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THE MAGNANIMITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT.

“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit! And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.”—Acts 7 : 59, 60.

THIS brief record of the death of the first martyr to Christianity is a complete refutation of one objection, which its enemies have urged against it. They have asserted, and often with an air of triumph, not merely that its doctrines are absurd, but that its spirit is degrading to the dignity of human nature. In their estimation, the lofty aspirations of ambition, the indignant spirit, which kindles at every affront or injury, and visits it with implacable resentment, and the sanguinary exploits of renowned conquerors, constitute the elements of true greatness. Hence the homage, which in all ages, has been paid to the daring enterprises of cupidity and ambition; the prompt and cheerful obedience, which has been rendered to the laws of honor, falsely so-called; the indignant infliction of evil for evil, and the valor and skill which have been displayed in waging sanguinary wars. Those who place these achievements, and the spirit which prompts them, among the characteristics of true greatness, in the temper and morality which the gospel inculcates see nothing to admire. Its devout, meek, patient, and forgiving spirit, they consider not adapted to *elevate*, but to *depress* men in the scale of true dignity and greatness. That this sentiment is false, and fraught with danger to the temporal and eternal interests of men, we hope to make evident.

We have not time to notice all the distinctive features of the Christian spirit. We shall confine our attention mainly to those which entitle it to the character of genuine magnanimity. We

cannot accomplish this purpose, however, without subserving another of amazing moment to the professed disciples of the Lord Jesus. It will furnish them with a safe criterion of character—a test by which the validity of their claims to membership in His family may be tried.

What, then, are the elements of true greatness,—of real magnanimity,—embraced in the spirit which the gospel inculcates, and which instrumentally it originates and sustains?

I. Its greatness is shown by the victories which it achieves over the corrupt affections of the human heart. The existence of these affections is denied by few, even of those who withhold their assent from the statements of the Bible respecting the *extent* of native depravity. By the unsparing censures which they pass upon those who give unbridled indulgence to impure and malevolent passions, they make it abundantly evident that they believe in their existence. Nay, many attest their existence in their own bosoms, by pleading in self-justification their inability to control them.

None who profess the Christian spirit, doubt that by nature there dwelleth no good thing in them;—that the heart, unsanctified by the Spirit of God, “is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” With them, the corruption of the heart is a matter of painful consciousness. From the pollution and power of sin, they pant to be delivered; but all human expedients for its expulsion, are vain. Philosophers and uninspired moralists have given wise rules for the government of the appetites and passions. The authority of human law has restrained from acts of impurity, fraud, and violence. But neither the teachings of philosophy, nor the authority of law, nor both combined, have *eradicated* the passions which prompt to deeds of evil. And they have often been insufficient to hold them in check. To cleanse the corrupt fountain whence issue the streams of pollution and misery, which desolates families, societies, and nations, they have done nothing. They have never expelled from human bosoms, selfishness, pride, envy, impure affections, the inordinate love of the world, repining under the afflictive dispensations of Providence, and enmity toward God or man. All that human wisdom and power have been able to do, is merely to *restrain* the grosser ebullitions of depravity.

The expulsive power of the Christian spirit has done more. By its introduction into the heart, its native darkness and impurity have been partially expelled; its pride, selfishness, and inordinate attachment to things earthly, have been diminished; and it has been expanded with benevolence, not toward *friends* merely, but *foes*, and love and devotion to God. Imperfect as is the degree of it in the present life, by its introduction into their hearts, its subjects are wonderfully transformed. Old things pass away,

and all things become new. The passionate become meek, the fraudulent just, the niggardly generous, the intemperate sober, the violent gentle, the impure chaste, the profane prayerful and devout, and the vindictive forgiving. The worshippers of mammon, by its transforming power, become spiritually-minded, and "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."

What we have said concerning the purifying efficacy of the Christian spirit, is not disproved by the fact that those who give decisive evidence that they possess a measure of it, often give mournful proof of remaining depravity. In this life they are but *partially* sanctified. Nor is the fact of the change wrought in the heart by this spirit set aside or weakened by the admission, that many who profess to have received it exhibit none of its celestial fruits in the life. An apostle has taught us, that "they are not all Israel that are of Israel." "But what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?" No fact is more clearly established than that multitudes of all ages, from the little child to the old man leaning upon his staff—of every grade of intellect and of all ranks and conditions—in every period of time, and in every condition of society, *have* experienced the change of which we are speaking. They have abandoned courses of evil which they had before eagerly pursued, resisted temptations to which they had yielded, and been eminent examples of meekness, spirituality, benevolence to men, and zeal for the glory of God.

And who exhibit the greatest magnanimity? Those who give indulgence to unhallowed affections, or those, who by the grace of God, labor to exterminate them? Those who live after the course of this world, or those who are crucified to it by the cross of Christ, and strive to "perfect holiness in the fear of God?"

These inquiries admit of but one answer. There is no magnanimity in self-indulgence—in following the corrupt inclinations of the heart; but there is real greatness in Christian self-denial—in the victories of holiness over sin. There is real moral grandeur and heroism in cutting off the right hand and plucking out the right eye that offend, and governing the heart and life by God's holy and immutable law.

II. The greatness of the Christian spirit is evident from its superiority to the principles, spirit, and practices of this world. Many of the practices in which the men of the world indulge—many of the maxims by which they regulate their conduct and prevailing spirit, are in direct conflict with God's requirements. With them, pecuniary advantage, honor, or the indulgence of the appetites and passions, separately or combined, is the paramount object; and, provided the pursuit of it be so conducted as not to transgress human law, many seem to think they have done nothing deserving censure, even though the feelings of others are outraged

and their rights disregarded. If, in the pursuit of their favorite objects, they do not transgress human law, they take it for granted they do not the Divine. That an act may be legally right, and at the same time morally wrong, seems not to have entered their minds. With many, public opinion, however erroneous, and human law, though in direct conflict with the Divine, constitute the standard of morality. Hence the pleas so often urged in vindication of the traffic in intoxicating drinks, divorce on the most trifling grounds, the desecration of the Sabbath, public amusements of corrupting tendency, licentiousness, and offensive war. Nay, duelling, suicide, the holding of men "for filthy lucre's sake," in involuntary bondage, and converting them into mere "goods and chattels," and even the accursed slave-trade, have their advocates.

We rejoice to state that many, who prefer no claim to the possession of the Christian spirit, hold the things just mentioned in utter detestation. They are distinguished for the exercise of the humane and social affections, have a keen sense of justice and honor, and are noble examples of a disinterested love of country. But these amiable attributes of character, notwithstanding they give their chief attention and regards to the interests of this world, and live as exclusively to themselves and the objects of their selfish attachment, as if there were no God to whom they owe their supreme homage. They refuse to deny themselves for His sake, and offer to Him the sacrifice of humble and grateful hearts. They form their plans, transact their business, and seek their own pleasure, to the utter neglect of the great end for which He dignified them with a rational and immortal existence. This class of amiable rejecters of the claims of God to their love and service, embraces many who seem wholly to overlook the necessity of right motives and affections to render actions, which are correct in form, acceptable to God. Provided their words are truthful and kind, and their visible deportment correct, they pass no sentence of condemnation upon themselves, though pride, envy, discontent, impure affections, and enmity, burn and rankle in their bosoms.

Infinitely superior to the system of the world's ethics, is the course to which the Christian spirit prompts men. So far as they are influenced by it, they do not inquire whether an act or course of conduct have the sanction of human law or public opinion, but whether it be right?—whether the Word of God approve it? *Him* they strive to please and honor. To receive His approbation and promote His glory, they cheerfully sacrifice their ease and pleasure, their worldly interest, and the friendship of men. Abraham, when called of God to leave "Urr of the Chaldees," and his kindred, for a land to him unknown, obeyed the heavenly mandate, and "went out, not knowing whither he went." By

this act, he exposed himself to the world's reproach and scorn; but the opinion of men had little influence with him, when it contravened the will of God. Moses, when a candidate for the highest honors of the court of Egypt, "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the *reproach* of Christ *greater riches* than the treasures in Egypt." Nehemiah, when urged by his friends to seek safety, in an hour of peril, by deserting the post of duty and concealing himself in the courts of the temple, with heroic decision of purpose and real magnanimity of soul, replied: "Should such a man as I flee? and who is there that being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in." When the apostles, after having been prohibited by the high-priest and elders to preach Christ to the people, persisted in their work, they justified themselves by appealing to the authority under which they acted. "We *ought*," said they, "to obey *God* rather than *man*." Upon this principle, Paul, the Reformers, our Puritan forefathers, and "the noble army of the martyrs," acted. They cheerfully sacrificed the honors, the pleasures, the possessions and friendships of the world, in order to serve God and secure an inheritance in His kingdom. They looked beyond "the things which are seen and temporal, to those that are unseen and eternal."

And who exhibit most true dignity and greatness? those who act in accordance with the maxims, the spirit, and the ethics of the world, or those who make the Word of God the rule of duty?—those who forego eternal joys for momentary gratifications, or those who sacrifice the latter when they conflict with the claims of the former?—those who live to themselves, or those who make it their governing aim, though at the sacrifice of what they hold most dear on earth, to glorify and enjoy God? No candid person can be at a loss for an answer to these inquiries.

III. The Christian spirit exhibits its moral grandeur and magnanimity under the infliction of unprovoked injuries. Under malevolent treatment, the spirit of the world is bitter and vindictive. Its subjects, even when restrained by education, conscience, public opinion, or the supremacy of law from avenging their wrongs, they awaken implacable hatred toward the authors of them. Were opportunities afforded and restraints to be removed, their causeless injuries would be visited by speedy and terrible retribution. Not unfrequently they have been. Examples are not wanting of individuals, suffering under real or imaginary injuries, who have watched for years for an opportunity to avenge them. When it occurred, they seized it as the tiger pounces on his prey, and left the victims of their hate lifeless or convulsed with their final agony.

Such are not the fruits of the Christian spirit. These consist in

the cheerful forgiveness of injuries, and deeds of kindness toward their authors, prompted by holy and benevolent affections. The glorious Founder of our religion, not only forbids us to render evil for evil, but requires us to overcome evil with good, and to exercise toward enemies a meek and forgiving spirit. "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." These are the laws of His blessed Kingdom. Such importance does He attach to these and similar commands, that He has made obedience to them the condition of obtaining forgiveness of our heavenly Father. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Nay, in the prayer which He taught His disciples, we find this emphatic petition, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." He requires us when we pray for forgiveness from God, to give a solemn bond, the penalty of violating which, is eternal condemnation, that we will forgive others as we pray to be forgiven. Such morality,—morality so utterly at variance with the maxims, spirit, and usages of the world—may well claim a celestial origin.

Examples of such a spirit are not wanting. The persecuted apostle of the Gentiles could in truth say for himself and his suffering brethren, "Being reviled we bless; being persecuted we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat." From the records of ecclesiastical history we learn that the Jews became so incensed at the apostle James because he preached that Jesus was the Messiah, that they put him to a violent death; and that while suffering its agonies, he earnestly prayed that they might be forgiven. Stephen, when dying under a shower of stones, which his enemies poured upon him, "kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord lay not this sin to their charge." Examples of this sort were not confined to the apostolic age. The dark and suffering periods of persecution abounded with them. And, much as the lack of the spirit of Christian forgiveness in the professed disciples of the Lord Jesus is to be deplored, we believe it has, in centuries gone by, existed, and that it now exists among them to a far greater extent than the children of disobedience are willing to admit. One example I cannot forbear to notice.

David Brainerd, after asking forgiveness from one of whom he had spoken disrespectfully, adds, "God has made me willing to do anything that I can do consistent with truth, for the sake of peace, and that it might not be a stumbling-block to others. For this reason, I can cheerfully forego and give up what I verily believe, after the most mature and impartial search, is my right in some instances. God has given me the disposition, that if a man has done me an hundred injuries, and I, (though ever so much

provoked to it,) have done him only one, I feel disposed and heartily willing humbly to confess my fault to him, and on my knees to ask forgiveness of him, though at the same time he should justify himself in all the injuries he has done me, and should only make use of my humble confession to blacken my character the more, and represent me as the only person guilty; yea, though he should as it were insult me, and say, he knew all this before, and that I was making work for repentance." But we have a more illustrious example of a forgiving spirit than is furnished by the lives of Paul, or Stephen, or James, or Brainerd. When the incarnate Son of God was expiring upon the cross in unutterable agony, amidst the taunts and insults of His murderers, He prayed, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." Compared with the meek, forgiving spirit of the gospel, that of the irascible and vindictive spirit of the world is abject meanness. The difference between them was well expressed by one, whose friend when smarting under an injury, inquired whether he did not think it would be *manly* to avenge it. He replied, "I think it would be *man-like* to avenge, and *God-like* to forgive it. There is real magnanimity of soul,—a moral grandeur in acts of Christian forgiveness,—which make the avenging of injuries and the chivalrous deeds of the world's heroes and conquerors, appear degrading and even contemptible.

IV. The magnanimity of the Christian spirit is shown by the support and consolation which it gives in seasons of sorrow and pain, and the victory which it achieves over the king of terrors. It enabled those ancient worthies, of whom such honorable mention is made in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, patiently to suffer "cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment," and armed their souls with holy fortitude when "stoned, sawn asunder, tempted and slain with the sword." Job, sustained by this spirit, as he sat down amidst the ruins of all his earthly comforts, with celestial composure and peace, said, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." Fortified by this spirit, David, when his life was unrighteously sought by his enemies, triumphantly exclaimed, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me upon a rock." Under the sustaining power of this spirit Paul, even when his bosom was pervaded with a sense of his own weakness, exultingly said, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." It enabled him and his suffering brethren amidst want, weariness, scorn, enmity, and persecution, "to glory in tribulation," and in the language of assured faith to say

“Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Thousands of the possessors of this spirit, when bending in the agony of grief, over dying friends and kindred, and over their graves when dead, have sweetly acquiesced in the will of God. The feeling of their hearts has been, “Not *our* will, but *thine* be done.” And signal have been the victories which it has gained over the cruel spoiler, death. The sweet Psalmist of Israel said, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.” In anticipation of his departure from the world, Asaph thus expressed his soul-sustained confidence in God: “My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.” Paul panting to enjoy the Saviour’s presence in heaven, said, “I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ.” In the prospect of his speedy removal to eternity, he was enabled to say, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.” This victory over death was not the exclusive privilege and achievement of saints, endowed with the gift of inspiration. Since that was withdrawn, thousands have died in the triumphs of faith in Jesus. And they have embraced all ages and every grade of intellect and variety of native temper and education. It would be delightful to contemplate the victory of many of them over the king of terrors, but our limits allow us to notice only a few.

Nathan W. Dickerman, an uncommonly lovely and interesting child, died in the eighth year of his age. During his long and painful sickness, he enjoyed great peace in believing in Jesus. To him, death had no terrors. Shortly before he died, he sent this message to an absent friend. “Tell him I’m very happy—my Saviour is precious—and if we don’t meet on earth again, I hope we shall meet in heaven.”

Catharine Brown, whose conversion was one of the early fruits of missionary labor among the Cherokee Indians, died young. When it became evident that her final hour on earth was near, she said, “I feel perfectly resigned to the will of God. I know He will do right with His children. I thank God that I am entirely in His hands. I feel willing to live or die, as He thinks best. My only wish is that He may be glorified.”

The widow of the late Rev. Dr. Blatchford, of Lansingburgh, who through a long life was an ornament to her sex, and an honor to humanity and evangelical religion, in the early part of her last sickness, suffered some disquietude of mind, under a sense of her own unworthiness. But the Sun of Righteousness soon dispelled the gloom. “Now,” said she, “I enjoy not merely a glimpse,

but a full blaze of the divine glory as revealed to me through Christ. I dared to hope and pray only for *peace*, that I might be delivered from darkness, but O, it is the *fulness of joy*, the *fulness of joy*. And can it be that I am so blessed? It's wonderful! it's wonderful! matchless condescension! infinite grace!!" In the sermon delivered at her funeral, her pastor remarked, "At one time she seemed in a perfect transport of joy in view of her departure. All present were filled with awe, and thought her just about to burst the chains of earth and soar away to the mansions of peace, as she raised her dying hands, and with heaven beaming in her countenance exclaimed, I'm mounting, O I'm mounting! O I desire to see the whole world filled with the glory of God."

The Rev. John Janeway, an accomplished scholar, died in England at the age of twenty-four. During the greater part of his sickness, he seemed to enjoy the bliss of heaven. Shortly before he expired, he said, "Let no Christian ever be afraid of dying. Death is sweet to me. Praise is now my work, and I shall be engaged in that sweet employment for ever. I shall in a few hours be in eternity, singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb."

The late Dr. Payson, when convulsed with agony, said: "While my body is thus tortured, the soul is perfectly happy and peaceful. My soul is filled with joy unspeakable." Multitudes of Christians have died in a similar manner. Infidelity and irreligion *never* obtained such a victory over death. Nothing but the Christian spirit ever did. And what spectacle on earth can be more sublime than that of a feeble mortal vanquishing the king of terrors, by the might of Him "who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel?"

V. We have a further proof of the magnanimity of the Christian spirit, in the benevolence and grandeur of its purposes, and in the labors and sufferings to which it prompts in the execution of them. It leads one to yearn over a world lying in wickedness, and to employ the means which God has ordained to enlighten and save it. Under its constraining power, the apostles went forth and proclaimed in the ears of all to whom they could gain access, the glad tidings of salvation through Immanuel's blood. To this noble work they devoted all their strength and energy, in the face of scorn, enmity, persecution, and all the appalling apparatus of martyrdom. But this age of blessed zeal and triumph was followed by a night of fearful darkness and corruption of more than a thousand years' duration. But the morning-star of the Reformation heralded the dawn of a bright and blessed day, whose beams of hope and promise it is our exalted privilege to behold. Far removed as the Church is from the elevation of Christian attainment which she ought to have reached, it cannot be denied that

during the last half century there has been a great increase of the missionary spirit. In the minds of thousands of the disciples of the Lord Jesus, the purpose is formed in reliance upon His grace, while life shall last, to labor and pray for the conversion of the world, and the training up of the succeeding generation to carry forward the work when their bodies shall moulder in the dust. For the accomplishment of the grand and God-like purpose of spreading the gospel through the world, hundreds of thousands of dollars are yearly contributed, a large proportion of which is from the hard earnings of industry and the scanty pittance of the poor. Since this new era of missions commenced, hundreds of devoted men and women have gone to distant, barbarous continents and islands to make known to their benighted and perishing population the salvation of the gospel. Constrained by the love of Christ, they cheerfully bid adieu to country and kindred, cross oceans, penetrate inhospitable and insalubrious regions, and expose themselves to piercing cold and scorching heat, and all the privations, hardships, and sufferings of savage life. Many of them have already fallen victims to incessant toils and insalubrious climate; and some by the hand of savage violence. Still, those who survive are not disheartened or dismayed. They are now prosecuting their benevolent, self-denying labors amidst the frosts and snows of Labrador and Greenland, and on the burning plains of Asia and Africa. Prophecy assures us this spirit shall live and increase till the glad tidings of salvation shall have been published to all people.

Who has not admired the fortitude and enterprise of those who, for the sake of discovery or gain, have traversed unknown oceans, circumnavigated the globe, and penetrated into the heart of unexplored and barbarous kingdoms? Their boldness of purpose, their fortitude under suffering, their heroism in danger, and perseverance against seemingly insuperable difficulties, have won for them the admiration of the world. The daring purposes and enterprises of ambition, have done the same for their authors. Napoleon sought to bring all Europe and part of Asia and Africa under his control; and Alexander achieved the conquest of the world. By their bold and comprehensive plans and purposes, and their indomitable resolution and untiring perseverance, they secured to themselves the honors of an earthly immortality. But what were *their* purposes and exploits in the scale of moral grandeur, compared with those which Christian love has originated! In importance to mankind, what are travels and voyages of discovery, and the acquisitions of science and gains of commerce, secured by them, compared with the blessings of the gospel of peace? The advantages of the former are limited to the present transient state of existence: those of the latter are eternal. And the former have often been procured by acts of injustice and vio-

lence. For what purpose did Alexander and Bonaparte labor to extend their power and authority over the nations? Not to *bless*, but to make them subservient to their own low ambition and pleasure. Both made their way to empire through countries desolated by their armies, over the ruins of pillaged and conflagrated towns and cities—over the gory, lifeless bodies of slaughtered millions, and amidst the tears and sighs of those whom they had bereaved.

The Christian spirit seeks the conquest of the world, not to *enslave*, but to *emancipate* it; not to curse, but to enrich it with the choicest blessings. Although it does not seek, as its main end, the temporal amelioration of mankind, yet its humane and benevolent work will not be fully accomplished till all the forms of despotism on earth give place to free and righteous governments; till fraud and oppression shall cease; till the last accursed slave-ship shall retire from the coast of injured, bleeding Africa, and all her enslaved children shall be made free; till the blessings of civilization and science shall be diffused throughout the world; and “nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Did the spirit of Christian benevolence contemplate nothing more than the emancipation of mankind from temporal evils, and putting them in possession of the blessings of civilization, science, and of free and equitable governments, all other schemes of good compared with this enterprise, would have little to command admiration. But these temporal benefits of Christianity, great and invaluable as they are, do not constitute its chief mission. The spirit of Christian benevolence contemplates men mainly in their relations to God and the world of eternal retribution; as rational and immortal beings, ruined by sin, and offered salvation in the gospel. Through the medium of the revelation which God has given, it views them as destitute of holiness, and obnoxious to His eternal curse, and yet as candidates for the bliss and glory of heaven. While it weeps over their sin and peril of perdition, it taxes its energies to the utmost, to convey to every member of our fallen race the welcome message that he may nevertheless be pardoned, and purified, and exalted to the more than princely dignity of a son of God, and made heir “to an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens.” Till these glad tidings shall be published in the ears of all our world’s population, accompanied by all the tenderness and power of Christian entreaty, and the supplicating energy of prayer, that these means may be blessed to their salvation, the object of its benevolent desires and purposes will not have been attained. In respect to moral grandeur, all others have “no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth.”

My brethren, do we realize the dignity and obligations of our high calling? The littleness of dishonesty, falsehood, vindictive-

ness, and the love of things earthly for their own sake, we ought not merely to shun, but despise and detest. If we be in reality what we profess to be,—“the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty,” we were made such for great and noble ends. It becomes us to wage an unrelenting war with all sin, overcome the world by faith; to “forgive those who trespass against us” as we hope to be forgiven of God; to labor, contribute of our substance, and pray without ceasing for the spread of the Gospel, and the conversion of the nations. If we thus make evident the validity of our claim to the possession of the Christian spirit, we may hope to be God’s agents in accomplishing his purposes of mercy toward our race, to triumph over the last enemy, and that “an abundant entrance shall be administered to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Are there any present who look upon the Christian spirit as degrading to human dignity? Nothing so exalts it. It purifies the heart, achieves the noblest victories, forms, and labors with invincible perseverance, to accomplish the most stupendous purposes of benevolence in respect to the great brotherhood of humanity, and makes its possessor a son and heir of God. Compared with this, all other dignity is meanness. This is the high-born spirit of heaven—the spirit of Him who came from thence and laid down His life a ransom for sinful and dying man. Nothing else will so protect you against the assaults of temptation, sustain you under the heavy pressure of adversity, enable you to “overcome evil with good,” and perform your duty at the sacrifice of ease and interest, and popular favor. Nothing else can give you a victory over death and the grave, and fit you for the society of heaven, and fellowship with God. Embrace it—surrender your souls to its influence—and it will sustain and comfort you under all the toils and sorrows of your mortal pilgrimage, and conduct you to mansions of everlasting glory.