Till thou return, and we shall eat
The marriage supper of the Lamb."

XIX.

“TEACH US TO PRAY.”

“It came to pass that as he was praying in a certain place alone on the seaside, one of his disciples came unto him, and said, Lord, teach us to pray.”—LUKE xi. 1.

IN preferring that request, the disciple unconsciously uttered a prayer, in the very act of asking to be taught to pray. The petition was an expression of ignorance needing instruction, of weakness needing help; and so, in their conscious infirmity and need of divine direction and uplifting, they said, “Lord, teach us to pray.” We are not by any means to infer from this that the disciples were not in the habit of prayer, or that this was the first time when they approached the Lord with a petition. Most of them had been familiar all their lives with the Jewish forms of prayer, and no doubt had oftentimes made devout use of them; but now something had just occurred which gave them a new conception of what prayer was. Our Lord, in accordance with his custom, having retired to a solitary place, was himself engaged in prayer. Unintentionally, perhaps, his disciples approached the place and overheard the petition which their Lord was offering. As they listened a new light broke in upon their minds; a new conception seized them as to what prayer might be, for as Jesus prayed with upturned face, we may well imagine that he seemed to his wondering disciples to be looking directly through heaven’s gates upon the very face of the throne, and as, with confident step, he seemed to ascend the golden way that led to that

throne, and his heart glowed with new fervor and his face with new brightness as he approached the excellent glory;—so deeply affected were they by what they had been the involuntary hearers of, and by what they had unexpectedly witnessed, that, dissatisfied with their own prayers, they came to him and preferred the petition in the text, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

It is well for us, my friends, to have the scriptural ideal of what prayer may be. It would be well for us if we studied more than we do the scriptural modes of successful prayer. Oh! how much we could have learned had we been permitted to overhear the petition which the patriarch offered on that memorable night when he wrestled until the dawn of day with the traveller unknown; wrestled with an importunity which found expression in words like these, “I will not let thee go until thou bless me.” How much we could have learned if we had listened to the prayer that Elijah offered when, in answer to his supplication, heaven was shut so that there was no rain upon the earth, and when, in answer to his appeal, heaven opened and the showers descended upon the thirsty ground. What instruction we might receive could we have heard the prayer of Daniel on that memorable night which you have been so lately considering in your International Sunday-School lessons, when, cast by the king into the den of lions, he was serene, unruffled and filled with peace, while the king that had ordered him to be placed there tossed from side to side with a guilty conscience all night long, brooding over the wrong that he had done to God’s dear servant. If we could only have heard the prayers which that man in such peril offered, the prayers that brought him unutterable, ineffable peace; or if we could have overheard David, when, with a broken heart, he cried out in his anguish and made

his penitent confession, and then uttered his fervent supplications as they are all recorded in the Fifty-first Psalm; or if we could have overheard the prayers which the Apostle in the dungeon offered when he was ready for the great change which he knew was just at hand, and when, having fought the good fight and finished his work, there was nothing more for him to do but to receive his crown. But more memorable than any, more memorable than all these, was the prayer which the disciples had just heard, and which prompted them to come to Jesus and say, "Lord, teach us to pray." My friends, I think this is a very good petition for every one of us to adopt individually. We might very well make this the preface, the prelude, to all of our prayers. It would be a very proper prelude to those prayers which we offer in private, in secret, for sometimes our thoughts are very wandering; sometimes our affections are all dull and dead, and we need the inspiration, we need the uplifting that can come only from heaven. We should then stir up the gift that is in us by commencing our prayers with a petition like this, "Lord, teach me at this very moment of my solemn approach, teach me how to pray." So, too, it would be very well for each member of the family silently to offer this petition just as the household gathers for family worship, to say, "Lord, teach my father (or my mother, as the case may be) to lead us in the devotions of this morning;" or, if not that, to say, "O teach us how to follow as we are led!" How well it would be, as we gather as a larger household, as one family in Christ Jesus, in our worship on the Sabbath day, if each one of us would say, "Touch the lips of thy ministering servant, O Lord, and anoint him with the heavenly unction, and may we all remember that his prayer is our prayer, and that when he is giving vocal utterance to these petitions he is only

giving expression to our own desires. Lord, teach pastor and people together so to pray as to bring down divine benedictions this day."

Now, the question naturally occurs, How is it that Christ teaches us to pray? How does he fulfil his petition and answer it? In the first place, we are taught when we consider prayer as a custom consecrated by his own example; in the second place, by the encouragement it affords to those that seek God's face and favor; in the third place, by revealing what is the source and secret of all successful and acceptable prayer, viz., the example. Second, where do you want sweeter encouragement than you find in the verses which succeed this text, when our Lord reminds us that we have a Father in heaven whose care and sympathy for his children exceeds that of any earthly parent? "If ye know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask?" Do you not know that when that great ascension gift is granted you may be sure you will be taught to pray for things that you ought to ask for, and in a manner, too, which will be acceptable to God? Third, the foundation, "Whatsoever you ask in my name," etc.

Now, let us revert for a moment to the circumstances which preceded this request on the part of the disciples. What was it that led them to come to Christ with this petition? They had overheard, as I have reminded you, the prayer which Jesus offered in what was, at the beginning, a solitude, when he was alone, and yet filled with heavenly company, until his disciples came, uninvited and unexpectedly, to the place. There are two great truths set forth with equal clearness with regard to our Saviour in the Holy Scriptures. One is the fact of his deity, and the other is the fact of his humanity. It would be very

difficult to tell which was demonstrated most clearly. If we considered only his divinity, we might conclude that prayer was unnecessary for him, at least. That Christ was God was evident from the superhuman works that he wrought, from the stupendous miracles that testified to his omnipotence, as when he controlled nature's great forces, rebuking the winds and waves and converting a storm into a calm; or, as when he asserted his power over all diseases and healed them by a word or by a touch; or, as when he demonstrated his authority over the invisible world, so that devils cried out in his presence, “Art thou come to torment us before our time?” or, when he manifested his power in raising the dead from their tombs; and, lastly, by rising himself on the third auspicious day, and coming forth to give benediction to his disciples. But if these things testify to the deity of Christ, we have also equal evidence of his humanity in the fact that his bodily wants and infirmities were similar to those that we possess in the fact that after he had taken a long summer journey, he sat wearied at the well as he talked with the Samaritan woman; in the fact that he, too, was thirsty and needed food and drink; in the fact, too, that he shed tears. If there is anything that indicates the true humanity of our Lord it is when we see him lifting up his eyes to heaven, and sighing out a petition from the sadness of his heart, just as he was about to heal the poor, infirm man, not only because of his pity for an individual sufferer, but because he looked upon that man as a type of thousands and hundreds of thousands of sufferers in the world; or when he said to the sisters of Lazarus, “Where have ye laid him?” and sought that natural relief that so many have felt in going to the grave to weep there; and when he was so moved with sympathy that the Jews who looked upon him said, “Behold, how he

loved him ;” and when the Evangelist put on record that shortest and tenderest verse in all the Bible, “Jesus wept.” But, my friends, not only are these the proofs of the humanity of our Lord, but we also have another demonstration in the fact that our Lord himself was dependent upon prayer ; that he derived from it strength and consolation, and was so like us in these respects that he was not ashamed to call us “brethren,” for though he was a Son, he learned obedience by the things that he suffered. And what first arrests our attention is the fact that, although Jesus was the sinless One, still that did not render him independent of prayer. Christ had no confessions to make, no petitions for pardon to offer ; and yet who prayed so fervently, and yet who prayed so frequently, who prayed so earnestly, whose prayers were more protracted than the prayers of him who rose on one occasion a great while before day to pray ? He had no occasion to enter into his closet, for the hilltop was the closet then, and darkness shut the door that shut him in. We are told that all night he continued in prayer. This was the history of the devotional life of the absolutely sinless One. And yet our Lord needed the support that prayer gives. In his hours of overwhelming sorrow he needed the sympathy that Heaven bestows, and we see that true manhood of Christ exhibited in the fact that he sought solitude and comfort and encouragement and strength in his prayers. The loftiest sainthood does not exempt one from sorrow, neither does it exempt one from the necessity of that strength which the sorrower only finds when he can approach acceptably the throne of the heavenly grace. There are some souls that tower above others even as mountains tower above the plain, but it is around the mountain tops that storms most frequently gather, and their lightnings flash and their thunders break.

So it was with Christ; though he came nearest the throne of any one who ever stood upon earth, yet his title was “Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.”

Now, we learn that no life is so holy as to exempt the saintly man from the necessity of special times and special places for prayer—times and places both. I heard one say that he had arrived at such a stage of spiritual development that he did not need to offer special prayers. He did not need, he said, to offer vocal prayers; that his whole life was a prayer. He lived in perpetual communion with God, and he needed not, therefore, to utter any verbal petition, and needed not to have any set time for prayer. My friends, it was not so with Christ; and if you wish to condemn, or correct rather than condemn, this sad mistake of one who so little comprehends himself as to think himself advanced beyond and above the necessity of prayer, you have only to point him to the example of the sinless One, who had his places and his times for silent, lonely, earnest prayer. I believe that one’s piety may be so developed that the Christian life flows on like some wide, deep, peaceful river to the sea; but, oh! my friends, it is from fountains in the hills, the unfailing springs, tributaries gather that form the wide and placid river; and if ever a life becomes saintly, it was because the beginnings of that growth in all that is good began in communion with God, and because of the grace which God gave the seeker in answer to his verbal prayers.

In the New Testament there are eighteen references to Christ’s prayers, eighteen references to or quotations from his prayers: and if we take the eighteen and divide them into groups, you will find that each group teaches a different lesson. For instance, one of the groups instructs us as to the length of Christ’s prayers; that sometimes

they were very protracted. There is another group from which we learn that it was his custom to mingle thanksgiving with his prayers. Another group teaches us that it was his custom, while he prayed for himself, to make intercession for others, and so he prayed for his friends, and he prayed for his enemies, and he prayed for his disciples. He prayed as a man: he prayed as a Mediator. He prayed often, he prayed earnestly, and he prayed long. And now, for the sake of more distinct impression, I wish to refer you, to refresh your recollection, to the special occasions that Christ made the times of special prayer.

First. Christ always began or accompanied and followed his labors with prayers. The toiling Christ! Oh! how little conception the ordinary reader has of the biographies of our Lord as given by the evangelists; how small the conception of the life of labor, of protracted and lasting toil of our Lord. I wish I had time this morning to take up the history of one single day, recorded by one of the evangelists, to give you some conception of how our Lord spent his days—his days of toil. Well, we find that when such a day was about to approach, he either arose early in the morning, and sought the strength which he might need for the duties of the day; or, when the toils of the day were over, he separated himself from his disciples, and oftentimes with great difficulty, in order that he might retire to some secret place, and there refresh his soul and find his rest through communion with the Father. My friends, let us see to it that we never separate work and worship. The reason why so much of our Christian work is ineffectual, the reason why it is not crowned with happier results, is that we undertake it with so much self-confidence, and so much reliance upon our ability, without remembering at all that our sufficiency is of the Lord, and his blessing alone makes our

labor efficient. Oh! that every pastor could remember this; that every head of every household could remember this; that every teacher of a Bible class in a Sunday-school could remember this; that every parent would remember this; that every business man would remember this. When consecrated by prayer, business may be made an instrument by which the soul shall be trained for a higher and nobler sphere. Christ accompanied all the work of his life with prayer, and his is the great example that we have to follow.

Second. I remark, again, that when he was about to enter upon a new era in his public life, he inaugurated it by prayer. We have one illustration of this: at the time when he called his disciples, Christ could have carried on his own work in the world alone had he chosen, without the aid or intervention of men; but it pleased him to summon to the work of laying the foundation of the earthly church and of giving extension to the kingdom which he inaugurated—it pleased him to call twelve men to that sacred office; and before he summoned them to their work, he preceded that act upon which the whole future of the church was so much dependent, and upon which the propagation of his gospel throughout the world depended—he inaugurated that work first by solemn prayer. He prayed, and then he called the men who were to be co-workers with him in the establishment of his kingdom in the world. (Luke vi. 12, 13.)

Third. And so we find that *when our Lord entered upon his own public ministry*, before he went into the *next towns*, as he expressed it, to preach the gospel of the kingdom, he first *offered prayer before he became the preacher of his own gospel in the world*. (Mark i. 35-39.) We are taught, my friends, that when we are about to make a change in our own lives, or when any change is

about to occur in our own households, that ought to be a time of special prayer. When you move into another residence, the man who builds a house and furnishes it, and takes wife, children and domestics into it, ought to consecrate that house by prayer just as we consecrate our churches when they are finished, and when we are ready to offer them for the service of the Almighty. It is a beautiful custom, when we move to a new residence, or when we have a new home, to begin our domestic life with a domestic altar, and ask, with united hearts, that God will bless those who inhabit that place and dwell beneath that roof, and to overrule all the changes, of joy and sorrow, and all the vicissitudes of family life to which we are subject, by his good Spirit.

Prayer is the best preparation for impending events, and for all the changes that take place among friends, and all the separation that take place in families; and so Matthew Henry quaintly says, whenever friends are about to part they ought to pray that God's blessing may be upon them while they are separated, and that it may please God to bring them together with hearts grateful for his providential and gracious goodness during the separation; or, if they never meet on earth, they ought to pray at parting that they may meet in the place where there are no separations.

Fourth. In the next place, we notice that our Lord offered special prayer when he was about to enter upon great enjoyment, and when the Father was about to bestow new privileges and new honors upon him. One of these occasions was the time of his baptism. (Luke iii. 21, 22.) We read that while Jesus stood praying, heaven opened, and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended upon him. My friends, if you would make the ordinances of God's house, the solemn sacraments of his

institution, effectual to your spiritual development, you must accompany them by prayer. If the Spirit, like a peaceful dove descends and rests upon your heart, that Spirit comes only in answer to your prayers. As Jesus stood praying, heaven opened, and as the Spirit descended, the voice of the Father was heard, saying, "This is my beloved Son." And then, again, we read that as *Christ was praying he was transfigured*. (Luke ix. 28, 29.) That was the only time when Christ gave the world a glimpse of his innate glory. On that occasion, the veil for a moment being taken away, his glory flamed out upon the eyes of all beholders as he was transfigured before them; and as he was praying the fashion of his countenance was changed. My friends, it is prayer only that can give us that tranquillity, that can give us that sweet and heavenly unction by which men shall feel how sweet and potent an influence goodness is, and make us blessings to those with whom we have daily associations.

Fifth. I remark, again, that when Christ *anticipated great sorrows, he made these occasions the times of special prayer*. When he was approaching the hour for which the world had been waiting for thousands of years, the hour when all the promises were about to find fulfilment, our Lord gathered his disciples about him and delivered to them a valedictory discourse, and then he followed that discourse with a prayer, teaching us that every sermon ought to be followed by a prayer, as well as preceded by a prayer, if we would imitate the example of Christ, for just as soon as he finished his farewell discourse to his disciples, we read that Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven and began that wonderful prayer, that intercessory prayer recorded in the Gospel of John, the longest prayer of our Lord's on record. (John, chap. xvii.) When we glance through it, oh! how much that prayer teaches us. It

began by saying, "Father, glorify thy son." Oh! what a moment that was. There was a great sorrow impending, the greatest sorrow that humanity had ever known, the greatest tragedy that earth had witnessed was about to be enacted; but Christ does not speak of that primarily. His great desire was that, whatever the sorrow might be, it should be overruled for his glory, and therefore he said, "Father, glorify thy name!" teaching you, O friends! that when trouble comes upon you, you ought not to be so anxious that the trouble should be taken from you as that the trouble may be sanctified to you, and be so, in some way, the means of bringing greater glory to the Father and glorify his name. Then how tenderly he prayed for his disciples: "O Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou has given unto me." And then he prayed for their unity, that they might be one. Oh! the Lord hasten the time when all the different denominations of Christendom may pay less and less attention to the things that divide them, and more and more attention to the things in which they all agree, for, after all, the common things are the greatest things, the true things and the best things. Oh! that the time may come when the Lord's prayer may be fulfilled in the unity which is one day to be vouchsafed to the universal church. He prayed not only for this, but there is one other petition in this prayer which gives it a personal interest to each one of us, and that was when our Lord said, "I pray not only for my disciples; but I pray for all those who shall believe on me through their word" — that Word which the apostles preached; that Word which has been transmitted through all countries, which has been proclaimed in so many thousands of places on this continent and all over the earth to-day — "Those who shall believe on me through their word." Oh! it is comforting to think that

we were remembered and included in that all-comprehensive intercessory prayer of our Lord just before his suffering.

And, then, from the supper he went to the garden, and said to his disciples, "Watch ye here while I go yonder and pray." (Matt. xxvi. 36; Mark xiv. 32.) Oh! what a prayer that was in Gethsemane. Oh! what earnestness, what reverence. Christ kneeled upon his knees, and then he fell upon his face. What resignation! "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." And although the cup did not pass from him, the prayer was answered, for an angel came and strengthened him. Then, the prayer completed, he was ready to go forth and perform that work for which he became incarnate, that work upon which the salvation of unnumbered millions of Adam's race depended, the great sacrifice which he offered of himself upon Calvary. As our Lord lived praying, so he died praying; for while they were making the preparations for the crucifixion, just as the cruel work began, our Lord said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii. 34.) And then, when the tragedy was over, and when the Sun of Righteousness was going down with a bloody setting behind the lurid clouds, he uttered another prayer. He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke xxiii. 46.)

My friends, into whose hands do you expect your soul to go when you die? That is a searching question. I have often thought that there is nothing that can be imagined so lonely and so desolate as the soul that goes out of the earthly tenement into awful space, unless there is some friendly hand to lead it, unless there are some tender arms to embrace it. Oh! to think of the dread loneliness of a soul ejected from the body, going out into the black-

ness and darkness without a ray, without a guide, without a hope.

Stephen's prayer was one that he caught from the prayer that our Lord had offered on the cross. When they were stoning him to death, he looked up through the parting blue and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and he said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit; and he fell asleep."

So, dear friends, I close my sermon with the simple expression of the wish that all of the events, that all of the changes, that all of the duties, that all the privileges of your lives may be so consecrated by prayer that when you come to the hour when heart and flesh fail, you may have the assurance of David when he said, "When strength and heart faileth, be thou my strength and my portion."

The life that is to be followed by a peaceful death and a safe transmission into the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where Christ will receive the departing soul in answer to the petition which he offered in his own intercessory prayer when he said, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." Oh! say this, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

XX.

IN THE SWELLING OF JORDAN.

“If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and it in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?”—JEREMIAH xii. 5.

I AM going to preach upon a text from which, perhaps, you never heard a sermon, and I hope it will not be less interesting or instructive on that account. Listen again to the strange phraseology of the prophet.

“The swelling of Jordan.” The interest which we feel in rivers does not depend upon their beauty, upon their length, upon their size, or upon their fitness for navigation, but upon the historic events which have made them memorable. We have no associations that are pleasant — we have no associations of any kind — with a river like the Amazon, like the Ganges, though they are classed among the great rivers of the world. That makes no difference in our estimate of them. And yet when we hear the name of the Nile, what a host of memories are conjured up by its mention. We recall that upon its waters was rocked the cradle of Moses, the great law-giver and leader of the people in their magnificent march from the land of bondage to the Canaan, where they were a free people, and enjoyed the best government the world ever knew, the government of the theocracy. So, too, the river Rhine is one of those historic rivers with which we have numbers of associations. What battles have been fought upon its banks! What castles stand upon its

crag, with a romance in every stone, from foundation up to the battlemented towers on the summit! But of all the rivers of the world there is no river with which we have associations so sacred and so tender as the river Jordan. From the time that Abraham and Lot held a debate upon its banks as to where their possession should lie; from the time that Jacob, that old patriarch, exultingly cried, "With my staff have I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands"; from the time that Joseph went up from Egypt to bury his father, when he made that great mourning at the threshing-floor of Atad — down to the time when John the Baptist preached the doctrine of repentance upon its banks, down to the time when Jesus came to be baptized of him, and when from the open heavens descended the dove that lighted upon him, and the voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And so from that time to ours, this river has been the scene of some of the most important events in the world's annals. The Crusaders quenched their thirst in its waters in the pause of battle, when they came to recover the Sepulchre from the hands of the Saracens. I cannot give in full the history of this river. I will only say the greatest exploration of its entire course, from the Sea of Tiberias down to its entrance into the Salt Sea, was made by an American, an officer in the American army. There is no river like it, because of the associations connected with it in the mind of the Jew, in the mind of the Mohammedan, in the mind of the Christian, all over the world, and the Jordan is the only river that is looked upon with veneration by these great representatives of the world's nationalities, the Jew, the Mohammedan, and the Christian. And what a singular interest attaches itself to that river, when in all languages it has been made the emblem of that separating water that

divides the heavenly land from ours; and if I could only turn to the passage, I would give you an illustration of it:

“ Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dressed in living green;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.

“ Oh! could we make these doubts remove,
These gloomy doubts that rise,
And see the Canaan that we love
With unbeckoned eyes.

“ Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood
Could fright us from the shore.”

I am going to give you an analogy which I have worked out, and it has been exceedingly interesting to me; it is this, that a river is the most striking emblem of which we have any knowledge, the most striking emblem of human life. It is like human life because at its beginning it is small as infancy itself. And then it widens and deepens in its onward flow, just as manhood grows richer and fuller with experience, and all the treasures of accumulated knowledge. The spectator, as he stands upon the banks, never sees the same water twice; while he looks at the water just beneath him, it is gliding away, and passes from his sight. So the generations go. But as the spectator stands, the river is still there. And so the human race continues; although the generations vanish, the great river of human life still rolls on! And then again, what a striking emblem of human life there is in the fact that oftentimes the current of the river is exceedingly swift, and then its motion seems almost to cease; sometimes it is crowded within narrow banks, and then

suddenly it widens out like a lake; sometimes it runs almost dry, and then again with spring showers it overflows all the plain! Oh! what a striking emblem that is of the penury, of the poverty that oftentimes makes life seem so narrow and so hard! And what a striking emblem of that sudden expansion of wide and joyous amplitude when Heaven's bounty flows in and overflows, to swell the volume of human opportunity, and human success, and human happiness! What an emblem the river is of the vicissitudes of life; what an emblem of the devious ways in which we oftentimes wind our course through life! That river, the Jordan, never ran in a straight line; sometimes it was very turbid and tawny, sometimes bright and clear; but, like all the human race — and, oh! what an analogy this is — like all the human race, emptying at last into the Dead Sea!

When Napoleon was about to fight one of his great battles in Egypt, he animated his troops by saying, "Forty centuries are looking down upon you." He was reminding them of the pyramids when he said that. So, when I look upon the river Jordan, forty centuries chronicle its history with the most memorable events in the world's annals.

The prophet Jeremiah, who was the author of this most solemn text, was a man whose life was very full of strange experiences. He was a man of very gentle and tender spirit; he was a man that shrunk from responsibility, and yet when duty was imposed upon him, there never was a man more courageous, more firm, more resolute, more true to every obligation. The condition of the country was one that weighed heavily upon his heart, because Jeremiah was not only a prophet, he was a patriot as well. The condition of the country made him emphatically a "man of sorrows." Every time he struck the

quivering wires of his harp a tear seemed to drop from the trembling cords! He had a happy time during the reign of good King Josiah; but after his worthless son, Zedekiah, sat upon the throne, then the woes of Jeremiah began afresh. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, who had reduced the country to subjection, was perfectly willing that Zedekiah should have the nominal reign, because the great emperor knew that he would be a facile, pliable tool in his hands, for Zedekiah was a man without resolution, without self-reliance; he was crafty, cunning and treacherous. In the exercise of his prophetic office, Jeremiah had felt it his duty to tell King Zedekiah of the woes that were coming upon Jerusalem, that it should be captured by the Chaldeans. Zedekiah had already made a treaty with Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon; but now, when he found the city was to be captured and pillaged afresh, he determined to make an alliance with Pharaoh-Hophra, the king of Egypt, and he acted a treacherous part towards the government of which he was a vassal. The prophet came and assured him that that expedient would be a terrible failure, that the king of Egypt would never prevent the capture and pillage of the city by the Chaldeans. Still Zedekiah refused to believe the words of the prophet. At last they found a strange fulfilment: the king of Egypt did indeed march to the rescue of Zedekiah, but the Chaldean army intercepted him, and defeated him, and obtained such a victory that the Egyptian troops went back to Egypt; and then the Chaldean troops had nothing to do but complete the capture of the city. There was still one possible refuge for King Zedekiah, and that was to do what the prophet told him to do, to go and humble himself before the king of Babylon, and allow the yoke to be put afresh upon his neck. It was a very humiliating condition, to be sure;

but it was that or utter ruin. He was unwilling to make that sacrifice — he saw his country ruined!

Now you comprehend the significance of the wonderful words of this text. “If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?” The meaning of that is simply this, “If you are not willing to humble yourself and take the yoke of the king, who will save the city from pillage, and still allow you to be his viceroy — if you will not consent to that condition, then you must make up your mind to the hard result, to the terrible tragedy that will end this scene; the demand that the king of Babylon makes, that you should humble yourself, is but a contest with the footmen; but when he comes to sack the city, that will be the inroad of the horsemen; and if you are afraid of the little stream that you dare not cross, what will you do in the swelling of Jordan?” This is a great parable. The result of the history I will briefly tell you. The Chaldeans came, the city was invested, Zedekiah attempted to escape, he got out upon the plain, he was arrested while he was a fugitive by the Chaldeans, he was taken captive to Babylon with his sons; his sons were slain before his eyes, and his own eyes were put out, and he was for the rest of his life a captive!

This text stands at the head of a number of passages of similar import that we find scattered through the Bible, to only two or three of which I shall have opportunity to refer. Here is one of them: When our Lord was on his way to the crucifixion, as he passed along the Dolorous Way, he was followed by the women, beating upon their breasts and wailing as they went, and he turned and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for

yourselves"; and then he added, "If these things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" — by which he meant, "If I, an innocent sufferer, must suffer death because I bear the sins of others, what will be the sufferings of others who meet divine retribution because they bear their own sins unforgiven?" "If these things be done in the green tree" — Christ compares himself to a tree whose leaves are for the healing and not for the hurt; "if a being so innocent and pure as I am must suffer death, what shall be the doom of those who have the promise and the possibilities of the rescue, of the Rock of Ages — of the ark of safety — and refuse to enter it, 'what shall they do in the swelling of the Jordan?'" Our Lord wept when he thought of the desolation that was to come upon the city. All the calamities that had hitherto befallen the city were not to be compared with the ruin and desolation brought upon it by Titus — that is the bloodiest picture in the book of time! They had passed through trials, but the trials had not been sanctified; they had had many calls to repentance, many opportunities of making peace with God. They put these opportunities aside, and slighted them, one by one. In the land of peace they had not sought the friendship and favor of the Prince of Peace, and what were they to do in the swellings of Jordan?

This is an ancient parable; and it finds another illustration in the discontent which we often find in the minds of people that live in the midst of peace, and in the land of plenty. Possibly no people complain more of life's worries than those that have been dandled in the lap of luxury — it is the people of overflowing wealth, that have tried all of life's pleasures, and found them devoid of satisfaction. There is more murmuring oftentimes in the heart that is covered with lace, with glittering dia-

monds above it, than in the poor woman that stitch by stitch makes her hard living in the garret. If people cannot bear the little trials that come upon them for their discipline, what will they do when the great trials come? "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?" And if men do not learn patience and resolution under the minor trials and toils of life, what are they going to do when the great trials of life come — that take the fragrance and the brightness and the music out of life, and leave men desolate? "And if in the land of peace thou art full of murmuring and rebellion against God's providence, what are you going to do when great troubles come like the swelling of Jordan?"

We have another illustration in those solemn words of the Apostle, when he said, "If the violator of Moses' law died without mercy, when there were only two or three witnesses against him, of how much sorer punishment shall he be counted worthy who rejects the Son of God, and slights the blood of the covenant, and does despite to the Spirit of grace?" There is an argument from the less to the greater. The man that broke the old law died without mercy, when accused by two or three witnesses. The Apostle says, if that be so, then how much greater will be the punishment of the man that tramples, not only upon the law, but upon the love of Jesus, and the man that dishonors the Son by refusing to take advantage of his offers of mercy. Two or three witnesses were required of old; there are three witnesses now, the witness of the insulted Father, the witness of the injured Son, the witness of the grieved Spirit! Ah! if the men that lived under the old law could not contend with the footmen, what is to become of the men under the law of grace, under the economy of love, what is to become of

them when they trample under foot the atoning Saviour, and do despite to the Spirit of grace — what are they going to do in the swelling of Jordan?

And still again, the Apostle cries out, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Not that there is anything defective in the atonement of Christ; not that there is anything uncertain in the promises of God, but this is what the Apostle means: in order to be *assured* that we are Christians, what purifying of our lives and hearts, what resistance of temptation, what striving against sin, what earnestness in running the Christian race, what self-denial, what self-crucifixion is necessary to obtain the assurance that we are on the way to heaven; and if those who profess to be on the way are intimidated by the difficulty of preparation, what shall they do in the swelling of Jordan?

And so I close my sermon by asking one more question: What are they going to do who do not seek an interest in the Saviour, who do not make their peace with God because they are hindered by the little, trifling obstacles that lie in their way; because they feel the pressure of business, because they do not find time to do that for which all time was given — because they are intimidated by the fear of ridicule, are reluctant to break old sinful associations, to part with sinful companionship? What are we to say of those who allow these little difficulties to keep them out of the kingdom of heaven — keep them from attending to the things that belong to their eternal peace? And if they reject the overtures of grace, when all the conditions for obtaining peace are favorable; if they are unwilling to submit to any sacrifices or self-denial while seeking reconciliation with God, what are they going to do when they are on their deathbed, and are buffeted by the swelling of Jordan? You say, "Now I

have not a suitable time to prepare for the eternity that lies before men, and is so near." If you cannot make opportunity now, do you think you will when you come to contend with the cold billows that beat upon you when you get in the swelling of Jordan? I do not know of anything more terrible than the anguish of the despairing soul, trying under the most distressing, most helpless circumstances of life, to make his peace with God — the man that allowed the other trifles to prevent him from getting safely into the city of refuge — the man who struggles when it is too late, and among the buffeting of those billows tries to secure something that requires the best exercise of the mind and heart and the calmest and most rational moments of life! — in the midst of fever, in the midst of the paralysis that often comes upon the brain at that moment! If he does not contend with the footmen, what will he do with the horsemen; if he does not brave the little stream, what is he going to do when he comes to the swelling of Jordan? That is the awful inquiry that the prophet makes.

I commend you to the last pages of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, when Christian and Faithful and Hopeful came to the brink of the Jordan, the separating river, they were delighted to find that when they walked down into it they found themselves walking upon a firm bottom, and they found the river very shallow. There was no swelling then, no desolating flood to oppose their progress. They passed over safely. Payson, when he came to that river, said he found it had dwindled to a rill, so narrow he could step across it. Oh! happy are those that have improved all their opportunities so that when they come to the last critical moments of life they may have nothing to do but to cross over, and rest under the shade of the trees that fringe the banks of the river of life immortal!

XXI.

A COFFIN IN EGYPT.

“So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.”—GEN. 1. 26.

THE East is the land of wonder, mystery, romance and song. It was in the East that the Garden of Eden was planted before thorns and thistles infested the ground, or sin and sorrow came into the world. It was in the East that the old world empires flourished and fell. It was in the East that the patriarchs and prophets of Old Testament history uttered the words and performed the acts by which, being dead, they yet speak to us. It was in the East that the light arose, which, travelling westward, illumined Europe, and then crossing the ocean irradiated these American shores. It was in the East that Christianity commenced its magnificent march on its ever-brightening way to universal conquest.

Of these ancient empires some have not left a trace on the map of the world. They are gone like the dreams of things that were —

“Wondrous and awful are thy silent halls,
O kingdoms of the past!
There lie the bygone ages in their palls,
Guarded by shadows vast;
There all is hushed and breathless,
Save where some image of old error falls
Earth worshipped once as deathless.”—*Lowell.*

To this there is one memorable exception. Egypt still survives, though it stands only as the echo of a great

name. But there it is, unchanged — at least, in its strange physical characteristics. Its clear skies are not veiled by clouds, casting grateful shadows on the parched plains. Its long drouths are not relieved by the showers which make the furrowed fields soft and green. No rain drops on the pastures of its wilderness. But the time at last comes when the inundation of its mighty river gives opportunity for literally casting seed upon the waters. Then comes the flash of verdure, and then the richer hues of harvest. So that the Egyptian people say their land for three months is white like pearl, for three months black like mask, for three green like emerald, for three yellow like gold. Yes, Egypt is the wonderful land on the banks of whose solitary river stands the long line of pyramids — the mausoleums where kings lie in their glory, on whose sands crouches the sphynx, with expressive face of imperturbable calm, gazing out on infinity. There, too, moulder mighty cities, whose foundings antedate history, the land whose present degradation verifies the truth of prophecy, that it should be the basest of kingdoms, blighted by the leprous hand of the Turk, which taints all that it touches, while adjacent Palestine cowers under his brutal heel. It was characteristic of these old world nations that their golden age was in the past. They fondly looked back to a time when the skies were bright and the fields were fertile, when laws were just and morals pure, and when prosperity filled the cup of a virtuous people. But as time wore on, signs of disintegration and decay filled the minds of the wisest and most thoughtful with forebodings of final disaster and extinction. Seers, poets, historians, decline and fall in melancholy and hopeless strains. To this general foreboding there was one memorable exception. The bards and prophets of ancient Israel turned their faces towards the

future, and in that future saw their brightest era. There was much in their history to depress and even to extinguish this hope, but it survived amidst all apostasies, all captivities, all desolations of foreign conquests. With the light of morning in their eyes, and the glories of Messiah thrilling their hearts, they hailed the day when his way should be known on earth, and his saving health among the nations; when Gentiles should come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising, and when all the nations should rejoice on the blessings of his universal reign. Thus, while the poets and sages and the oracles of the old pagan world predicted ultimate disaster and overthrow, and while one by one their hopes of a happy future went down into the sad sea that never gives up its dead, Palestine, the most isolated and territorially insignificant of the old nations, lying directly in the pathway of rival kingdoms — its ground trembling under the tread of great armies, often provoking the wrath of powerful neighbors, often pillaged and conquered by them; yet there, in the Hebrew heart, the hope of a radiant future glowed like a perpetual altar fire, and found expression in those triumphant Psalms, which, beating time to trumpet and timbal, have the ring of conquest in their melodious march!

The whole Book of Genesis glows with these predictions of coming prosperity and power to Israel, till we come to the last chapter, when all these glowing prospects suddenly disappear — suddenly shrouded as with a pall; so that all that seems to remain is what is hid under the lid of "a coffin in Egypt." Thus the closing chapter of Genesis ends with the death of the last man who had the influence or the power to help his Hebrew brethren, and we read, "So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old, and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin

in Egypt." Was there ever such a lame and impotent conclusion to a splendid history? — ever a hope succeeded by such despair, ever a story so full of joyful anticipation, ending in a tragedy so dismal? To comprehend the whole depth of the disappointment we must go back to the Old Testament history, and ascertain what were the expectations awakened by the divine promises with regard to the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, their march to Canaan, and their ultimate prosperity and glory in their own land. A new era began in the history of the world at the call of Abraham; it was the commencement of a new chapter in the great book of Providence. It was the lifting of the curtain which revealed new scenes and actors in the drama of human affairs. The call of Abraham was the initial act on the establishment of the visible kingdom of God in the world. It was an event whose influence and results are felt to this day. To-morrow were you to meet a man on the street who had never given a thought to such a subject, were you to tell him that he had a personal interest in the call of Abraham, that his own life and all the influences which had moulded that life were different from what they would have been if no such man as Abraham had never existed, what would he say? He might say nothing, but he would think that you were smitten with some mild form of lunacy. And yet, were he a man of ordinary intelligence, you could so demonstrate the truth of your statement as to make him admit it. You could tell him that it was not a theologian, but a thinker like Thomas Carlyle, who said that a man's religion was the chief thing about him, and determined all the rest. You could show him that with Abraham began the nation that has shaped the religious history of the world, and whatever shapes *that* determines the character of domestic, social and political life. You

could tell him the institutions under which we live were not only moulded by the old theocracy and by the Christianity, which was the development of that theocracy, but owe their existence to it. So that the man who thought you a lunatic or fanatic for making such an assertion would himself admit that he was a different man for having been born of Christian instead of pagan parents. Abraham was the central figure in the old world history, and the promises God made to him are yet in process of fulfilment. What were these promises? That Canaan was to be inhabited by his posterity, that in his seed all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Never was their faith more triumphant than his. "He believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." His was a faith that did not stagger at improbabilities, nor at seeming *impossibilities*.

Though Canaan was then held by a warlike race, though he had no army at his command, no means of conquest, he knew that the promise was sure; though he was an old man and childless, yet he never doubted his posterity would be as the stars for multitude; though the time of fulfilment of the promise lay in far distant centuries, though he was told that his descendants should be strangers in a land not theirs four hundred years, yet he was assured they should come out with great substance, and become a great nation.

These promises were renewed to Jacob, and though his faith, too, was sorely tried, it did not fail under the strain. When famine drove him down to Egypt, he was told not to fear — the way had already been prepared — for a strange providence had sent Joseph there before him and exalted him to the very summit of human power and honor. God said to him I am the God of thy fathers, fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will go with thee and I

will make of thee a great nation, and I will surely bring thee up again! Few incidents are more dramatic than the meeting between Joseph and his father, or the interview between Jacob and Pharaoh, and how much nobler was the bearing of the patriarch than that of the king! Pharaoh could not think of anything more graceful in opening the conversation than to ask Jacob how old he was. What surpassing dignity there was in the reply, and when the interview was ended, we read that Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out. "Without contradiction, says the Apostle, the less was blessed by the greater" (better). And when he went out, it was the kingly man who departed, only a doomed Egyptian mummy was left behind, and the glory of the scene vanished with Jacob's departure. But the largest, most illustrious life has its end. The time came when Jacob said to Joseph, "Behold, I die, but God shall be with you, and bring you again to the land of your fathers. And he said to his sons, bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron, in the land of Canaan. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebecca his wife, and there I buried Leah." Canaan was dear chiefly as a memory to Jacob, but to Joseph it was dear as a hope, for when his time came, he said, "I die, but God will surely visit you, and will bring you out of this land, into the land which he sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob. So Joseph died, and they embalmed him, and put him in a coffin in Egypt."

With the death of Joseph, the last ray of hope of deliverance from Egyptian bondage went out in the blackness of darkness; the last link was broken which bound his people to a happy future. So Joseph dies, and they embalmed his body and put him in a coffin in Egypt. What now is left? Only a few bones and a few promises,

but they were the promises of God. The patriarchs are indeed all dead, but God lives — lives in the immutability of his truth, in the omnipotence of his power. Note, my hearers, after Genesis comes Exodus. Genesis is the beginning of things, Exodus is the continuance, the development, the consummation of things. Genesis ends with a narrow coffin in Egypt; Exodus opens with a wide deliverance; a new and splendid history unfolds itself. Exodus means departure, it means crossing the Red Sea, the destruction of Pharaoh's host, the march to the land of promise, the conquest of Canaan. So, after all, the faith of Joseph was not in vain, the legacy of the embalmed body was not in vain. The appeal is made to his brethren to remember that God would surely visit them, and bring them to the land of their fathers. The expectation that Joseph cherished of being buried in Canaan was not in vain. How sublime was the faith that triumphed, and all that could daunt and quench it! Munroe Gibson, in his work entitled *The Ages Before Moses* compares Joseph, the apparent end of his race — so far as power to help them went — to Campbell's "Last Man," making his address to the sun about to go out in eternal night —

"The skeletons of nations were around that lonely man,
Yet prophet-like that lone one stood,
With dauntless words and high."

And what did the lone man say? He said this:

"Go tell the night that hides thy face,
Thou sawest the last of Adam's race
On earth's sepulchral sod
The darkened universe defy
To quench his immortality,
Or shake his trust in God."

So it was with Joseph's high and dauntless words, "God will surely visit you and bring you to the land of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob."

Nothing quenched that hope or shook that trust. That trust was the trust of triumphant faith — that hope became a history. The promises were all fulfilled: Canaan conquered and possessed, Jerusalem builded, David crowned, Solomon's peaceful sway recognized from the Nile to the Euphrates. The temple was built upon the imperial mount which it graced and glorified, a mountain of alabaster, with golden pinnacles flaming at the tops. The messenger of the covenant came suddenly into that temple. The Desire of all nations was announced, and from the seed of Abraham sprang the world's Redeemer! So the promises which seemed to be buried in a coffin in Egypt had an Exodus in the birth of One whose coming meant peace on earth, and glory to God in the highest.

This leads naturally and inevitably to the greatest illustration of the text. When the enemies of Christ consigned him to the death of the cross, they believed that Christianity itself was consigned, not to a coffin in Egypt, but a sepulchre in Palestine. But the death of Christ was only the Genesis of the gospel of which his resurrection was the Exodus. It was the foundation of his mediatorial reign, for —

"The Cross a sure foundation laid
For glory and renown;
When through the regions of the dead
He passed to reach his crown."

He himself spoke of his death, not as the end, but the instrument of his perpetuated influence and power.

Christ's followers always speak of him as alive. This is not true of the founders of any other religion. The

followers of Zoroaster, of Confucius, of Mahomet never speak of their master as alive. The Evangelists, indeed, record the death of Christ, but in the next breath announce his resurrection. St. Luke narrates in his gospel what Jesus began to do and to teach, and goes on to tell of his continued activity. The Book of Acts might be called the Acts of Christ, since it is really a review of what the risen, reigning Christ was doing for the advancement of his church on earth, for the heralds of Christianity went forth, not alone and unsustained, but the hand of the Lord was with them, working with them. When Stephen was stoned, as he looked through the parting blue, he saw Jesus standing, for would he sit while his holy martyr was dying for him? He saw Jesus, and his own face reflected something of the beauty of the glorified Saviour.

“He prayed, and from the happy place
God’s glory smote him on the face.”

Stephen’s life was short, if we measure it by years only; it was long if we measure it by the immortality of influence. Stephen’s life was taken up by the young man, at whose feet his clothes were laid; it had a resumption in Paul, who never lost the impression of that martyrdom; it was an inspiration to him during the years of his transcendent course of ceaseless service. If the cross was a tragedy, it was also a triumph. Once, indeed, it was the symbol only of an ignominious death, but now the associations of men with regard to the cross are not only changed, but are actually reversed. The cross is now traced in starry constellations, it is emblazoned on the banners of conquerors, it is carried on the shields of the mighty, it glitters above the domes of great cathedrals.

“ In the cross of Christ we glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.”

The very tomb of the risen Jesus is the birthplace of immortality. Men put him to death, and placed him in a sepulchre, that he might restore them to life, and place them in a mansion in heaven. The end of every man's earthly life is a coffin, but no *soul* was ever shrouded or put in a coffin followed to the grave by weeping kindred. What we call death does not destroy the continuity of the soul's life. Earthly life is the Genesis, death is the Exodus. The time of my departure is at hand, it is better to depart and be with Christ. When the Duke of Marlboro was in his last illness he was carried before a picture of one of his great battles, and exclaimed, “The Duke was something then, but now he is dying!” The Christian is something *when* he is dying, for his “life is hid with Christ.” When Hobbes, the notorious skeptic, came to his last moments, he said, “I give my body to the dust; my soul to the great Perhaps.” The great Perhaps! Paul said, “I know whom I have believed, and he will keep that which I have committed to him against that day.” Victor Hugo said, “I feel within myself the pulsation of a future life. You say the soul is nothing but the resultant of bodily powers. Why, then, is my soul more luminous when bodily powers begin to fail? Winter is on my head, but eternal spring is in my heart. The tomb closes with the twilight, to open with the dawn.” A greater than Hugo has said, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. The greatest triumphs of faith are often witnessed in the final hour — all that has appalled vanished from the valley and shadow. Oh! to see one leaving this world calmly, saying, “I fear no evil

for thou art with me." "My heart and my flesh faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." When in such a confidence the spirit prepares its flight, in full view of the open gates of the city of God, with mortal paleness on the cheek, but glory in the soul, and then wings its way to the heavenly home, leaving a smile of holy peace imprinted on the clear cold face, and the life forever still — then death is indeed translation; it is the boundary line, where earth and heaven meet and mingle; the dark lattice admits the light of eternal day — no gloomy vault, but a glory gleaming portal, beyond which is eternal bliss. It is no coffin in Egypt, but the entrance to a mansion in the Paradise of God. All generations shall give praise and honor and glory to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

XXII.

UNFULFILLED OBLIGATIONS AT LAST FULFILLED.

"I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the Lord said, Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and behold the land with thine eyes, for thou shalt not go over this Jordan."—DEUT. iii. 25-27.

WHEN one visiting the land of Palestine stands on the top of the Mount of Olives, and looks towards the south, he beholds the vast range of the Mountains of Moab. They stand there on the southern border like a great wall, and in general appearance resemble the Palisades of the Hudson in the distance, though, unlike the Palisades, they are thousands of feet in height. Viewed from that standpoint, on Olivet, the top seems a horizontal line, and instead of the serrated form that mountains assume, it is almost like a sea line in the distance; but as the mountains are approached, and when they are reached, it is found that the summits are waving; that there are depressions between them, without much depth, and slight eminences, not precipitous, but sloping, two of which are Pisgah and Nebo.

For a long time it was impossible to identify the localities of Nebo and Pisgah; it was reserved for a canon of the Church of England, for an explorer from the United States, and for a medical missionary of the city of Beirut, to come nearer to the identification of these sacred spots than had hitherto been done, if, indeed, they did not actually identify them. In connection with these two

named mountains, if we may call them such — mere eminences in the great range — with these two names at least, Pisgah and Nebo, we have associated the most pathetic incident in the life of Moses — I might say, the most pathetic incident in the life of almost every one that ever lived. After forty years of wandering through the desert, now that he had come to the borders of Canaan, he received a startling message to go up into the top of Pisgah, and die there. The text contains the tender appeal that Moses made to the Lord to reverse his decision, “Oh! let me see the good land, the goodly mountain, and Lebanon; let me pass over this Jordan.” But so peremptory was the refusal, that the Lord told him not to speak to him any more upon that matter.

Oh! my friends, this decision seems hard, at a time when Moses was so near the fruition of his very fondest hopes; hopes that had been so long cherished, so long indulged. It always aggravates the disappointment when we are just about to reach the thrill of possession, that suddenly the hand is arrested, and the veto finally put upon the hope that dies in a moment. So it was with Moses. I do not know when he began to indulge this hope of entering the Land of Promise; but I take it for granted that it often occurred to him during his residence in Egypt; often occurred to him during those solitary years, amounting almost to half a century, which he spent in the solitude of the great desert; and, then, from the very time that the magnificent march commenced from the borders of Egypt to the borders of Palestine, one hope must have thrilled his heart, and that was of entering the land for which he had toiled, and for which he had trained the people of Israel.

What! — could it be true that the meanest member of that great host could cross the river and enter the

Promised Land, while Moses, the mighty leader of that host, was left upon the opposite shore, and prohibited from putting his foot upon the coveted ground? It was quite natural that Moses should have longed to get there. It is always natural for us to try, and expect, to reach the fruit of our sacrifices and of our toils. It was extremely natural for Moses to wish to see the land that was endeared to him by so many associations; the land in which the world's gray fathers had pitched their tents; the land which God had pledged to their posterity; the land where the patriarchs had found their last repose; the land that was allied with everything that was most inspiring in the history of Israel; the land where the temple was finally to be built; the land which was to be trodden by the feet of him who, for our salvation, was nailed to the bitter cross.

How natural, I say, it was that Moses should wish to enter that land, and, after seeing the tribes settled, enjoy their prosperity, their progress, their power, their happiness! But all this was denied him. And yet, in order to gain such a prize as this, Moses had made great sacrifices; he had renounced a throne; he had refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and when the cup, filled with all that could satisfy the loftiest ambition, was passed to his lips, he put it aside, and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God; chose rather to endure the reproach of Christ than to possess the riches and glories of Egypt.

If I were to speak of the services that seemed to entitle him to such recompense as this, what could I say? I could say little now, because the subject is too great for discussion here. I can only say this: that among those services was that of being the founder of the most wonderful nation that this world ever saw. History does

not celebrate the rise and perpetuation of a people whose career has been so wonderful as that of the Jewish people. Brought out from bondage; drilled to become a nation by the discipline of the wilderness; permitted to take possession of the inheritance that God had provided for them; then subjected to strange captivities; their city pillaged; their temple burned; their land often trembling under the tread of the armies of the successive conquerors who swept over it; their capital destroyed — and yet, for eighteen hundred years, as distinct a people as any people that now have their own nationality and autonomy; a separate people, clinging to their ancient institutions and traditions, anticipating the advent of their Messiah; everywhere scorned, everywhere surviving; impoverished by exaction, yet holding in their hands the wealth of the world; never losing their identity by assimilation or absorption by other races; preserving not only their mental characteristics, but their distinctive physical features, so that to this day they are everywhere recognizable at a glance. All this because of the great things in store for them, and through them, in store for the world. When the predicted time arrives when Jew and Gentile shall constitute one family, with one Lord and one faith, then, as inspiration teaches us, there will be a new dispensation of mercy to mankind, to be followed by the universal establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth, giving men a new and nobler conception of Providence and grace in the unfolding of the divine purpose as to what redeemed humanity shall become in time and in the eternal future.

The founding of such a nation, designed to exert such an influence, was but a part of the work which Moses accomplished. And it was at such a time, with a past history of personal services so illustrious, and with the

immediate prospect of Canaan before him, that the startling summons came to him to go up into the mountain and die there, without leaving so much as a footprint on the soil of the land he so loved and longed for. Thus, that aspiration expired and went down into the depths of the sea that never gives up its dead.

This is, indeed, one of the most wonderful of all dispensations. I marvel greatly that God should have allowed Moses to cross the Red Sea, and yet not cross the narrow Jordan; that God should have spared him to live one hundred and twenty years, and then, at the time when we are told his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated, when, enriched by the experience of more than a century, he was better fitted than ever for service, that his career should be abruptly terminated.

What an ancient parable that is! What a type it was, and is, of what has been happening ever since! What chapter in the world's history is more sad than that of unfulfilled aspirations? How many thousands of men have lived that have had one supreme wish in their lives, one passion, one aspiration, that swallowed up everything else just as a mighty river swallows up all the tributaries that run into it. It may be ambition; it may be love; it may be the desire for usefulness. Still, it has been the master-passion; and when one has staked everything upon the attainment of one expectation, and that expectation is suddenly blasted, then who can describe the tragedy?

“The night has a thousand eyes,
The day has one,
But the light of the whole world dies
With the setting sun.
The mind has a thousand eyes,
The heart has one,
But the light of the whole life dies
When love is done.”

So it has been with thousands since the day of Moses; to thousands has the order come, "Thou shalt not cross this river, though it be but a rill, and though you have before you your goodly Lebanon, the object of your ambition and aspiration, just within reach, you shall not cross the river, and you shall not possess the mountain."

How fragmentary are man's works! What incompleteness attaches to man's enterprises of every character! We see hundreds of illustrations of it. It is not every historian who has the good fortune that Gibbon recorded when he penned the last sentence of his great history of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and who, as he walked up and down in the little arbor, remembered now that he had terminated the work which linked his name to immortality. It often happens that the historian dies before he has completed his final volume, and he leaves his work, perhaps a splendid fragment, his own history abruptly terminated. The eye of the great painter is closed before he has given the crowning touch to the coloring of the picture which he hoped would make him famous. The hand of the sculptor is paralyzed while yet the statue stands in prophetic, yet unfulfilled, proportions, to sadden the lover of art with the spectacle of symmetry and beauty almost, yet not quite perfected. The patriot-soldier, toward whom a nation turns its trustful and loving gaze, as the instrument, under God, for the achievement of its independence, is cut down, with a mysterious unexpectedness, leaving a nation to mourn its bereavement, its liberties yet unattained.

Ah! yes, the lives of men are so incomplete, and so full of disappointed aspirations, that this old Nebo parable has had its illustrations in all the ages that have succeeded Moses. We are reminded of the fact that after Isaac Newton — the man of whom it was said that "his was

the whitest soul of human kind"—made his splendid discovery, his theory of astronomy was not, at the time of his death, credited by fifty men on the whole continent of Europe, and by some he was charged with having made an assault upon Revelation by the alleged discoveries which he had published. There, too, was Beethoven, just as he was about to go to the place where no earthly melody penetrates the dull and cold earth of death, who said, "If I could live a little longer I could be a musician." In this sad procession comes Thorwaldsen, who, on the day after he had sketched in chalk the outline of a statue that was to be the masterpiece of his life, was smitten down in a single moment. You see, also, one of the greatest of English discoverers and voyagers, who, after sailing around the world, and making rare and rich discoveries; after having been shipwrecked again and again, and arrested as a prisoner of war; after six years pining in captivity, comes out at last to find that another had surreptitiously availed himself of the discoveries he had made, and claimed the credit of them; and then, still animated by the hope of vindicating himself and of reaping the benefit of the researches to which he had given the best years of his life, he set to work to prepare new maps and a faithful history of his labors, but died on the day the proof-sheet was put in his hand.

This is an old parable that is always finding new illustration. What shall we say of David Brainard, of Harriet Newell, of Henry Martyn, of the great reformers who were snatched away before their tasks were completed, and of the missionaries who sailed to pagan lands, only to die almost as soon as they touched the far-off shore. What shall we say to these things? Let us be silent and adore, while we hear the divine answer, "What I do, thou knowest not now; thou shalt know hereafter."

And so, when we ask the question, What is the meaning of all these strange dealings with the children of men? we are taught that the providences of God are like the four half lines written on the palace of one of the Cæsars — four half lines; we must wait for time to complete the rest of the sentence.

“ The great design unfinished lies,
 Our lives are incomplete;

 But in the dark unknown,
 Perfect their circles seem,
 Even as the bridge’s arch of stone,
 Is rounded in the stream.”

And so it is in the providence of God, though some of the reasons for his dealings with Moses have been explicitly revealed to us. There was one sad passage in his history, and that was when the whole multitude were fainting for water, and when God told him to go and speak to the rock, and a refreshing stream would flow forth, and when, worn out as he was by the murmurings, the accusations and the apostasies of the people, he lost his temper for once, and assumed the power of working a miracle, and spoke unadvisedly with his lips, “Ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?” And then, instead of speaking quietly to the rock, he smote it twice, and thus dishonored God before the people. And then he was informed that because of this act, by which he had failed to honor God in the eyes of the nation, the penalty should be as public as the offence, and that he would not be allowed to cross that river, or see the goodly mountain, the Lebanon, so long the object of his aspiration.

And yet, my friends, when God denies the request of one of his children, although he may withhold a particular

blessing, he always makes a compensation by giving an equivalent — by giving something better. If Paul comes and beseeches the Lord thrice that the thorn may be taken out of his flesh, and if the Lord denies that request, Paul goes on with the thorn still rankling; but the discipline he undergoes prepares him for the vision of the third heaven, and then for a mansion there, which was not a vision, but a reality, a home, and an eternal inheritance.

Oh! never was he so near his rest and reward as at the very time he was consigned to the darkness and filth of the Mamertine dungeon, previous to his martyrdom; just as I had occasion to say to you this morning, that our Lord was never as dear to his Father, never as near to the excellent glory to which he ascended, as when he went down into Gethsemane and when he went up to the cross. If the Lord does not give you the exact thing that you are asking for, he will give you an equivalent, or he will give you something better. When he denied this petition of his servant Moses, then immediately, by his sweet submission, the “meekness” of that man of God was perfected, it received its final transforming touch. Then Moses made the last sacrifice that could be made to the divine will. God, indeed, pressed to his lips a cup that was full of bitter disappointment, but with a steady hand he took it and drank it to the dregs; “and then God put into his hands another cup, filled with the wine of consolation, and thus he had his recompense; and Moses was never so Moses-like, Moses was never so Christ-like,” as when he said, “If possible, grant me this request; nevertheless, thy will, not mine, be done.” Moses did not remonstrate, did not murmur; he acquiesced in the decision of the Lord, and just as soon as he found out that it was not the purpose of God to permit

him to cross the water, he filled up the little time remaining to him in active duty.

Oh! what an example, and what a lesson, to the aged people in the kingdom of Christ, never to lay down the weapons of their warfare, never to resign themselves to supineness, saying, "I have done enough; I have fulfilled my vocation;" but, inspired by the example of this man, who worked on to the very minute he began to ascend Nebo, can say, "My arduous work will not be done till I have got my crown." After Moses was forbidden to cross the river, how did he employ the remnant of time that remained to him? He made the speeches recorded in the Book of Deuteronomy, and recited to the people the whole history of God's dealings with them; he made every appeal to their generosity, to their honor, to their faith, to their gratitude, to stand fast to their colors in the service of the Captain of their salvation. He did that, and then he took the law he had written and put it in the hands of the priests, and, lest the priests should corrupt it, he also put it in the custody of the elders, that they might have jurisdiction over the priests, and that the law might remain unchanged in its purity; and then, having done this, he quietly appointed Joshua as his successor. And when the critical moment came for him to depart, we have a scene which is not described in the Old Testament at all; we only have it in the writings of Josephus. It may be an imaginary one, but it is a very natural one. He said that when Moses, in full possession of his health and vigor — how strange for a man to go to his death in that superb condition! — in the full possession of mental and physical powers, began to ascend the mountain, all the women of the tribes came after him, beating upon their breasts, the children weeping and wailing, universal distress and lamentation pre-

vailing everywhere, while those who watched him saw how he seemed to diminish as he went, becoming just a speck in the distance, hardly discernible away up on the heights of Nebo, until he vanished forever from human view. This was the last of earth, and now heaven begins. The Lord received him on that lonely peak; the Lord gently laid him down, and kissed away his life with a kiss of eternal love and reconciliation, and from lonely Nebo, Moses went up to the general assembly of the church of the first born, and took his place in the ranks of the glorified. That was his recompense.

I was in the chamber of a young minister who was dying. He said: "I have often wanted to see Palestine. I have often thought how sweet it would be to visit Bethlehem, where the Saviour was born; to go to Nazareth, where he lived; to tread the shores of the lake around which he walked, and to visit the city where he offered himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. But," said he, "I won't miss Palestine, because I am going in a little while to a better country, where I shall behold the delectable mountains, and the city of the great King, and the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." There was a lovely girl—a member of this church, a good many years ago—who was dying, in her perfect senses, quite conscious of all that was happening around her, and when I took up the Bible to read a few verses at her request, I said, "My dear, what shall I read to you?" She said, "Read me a part of the seventh chapter of Revelation;" and when I read it to her she said, "I was almost there; I heard those songs; I saw those visions." So Moses saw the earthly Canaan just before he entered the heavenly gates. He did not care now for the associations which he expected to enjoy in Palestine, in visiting the tombs of the old patriarchs, because

in a few minutes he was to be walking with the patriarchs themselves in the glory everlasting. This was his all-sufficient recompense. This was his satisfying recompense.

You have read accounts of imposing funerals, and of the honors paid—and oftentimes justly paid—to the remains of the great and good. There never was a funeral like the funeral of Moses. The Lord buried him; and no man knoweth the place of his sepulchre unto this day. And, my friends, there is something very interesting in the thought that Moses, after all, was not buried in Canaan. There was something very fitting, when we come to think of it, in the fact that he was buried outside of Canaan; that he was buried out in that heathen land of Moab, intimating to us that the law that Moses had written at the command of God was not to be a sectional code, confined to Palestine; that the religious institutions of which he had been the founder were not to be imprisoned in that limited strip of country, one hundred and twenty miles in length by forty in breadth, but that they were to be institutions for the world; and although no one knows the place where Moses was buried out in that wild territory, there stands Mount Sinai to commemorate his life and death, and Mount Sinai is the grand monument of Moses. He needs no other. Then, again, the fact that he was not permitted to enter Canaan, and that he was not buried there, is also an intimation that is very animating and encouraging to us; that God no longer has a sacred soil. There is no country in the world which monopolizes the divine regard. Moab is now as dear to God as the land on the other side of the river; and in the fact that Moses was buried outside of Canaan we have a dim prophecy that all the nations shall by and by serve the God of Israel; a dim prophecy

that the boundaries of Israel shall be widened until they embrace all who worship Israel's God; and when I say that Moses received compensation, and that when God denies one thing he gives a better, I close my discourse this evening by saying that, after all, Moses did enter the Promised Land; after all, he was permitted to do what he prayed God to be permitted to do, and what was forbidden at the time, for when that supreme moment came in the life of our Lord, when he stood upon the mountain, transfigured, there came down to converse with him Moses and Elias; and from that summit Moses overlooked the land; from that summit he contemplated the place where the great sacrifice was to be made, where that redemption was to be achieved which finally would bring peace on the earth and universal subjection to Messiah's gentle reign.

My friends, we call Canaan the land of promise. It is no longer the land of promise. Our land of promise is not terrestrial. You have a land of promise, and so have I. We are journeying to the promised land, but that land is not bounded by geographical lines; it is not separated from us by an intervening river, like the Jordan. It is a promised land, but the Canaan of old was but a dim and clouded type of the land we love, and are looking for; it is the land into which God has been gathering the purest and the best of earth — many of the members of our churches, many of our friends and kindred.

Where are those that worshipped with us years ago? Where are those who commenced the journey of life with us — the friends of our youth, our school-mates? My heart was greatly touched yesterday, or the day before, when I saw the notice of the sudden death of the Rev. Dr. Joseph M. Atkinson, of North Carolina, who was my class-mate at college, and my dear friend ever since.

Yes, they drop away; but they go one by one to the meeting-place, and we travel onward in the way our fathers trod, and in the way our friends have trodden, or it may be our children, to the place where the saints of all ages in harmony meet to be forever with one another, and with the Lord. With what ineffable delight, with what joy inexpressible, must they look upon Christ, and then, as they look upon one another, discover in every face something of Christ's beauty, and see how every form is irradiated with the glory of the risen Redeemer. Oh! *that* is the land of promise. That is the "better country" towards which we are journeying. May God take you, my friends — may he take you by the hand and lead you safely on, and safely through the bright gates of Paradise, to the home where there are no blighted hopes or unfulfilled aspirations, but where you will find "every longing satisfied" with the salvation which is not only "full," but eternal.

THE SUCCESS OF CHRISTIANITY AN
EVIDENCE OF ITS DIVINE ORIGIN:

A LECTURE,

DELIVERED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA.

THE SUCCESS OF CHRISTIANITY AN EVIDENCE OF ITS DIVINE ORIGIN.

MORE than eighteen hundred years ago, amidst the shadows of the night, and the gloom of a narrow defile near the city of Jerusalem, there might have been seen the dim outline of a human form, prostrate upon the ground, uttering plaintive cries, and exhibiting evidences of the most overwhelming sorrow.

Presently lights were seen glancing through the foliage, and the heavy tramp of a company of men was heard. A band of soldiers, and others, bearing lanterns and torches and weapons, advanced, and took into custody the mysterious mourner. A little company of friends witnessed the capture, but they had neither the strength nor the courage to attempt a rescue, and seeing him in the keeping of the soldiers, they all forsook him and fled.

The next day a tumultuous crowd darkened the summit of a hill, on which three crosses had been erected. On one of these crosses the captive of the preceding night was hanging in the agonies of death. But strange prodigies attended that crucifixion. All nature gave signs of unwonted agitation. The earth, as if instinct with life, shuddered as the crimson drops trickled upon it. It became pervaded by an emotion which seemed to pierce its heart and thrill through its entire frame. Upon its quaking surface the forms of the shrouded dead were revealed to the eyes of the terror-stricken living, while over the opening tombs, the rending rocks, and the parting veil of the temple, the sun wrapped himself in darkness, and thus pursued his journey.

Nor was the sympathy of nature wholly inarticulate. It found an interpreter in the centurion, who, convinced by these prodigies of the divinity of the sufferer, exclaimed, "Truly this was the Son of God." But strange as it may appear, while this heathen soldier is bearing such noble testimony to the character of the crucified Jesus, his own followers abandon all confidence in him. They *did* hope that he would prove the long-expected Deliverer — the light of Israel, and the salvation of the ends of the earth; but, now they believed themselves to have been cruelly deceived. It was a bitter disappointment, but there was no help for it. Their fondly cherished hopes must be buried in the tomb in which they believed him to be sealed, the prisoner of death, until the final judgment.

But soon after, a surprising change took place in the feelings and in the conduct of these timid, disheartened men. Having been scattered, they suddenly rally again, their hopes revive, their confidence is reanimated. They are no longer wavering or fearful; on the contrary, they are decided and courageous. No argument can shake their faith — no terrors can daunt their resolution. Decision — intrepidity — the loftiest heroism characterize the men who a little while ago were appalled at the death of their Leader, and who trembled lest there should be any suspicion of their connection with him. They themselves furnish the explanation of this sudden and otherwise inexplicable change in their views and feelings. They assert that their crucified Lord is *alive*. Everywhere, at all times, in the face of all dangers, they persist in the declaration that they have seen him, conversed with him, and possess the most undeniable proofs that he has risen from the dead. So firmly has this conviction possessed them — so wonderfully does it animate them,

that they prepare to traverse their own, and even foreign lands, for the sole purpose of proclaiming salvation through the crucified and risen Jesus.

Whether its earliest heralds were mistaken, or correct in their belief of the resurrection of Christ, is not now a point under discussion. The fact that such was their avowed conviction is all that concerns us at present. That they *did maintain* this doctrine — that they made it the basis of their creed — the theme of their proclamation, is equally admitted by the Christian and the Infidel. Now of the result of these labors we have two accounts — the one furnished by the friends of Christianity, the other by its foes. Both of these concur in two important particulars. They agree in their representations of the wonderfully rapid diffusion of the new faith, and of the feeble and inconsiderable instruments employed in its propagation.

We learn from the writers of the New Testament that the first triumphs of Christianity commenced in Jerusalem — the very city which had clamored for the crucifixion of Christ. A few days after his departure from the world there was an assemblage of disciples, amounting to one hundred and twenty in number. In a little more than a week after, three thousand were converted in Jerusalem under one sermon of the apostles. This number was in a very short time increased to five thousand. Nor were the labors of the apostles confined to Jerusalem. They traversed the whole land of Judea with wonderful success in gaining numerous disciples. Even a great company of *priests* became obedient to the faith. Not to dwell upon particulars, it is sufficient to remark, that before the author of the Acts of the Apostles reaches the twenty-third chapter of his brief history of the infant church, he asserts that thousands (*μυριαδος, myriads*)

of the Jews were zealous believers. And before he concludes his narrative, he informs us that the religion of the Cross had penetrated Italy and Asia Minor, and had commenced its aggressions even upon the continent of Africa. In less than ten years from the time when Paul went forth on his missionary tour from Antioch, it was said of him and his companions that they had "turned the world upside down."

The Christian Fathers enlarge upon the triumphs of the cross, and dwell with exultation upon the splendid progress of the gospel from land to land, and from continent to continent. Justin Martyr, who flourished in the beginning of the second century, asserted that there was not a nation, either Greek or barbarian, or of any other name, even of those who wandered in tribes, or lived in tents, among whom prayers and thanksgivings were not offered to the Father and Creator of the universe, through the name of the crucified Jesus. Tertullian, who lived about half a century later, exclaims, "In whom else have *all nations* believed, but in Christ who lately came?"

In his appeal to the Roman governors, he indulges in this exulting language, "We are but of yesterday, and we have filled all places belonging to you, your cities, islands, castles, towns, councils, the palace, senate and forum, we have left you only your temples." And he adds, that should the Christians withdraw in a body from the empire, the world would be amazed at the solitude and desolation that would ensue.

Such is the testimony of the friends of Christianity — let us see how far these assertions are sustained by its foes.

About thirty years after the crucifixion, Rome became the theatre of an imperial villany, which has scarcely a parallel in history. The Emperor Nero became the in-

condiary of his own capital. To escape the odium of such an atrocity, he accused the Christians of having set fire to the city, and visited them with the most inhuman cruelties. Tacitus declares that those who bore the vulgar appellation of Christians derived their name and origin from Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, had suffered death by the sentence of Pilate; that for a while the dire superstition was checked, but it again burst forth, and not only spread itself over Judea, but was even introduced into Rome. Now no writer is more carefully guarded in his statements than Tacitus—none more sedulously free from exaggeration, and therefore we know it is no hyperbole in which he indulges, when he speaks of the “*bursting forth*” of the “superstition” as he would of the leaping flame of a conflagration, or the headlong rush of a torrent. Nor would he characterize an inconsiderable number as a “*vast multitude*” within the very walls of the capital of the world. His account of the sudden revival, and triumphant progress of the gospel, reminds us of the New Testament narrative of the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the simultaneous conversion of the thousands of Jerusalem.

The elegant Pliny, governor of the remote provinces of Pontus and Bithynia, bordering upon the Euxine, found these distant regions so filled with Christians that he addressed a letter to the Emperor Trajan, asking advice as to the proper mode of treating them. He complains that the number of the culprits was so great as to call for serious consultation; he declares that their superstition, as he characterizes it, had seized not only upon the cities, but upon the lesser towns, and open country; that the pagan temples had been almost deserted, the sacred solemnities suspended, and that scarcely any purchasers could be found for the sacrificial victims. No-

thing asserted in the Acts of the Apostles more vividly illustrates the triumphant conquests of Christianity than do these statements of the pagan Pliny.

But it is needless to extend this testimony, either of the advocates or opponents of Christianity, with regard to its vast and unparalleled conquests in the primitive ages. It was of rapid growth. It was not slowly evolved from a germ like the mythology of the ancients, originating in the dim antiquity of some remote and obscure tribe, to be developed and perfected by the accretions of long centuries — but it sprang into being, and into vigorous maturity, before its enemies had any reason to apprehend its power or the impossibility of its overthrow. Or, to change the figure, it was not like the coral island insensibly emerging during the progress of ages from unknown depths of the ocean, imperceptibly rising above the surface, and expanding into a continent, but was rather like the sudden vision of some newly-formed orb, springing fresh and glowing from its Maker's hand, and hung up in its symmetry and beauty to shine as a light forever in the firmament of heaven. Certainly and delightfully true is it that Christianity, with its celestial radiance, darted, as the beams of the morning sun from city to city, and from continent to continent, until kindreds, people, tongues, and nations, were blessed by the light, and warmed by the heat into a new and diviner life.

All the testimony which we have on the subject, from whatever source it comes, unites in illustrating the swiftly advancing and victorious march of Christianity to universal dominion. Its progress was signalized by the abolition of the corrupt and cruel institutions of heathenism, and by the establishment of order, harmony, and prosperity, in the place of misrule, dissension, and wretch-

edness. The bloody altars of superstition were overthrown. The temples of pagan deities were abandoned to solitude and decay. The most hallowed shrines grew mute — or, as if smitten with sudden fear, uttered half-audible responses. Solemnly does the choral verse of Milton celebrate these desolations :

“The oracles are dumb,
 No voice or hideous hum
 Runs thro’ the arched roof in words deceiving;
 Apollo from his shrine
 Can, no more divine,
 With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
 No nightly trance, or breathed spell
 Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

.
 Peor and Baalim
 Forsake their temples dim,
 With that twice-battered God of Palestine;
 And mooned Ashtaroth
 Heav’n’s queen and mother both,
 Now sits not girt with tapers’ holy shrine.

.
 And sullen Moloch fled,
 Hath left in shadows dread
 His burning idol all of blackest hue;
 In vain, with cymbals’ ring,
 They call the grisly king,
 In dismal dance about the furnace blue.

.
 Nor is Osiris seen,
 In Memphian grove or green.”

Thus was the advance of Christianity from zone to zone attested by the overthrow of idol gods and temples. And equally triumphant was it in conflict with *every* opposing force. At first ignored, then despised, then trampled upon by the civil power — it commanded respect — then in-

spired fear — then displayed its majestic might, and became terrible as an army with banners. It stretched forth its resistless hand, and took to itself the power. It enrobed itself in the imperial purple. The banner of the cross floated from the dome of the world's capitol, and the triumphant church placed upon her brow the diadem of the Cæsars. The last page of Eusebius glowingly depicts the blessedness of the reign of Constantine, under whom had been extended the dominion, not of pagan, but of Christian Rome, from the rising sun to the last borders of declining day, while his exulting subjects, in chants and hymns, extolled God the universal King, and gave him glory for the victories of his church.

But when we have asserted and illustrated the simple fact that Christianity did thus rapidly attain to universal diffusion, we have only entered upon the threshold of the subject. If we wonder at the celerity of its propagation, much more will our wonder be excited when we come to contemplate the numerous and formidable obstacles which opposed its progress — when we consider how every earthly influence combined to prevent its extension, how all the prejudices and powers of the world conspired for its annihilation, while there were no visible agencies at all adequate to the production of a result so stupendous, as its advancement from victory to victory, until it achieved the conquest of the world.

There is indeed *one* satisfactory method of accounting for the success of Christianity, viz., by ascribing it to that power which built the worlds. But setting aside for the present this single method of explaining its triumphs, its success becomes the most inexplicable of all wonders.

Christianity is *now* an existing fact. *We* can review its history — we can trace its entire career from its origin, through all its struggles and victories, down to the pres-

ent hour. But were our *standpoint* the beginning of the first century, instead of the middle of the nineteenth century of the Christian era, and were we from *that* point of observation required to estimate the probabilities of its success, by all the modes of reasoning known to man, we would be forced to the conclusion that it never could prevail. Our verdict would be that its success would be contrary to all the laws of mind, to all the experience of the past, to all the relations of cause and effect. There was a time when this *was* the verdict of all who had heard of the pretensions of Christianity, with the exception of a dozen obscure and illiterate individuals in the land of Judea. Even had Christianity commenced its career by adapting itself to the natural passions of the human heart — had it sought to allure men by the proffer of earthly power, wealth and pleasure — had it imposed no restraints and required no sacrifices — had it been advocated by philosophers and orators — had genius, art, and fashion lent it their fascinations — had rank and power afforded it their countenance and support, even then, in a world composed of nations and races so dissimilar in intelligence, tastes, interests, and habits, we could hardly have anticipated its universal prevalence — for when have all mankind agreed in any opinion, or become simultaneously subject to the same influence? Said Celsus, one of the early fathers of skepticism, “A man must be very weak to suppose that Greeks and barbarians can ever unite under the same system of religion!” But we proceed to show that Christianity, so far from possessing such natural attractions and adventitious aids as have been alluded to, commenced its career with pretensions, with demands, with advocates, with prospects, all culculated to excite scorn and opposition — calculated to bring it into direct and fierce collision with all established

opinions and venerable institutions — with all the philosophy of the learned, with all the creeds of the superstitious, with all the jealousy of governments, with all the enmity of the natural heart, while the agencies employed for its extension were, to human appearance, not only *feeble*, but *repulsive* and *despicable*.

The very birthplace of Christianity was inauspicious. The Jewish nation was the most unpopular branch of the human family. Their land was the Bœotia of the world. It was regarded as the native home of fanaticism, bigotry, and detestable superstition. We may learn from Tacitus in what estimation the Jewish people were regarded by their neighbors. He stigmatizes them as a race excessively depraved, prone to lust, and accounting no abomination as unlawful. He declares that what others deem sacred, they reckon profane; and what others abhor, they freely tolerate. Now, a religion emanating from a people regarded with such aversion by the rest of mankind, would be prejudged and condemned without an investigation.

But how could Christianity originate among the Jews themselves? It is true, that about the time of the birth of Christ there was among them a very general expectation of the advent of some extraordinary personage, whom their prophets had denominated Messiah. In glowing terms they had described him as a mighty conqueror who should deliver his people from foreign domination, impart new splendors to the throne of David, and extend over the world the sceptre of universal empire. Hence the Jews, from whom civil independence was now departing, eagerly seized upon such declarations, and giving to them a literal interpretation, revelled in the anticipation of the national supremacy and glory to which their deliverer would exalt them. And although their

prophets had also spoken of the humiliations and woes of their Messiah, they would have readily forgiven him any failure in fulfilling *these* predictions, had he but possessed the power to elevate them to that temporal aggrandisement which they coveted.

But when they saw him enter their capital without pomp or pageantry, surrounded by publicans and fishermen, instead of a splendid retinue of courtiers, followed by the poor, the blind, and the halt — how great was their disappointment and chagrin — how bitter their derision of his kingly pretensions! Nazareth was his reputed home, and Galileans his chosen associates — but Nazareth and Galilean were names of reproach even in Jerusalem. A Nazarene our Messiah! A Galilean our King! No, exclaimed they, this is not he; when Christ cometh no man knoweth whence he is. Is not this the *carpenter's* son? And above all, when they saw him unresisting and deserted — spat upon and derided — and then led away to ignominious crucifixion, they regarded this as a fit termination for so miserable an imposture. “Away with him!” “Crucify him!” “Let his memory perish!” And yet — astonishing to relate, and strangely true — multitudes of those who had joined in this cry, and who had witnessed his death on the cross, in a few days after, under the preaching of Peter, an obscure Galilean fisherman, were cut to the heart, and openly — exultingly — professed faith in the crucified Jesus, and became his devoted disciples!

How is this mighty revulsion of feeling, this total change of life, to be accounted for? How came it that the deep-rooted prejudices of thousands were annihilated in a twinkling, or exchanged for admiration and love stronger than death?

These very men had doubtless witnessed many of the

wonderful works of Christ — they had been spectators of his affecting death — they had seen the heaving of the rocks, and felt the quaking of the earth, and had been shrouded in the preternatural darkness; and was the preaching of the darkened heavens, and of the bursting tombs, and of the trembling earth, and of the Saviour's dying groans, less eloquent than the preaching of Galilean Peter? Surely not. How, why then, were the Jews *now* convinced? What overpowering spell so suddenly conquered their wilful prejudice, their determined unbelief? Surely here is mystery wholly inexplicable by all natural causes. Was it a mere human power which thus conquered them? Then it was a human power also which cleaved the rocks, and shook the earth, and clothed the sun with darkness.

Such was the first triumph of Christianity. But the heralds of the cross do not confine their labors to Palestine. They visit pagan lands. They proclaim the resurrection of Christ, and the doctrine of salvation through him alone, to the most *barbarous*, and to the most *enlightened* nations of the Gentile world. They seem to make no distinction between savage and civilized people. They evince no preference for any particular field of labor, but visit with equal readiness the most refined and polished cities, and the most benighted and barbarous provinces. They are as confident and courageous in the proudest capital as in the obscurest hamlet. The early champions of the cross did not hover about the outskirts of civilization, like Cossacks around the camps of disciplined armies, only to make sudden and irregular assaults, and then to flee to the wilds of the desert! It would, indeed, have been a suspicious circumstance, if Christianity had evinced a preference for the haunts of ignorant and savage tribes, and had it selected *these* as the theatre of its

first aggressions, untutored and unreflecting men might easily have been made the dupes of an imposture, however base and imprudent. But on the contrary — in the words of a venerable divine — “In this respect Christianity stands upon high vantage ground. Its Author first announced himself to an age celebrated in story and immortalized in song. His apostles travelled over classic ground. They established churches in the land of Euclid, of Aristotle and Longinus; of Demosthenes, Solon and Lycurgus; of Homer and Pindar, Atticus and Cicero, Sallust and Livy, Horace, Ovid and Virgil.” It was the Augustan age — an age distinguished for its constellation of poets, orators, and statesmen — an age eminent among all others for its inquisitive researches, its ingenious disputations, its vast and varied erudition, its bold speculations, and unfettered freedom of opinion. Not only were Ephesus and Antioch, and other renowned cities of Asia, honored by apostolic labors, but another city — more renowned than all — a city where the merchant found his exchange, the student his university, the artist his studio, the pleasure-loving his paradise, and the wit his admiring audience — the classic capital of the most classic land — there, too, the Apostle proclaimed his message, in the hearing of the volatile, ingenious Athenians (those true Parisians of antiquity) — and proclaimed it, too, with just as much confidence and expectation of success, as if, instead of the Areopagus, he had stood in the cottage of some Galilean fisherman! Nor did his labors terminate until his desire to see Rome was gratified; until Cæsar’s household heard from his lips the story of the cross.

But what popular *doctrines* do the apostles proclaim, as they journey from city to city, and from province to province, captivating and entrancing one quarter of the globe after another? How contrary to all that we might

anticipate, is the answer! Doctrines so strange and incredible as to provoke ridicule and scorn, or so unpalatable and offensive as to excite disgust and anger. What could have been more calculated to awaken the derision of the multitude than the proclamation of the resurrection of the dead? In an age when the immortality of the soul was scarcely believed, nothing could have appeared more preposterous than the assertion that the body which had seen corruption, and returned to its native earth, would be revived, reanimated, and clothed with immortality. It was the annunciation of this doctrine which caused the Apostle to be regarded as a madman by the Roman. And when he visited Athens, whose inhabitants were ever eager "to hear some new thing," he presented to their minds a novelty *too* strange and startling. When he spoke of Jesus and the resurrection, they characterized him as a "setter forth of strange gods." So vague were their ideas of his meaning, that they seem to have regarded the resurrection (*αναστασις*) as one divinity, and Jesus as another; and when more fully informed as to the Apostle's meaning, they turned away in disgust from a tenet so incredible.

What! were they to be told that the bodies which had mouldered and mingled with their kindred dust, and then been dissipated by all the winds of heaven — that the bodies whose very *tombs* had crumbled to atoms, and vanished, not only from the sight, but from the remembrance of men — were to be raised to life again? Were they to be persuaded that the elements would ever disgorge the particles which they had swallowed up? — that not only the earth, but that the sea should give up its dead? that the forms of those who went down into the fathomless caverns of the deep, in the shock of battle and tempest, would emerge from their hidden chambers, and

darken the blue bosom of the ocean as they arose to be judged with those who had slept in the earth? Would the warm pulses of life again throb in the scattered dust of Aristotle? Would Socrates, and Plato, and those ancient sages who had indulged rather in the fond hope than in the confident belief of a future existence, again stand erect upon the earth, and gaze upon that sun which centuries ago had looked down upon their graves? No, a doctrine so startling and incredible was worthy only of mockery.

Even the doctrine of a future life, as it was presented by the apostles, had nothing in it attractive to the natural heart. The heaven which they revealed to the faith of mortals was no such Elysium as that which mythology had delighted to present; no flowery abode of sensual joys and pleasures ministering to the natural tastes and passions of men;—no Paradise, where feasting and revelry ruled the hour, where black-eyed Houris reposed in every bower, and whose perfumed air ever vibrated with dulcet melodies, such as Mahomet promised to the faithful (and of which he permitted them to enjoy such large prelibations in this life)—but a world whose element was holiness, one which excluded all but the pure in heart, which did not offer one attraction to the covetous, the ambitious, the licentious, or the revengeful—one which could be attained only by a path narrow, rugged and difficult of ascent.

Point out to men a heaven where the pleasures of sense may be enjoyed in a more exquisite degree, and enjoyed forever; a heaven to which *Dives* may go with his purple robes and rosy wine; where all the natural inclinations and unhallowed propensities may find unbounded gratification, freed from the restraints of law and the checks of conscience;—and men will rivet their eager

eyes upon it, and, if possible, force the gates and scale the ramparts of a paradise so alluring. But, discarding the doctrine of a divine influence, what could so change the natural heart of man as to cause it to aspire to the pure spiritual joys of a heaven like that revealed in the gospel? Whence did myriads obtain those tastes which gave them a relish for the hallowed enjoyments and employments of glorified beings? Whence did impure grovelling mortals derive those qualifications which prepared them for the exalted services of a world of purity, for the dignity and the dominion of kings and priests unto God? If such a heaven became attractive to the eyes and hearts of mortals, it was because their eyes were opened, by some divinely exerted power, to the perception of spiritual beauty to which they had been blind before, and their hearts to the reception and love of truths which otherwise had been objects of disgust and aversion.

But how was a title to the abode of the blessed to be obtained? Would the populace be attracted, conciliated and won by the proclamation of the only name under heaven whereby salvation is even possible?

On the contrary, would they not be filled with commingled disgust and displeasure when they learned that the great burden of the apostle's message was salvation through the merits of a crucified Jew?

We have already adverted to the estimation in which the Romans held the Hebrew race. And if such was their contempt and aversion toward that whole people, now that they were in the very act of wresting the sceptre from Judah, how could they be induced to acknowledge a plebeian of that nation as a king — a plebeian despised and rejected by the vast majority of his own countrymen?

Well has it been said—had Jesus been still living—

had he advanced toward the capital, as an ambitious warrior at the head of a brave army — Romans might have respected him as a gallant foe; still the Temple of Janus would have been thrown open, and mail-clad legions would have marched to meet the invader. But if no greater honor than *this* could have been shown him, how could the Romans, ignorant of prophecy and of the spiritual nature of his kingdom, receive him as a King and Saviour? Would they not despise him and deride his pretensions, even more than his own countrymen did previous to the day of Pentecost?

Accustomed as we have ever been to associate the cross with all that is sacred and venerable, we can have no conception of the disgust which would arise in the Roman mind at the proposal to elevate a crucified man to the rank of a divine Saviour — and withal a crucified *Jew* — a Jew who was born in a stable. What witticisms, what jeers, what scoffs, would overwhelm the advocates of such a Divinity! No wonder that a Roman governor should have charged one of them with being “mad.” Should some one in this land assert the Godhead of an Indian who had been hanged upon a gallows, he would not more offend the moral sense of the community than did this doctrine of the apostles the proud and polished people to whom it was addressed.

But what doctrines did the apostles proclaim which were *not* opposed to the sentiments of the natural heart? It is no compliment to a man to tell him that he is totally depraved, utterly helpless, and justly condemned. It is an impolitic way to attempt to gain adherents to a cause by demanding of them heavy sacrifices and painful self-denials. And no system of human invention, seeking the suffrages and applauses of the world, would have demanded as its *first* requirement, self-crucifixion, and a

renunciation of all that is most dear to the natural heart. Yet such were the exactions of Christianity. It was never offered to men as a speculative creed, intended merely to occupy the intellect; but it was urged as a rule of action, to control the outer and inner life of man — to regulate not only external conduct, but to prescribe imperative laws for the government of the thoughts, desires and affections—condemning ambition, avarice, envy, intrigue, carnal ease, sensual indulgence — and enjoining meekness, temperance, forgiveness, love to God, love to man, love to *enemies*, purity of life, holiness of heart.

Almost every precept of Christianity imposes a restraint or demands the mortification of some passion or inclination of the heart.

By nature, man is proud and self-sufficient: Christianity declares him to be weak and dependent, and incapable of self-guidance. Though man is naturally obstinate and self-willed, Christianity demands the subjection of every faculty and power to the law of another. Though man is naturally selfish and intent on the gratification of his own wishes, regardless of the happiness of others, Christianity enjoins a philanthropy which is wholly disinterested; it demands a sacrifice of personal ease and interest for the promotion of the good of others, and ordains a charity which shall embrace in its arms the whole family of man. Though man is by nature prone to retaliation under a sense of wrong — though, for the moment, revenge is sweet when it is glutted by the destruction of its victim, yet, even when the bosom is swelling with rage — when furious passions lash the soul into a tempest and drown the voice of reason — even then the clear, celestial tones of the gospel are heard, rising above the din of passion, saying, “Peace, be still.” “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto

wrath." "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink!"

When Homer gave to the world his portraiture of the most renowned hero of antiquity, the prominent traits of whose character the great Latin bard has summed up in one nervous line —

"Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,"

epithets which might furnish names for four devils, he did not offend the moral sense of his countrymen by such a delineation; neither was Greek nor Roman admiration of the character of this warrior diminished, even when he is represented as dragging the dead body of his gallant rival, bound to his chariot wheels, three times around the walls of Troy, and that, too, in the sight of his aged father.

How foreign to all the genius and spirit of the age which witnessed its triumphs were the teachings of the gospel! Plain, unlettered men, without wealth, or rank, or influence (and with one or two exceptions), without address or eloquence, went abroad proclaiming doctrines most novel, startling, unpalatable. "A crucified Christ was all their rhetoric," and yet no doctrines ever promulgated, before or since that day, met with such universal favor — no teachings ever so penetrated and transformed human hearts, none ever gained a popularity so world-wide. But did Christianity obtain its unlimited supremacy over the hearts of men, did it triumph over principalities, did it ascend a throne, and issue its undisputed edicts to the subjugated nations — by forbidding all that corrupt humanity craved, by enjoining all that corrupt humanity was averse to — by waging war of extermination upon every depraved, and, therefore, cherished passion, prejudice and propensity? Leaving out of view the

intervention of divine power, here is an enigma to be solved by some more gifted intellect than the world has yet been favored with.

Another obstacle to the progress of Christianity was its *uncompromising exclusiveness*. It refused to come under the patronage of any other religion. It refused to take any other religion under its patronage. It would not even enter into a friendly alliance. It would not even make a treaty of peace. It proclaimed eternal warfare upon every other faith. Its Janus was never to be closed while an enemy survived. It demanded the overthrow of every altar and temple of paganism. Its aim was a total abrogation of all the religious systems of the world. It demanded the utter annihilation of institutions which the revolution of ages had rendered venerable and sacred in the memories of men. Claiming to be the only true religion, it would not receive the false into its embrace. To every proposed affiliation its genius replied, What communion hath light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial? It declared to paganism that its priests were jugglers and its gods a lie. It declared to Judaism that its mission had ended, that its glory had departed; that it was now only the worthless scaffold around some completed palace, and as such, fit only to be thrown down. It declared to the sage that his profoundest speculations were vain janglings. It ranked the Epicurean with the beasts, and the Stoic with the stones of the field. It estimated the wisdom of the scribe as lighter than vanity. It denounced the sleek and sanctimonious Pharisee as a disguised hypocrite, and rent in fragments the reverend garments whose hem men had stooped to kiss, and exhibited the wearer to the world as a naked child of the devil.

Such was the attitude which Christianity assumed

toward the time-hallowed systems of the world. Such was the attitude of a novel religion — one which sprung from a subjugated people — whose founder was a carpenter, and whose greatest apostle was a tentmaker.

Far easier is it to change the kings than the gods — the government than the religion of any nation. Did exclusive, uncompromising, all-assuming Christianity adopt the right *policy* for effecting such a change?

Nor are we to suppose that polytheism had a slight hold upon the affections and prejudices of men. It commended itself to the favor of the sensual by the indulgence it permitted. The fires of unhallowed lust were kindled upon the very altars of paganism. It commended itself to the imagination of the refined by the beauty of its mythology. It placed genial household gods beneath every roof. It animated all nature with propitious deities. It gave Naiads to every fountain, and Dryads to every grove. Aurora rode upon the beams of the morning, and Iris clothed herself in the melting hues of the rainbow. Old ocean obeyed its trident-bearing god — the voices of spirits were heard along its flashing waves, and sportive Nereids gambolled upon its yellow sands.

It commended itself to the taste of the common people by its gorgeously attired priests, its showy temples, its jocund festivals, its stately processions, and brilliant ritual services, rendered more attractive by all the charms derived from an alliance with music, painting, and sculpture. How seemingly hopeless the aggressions of Christianity, without imposing rites, without altars, without sacrifices, or visible gods — and utterly devoid of all external attractions!

How can a religion of faith — a purely spiritual religion — overturn systems venerable for antiquity, deeply entrenched in prejudices of men, endeared by association,

upheld by the homage and personal devotion of statesmen and warriors, who felt honored in exchanging the gown and the armor for the sacerdotal vestments, that they might personally assist in the sacred ceremonies? How shall a superstition commending itself to the bosoms and business of men, pervading all the ramifications of social life, interwoven with all the departments of government, under whose auspices Greece had attained her highest heaven of classic renown, under whose favoring smiles Rome had achieved the conquest of the world — how shall a system thus founded, and thus supported, be supplanted by an upstart faith which does not offer one attraction to worldly pride, pleasure, or glory, but which, on the contrary, summons its votaries to a life of mortification and self-denial — to obloquy, and the ruin of all earthly prospects — whose open confession is, *“If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable?”* With prospects like these, what earthly possibility is there of its triumph over the firmly-established and fondly-cherished institutions of polytheism? Experience answers — reason, common sense answers — It cannot prevail; it must perish. Nevertheless, it did prevail; it did triumph. It scattered polytheism to the winds, it sent its idols to the moles and the bats, it laid its proudest temples in the dust, and on the ruins of the fallen fabric it planted the immovable foundations, and reared the eternal pillars of the Christian church. Is this august structure the work of human hands? A stone-mason can build a wall; but does it therefore follow that he can build a world?

We have now considered the obstacles to the success of Christianity arising from its innate offensiveness to human taste, prejudice, and reason, its failure to meet the exalted expectations of the Jews, the absurdity of its doc-

trines in the estimation of enlightened pagans, the startling novelty of its precepts, its want of temporal rewards for its votaries, its unattractive spirituality, its destitution of all such sensuous charms as would captivate the vulgar, its uncompromising exclusiveness, and determined hostility to every other religion, and now it only remains to contemplate its triumph over one other obstacle, viz., over *the active external opposition* which it encountered on all sides — the desperate efforts of its enemies for its overthrow by means of slanderous tongues, and slanderous pens, and the dreadful sword of persecution.

The success of Christianity under *persecution* is a strange and deeply interesting phenomenon. It would be impossible to specify all the forms of assault to which its enemies resorted. Wherever Christianity appeared, it excited the rage of various classes and orders of men, who opposed it from widely different motives.

Professing to be a universal religion, its proclamations must needs go throughout all the earth, and be heard in the ends of the world. Its voice must mingle with the soft murmur of the Mediterranean waves, and with the hoarse tempests which thunder along the bleak shores of the frozen sea. It must come in contact with every phase of human character, as varied by different climates, degrees of civilization, and forms of government, and hence it must excite an opposition as diversified as the abodes, customs, and interests of mankind. But for the present, leaving this extended field of observation, and confining our attention to the fortunes of Christianity in the Roman Empire alone, we can readily anticipate what a host of foes its aggressions would stir up among that people. Polytheism was the munificent patron both of the fine and mechanic arts. It gave employment to the painter, to the poet, and to the humblest artisan. It gave honor and

emolument to the vast retinue of priests and officials in the service of the gods of every shrine and temple. It gave entertainment to the countless multitude in whose minds alternate emotions of awe, pleasure, and exultation, were enkindled by public games, processions and festivals.

An innumerable sacerdotal throng of pontifices, augurs, vestals and flamens derived their support from the revenues of the temples, and from the public treasury. But should the doctrines of Christianity prevail, who would believe their venerable lies? Who would make them donation visits? Whence could they obtain bread, the impostures of their craft once exploded? It is not agreeable either to a mercenary politician or priest to lose office. As a matter of course, all the satellites, and retainers, and dependants of paganism, would rouse all their energies to resist the inroads of the gospel, which took away at once their credit and their means of subsistence. The common people would be enraged at the loss of their favorite entertainments. The philosophers would gnash their teeth against a system which closed their schools, and rendered their teachings contemptible. The higher classes of society, men of rank and influence, senators and soldiers, men who derived new distinction by officiating at the ceremonials of religion, would indignantly frown upon a faith which mocked at their divinities and solemn mysteries. Kings and magistrates would regard with mingled fear and detestation such an overturning of the religion which was incorporated with the state, which was sustained by proscription and prejudice, which was so interwoven with the civil and military institutions of the country, that no warlike expedition could be ordered, and not even a seat taken in the senate, without accompanying religious ceremonies. Hence Christianity was regarded as *treason* against the state.

We cannot wonder, therefore, at the variety or the virulence of the assaults made upon so restless an agitator. The foulest slanders were verbally circulated, accusing Christians of dark, impure, and bloody rites. The acutest and most brilliant writers employed all their learning and cunning to bring Christianity into contempt. Among others, Celsus, Porphyry, Symmachus, and the Emperor Julian, wrote treatises, fragments of which have come down to us, from which we learn, that although they did not deny the miracles of the gospel record, yet they assailed Christianity with a malignity which rivalled the ingenuity of Spinoza, the wit of Voltaire, and the ribaldry of Paine.

But the final appeal of terrified and tottering paganism was to the power of the government. The Roman monarchy, the greatest and strongest upon earth, directed all its might toward the overthrow, and, if possible, the extinction of the Christian church.

A certain class of writers have indeed endeavored to create the impression that the Roman government was wonderfully liberal and tolerant towards the religions of other nations. But a closer examination into the best authorities on the subject will lead us to a very different conclusion. It is true that some of the emperors were disposed to be lenient and indulgent. There were intervals during which the church enjoyed seasons of comparative tranquillity. It is also admitted that *individuals* were permitted to express their sentiments with a great degree of freedom. For example, upon the stage, and in the writings of the satiric poets, the keenest ridicule was directed towards the thieves, murderers, and adulterers, facetiously styled "the Immortal Gods," and winked at, perhaps enjoyed, by the magistrates themselves. The caustic irony of Plautus and Terence, the philosophic

raillery of Cicero and Lucian, might be indulged with impunity. It is also true that when the Romans wished to conciliate a particular people they did not hesitate to express great reverence for the gods of that people. But Christianity was not the religion of any *nation* — but of a new sect. It was a religion demanding unconditional submission to its requirements, and refusing to enter into coalition with any form of idolatry. Hence, there was no motive, or policy, in treating *it* with conciliation. There was, on the contrary, everything to provoke jealousy and hatred. And when one of the emperors proposed to give Jesus Christ a place among the gods of the nation, the proposal was rejected by the senate.

Moreover, the Romans ascribed their greatness as a people, and the unexampled success of their arms, to the favor of their gods. It was the rhetorical boast of Min. Felix Octavius, that “because of exercising religious discipline in the camp, Rome had stretched her dominions beyond the paths of the sun, and the limits of the ocean.” Hence, however theoretically tolerant of other religions, there was often a political necessity for the exclusion of foreign rites. It was forbidden by law to pay religious honors to any deity which had not been recognized by a legislative act. S. Æmilius Paulus, during his consulship, ordered the temples of two foreign deities, not legally recognized, to be destroyed. On several occasions the senate felt itself constrained to exert its power to prevent religious innovations. Livy quotes an eloquent speech of one of the consuls against foreign rites. Dion Cassius has transmitted to us a celebrated oration, in which Mæcenas demonstrates to Augustus the danger of tolerating exotic religions; and even under the reign of Tiberius — that enemy of gods and men — the Egyptian ceremonies were prohibited. A Roman jurist declares it to be a principle of

their law, that those who introduced religions of new and doubtful tendency, if men of rank, were to be degraded; if plebeians, were to be punished with death! But of all the forms of faith known to the world, Christianity, for the reasons already mentioned, was most obnoxious to the jealousy of government. It could not be a *religio licita* of the Roman law. Its professors were liable to the charge of high reason. They were stigmatized as *irreligiosi* — *hostes Cæsarum, hostes populi Romani*.

Could any one unacquainted with the true nature of Christianity have foreseen the ominous clouds which were to gather around her, and the tempests of fire and blood which were to burst upon her, during the long night of her affliction, he would have deemed it impossible for her even to maintain an *existence* upon earth — he would have predicted her speedy and utter annihilation.

In a country blest with a constitutional government and religious liberty — where none dare lay trammels on freedom of opinion, and where the expression, “persecution for conscience’ sake,” is scarcely understood, inasmuch as none have any experience of its meaning — it is difficult to form an adequate conception of the trials of those whose lives were liable at any moment to be terminated by bloody martyrdom — who, in professing the name of Christ, provoked the wrath of principalities and powers — who had to pass by the stake on their way to the communion table. When the world respects the rites and institutions of religion, it is an easy matter to assume the name of Christian. But the profession of Christianity is a very different thing, when the official is seen disentangling the thongs of the knotted lash — when the headsmen runs his nail over the keen edge of the gleaming axe; when the torturer stirs the fagots under the red bars of the iron griddle; when the executioner jags the nails and

clanks the spikes which are to mangle while they transfix the hands and feet to the cross; when the hungry lion howls round the amphitheatre, and famished dogs stand ready to gnaw the skulls which roll from the dripping scaffold — ah! then it is a different matter to espouse the cause which exposes its professor to terrors like these. But for the testimony of faithful history, we would not believe that satanic malice could invent tortures, or that hellish cruelty could have been so unfeeling as to inflict torments, such as Christians of every age and sex were then compelled to suffer. It was not the *terror of death* — but the *death of terror* which then affrighted the soul. And if, according to the testimony of Lactantius, there were instances in which magistrates boasted that during their whole administration they had put no Christians to death, let Lactantius explain the secret of their boast, and inform us what credit is to be given to those who uttered it. He can teach us that there are punishments worse than death — that the most savage executioners are those who have resolved *not* to kill — that the most dreadful of all sufferings are those which are disguised under the name of clemency. “They give orders,” says he, “that strict care be taken of the tortured, that their limbs may be repaired for other racks, and their blood recruited afresh for other punishments!” Knowing that death would be a release to the sufferer, and that it would confer on him the glorious crown of martyrdom, and admit him to the reward of the blessed, “they inflict,” he adds, “the most exquisite pains on the body, and are only solicitous lest the tortured victim should expire!” So great was the variety of the tortures invented for them, that Domitius Ulpianus, a celebrated lawyer, wrote seven books descriptive of the different punishments that Christians ought to have inflicted on them. But if occasional

instances occurred in which humane and justice-loving magistrates, yielding to the natural sentiments of pity, were willing, with Trajan, to advise that Christians should not be sought for, and that only such as *were* apprehended should be capitally punished — yet there were no such restraints upon the blind fury of the *populace*, whose appetite for blood was only whetted by each fresh view of the gory scaffold and the crimson sands of the arena.

But why should we dwell upon details which sicken the heart and harrow the feelings? It is sufficient to observe that thousands upon thousands were the victims of those persecutions, and that the whole power of the Roman Empire, which had been sufficient to subdue the world, was exhausted in the effort to subdue the church. And here a new phenomenon engages our attention. These persecutions, so far from extinguishing the Christian name and cause, served only to give to both new honors and triumphs. If power smiled upon the church, it grew; if power frowned upon the church, it grew still faster, and amidst indescribable terrors advanced with a heroism which could “smile at the drawn dagger and defy its point.” Amid the dark glooms of persecution, there blazed forth the burning and shining lights of the world. The heroism of the soldier who fights in the presence of thousands, whose victory is celebrated by a nation’s acclamations, or whose fall is hallowed by a nation’s tears, is nothing to the heroism which supported the primitive martyrs through long months and weary years of imprisonment, and which inspired them with a holy serenity when they stood upon the scaffold, surrounded, not by admiring and applauding thousands, but by the hootings and execrations of the infuriated rabble.

Do you wish for the most illustrious examples of un-

shaken fortitude which the world has known? Then search not for them on the bloody deck or on the embattled field — but go to the deserts to which the saints have been exiled, to the dungeons in which they have been immured, to the funeral piles from which they have ascended in chariots of fire, and there behold displays of true valor, infinitely transcending the bravery of those who seek the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth, or who rush on death amid the clangor of trumpets and the thunder of artillery!

The resignation of the martyr was no sullen stoicism yielding to inevitable necessity. It was not the savage pride of the Indian at the stake, who dies, and makes no sign of inward agony. It was cheerful acquiescence in the will of Providence. It was the deep and beautiful tranquillity of those who believed that to die in the arms of Jesus was to live forever.

Like the trees which yield their precious gums only when their sides are gashed; like the palm which lifts its head highest when the greatest weight is laid upon it; like the burning forest, which kindles with fiercer flame just as the tempest beats upon it — so Christianity, under the sword, under the heel, under the storm of persecution, only the more mightily prevailed and grew. The good seed of the gospel had been sown over the field of the world, and upon that seed the blood of martyrs fell like fertilizing showers, while over it the flame of persecution was but a torrid sun, quickening it into luxuriant development, and clothing it with a brighter verdure.

It is not Paul at liberty, but Paul in chains, who bears testimony before kings, and as a captive makes converts in Cæsar's household.

The enemies of Wycliffe, years after his death, ordered that his remains should be disinterred and scattered. The

more effectually to effect this purpose, his ashes were cast into one of the branches of the river Avon, and thus, says old Fuller, "this brook did convey his ashes into the Avon, and the Avon into the Severn, and the Severn into the narrow sea, and this into the wide ocean, and so the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over." So, too, in primitive times, the whirlwind of persecution scattered the good seed wherever there was a soil on which it could fall; and not only did it germinate in rich luxuriance on the banks of fertile rivers, and on the shores of sunny islands, but far away in the distant desert there was the bloom and fragrance of the rose.

No arguments were so convincing as the patient sufferings of Christians, no miracles so overpowering as their prayers, invoking blessings on the heads of their tormentors.

Do mail-clad soldiers, inured to the atrocities of war, behold a young and beautiful female, possessed of all those charms which poets delight to celebrate and sculptors to perpetuate, accused of no crime, but that of loving Jesus of Nazareth — do these men of iron mould, behold her driven through the streets of Rome, stripped of her modest veil, scourged as she goes, and scarred with hot irons, until she sinks in the arms of death, with murmurs of pity and forgiveness upon her lips and triumph in her eyes? — then these, before unmoved and prayerless men, kneel down in the streets, and declare that, if such are the victories of the Christian faith, they, too, are the disciples of Jesus henceforth and forever; and there, beside the body of the murdered girl, they swear allegiance to the cause for which she suffered martyrdom.

Does a little boy, charged only with loving him who took little children to his arms and to his heart, clasp his

hands together as he is fastened to the stake, and sing his infant hymn as the flames kindle around him, and pray to Jesus not to desert him in the fire? — there, too, is a spectacle which makes iron-hearted veterans weep, which causes them to call upon the executioners to prepare the pile for them also, for, say they, if a child can die thus exulting and go rejoicing to the skies in a whirlwind of fire, his faith must have come from the skies; let ours be such a death, and our last end like his.

Such was the result. The sword of persecution glancing off from the shield of Christianity, inflicted mortal wounds upon the body of him who drew it, and at last fell broken from the palsied arm which had wielded it.

Such was the triumph of Christianity over its mightiest foe. The Roman power, before which the nations had bowed in subjection, cannot overcome the fishermen of Galilee, but is conquered by them. Historians have made the success of Alexander in subduing the Persian Empire with an army of thirty thousand the theme of their glowing eulogies; but what was this to the achievements of one little band of apostles?

Christianity, without arms, without allies, without wealth, without influence, without worldly allurements, goes forth from its lowly shed in Bethlehem, seizes upon Jerusalem, overcomes Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Alexandria, Rome; overturns idol, altar and temple; sweeps away the religious formations of centuries; prostrates all enemies in the dust; places its foot upon the neck of persecution; ascends the imperial throne, and gives laws to the subjugated nations. Here is a mystery demanding a solution. Here is an effect, a stupendous effect, produced without any visible agency or discovered natural cause at all adequate to such a result. Here is a consummation attained in defiance of all the ordinary laws which control

the changes of society, in opposition to all the principles which govern the developments of human affairs. Behold the Christian Church — a symmetrical edifice; not a heap of building materials, but a structure, well cemented, admirably proportioned, and garnished after the similitude of a palace, exhibiting in all its parts evidences of deep design, and matchless skill, and resistless power! Whose hands reared these walls, yet strengthening, yet rising, waiting only for the capstone, and the accompanying shoutings of a multitude which no man can number? Who is the designer and builder of this temple?

The Christian delights to answer, "I trace in every polished stone, in every pillar and battlement of this august edifice, the handiwork of a divine Architect."

If the infidel refuses to unite in this ascription, and denies the agency of the supernatural in the progress of the gospel and the establishment of the church, then let him inform us how he solves the mystery of the triumph of Christianity without the intervention of a God.

The attempt has been made. The marvellous conquests of the gospel in the primitive ages have been ascribed to natural causes, and to agencies purely human. All the ingenuity of unbelief has been exhausted in the effort to show that instrumentalities, such as man can devise and put in action, were quite adequate to the result. Without formally enumerating these agencies, or demonstrating their insufficiency to themselves to bring about the mightiest revolution ever wrought in the history of the world, it is sufficient to remark, that some of these alleged causes of the rapid propagation of Christianity were *effects* of a higher cause — even the highest. The swift and wide diffusion of the gospel has been ascribed to the dauntless courage, the purity of life, the inextinguishable zeal, of its early champions. But what rendered

these once timid, ignorant and wicked men the fearless advocates of a faith which exposed them to persecution and to death? What qualified them to become the authors of the purest and sublimest system of ethics the world ever saw? What kindled the zeal so rational, so well founded, so tempered with charity, so attended by a regard for all the proprieties of life, and yet so mighty to the overthrow of all error and of all opposition? There is only one rational explanation of the transformation which took place in these men, and that is the theological one, that it was produced by a divine influence, causing a thorough, radical and universal change in their principles, affections and lives.

But while Christianity claims a divine origin, and professes to owe its extension to a divine power, it does not weaken the force of these claims to admit that it was greatly aided in its propagation by "secondary causes," and by agencies purely human. These were not, indeed, the primary cause of its triumphs, but it only illustrates the wisdom of divine Providence when we can show how he constrains all human instrumentalities to subserve his plans in the government of the world and the establishment of his church. No believer in the great Author of revelation doubts either that he adapted his gospel to the world, or that he prepared the world for its reception, compelling even "secondary causes" to accomplish the adorable purposes of his grace; but it is hard to comprehend how any candid man, with all the facts before him, can honestly believe that the church of God was founded and has been preserved in the world by agencies simply human; or how can he find in secondary or natural causes a satisfactory solution of that mystery of a church without worldly influence, wealth, learning, rank or power, represented by men ignoble and despised, declaring, as it

did, open war upon all the vanities, vices, selfish interests, cherished propensities and deep-rooted superstitions of the world, yet triumphing over prejudice, argument, eloquence, philosophy, established religion, the sword of persecution, and finally clothing itself with the glory and the honor, the dominion and the power!

But make a single admission. Ascribe these victories to the superintendence and to the imparted aid of the Omniscient and Omnipotent, and then all wonder ceases, all mystery vanishes. Indeed, willing or unwilling, we are forced to this conclusion. There are no principles or causes of production and change in the worlds of spirit and of matter which are not either natural or supernatural; but having seen that the former is insufficient to explain the phenomenon before us, we are forced back upon the supernatural. Says Hume, "When we infer any particular cause from an effect, we must proportion the one to the other." Here, then, is the great incontrovertible fact of a religion triumphant over a thousand obstacles, any one of which would seem sufficient to arrest its progress. To refer such an effect to a human cause, and, above all, to such feeble and inadequate causes as infidelity with its best ingenuity has been able to assign, is certainly a shocking violation of the principle of the great skeptic. The disproportion is monstrous. A church resting upon its spire would be a novelty in architecture, but it would have as stable a foundation as that which infidelity gives to Christianity. Regarding the Christian church as an edifice whose maker and builder was God, we delight to contemplate the lofty spire springing *from* the temple, and pointing to heaven, to remind us of the Almighty Architect. The divine influence to which the Christian ascribes the success of Christianity is sufficient to account for every anomaly, and adequate to the production of

every effect. Sustained and developed by omnipotent power, we can see how Christianity, at first appearing as a twinkling star, surrounded by clouds and thickest glooms, should nevertheless increase in magnitude and splendor, and cleaving the surrounding veil of darkness, shine forth as the meridian sun. Urged on by the hand that moves the worlds, we can understand how the greatest results were accomplished by the feeblest instrumentalities; we see that the selection of humble fishermen as the heralds of salvation, instead of men of rank, and genius, and eloquence, was because "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 which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence," and that the power might be seen to be of God. Plain men, convinced by the miracles which they saw Christ perform of the truth of his doctrine, and able to convince others of the same truths by the miracles which they wrought, with love to God and love to men throbbing in every pulsation of their hearts, and sending the thrill of a diviner life through every limb, impelling them to all-daring, never-flagging action—men thus inflamed and thus nerved went forth into the field of the world, and sowed the good seed which has never perished, and from which thousands in all generations have reaped the harvest of life everlasting.

The *primary* cause of the success of Christianity was the operation of the Divine Spirit on the minds and hearts of men, giving to them spiritual perception—subduing their opposition to the truth, and endowing them with the expulsive and impulsive power of a new affection, "Tarry

ye," said our Saviour to his disciples, "in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." This was doubtless a trying command to men in their situation, certain of the resurrection of their Lord, assured that his kingdom would one day fill the earth with its glory, and knowing that the salvation of the race depended upon its reception of the gospel offer. With such tidings to communicate, with such a glorious King to proclaim, they must have longed to advance, at once, to the prosecution of their work; but the time had not yet come. A new and peculiar influence must descend from heaven and rest upon them ere they could be qualified for the undertaking. As the statue of Memnon, on the shores of the sea, stood tuneless and mute, until the rays of the morning sun gilded its brow, so these heralds of the gospel had neither gifts nor tongues for their sublime proclamation until the light and fire from heaven should descend upon their heads, illuminating and kindling them, and causing them in turn to illuminate and kindle others. But baptized by this heaven-descended influence, though ignorant, they became wise; though weak, they became resistless; though timid, they became animated with a courage which nothing in life or death could daunt. By this supernatural agency they were endowed not only with the gift of tongues, but with the power of working miracles. And now their most extraordinary successes are no longer inexplicable. What though they are obscure, unlettered men, standing perchance in the presence of rank and power, what is to prevent them from elevating the humble cross, and challenging the admiration and love of beholders for a crucified Saviour, while they bear in their hands the credentials of heaven, and by signs and mighty wonders are able to display to the senses and inmost convictions of men the evidences of an omnipotent

and omnipresent God, bearing miraculous testimony to the truth and importance of their doctrine? What is there longer unaccountable in the success of Christianity, the moment that the son of the lowly virgin is demonstrated to be the Son of God, and when his poor, unlettered, timid followers are seen to be girded with strength from on high? What is to prevent the triumph of doctrines which exhibit the impress of the same Almighty hand which has left its autograph on every leaf of the book of nature? Should all other miracles be blotted from record, this miracle of the swift and universal spread of Christianity would remain a monument of its celestial lineage, immovable as the everlasting hills.

And to the same power which gave to Christianity its first victories must we ascribe its *preservation* in the world during so many centuries, and its present existence, power and progress. There was a period — we need not now trace the path which led to it — when all that was pure and spiritual and divine in Christianity seemed to have been swallowed up and buried under a mass of dead forms and living corruptions; when superstition and ignorance brooded over the earth as darkness did upon the face of the deep when the earth was without form, and void. But Christianity, though disastrously eclipsed, had not been utterly extinguished. Deep beneath the smouldering ashes a brand from the altar lay buried. It was glowing unseen, like the internal fires which are smothered in the deep abysses of the volcano, presently to burst forth and shoot up their flames to the empyrean. Through all the dark ages the religious element was working, and though misdirected, as in the case of the Crusades, it was not annihilated. The Word of God, though bound, was not utterly silent, and even when its whisper was heard, the still small voice was glorified. There were

not wanting, even in the bosom of the apostate church, witnesses for the truth as it is in Jesus. Claudius of Turin, in the ninth century, and Peter of Bruys, Arnold of Brescia, in the twelfth century; Pierre Valdo, Wycliffe, Jerome of Prague, Anselm of Canterbury, and Savonarola, in later times, all testified against the abuses which had corrupted the church; and, above all, the Vaudois formed a long-continued chain of witnesses for the truth, holding up the cardinal doctrines of the gospel, even as the Alpine mountains which they inhabited lifted up their summits above the plains to be bathed in the pure sunlight of heaven. The Waldenses, nestling in the valleys of Piedmont, holding fast to their integrity, served God in ancient purity of worship, and never bowed the knee to Baal; and even when the sword of the persecuting foe smote among them they were not destroyed, but, when scattered, went forth into all parts of Europe, sowing the good seed of the Word of life. It was the noble heroism of this band which inspired that immortal sonnet of Milton, so truly descriptive of their wrongs and of the fruit of their sufferings:

“Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter’d saints, whose bones
 Lie scatter’d on the Alpine mountains cold;
 Ev’n them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
 When all our fathers worshipp’d stocks and stones,
 Forget not: in thy book record their groans,
 Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
 Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that roll’d
 Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
 The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
 To heav’n. Their martyr’d blood and ashes sow
 O’er all th’ Italian fields, where still doth sway
 The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow
 A hundred-fold, who having learn’d thy way
 Early may fly the Babylonian woe.”

When at last the light of the Reformation blazed forth, it was evidently kindled by the same spirit which came down in tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost. It was not by might, nor by human power, that the Reformation was accomplished.

Various temporal princes resisted Rome, but one after another (to use the fine metaphors of D'Aubigne) they broke in pieces at the base of the mighty Colossus they undertook to overthrow. Learning, too, awoke and came to the rescue; but learning became subsidized, and kissed the feet of the power it attempted to dethrone. At last the apostate church undertook to correct its own abuses, but corruption could not purify corruption, nor could the festering wound originate its own cure. But finally the regenerative power which erected the church of the first century on the ruins of polytheism, built up its demolished walls on the ruins of Babylon. The divine oracles, so long imprisoned, again spoke forth, and the Word was life and light. Pure Christianity revived. Old things passed away and all things became new.

Since the glorious era of the Reformation, Christianity has illustrated her indestructibility by coming forth unscathed from the assaults of other foes. Even under its noon-tide radiance, and in the enjoyment of the richest blessings which the gospel has communicated to the world, there has arisen an order of men whose hearts are filled with rancorous hatred to its doctrines, and who have exerted all their powers in the attempt to dislodge its truths from the memories and affections of their fellows. Casting aside the old weapons of force, the assault has been not upon the bodies, but upon the minds of men. "In this campaign infidelity has marshalled all its hosts, it has sent forth its ponderous tomes of grave scholastic argument, it has come forth arrayed in the imposing garb

of philosophy. It has assumed to itself all the panoply of science. It has mingled its dogmas with the voice of history. It has infused its poison into the fountains of literature. It has blended its notes with the sweet cadences of poetry. It has chanted its blasphemies in softest strains of music. It has crept into every house in the garb of fiction. It has shot forth the polished arrows of satire, and decked itself with the charms of wit and sentiment. It has borrowed the livery of heaven, and transformed itself into an angel of light. It has pretended to be the only true friend and ally of freedom. It has spread its lures for the feet of the aged, and stolen with velvet tread into the chambers of youth and innocence. Since the era of the Reformation, it has joined hands, as did polytheism of old, with persecuting power. It has again drawn the sword, and kindled the fagot, and quarried the prison, and set in order its implements of cruelty. It has thundered its denunciations against the heralds of the gospel, and armed its myrmidons against the followers of the meek and lowly Lamb. It has abolished the temples of the Most High, attempted to raze the foundations of the church, and to overwhelm in a tempest of fire and blood all who professed to be followers of the crucified Redeemer. And still the church survives, God being her refuge and strength, and very present help in time of trouble.

There is another and very different illustration of the "success" of Christianity, to which we would fain advert, viz., to its instrumentality in relieving human wants and woes, its amelioration of the wrongs and evils of society, the solace it brings to the wounded spirit, and its happy influence on the temporal prospects of men. Wherever it has gone it has rebuked oppression, repressed violence, and compelled vice, abashed, to skulk in darkness. Chris-

tianity is now the mightiest power at work among the nations — nay, nations are civilized just in proportion as they are Christian. Modern civilization is the offspring of Christianity. The institutions which most conserve, which most elevate and purify society, owe to it their origin. It is the foundation of all just law; it is the patron of every fine art. It is the genius of whatever is most healthful in literature. From it the poet derives his divinest inspiration, the painter his grandest and tenderest scenes. The sweet charities of domestic life, the most hallowed ties which unite human hearts on earth, refinement of manners, courtesy of intercourse, cultivation of taste, all these are among its incidental benefits, while its grand aim is to purify the heart and elevate the affections, and so transform the entire man as to qualify him for the felicities and glories of the heavenly world. While infidelity is like the molten lava which, spouting up from the fiery depths of the volcano, overwhelming vineyards and human habitations in its destructive sweep, then settles down upon the blackened ruins, hardening itself to stone — Christianity descends like the gentle dews of heaven, steals through the silent valleys, diffusing fertility and fragrance as it goes, causing the dry land to become springs of water and the desert to blossom as the rose, while before it sighing and sorrow flee away, and in its train come thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

The author of that admirable little work entitled *The Bible True*, remarks that “there are two effects produced by the Word of God on the hearts of those who embrace it, which are peculiar to revelation. One is elevated purity. This effect is not confined to the virtuous part of mankind, but is witnessed also in the desperate, and outrageous, and lawless, who are brought under its power. Men fierce as wild beasts, as cruel as death, and ungov-

ernable as the storm, have often felt its purifying power. This has been the case from the first. An early Christian writer says, 'Give me a man of a passionate, abusive, headstrong disposition; with a few only of the words of God, I will make him gentle as a lamb. Give me a greedy, avaricious, tenacious wretch, and I will teach him to distribute his riches with an unsparing hand. Give me a cruel and blood-thirsty monster, and all his rage shall be exchanged to true benignity. Give me a man addicted to injustice, full of ignorance, and immersed in wickedness, he shall soon become just, prudent and innocent.' "

Such was the testimony of one who witnessed the power of Christianity in the primitive age. Let us content ourselves with a single illustration of its influence in more modern times, as exhibited in the following simple narrative, extracted from an annual report of the Bible Society, and worthy of perpetual remembrance:

"In 1787, the ship *Bounty* sailed from England to the Pacific in quest of young bread-fruit trees, to be replanted in the West Indies. On her way home the crew mutinied, placed the master and eighteen others in a frail open boat, with scanty provisions, and committed them to the mercy of the ocean. Strange to tell, that boat accomplished a voyage of more than 4,000 miles, and reached England in safety. The mutineers, twenty-five in number, set sail for some island in the Pacific. They quarrelled and separated. About half of the whole number were captured by an English vessel-of-war, carried home and hung in irons. Nine of these desperadoes went to Tahiti, took on board nineteen natives, seven men and twelve women, and sailed for some uninhabited island in the ocean. They found one, Pitcairn's Island. Shortly after landing, the Tahitian men murdered five of the mutineers, upon which the twelve women rose at night and killed

their seven countrymen. Of the four remaining mutineers, one invented a distillery, and becoming delirious leaped from a cliff into the sea and was lost. Another was shot for attempting to destroy his messmates. Of the two then left, one died a natural death, and the other, named John Adams, alone survived. Here their hiding-place was undisturbed until 1814, when it was visited, as also in 1825. Strange alterations had taken place. The number of inhabitants had increased to seventy. There was no debauchery amongst them. Good order prevailed. Filial affection and brotherly love pervaded the entire society. The blessing of God was invoked on every meal. Prayer was offered every morning, noon, and evening. The laws of civilized society were in force. The rights of property were respected. A simple and pure morality was prevalent. How was this? What had made the change? Had vice wrought its own cure? Had there been some good principles combined with the mutiny and murder, the heathenism and devilish passions, which this gang had been guilty of? No. These evils never work their own cure, except by consuming, like a fire, their own materials. The cause of the change was this. Adams had saved, hid, and preserved a Bible, and when his comrades were dead, he studied it, embraced its promises, believed God's testimony concerning his Son, was converted, read and taught its truths to his family and neighbors, and God blessed his Word to their conversion also. That very Bible is now in this country. It is a small volume, printed in 1765. The salt sea and the salt tears of old Adams have taken away its gloss and dimmed its print; but it contains God's testimony of Jesus. That was the secret of its power. The worm has eaten it through and through. But the glad tidings to sinners can still be read in it. That Bible has travelled round the

globe, has been the means of reforming a whole community of outlaws, and still lives to proclaim its divine Original and its life-giving power. When Adams was brought to his death-bed he was old in years, but strong in faith. The friends of the old salt collected around him and asked, 'Well, John, what cheer?' 'Land ahead!' was his characteristic reply. After a few days they again gathered around him and said, 'Well, John, how now?' He replied, 'Rounding the point into the harbor.' At last he lay upon his dying pillow, and his relations were standing all around in tears, and yet in hope. One said, 'Brother, how now?' 'Let go the anchor,' was his dying exclamation, and he fell asleep."

Having now taken this general, but extended view of the rise, progress and effects of Christianity, we may be permitted, in conclusion, to cast a single glance toward the future.

We have seen enough to convince us that our holy religion is indestructible in its nature, possessing within itself no elements of decay, but the principle of immortality. The shield of God is spread over it, and the bosses of that buckler are eternal truth and power. There let infidelity hurl its darts until, with nerveless, withered, wasted arm, it abandons the contest, with the confession that such assaults are more idle than casting straws against the impenetrable scales of leviathan. Its past history gives the bright presage of its future victories. Amidst all the revolutions of ages, amidst all the desolations of time, amidst all the changing, vanishing creeds and institutions of the world, Christianity still survives; and rises to the view as beautiful and glorious as on the day when, arrayed in its primal loveliness, it came down from heaven to redeem and regenerate the earth. "Serapis fell with Thebes, Baal with Babylon, Apollo with

Delphi, and Jupiter with the Capitol, but Christianity has often beheld the demolition of her sacred temples without being convulsed by their fall." It derives its vitality from him who only hath immortality, and its shrine is not material walls, but the living heart of the good man. When its temples have been overthrown, and its disciples compelled to flee the haunts of civilized life, its hymns have charmed the solitude of the desert, its prayers have hallowed the damp walls of the dungeon, its sacraments have been celebrated in the dens of the earth, its most illustrious triumphs have been witnessed upon scaffolds, its brightest glories have blazed forth from the funeral piles of its martyrs. Other creeds have been like the clouds, for a time piled up in dizzy heights and bathed in the golden beams of the sun, while Christianity, like the sun itself, shines undimmed and unwasted, with none of its original glory obscured. Every day its expansive power becomes increasingly manifest. Its missionaries now traverse all lands, dare all climates, and tempt all seas.

With each returning Sabbath the praises of its exalted Author are murmured from ten thousand tongues; the strain is caught up from church to church, and from land to land, until the music goes echoing round the world.

And can we for a moment believe, that a religion so benign, so adapted in its provisions to the necessities and woes of the world, teaching sweet lessons of resignation under present sorrow, inspiring such joyous anticipations of future blessedness, can ever perish? No; these celestial hopes, whose untiring wings waft the soul above all that is terrestrial, these sublime aspirations, whose angel fingers point to the illimitable sky, and cheer the spirit with the foretaste of a destiny full of glory, honor, immortality, eternal life; oh! no; these can never perish —

they are heaven-born and indestructible. They can never be supplanted by a sullen, cheerless infidelity, which submits, because it must, to inexorable fate — which has no prospects, but a cold, bleak world around, and a rayless eternity beyond — whose best discovery is, *a grave without a resurrection, and a world without a God.*

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