

THE
PATTERN IN THE MOUNT

AND

OTHER SERMONS

BY

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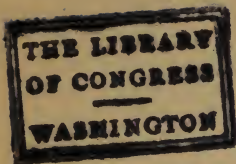


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I.

THE PATTERN IN THE MOUNT.

"Look that thou make them after the pattern that was showed thee in the mount."—EX. xxv. 40.

THIS occurs in the course of a lesson that the Lord was giving Moses on architecture. The tabernacle was not yet built. This lesson had primary reference to the tabernacle and its furniture. Moses when he went down from God on Sinai knew what he was going to build and how he was going to build it. The tabernacle was with him already a fact, a mental fact—as real a thing to him then, I suppose, as it was afterward when it stood out upon the plain a palpable affair of rams' skins, goats' hair, and shittim-wood. The thought of a thing, the conception of it, is its first half and largest half. It is easier to pour in the molten iron than to make in the sand the mould into which it is to be poured. In the idea, the tabernacle was already finished and furnished. He had now only to go on and set up upon the ground in forms of wood, linen, and metal, the structure that in his mind was already forecast and divinely complete.

This will yield two or three lessons that will serve us practically. I want, in the first place, to say something generally about plan and pattern and purpose—"Look that thou make them after the pattern that was showed thee in the mount." It is not so clear how God drew for Moses the design and working-plans for the tabernacle. The story only lets us know that he went down from God with a definite notion of what was to be done and how he was to do it. He did nothing till his plan was clear and ripe. He did not go to work at random and let a purpose develop from experiment. He planned from his work, and worked from his plan. This lets me say something broadly about plans, and about plans of life. As I look through Scripture I discover that the men who did the best work and the most of it, first wrought out in thought what they were afterward going to work out in act and word. Noah, Moses, Solomon, Jesus, the Baptist, Paul, are examples in point. The Creator himself wrought out first His creative designs. In that sense the world is as old as God. When at the end of the first week He said, "All very good," He meant by it that things had now become in fact what they had first and forever been in idea. "Let us make man in our image," permits us to overhear God drafting His design of the man that was to be. All good work is the execution of plan, somebody's plan.

Nothing, perhaps, comes nearer God's workmanship in this respect than art; hence our habit of speaking of the *creations* of art. The painter puts on canvas what has first been a live fact in his own thought. Beauty is prior to the brush. Canvas is the convenience of the layman, not the exigency of the artist. Paint is the accident of beauty, not its substance. I want we should be familiar with the fact that reality is prior to the shows it makes of itself, whether in fine twined linen, brick, or pigment. The painter works from his pattern. The more complete the inner picture, the more perfect may be the outer. In other arts it is so. Music is the expression in score and in sound of a prior music that has no relation to ear or staff. Raphael's picture represents St. Cecilia as entranced by the music that is inaudible. Every musician, so far forth, must first be a St. Cecilia. The modern architect, like the one on Sinai, sees the building he is going to construct before the timber has been cut or the ground broken. Gerard von Rile, six hundred years ago, saw the cathedral which has just been completed beside the Rhine at Cologne. Slowly since the year 1200, German artisans have been copying into stone Von Rile's thought, working from his plan, and the cathedral is perfect to-day because it was perfect then.

All that God does is in prosecution of a plan, an

eternal idea come to utterance. The tree ripens to the grade of a purpose that was ripe before the tree, and before the Third Day. It is all one whether we say that the plan is deposited in the seed, or that God builds the plant each moment against the pattern of His thought, as the mason lays bricks close to the plumb-line. It all sums up into the same result. There are no planless seeds, no purposeless scions. They follow a plan. Nature works from a copy.

With such examples of pattern and purpose before us, I want to go on and say that there are at least three advantages that come from having a plan in our life and work, and working and living from that plan. One is, that in an open field and with a long prospect our purposes will lay themselves out in a larger and wiser proportion than when framed at close quarters and at the dictation of momentary impulse. Men do better things and work at a higher level when they coolly determine what they are going to do, than when they let daily circumstances determine it for them piecemeal. It is safer to work by calculation than by caprice, and if it is not one it will be the other. A man is better and wiser in the long reach of his thought than in the short reach. A poor penman will make a long stroke more gracefully than he will a short one. We think better long thoughts and purposes than short ones. We can more easily take our direction to the next village when we are on the

hill than down in the hollow. Men get lost in the woods because there is no room for a long look. We substitute by the sun or the compass. The captain brings his ship to Liverpool in less time by having the whole course settled at the outset than by settling a little of it every day. A man's longest purposes will be his best purposes. It is true, life is short and uncertain; but it is better to live on the short arc of a large circle, than to describe the whole circumference of a small circle. Better be Von Rile and see only the first stones laid of a cathedral that will be by and by the glory of a continent, than to design and build the whole of a house that you will yourself have to see repaired and replaced. The ocean pilot sets the prow for an unseen port. Laboring toward distant aims sets the mind in a higher key, and puts us at our best. If a man builds a lighthouse from a plan, he will construct it high and strong enough to answer the purpose of a beacon when the storm is beating and the breakers dashing; otherwise he will equal it only to calm weather and still seas. We are certain to get lost amid the little circumstances of every day. No act, however long, is safe that does not match a thought that is still longer. The intricate details of living will confuse and mislead, unless we keep to the pathway of long meridian lines. Immediate results are meagre results. The men who are doing most for their own day are such as are work-

ing toward an aim that is a score or a century of years away. In the days of American slavery the poor fugitive reached liberty by walking toward the stars.

Not only shall we think wiser and grander purposes when we mature them in advance ; there is also a solidifying and invigorating power in a long purpose clearly defined. You can generally tell from a man's gait whether he has a purpose. Plan intensifies. Pursuance of a purpose makes our work solid and consecutive. Plan concentrates energies as a burning-glass does sunbeams. Shiftlessness is mostly only another name for aimlessness. Purpose directs energy, and purpose makes energy. When we see the target we stretch the bow. Light in the eye is tension in the arm. We can, because we think we can. Power is with a good deal of accuracy measured by purpose. A man may draw inspiration from the grandeur of his own aims, as a fire-fly shapes its flight by its own flashes. To-morrow will depend upon to-day : yet at the same time to-day in a sense depends upon to-morrow. What to-morrow is in my purpose, to-day will to some extent be in my act. In architecture the spire is anticipated in the foundation, and so determines the foundation. It is very slovenly living that is not controlled by anticipation as well as by memory. We can not do to-morrow's work to-day, but we can have to-day's work

shaped and buttressed by what we are intending to do to-morrow. In a life which has meaning in it, past and future sustain each other. In an arch the stones on this side are kept in place by the stones on the other. When we step upon a bridge we are upheld as well by the abutment at the farther end as by that at the hither end. We have to acknowledge that our plans do often get thwarted, but, if you will interpret the words carefully, there is not so much hazard in framing long purposes as short ones. The longer will be less endangered by opposing circumstances. It is something in this respect as it is with a long keel at sea, which will easily cut the waves by which a shorter craft would be foundered.

Then, in the next place, knowing with definiteness what we are attempting to do is a moral safeguard. Purposelessness is the fruitful mother of crime. Not purposing to do something that is good is practically equivalent to a purpose to do what is bad. Adam fell when he had nothing particular to do; and the first step in the scheme of redemption was to set him at work. When men live only in conference with circumstances lying next them, they lose their bearings. To draw another illustration from the sea. When a vessel is lying-to, the man at the wheel will seek to avoid drifting by at least holding the ship's prow toward port. The house that was empty, say the Scriptures, immediately became the domicile of

eight devils. Satan recruits his ranks from vagrants. The tropics will yield more crime to the square mile than the temperate zones. The less we are pampered by nature, the stancher we are in our health and our morals. The kingdom of heaven is more accessible to a busy man, and a man with a long thought and purpose. We are overworked? Better overworked than underworked. Emptiness is full of Satan. Swift water is sweet water. The velocity with which a ball is shot keeps it from the ground. Electricity will keep to the wire till it reaches a break in the wire. Labor is the handmaid of religion. Purpose is what gives life a meaning. We need to preach a doctrine of works not only, but a doctrine of work. Paul taught both. The men that were called to the apostleship, so far as we know, were laborers. It has been so in all times and in all kinds of apostleship. A drifting boat always drifts down-stream.

If there be any young man here that is doing nothing in particular, and with no particular purpose, the chances are as ten to one that he is settling toward the bad. It is the principle of the bicycle that it is kept erect by its velocity. Men who know no Scripture but "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," are the men that fill our penitentiaries. Young aimlessness is the seminary of old iniquity. Even the Gospel is more readily embraced by a man that is busy. It was when Peter was fishing that he heard

the Lord, and followed Him; and so his companions. Paul found it easier to start a church in Thessalonica than at Athens. He made it his rule to preach where something was going on, and pushed for live centres and busy people. A cord gives out no music except when it is strained. So in our modern congregations the hard-worked men, as a rule, make the best hearers. Employment, therefore, is a subsidiary means of salvation, because it stimulates to purpose. Out of 904 convicts received at the Michigan State prison in the three years ending 1880, 822 (91 per cent.) were unskilled laborers—had never been taught how to work. Such facts challenge the attention of the Church as well as of the political economists. Character, purpose, and apprenticeship will never get far apart from each other whether among immigrants or native population.

But Moses not only approached his work with a purpose and a pattern, but brought down his pattern from on high. This is our second lesson: "Look that thou make them after the pattern that was showed thee in the mount." This teaches that there are celestial ways of doing earthly things, and that human success consists in getting into the secrecies of God's mind and working in the direction of His method. Human success is a quotation from overhead. Men are enriched with presentiments of the way God would work if placed in our stead. These

presentiments we call ideals. Human soil is marked with divine foot-prints. An ideal is a pattern shown to us in the mount. Ideals we do not make. We discover, not invent them. "In the mount," we reach after them and ascend to them. They are a continuous firmament that overarches us, but a clouded firmament that yields itself to us only in broken hints.

There is a good deal in this matter of ideals. While we are looking so intently on the ground in these days, many things overhead are slipping our vision. Sometime we are going to know that we lived closer to the unseen than we ever would or dared suspect. Hints and flashes fall athwart us that we do not make and that we can not explain. In our ideals there is something we have never put in them. They are as real as the sky, and as certainly overspan all experience as the sky overspans the ground. We can not reach them any more than we can the firmament, but everything measures its length against them as things mundane measure themselves against the firmament. And so our ideals are never filled, never satisfied. We always find faults in the sweetest song, flaws in the choicest poem, blemishes in the finest architecture, frailties in the most perfect human life. Have we ever given to this our careful regard? We have criteria of power, beauty, and purity that surpass all we have seen in others or felt in ourselves. What is

the explanation of these criteria? Whence have come to us our ideals? Whose authorship are they? We watch Moses coming down from the mountain with his scheme of a tabernacle and we ask him where he acquired his scheme. And we hear the Lord saying unto him, "Look that thou make them according to the pattern that was shown thee in the mount."

Have we lived so long, and has it never occurred to us to wonder what it is against which we measure all we see and do? We have never seen a thing that was perfect. What use have we then for the word "perfect," and what do we mean by calling this and that imperfect? What is that perfect against which we measure the imperfect and *find* it imperfect? It is a fair question, and you will have to go into the mount with Moses before you can answer it. You draw a circle and say it is not a perfect circle. And it is not. The perfect circle has not been drawn. It is not in nature to disclose it, nor in art to produce it. How does it come that you talk so familiarly about the imperfect circle as though you knew the perfect and had seen it, or felt it, or applied it as a criterion to such as are imperfect? And how about the perfect life? Have you discovered it? How about the perfect man? Have you seen him? And yet you say of this man that he is not perfect, and of that act that it is not perfect. And what is the sense

of it if there is not some sky purer than the ground, some mountain higher than the plain, down from which the unmade criterion, the unmeasured pattern has slipped?

There is nothing in which men have so much faith as in their ideals, and there is nothing whose validity it is so impossible to demonstrate. You can reach the sky with your staff as easily as you can reach the ideal with your logic. We need to think up into this matter carefully. There is something in Moses having a pattern given him in the mount that he brought down with him into the plain that never ceases to have significance to us. We are close to the edge here of the things which are unseen and eternal. Men can talk materialism fluently with their lips at the very moment that there are great solid masses of Platonism lodged in their hearts. Laws, also, we do not make; we find them. Moral laws are exactly as much beyond the reach of our manufacture as physical ones. Truth we can not enact one whit more than we can gravity.

It may be an old legend and a childish myth that the Decalogue, like the pattern of the tabernacle, was given in the mountain. But if there were no such story in Scripture, we should have to invent some such story now for convenience of statement, if nothing more. When we have said that right and wrong are not things that a man, or any number of men, can

invent, we have said for substance all that the Bible has to say about God, Moses, and the two tables. The best things are not dug from the ground, nor framed in a cabinet-shop. The best way to outgrow materialism is to look overhead and draw deep draughts from out the clear. We see, not make. The best thinking is only successful getting into the track worn by the thoughts of God. The wisest man we are not afraid to criticise, for there is a wiser than the wisest and a better than the best. We can all look higher than we can any of us go. I can not make my conscience say "yes" or "no." My conscience reaches as much higher than I as Sinai slopes up higher than Arabia. Conscience is individualized Sinai—the little mount where patterns get shown to me from God; and I would as soon think of apologizing for this mode of representation as of buttressing the granite pile on which God met Moses, and no sooner. Consciousness of God precedes consciousness of ourselves. The mountains make pictures against the background of the sky. My sin is the black spot which my bad act makes, seen against the disk of the Sun of Righteousness. Hence religion and sin come and go together.

Our thoughts are at home among the stars even while our feet sink deeply into the sand. The soul is by nature Platonic and Pauline. Plato's "idea" answers to Paul's things unseen and words unutterable.

The Greek word for man seems to mean "the upward looking one." There is more in the air than in the dirt. The first circle is the eye; the next the heavens. The eye matches the vaulted blue. The patterns are shown in the mount; and it is the gist of life to shape those patterns into forms of wood, brass, gold, and behavior. Architecture grows from a heavenly datum; so music, painting, and character. The problem of life is to make the ideal real, and convert the divine at the summit of the mountain into the human at its base. Prophecy consists in catching the best of God's thoughts and telling them. The scientist is prophet when he spells out a new word of God in the air or on the ground. Mind watches for the Everlasting. Christ pointed to the lilies and the sparrows, and David to the clouds and constellations.

Laws of nature are God's thoughts thinking themselves out in the orbits and the tides. We are idealists. Feeling goes deeper than thinking. Wonder is prophetic. The philosophy of dirt will be no match for the idealism of the Nazarene and the Tarsan. Half of New York stood out in the rain all Evacuation Day for the sake of an idea. Materialism has a heavy stint before it even in New York City. Man is in God's image. It is not easily forgotten. The old echoes are long in dying. Even the coin with which the drunkard pays for his cups has a church creed

stamped upon it. "See that thou make them after the pattern that was showed thee in the mount." That command comprises all commands. It enjoins it upon us to make the ideal real; to be men in a divine way. Once it has been done: in Galilee. The ideal and the real meet in Jesus. He could say, "Follow me." "Be ye therefore perfect," He said to the men about Him. "Looking unto Jesus," wrote the apostle.

Moses copied from the pattern seen in the mount. We have to build not a tabernacle, but a life and a character. For our convenience pattern has become person. Our model is the perfect man Jesus. How much interval is there between me and what the perfect man would be, and do, in my circumstances? Apply it to purpose. Put in your place, what ends would the perfect man pursue? What are you aiming for more than for anything else? Is it an ideal aim? Phrase it differently; was your aim Christ's aim? Put the perfect man in your place to-day, would your aim be his aim? Because it is difficult to be perfect, have we concluded that it is not feasible to try to be perfect? Does our Christianity at all consist in this, that we have turned ourselves to God's grace because we do not like God's model? The tabernacle in the plain, the pattern on the mount. When I look at my own heart, my friends, I am afraid we have, a good many of us, been different

from Christ so long that we are growing reconciled to the idea of not becoming increasingly like Him. Be careful not to measure yourself against your neighbor. Call no man master. One is your Master, even Christ.

II.

HUMAN SPIRIT AND DIVINE INSPIRATION.

"There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."—
JOB xxxii. 8.

YOU will appreciate upon the instant, I am sure, the closeness with which the two clauses of our text are related, and the fitness with which the first stands as introduction to the second. "There is a spirit in man, and the in-*spirit*-ing (inspiration) of the Almighty giveth them understanding." The two words "spirit" and "inspiration" are of course only different forms of the same word, and the spirit in man is that capacity in him which enables him to become the recipient of the Almighty's inspiriting. It is so much ability on man's part to receive a divine inbreathing set over against the power there is on God's part to communicate a divine inbreathing. "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

The fact that the Scriptures, and we in imitation of

the Scriptures, use the word spirit to designate now some capacity inhering in us, and now some faculty exercised by God, only shows that there is between God and man some ground that is common to the two, a meeting-place. The spirit in man is that special apartment of his nature which has been contrived and fitted for personal intercourse between him and God, as in the Jewish temple the Holy of Holies was chosen and arranged to be just such a meeting-place between Jehovah and the High-Priest.

The spirit in man is to the great inbreathing of God what the lungs are to the circumambient air. It is to the down-falling light from God what the eye is to the splendors of the earth and the sky. It is the element of our being that establishes in us religious possibilities. It is what sets us in any kind of appreciative relation to God, as it is the ear only that sets us in any kind of appreciative relation to tone. The religious susceptibility and faculty is in this way as much a part of us as is the hearing ear, the seeing eye, the reflective mind, and the sympathetic heart. It is no more optional with us to decide for ourselves whether the religious functions of our nature shall be exercised, and the spirit that is in us be inclined toward God in devout receptivity, and bowed before Him in reverent worship, than it is optional with us to decide for ourselves whether we will bare our souls to the baptism of beautiful sights and sounds with

which the grounds and heavens are fraught, or to the truths and sentiments and passions of the generation in whose midst we have our habitation and our life. "There is a spirit in man," and, like every other instinct of our being, it stands to us authoritatively, and lays its mandate upon us imperiously. We are religious by nature.

And it is just this faculty divinely wrought upon, and this string divinely played upon, that really composes the strength and tenacity of our religious convictions. The deep secret of our belief in God is not that we have been taught to believe in Him, nor that nicely assorted arguments have wrought upon us logically; just as we believe in a sun shining in the sky, because we feel the visual organ energized by a power that is felt to be not of us, but to impinge upon us from without, so we believe in God because there are ceaseless stirrings and whisperings wrought in the spirit-chamber of the soul by influences that we know are not of us.

Perhaps if we thought more about inspiration as it is presented for our consideration in this thirty-second of Job we should be in better condition to deal with the problems connected with the inspired character of the Holy Word. The inspiration of the Almighty, as this text sets it before our regards, has to do, in a purely general way, with God's own personal communication of Himself to us, and, at the spirit-point

of our being, imparting unto us the energies of His own wisdom, holiness, and power. It is not our concern to understand how this is done. It is more incumbent upon us that we bring ourselves to realize that it is in God's order of things that it should be done, and in man's disturbance of divine arrangement that it is so feebly and so interruptedly done. It does not lie along the track of Biblical teaching that we should allow to the prophets, apostles, and olden saints of God any monopoly of inspiration. There is always the possibility of beauty where there is an unsealed human eye; of music, where there is an unstopped human ear; and of inspiration, where there is a receptive human spirit, a spirit standing before God like a flower that waits to have its petals written upon with a heavenly pencil of light; lying before God like a harp-string that waits to be stirred into trembling and quickened into song. No man can have studied his own character attentively, or regarded his own achievements meditatively, without realizing that unless there is something entered into him that is not originally of him, his most conspicuous traits are the languor of his moral life, and the poverty and insipidity of that life's exterior fruitage.

And so the first office-work of inspiration is to create in us fresh personal vigor, and new spiritual animation. We work at our own characters as a painter works at his canvas, and a sculptor at his marble. It

does not pay. It is only painted canvas and elaborated marble when it is done. It does not breathe. It shows no pulse-beat. Character can not be constructed. It can not be put together. It needs first of all a principle that is animated, and one, therefore, that is animating. It wants an impulse more glowing, determined, and passionate than anything we are possessed of naturally. It is all a mistake that we can not be good and manly without being scrupulously and studiously good. There is too much mechanism about our virtue. It is rather a fine criticism that is passed by a modern admirer of Shakespeare, when he writes of him: "We never see Shakespeare's characters hanging over their virtues, or nursing and cosseting them, as if they were specially tender of them, and fearful lest they might catch cold." And the same thought works itself out in all variety of fine expression and deep suggestion in Pauline exhortations to high Christian living and doing. We need nothing so much as a determining life-force at the core of character, and impulse from out the very soul of God, that shall hold us in its warm, steady, and irresistible grip, and impel us with a momentum that has the very pressure of Jehovah in it. And all of this is a draft upon the divine inspiration. It is exactly as much inspiration as the power John had to write the fourth gospel, or Isaiah to compose the fifty-third chapter of his prophecy seven hundred

years before Calvary. If we have attained to a live manliness, and a heart so fed from out the veins of the divine life that the throbbings of our heart synchronize with the throbbings of God's heart, we are in no danger. "All virtue to be safe must be enthusiastic," it has been said, and well said, if we will understand by enthusiasm here that which the word itself etymologically imports, "God in us" (en Theos).

It will seem to you quite likely that this is substantially what the theologians call regeneration. It is that, precisely. The new man, the new life, is only another name for character wrought out at the determining impulse of a divine inspiration. We can set before us as example the fairest life ever ripened in the bosom of the Church, or model our demeanor even after the consummate pattern of Christ's demeanor, without attaining at all yet to anything distinctively Christian. What we need first of all is not to act like Christ, but to have exactly the same Divine Spirit working at the core of our lives that worked at the core of His, and then acts will take care of themselves. A man can not be manly till first he has been divine. All true manliness grows around a core of divineness. The inworking of God is the condition of all salvation and the substance of it. Inspiration is the premise out of which every valid inference of manhood is derivative. I wish we could see more among men that looked like *inspired* character—more

that looked as though in our daily doing we were swept triumphantly onward by God's irresistibleness at work in us. How much we do that we should hardly do were it not for the speech of people. What protracted arguments we hold with ourselves, trying to persuade ourselves into the right and dissuade ourselves from the wrong. It is not easy to do right. It lies with the grain to do wrong. John expresses the Gospel philosophy of the whole matter, when he says: "Whosoever is born of God doth not sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he can not sin because he is born of God"; which is only another way of saying that virtue is secure if it is inspired virtue. It is inspired virtue St. Paul is pleading for when he says: "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh"; and when he says that love, joy, peace, meekness, temperance, and the rest, are all of them the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We miss it, and incur incessant peril when we try to make the flintiness of a good resolve do the work of the inspiration of the Almighty. Virtue is safe only when it is inspired. So that the question each of us has to ask himself is not whether we are doing as well or better than some one else, but whether something has hold of us that is competent to steady our infirmities; whether we have allowed ourselves to be drawn in wholly beneath the sweep of the Almighty mind; whether we have got a virtue so divinely impassioned, and a character

so divinely inspired, moral energies so bound into the momentum of God's energies, that security is lifted to a maximum, and difficulty minimized, till right thinking and noble doing and brave daring is, all of it, beginning to become with us an accomplishment and a genius.

Another office-work of inspiration is to create in us fresh and vivid perceptions of the divine truth. "In His light we shall see light." It is nothing short of inspiration that qualifies us to apprehend the truth of God's Word. Our prayers often imply as much. But in this, as in other matters, our prayers often lie at a higher level than our practice or our philosophy. We need as much inspiration to enable us to read the Bible as its authors needed to fit them to write it. The faculty that will solve a problem of geometry is not the faculty that will solve a problem of Scripture. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." When the Psalmist would behold wondrous things in the Scriptures he cried to God, "Open Thou mine eyes." Which leads us on to a word respecting Christian opinion and Christian creed. No Christian creed is ever constructed. It may grow, but it can never be built. It can not be put together from the outside any more than character can. The reference here is not to men's philosophy of religion, but Christian creed in its closest and

best sense. A Christian creed is a matter of the individual. It is the form in which he shapes his own experience of the things of God and of his own soul. It is putting into the vernacular of his own thought what God has shown to him of the divine being and ways. A creed in its truest sense can not, then, be taught, any more than holiness can be taught. It is a matter between each man and God, and has to do with what God has shown him of himself. In point of directness and personalness every true creed will be like that of the man whose eyes had been opened: "I can see"; inclusive of what he knew for himself, exclusive of all hearsay. Being led about, a blind man, by those who could see, was no substitute for sight of his own. Every Christian creed is like Peter's creed; of which Christ said, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven"; an inspired creed. We might define a creed as the way in which a Christian *states to others* what God has first *revealed in him*. In this case it will be sure to bear upon it a good deal of the man himself, his personal idiosyncrasies, just as the books of the Bible tell us a great deal about the humanness of the men that were inspired to write them. No two men will therefore have exactly the same creed, except as they neither of them have any creed, but borrow from a third who has.

And accordingly, as we go on to know the Lord,

and obtain from Him fuller and fuller revelations, the faster our creeds will change; just as the more rapid our ascent up the slope of a mountain the more rapidly will become altered the aspects and mutual relations of all lying about us and below. We must therefore insist on a great deal of liberty here. If a man has received anything from the Lord we want to hear it, without asking too many questions as to whether what he has received is the exact duplicate of what you and I have received; in fact, the more his revelation differs from ours, if so be it be a revelation, the more valuable does he become to us as a prophet of God. We want then to see a goodly number of young men coming into our churches and pulpits who are in telephonic connection with God, and who succeeded in getting through college and seminary without parting with their mental and personal idiosyncrasies. When the sun is shining on the falling rain the air is full of rainbow, and no two eyes see the same. This is what will give us a progressive theology. Theology is not dead. Its possibilities of life and growth remain as long as men continue getting deeper and deeper into the things of God. Every new and deeper glimpse we gain of the hidden things renders obsolete our past glimpses. There, too, forgetting the things which are behind, we want to reach forward unto the things that are before. There is probably not one article in

your creed or in mine that we shall read a thousand years hence exactly as we do now. And it is a thing to make the angels laugh, were it not also so sad as to make them weep—the easy flippancy with which men still in the primer of God’s wisdom pronounce themselves in theological finalities; set up a little Sinai for the arbitrament of doctrine *in perpetuo*; and incapable, as all men of course are, of letting their thoughts broaden out to the scope of God’s truth, venture, with conspicuous immodesty, to constrain God’s truth within the limitations of their thought. But the end of theology is not reached. She is not dead. Obituary is not in order. Christian thinking will continue growing better, deeper, truer, so long as Christians, along the luminous path of God’s self-revelation to them, continue getting into the deeper things of God, and the closer intimacies of God. “There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.”

But only once more: The inspirations of the Almighty are suited to become to us qualification for all kinds of holy doing. We make toilsome work of being good because we do not let the inspirations of God work in us, and we make irksome work of doing good because we do not let the inspirations of God work through us. There, too, we are strangers to our privileges and traitors to our prerogatives. The world

is full of divine energy, energy material and energy spiritual, and it all waits to be used to our human empowerment. And our inventors and mechanics and manufacturers are incomparably more prompt in availing themselves of the physical energies of God than we are in adopting into our spiritual work His spiritual energies. They, the mechanicians, the world over are harnessing the cosmic forces of the world into our busy world's work; water is carrying our mills, wind is transporting our merchandise, steam is drawing our trains, electricity is running on our errands. The industries of the world are all of them leaning back upon the willing might of God. Ninety-nine per cent. of all the fruits of human industry, so called, are nothing other than the physical energies of God, abroad in the sky and the earth, utilized to the production of staple commodities; and I wonder if there is not divine spiritual power that is waiting to energize itself, but that is kept out of the service by men's unfaith in its utility, and men, workers in the cause of Christ, wearing themselves out, shortening their lives, and exhausting their powers, because from egotism or unbelief they will operate the machinery of the church by their own sheer strength, when they might belt the ponderous mechanism of the church to the enginery of the sky, and prolong their own powers and augment their own serviceableness, by letting spiritual agencies, like industrial ones, be bound back to the dynamics of heaven and worked

by the inspirations of the Almighty. Great vigor is shown in maintaining with scrupulous conservatism the original polity of the church in its externalities, methods of administration, modes of operation. But it is infinitely less the outward administration of method that needs conserving among us than the inward administration of the Holy Spirit. That was the special and distinguishing glory of the Apostolic church, and just in this is our distinguishing point of poverty; church machinery enough, culture enough in the pulpit, elegance enough in our churches, style enough in our service and our ritual, but a dearth of Holy Ghost; too much manpower, too little of the inspirations of the Almighty. We, as officers and members of churches, pastors, deacons, and people, must understand and appreciate that it is infinitely less our own personal endeavors that signify than it is the opportunity which our personal endeavors allow to the Spirit of God to move forth and work in His own divine way, and achieve His own divine results. And when we are ready just to have God use us, He will make us just as magnificently effective as we are beautifully humble. "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." "I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." We can not read Scripture appreciatively without realizing that it is divine power seizing and using consecrated human

weakness that has worked the magnificent results of the old time ; and that it is the same power, working through the same sort of instruments, that alone will suffice to repeat old results in the new time. We need inspiration, and inspiration with the same tension of divineness in it that qualified Moses to give the Decalogue on Sinai, or Christ to proclaim the new law on the Mountain of the Beatitudes. The demand is not for new Scripture, nor for men that can write it, but for men that are under the control of the same inspiring power that at one time moved men to write, and that would move and amply fit men to write more Scripture now, if more Scripture were the thing needed. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of administration, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." So that we are driven back to the declaration of our text that our one common and comprehensive need is of the inspiration of the Almighty, the direct breathing into us of the breath of God, with all the wisdom, holiness, and power which such a divine afflatus involves, that whether we speak, be it by word or act, we may speak as the oracles of God, and whether we minister we may do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

III.

COMING TO THE TRUTH.

"God will have all men to come unto the knowledge of the truth."—1 TIMOTHY ii. 4.

EVERY little while I am approached by some torn spirit who is snared in the meshes of his own perplexed thinking and wearied by the assaults of his own doubtings and unbeliefs. It has sometimes been the case that our private conference together has resulted in the removal of some difficulties; or, if not that, exactly, has resulted at least in getting the intellectual machinery into smooth running order, and, still better, in inducing in the mind a stronger and more wholesome tone. And it has occurred to me that it will be wise to spend our half hour this morning in meeting, at the level of their queries and difficulties, any who may be in the like circumstance; not with the purpose of taking up any of their specific difficulties and trying to solve them, but rather with the intent and with the hope, by the aid of the Divine Spirit, of drawing them into a mode of thinking and a quality of feeling that shall be itself

the solvent of problems, exactly as it is the sun's rising that better avails to saturate the air with brightness, and to clothe with distinctness the objects that stand forth in it, better by far than any detailed attempts of our own to brush down the darkness out of the shaded corners of the sky, or sweep out the patches of mist scattered among the valleys and along the hill-slopes.

And now, my friends, you whose case is especially contemplated just now, there is a considerable number of points that, in rapid succession, I wish to present to you, and I pray that we may all approach the matter with that teachableness and that earnestness which can alone comport with the seriousness and dignity of the place and theme.

It is one stone laid in the foundation of the matter when it is distinctly apprehended by the doubting mind that there *is such a thing* as the *truth*. Hardly will any mind in the exercise of normal power question it; and yet it is one thing not to question it, and another and distinct thing to confront it and to grasp the thought in its depth and area. *There is such a thing as the truth*. And truth, so far as we get into relations of knowledge with it, is not a matter of invention, but of discovery. We find truth, not construct it. It exists anterior to the human mind. It is there though we have not encountered it; it exists though our thoughts have not formulated it. The

truths of science are not true because the foremost men of science have concluded and agreed to have them true. Truth is no conventional matter. We can not enact truths, however we may be able sometimes to discover them. Truth is as apart and separate from the mind that feels after it and explores for it, as was America separate and distinct from the Genoese navigator, the Spanish coast from which he weighed anchor, or the *Santa Maria* on which he sailed. All our language implies as much when we cross-question it, and all our reasoning consents to as much when pushed by sharp inquisition. Men who do not think carefully sometimes allow themselves to suppose that because opinions differ and even antagonize, therefore truth is a figment ; but an *opinion* is at best a truth humanly reflected, and will depend for shape and complexion very much upon the medium through which the truth shines, and the ground upon which the truth lights and rebounds. Truth and opinion are radically distinct. The reality of truth is self-contained. Misapprehension does not modify it ; failure even to surmise it in no slightest manner interferes with it. Far up on the cold, untravelled heights we are sure the little Alpine flower is blooming, though no foot has trodden there. The star twinkles in the sky with the same substantial lustre, though no science has conjectured it and no telescope has brought it within

reach of the human eye: so with the undiscovered suns and constellations that throng the still deeper firmament of truth. Whether you do not apprehend the truth aright, or do not apprehend it at all, the truth is there, positive and self-subsistent, and you will find that this way of regarding the matter will help bring your thoughts to order, and give to those thoughts resolution and nerve.

Another consideration that will tend to similar results will be this: that, although the truth may be difficult to apprehend, and in instances without number utterly elude detection, nevertheless there is a correspondence between truth and the mind; in a mystic manner the two are related to each other. There is such a thing as a mental appetite, and truth satisfies that appetite. The two are made for each other. Such adjustments the world is everywhere full of: light and the eye; sound and the ear; beauty and the taste; the bird's wing and the atmosphere. The mind is hungry for facts. The child knows enough to *look* a question before ever he has words enough to ask it. Even wondering why a thing is, is the mind's unconscious sense of power to *understand* why a thing is. Even wonderment is the advanced guard and the light artillery of philosophy. Curiosity is thought on its entering edge. Desire presumes power. The very passion to solve a problem quietly attests the rudiments, at least, of a genius

capable of solving it. To desire to understand a thing means already that the mind is working close along the level of the thing it would understand. Even interest in a matter implies a congeniality between us and the object of our interest. Longing is unconfessed capacity. It is the downward reach of our thought that loads it with momentum for an upward reach. We find God with our thought because there is something of God already in the thought with which we push out after Him. It is the music in the ear that finds and interprets the music of the orchestra. Some one has said, "If the eye had not been sunny, how could it look upon the sun?" Deep answers unto deep. The upper and the nether firmament speak in the same vernacular. At the same time that you get into the deep places of your own soul you get also into the heights of God. The stars beam up into your eyes from the bottom of the sea. Passion, conscience, and reason will deal as loyally by you as you will deal loyally by them. Believe in your strongest thoughts; heed the deepest voices that speak to you from within, for the word of the Lord is in them, as the murmur which flows from out the Swiss valley is the sound of the Alpine storm and of the thundering avalanche fallen into a whisper at the level of human ears and habitations.

The third suggestion, which I am sure will, if regarded, help release you from your perplexities, will

be, that you yield respect and obedience to so much of truth as you are already persuaded of. Considerable of what passes as current unbelief is only the result of the habit men are learning, and the power they are acquiring, of thinking for themselves. I am inclined to suppose that there is more intelligent faith, more reasoned faith, more working faith, therefore, to-day than there was thirty years ago. That so many men are abandoning old doctrine, now that people are thinking for themselves, hardly argues that faith has suddenly become weak; it rather indicates what a feeble hold these doctrines really had upon men before they had learned to think for themselves. That a tree is upturned when the wind blows means not that the wind has weakened the tree, but that it has revealed the weakness already in it before there was any wind. So that when a man discovers, after independent investigation, that his creed is considerably shortened, he is to understand by it, not that he has suffered a loss, but that now for the first time he has really detected how little creed of his own he ever had. And there has been a great deal of such discovery. By a great many one doctrine after another has been questioned and discarded: the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of atonement perhaps, the doctrine of prayer as a moving influence with God, the doctrine of immortality, and, it may be, even that of God's personality.

With these subtractions made there seems to be very little left. That depends upon what you mean by little. If you have in your yard a tree heart-eaten and loaded with dead branches, with only foliage enough upon it to remind you how nearly dead the entire tree is, and yet with a fresh, sap-filled little scion shooting up from the base, you will be of the mind, most likely, that the scion without the tree is worth more than the scion with the tree, provided only the scion springs from a sound root. But when all this trunk of belief has been felled, and there remains only some single little shoot of a doctrine, is it orthodox to suppose that that shoot will suffice to save the man? I hope so; and yet that is not so just a way of putting it. It is less a matter of the scion saving the root than it is of the root being sound enough to save the scion. So it is less a question of the single doctrine saving the man than it is of the man being sound enough to save the doctrine. So that when a man tells me that whereas he used to believe all his parents and church taught him, he now believes only *one* thing, all I want to know is, not what that one thing is, but how he *treats* that one thing—whether he stands by it, and whether, if the pinch came, he would die for the sake of it. Just as fast as we live all that we believe we shall believe more than we live. You can not deal untruthfully by yourself at one point and then expect to win truth for yourself at another point.

Another point for you to consider is, that you will never succeed in *arguing* yourself out into the clear and up into the light. The heart as well as the intellect is an organ of discovery. I do not know how it has come about that we are instructed to believe everything that the mind says and nothing that the heart says. All great discoveries are made by men whose feelings run ahead of their thinkings. The disciple who recognized Christ first at the Sea of Galilee was the disciple that loved Him best. The heart has eyes that the brain knows nothing of. Intuitions contain an ingredient of the emotional. Science and philosophy broaden forward into poetry at their outer margin. "Language is fossil poetry," for the reason that every thought was once a poem. The mind must have a cause, but the heart must have a Father. With your eye you scan your friend's face, but with your heart you know your *friend*, and absorb inspiration from him. Thought is like the printer's type; heart is the ink that fills the type, and puts upon the page strong lines and brimming sentences. To intellect every word is a finality; to the heart every word is a symbol, a symbol of meaning unexpressed, of meaning not quite expressible.

And you want to come to the truth, not only with the heart, but with a clean heart: "The pure in heart shall see God." Preferences, cherished sins, unholy ambitions, self-seekings, are all the time weav-

ing clouds in the soul's atmosphere that darken the brightness that would otherwise so illumine the soul and nourish its potencies. Sin soils the spirit's delicacy, and unwillingness deadens its susceptibility.

My next recommendation to you is, that if you want to become clear and strong in your religious faith and convictions, you will do best to get into personal relations with men who are pronounced in their religious faiths and convictions. And there are two advantages that flow from this sort of personal contact : the first is that a truth appeals to us much more effectively when it is wrought into the tissue of a living man than when it comes to us merely as a verbal utterance, or addresses itself to our eyes in the shape of a written sentence. Theory is well enough, schedules of doctrine are well in their way, but we are never quite touched by truths till they become flesh, and dwell among us ; nothing saves like incarnation. There may be some among us this morning that do not believe in Christianity as a system, but I doubt if there is a person among us who does not believe profoundly in a man who consistently embodies that system. To be more specific : perhaps you do not believe in prayer, considered in the abstract ; yet it is hardly probable that you do not believe in the prayerfulness that your mother, now sainted, used to evince in the prayers she long ago offered for you at your bedside when you were a child. It by no means

follows that because a man does not quite accept Christianity as a scheme that can be written on paper, he does not very heartily respect it and very cordially fellowship it as it was lived in the flesh by his sister, mother, or wife. That is one advantage, then, in close relation with men of faith ; the barren form of faith disappears in the fresh, personal reality of faith ; the doctrine reappears as a life, with lines and edges all dissipated. Hence almost all the Bible is a series of crystallizations about living men ; and we are acting quite in the spirit of Scripture when we represent Christianity not as a set of truths formulated by Christ, but a body of principles gathered up into Him and lived by Him ; so that the most just and stimulating ideas that we shall obtain of Christianity will be by contemplating Christ as He appears in the Gospel, and by coming close to men that are the best reproductions of Him as they walk our streets or meet us in our homes.

But there is a second advantage accruing from contact with men of pronounced Christian faith and conviction. A considerable portion of religious incertitude and doctrinal indifferentism is the outcome of the low state of the system—moral system, I mean. Thought takes hold of truth only in an irresolute way because there is in the process none of that personal strenuousness and moral determinedness that makes the mind muscular and every movement of the mind

full of nerve and grip. Moral tone will give a man doctrinal tone. If you are in that condition of mind indicated by saying that you do not know what in the world to believe, it is probably not chargeable to intellectual confusedness primarily, but to moral debility; by which I do not mean immorality necessarily, but something that in the moral man is analogous to what in the physical we should call a low state of the system, reduced condition of the blood. And if you are in any such state (and great numbers of people are), and you find all your opinions and ideas slipping down in incertitude, the best escape from it will be to put yourself into personal relation with, and under the personal domination of, some great, robust, nervy soul, not for the sake of copying his ideas, nor for the sake of letting him put a prop underneath your ideas, but for the sake of letting him magnetize you, revivify you, reproduce himself in you; and that will work on your ideas and give a stamina and grasp to your thoughts, and a reach and an insight to them, very much as, after a drought, the rain works among the discouraged grass-blades and moping wheat-stalks, nourishing them, and so stiffening and strengthening them. It is a great, stalwart soul that qualifies a man to think great, stalwart thoughts, and if you have not such a soul, come as close as you can to the man who has, and you will become richer without his being made poorer.

I will add to the foregoing only this last suggestion, that you let your escape from perplexity be conducted in ways of severest honesty and most painstaking sincerity. You are familiar, I presume, with the lines of Tennyson :

“He fought his doubts and gathered strength ;
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them : thus he came at length
To find a stronger faith his own ;”

all of which is practical and feasible ; yet every step of the way must be taken in artlessness and candor. You will not attain to the truth along any by-path of chicanery. Do not try to believe anything more than you can believe easily. Ideas will not grow any faster, nor convictions shape themselves more rapidly, for being hurried. In one way or another you will have to pay for it if you try to compel a given amount of argument to yield more than a corresponding amount of persuasion. Be honest with yourself, then. Be honest with your neighbor. Never dress the infirmities and deformities of your belief in phrases of finery borrowed from the hymn-book, the catechism, or the Bible. If there comes an occasion for stating your belief, state it for just what it is worth. Above all, be honest with God. Do not pray to anything you do not believe in. If you do not believe in a personal God, never pretend that you do ;

never pray as if you did. Tell no lies on your knees. When Horace Bushnell lost his personal God, he recovered him by praying to the next best thing that was left, the abstract principle of right. It was a dreary kind of devotion, but it was sincerely meant, and a voice came to him, and a revelation broke upon him. Put, then, into your prayers no more orthodoxy than there is in your thought. If you can not address Him as a known person, approach him as an unknown Something; if you can not feel him, be contented to feel after him; if you can not see him, look in the direction where you conjecture that he may be. If you can not fly, walk; if you can not walk, creep; if you can not creep, stand and wait: "they also serve who only stand and wait." Every morning the daybreak comes to us, not we to the daybreak. And so, my friend, in fine, trust the deepest movings of your soul; live true to your best conviction; pray only up to the level of your faith; lay aside all perturbation and insincerity; wherever you see what looks to be sunshine, stand in it; and your sky will certainly clear, and your day will assuredly come. Every unhindered needle verges to the pole; every unstopped river empties into the sea.

IV.

WALKING BY FAITH.

"For we walk by faith, not by sight."—2 COR. v. 7.

WE walk by faith, said Paul. And we *do*. Paul meant it in a particular sense. He was thinking of religion, the Lord, and the life to come. But it is true in his sense, because it is first true in a wider sense. We *are* walking by faith everywhere, and in all things. Religion, the Lord, and immortality are quite of a kind with other matters, so far as relates to our apprehension of them, and mode of becoming assured of them. I do not discover that there is any heavier draft made on faith in the matter of religion, than in other spheres of thinking, living, and working. We, all of us, in everything believe a great deal more than we know. We are all of us believers. I do not say believers in Christ, believers in immortality, but believers. We are believers constitutionally. Belief is about the first instinct that shows itself in us. Most, at any rate, of the knowledge we have was belief before it was knowledge.

It seems strange that men should find so much

difficulty with the faith element in the Gospel, seeing we are in such hourly familiarity with it on other ground. I have thought that perhaps by considering the matter together a little, relief might come to some of us who are prejudiced against religion because it taxes faith so heavily. We have got to deal gently with people here. All minds do not work alike. Believing is more natural to some than to others. Some men wish they could believe more than they see their way clear to believe. Christ never hurried nor crowded men's faith. Let His manner be to us always an example. The Catholic Church offers to take charge of men's faiths. Some enter that communion as an escape from perplexity; like Alexander at Gordium, do not see how to untie the knot, and so cut it. I trust we shall be guided here to the utterance of words that shall prove helpful to them that are in sincere need of help.

We walk by faith; not by sight. We walk not seeing where we are going. We can think things a little ways, but can not think them to the end. We can not tell it all; can not prove it all. It is so in matters of religion; equally so in other matters. We run presently against an interrogation point, in whatever direction we go. These interrogation points stand in thick circuit around about us, and that circuit we call our horizon. There was a veil in the old Hebrew tabernacle. That veil we now call

horizon. It is the same thing. There is something outside of your horizon? You judge that there is; you act as if there were. Something *behind* the curtain? We expect so; we act as if there were so. We can not think things to the end, but what lies between our farthest thought and the end really makes out a large part of life's weight—in other matters, at any rate, even if not in religious ones.

When the sun is sliding up over our horizon, we believe the half of it we can not see. Faith and knowledge touch, almost touch—only the horizon line between. The world moves a little on its axis, and the line slides along the sun's disk and faith flashes into knowledge. That is faith: supposing, feeling, resting in what we can not see. The Bible's definition of it is that; almost the only definition the Bible gives; and that not of a kind to mean much to us till the New Revision put upon it its retouch: "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen"; living in the confidence of things we can not prove. That we do so much of that in religion is made an argument against religion. We can not see a soul. We have no premises large enough to yield us God in the third term. We can not demonstrate immortality. And men with whom it is not natural to feel ahead of their thinking get troubled by this. When you have entered an unlighted room in the night, and have groped your way

about in it, as you approached the wall you probably felt its nearness to you even before your hand reached it. It is a singular kind of intuition. Most men have it. It is in the physical realm a good deal like what faith is in the mental and spiritual, feeling running ahead of thought, and resting in what can not be seen. A part of our infidelity and atheism is mental habit. Certain occupations and professions embarrass faith. Dealing with men inclines us toward faith. Dealing with things inclines us away from faith. And so while William Humboldt was a believer, his brother Alexander wrote the *Cosmos*, and left God out of it.

To any thinking man here, then, whose sharp thinking does not bring him nearer God and the Bible, but away from it, I want to illustrate that while faith is an important factor in religion, it is just the same important factor in everything else. We live in all respects by our convictions of the things we can not see. Every step we take anywhere we take in faith. We step down upon unknown ground with no knowledge of what lies an inch under the surface. Not a footfall but takes much for granted. That is a near and just picture of what holds everywhere. We see one per cent. and assume ninety-nine. We go but a little ways before we bring up against the unknown. We treat the unknown as though it were known. That is faith, treating the unknown as though it

were known. We are continually cracking the shell to get at the hidden meat. When you step aboard a train, how much do you know of the man whose hand is on the valve? A thousand lives go speeding along the track, forty miles an hour, and that one man holds those lives in his hand. Do we as Christians live by faith in the Son of God? Yes; and so on the railway-train you live by faith in the engineer; and so on the steamer you live by faith in the man on the bridge. It is one thing. We walk by faith. We ride by faith. And all along the line are men whom you do not know; flagmen, road-repairers, yet in whose hand you put your life. You ride by faith. On the fidelity of the man at the switch depend a hundred lives and a million interests. "But somebody knows him." O yes. But *you* don't. That is the point. You travel by faith. You walk by your conviction of the things you can not see. We take men at their word. Are men false? Not nearly so much as they are true. Otherwise society would be impossible. No faith, no society; no faith, no trade. Faith is among men what gravity is among planets and suns. Count Cavour said that the man who trusted men would make fewer mistakes than the man who distrusted them.

We should never get a single day's work done if we stopped to prove every step. The element of faith

and of daring enters into every successful life. Business can go on on the street because men believe in each other. That is why you will not deal with a man on 'Change whose word is not as good as his bond. If the business-men of this city should commence to-morrow morning to walk only by sight, there is not a business interest in the country that would not be flat before nightfall. Shaken confidence in men has always been the prolific mother of mercantile disaster. And so when Paul says, "We walk by faith," we will remember that faith plays in religion only the same part as that with which we are made daily familiar in the concerns of society, the home, and the street.

I might say a word about science in this connection. Science is like society and trade, in resting at bottom upon a basis of faith. There are some things here, too, that we can not prove, otherwise there would be nothing that we could prove. Science is busy with the hither-end of things, not the thither-end. It is a mistake to contrast religion and science in this respect, and to think of religion as taking everything for granted, and science as doing only clean work, and having all the loose ends gathered up and tucked in. We never reach the roots of things in science more than in religion. To begin with, What do you know about yourself? I am just as much of a mystery to myself as God is a mystery

to me. You can tell me what *you do*, and what *you think*, and what *you feel*; but about the "*you*" that does, and thinks, and feels, you can not tell me the first thing, and you do not *know* the first thing. You can not prove your own existence, and still less your identity, from day to day. To take another illustration; our whole judicial system would be without dignity, strength, or coherency, if it were not generally supposed among men that there is such a thing as right. But there is not one of us that can prove there is such a thing as right. Thought instantly loses its way. We feel it, we walk and live by the conviction of it, but can no more bridle it with our logic than we could fence God or the celestial spaces with our logic.

Our infirmity does not disturb us here. We stand by faith; we walk by our convictions of the unseen. Faith is a faculty we have of being stayed by the unproved. Indeed, we can not prove that there is such a thing as the sun in the sky. We daily feel a brightness here, and assume a bright thing there in order to explain it. Or if you choose to say that your eye actually shows you the sun, the only difference is that now you believe what your eye tells you, instead of believing what your inward mental impression tells you. You have faith that your eye tells you no lies. Faith! And if you had as much faith in what your inner sense tells you about God, as you have in what

your outer sense tells you about the sun, you would stop questioning. And why shouldn't you have? Do you know of any reason why you shouldn't have? Again: all our prognostication is based on faith in nature—faith that nature will act to-morrow as she is acting to-day. All the expectation we have that there will be a sunset to-night and a sunrise to-morrow morning, leans back directly on our faith in nature. The sea-captain trusts the magnetic pole. He does not see it nor know what it is, but he trusts it. The whole ship's cargo depends on the faithfulness of the needle. We assume that it will behave as other needles have behaved. Commerce, then, is rendered possible by faith. It is a great jump from knowing that nature has been uniform to supposing that she will be. A great deal of what we know as science is only faith, that has leaned so long as to have become oblivious of its supports.

We do not understand God, soul, and immortality, any better than they were understood five hundred years ago, and it works rather to the detriment of religion if it is supposed that nature has been having its mysteries cleared up during that time. In science men keep making discoveries; but I do not understand that we are any nearer explaining things, getting to the end of things, than we were when Thales pondered and Aristotle explored. If we have enlarged our horizon, it is only to find how much un-

suspected room there is for new horizons outside of our own. The same enlarged telescope that makes stars of the first magnitude more distinct, brings into view a few thousand more of the twelfth magnitude. The frontiers of the universe keep running away from us. Chemistry has taken a drop of water, and resolved it into its two elements, that is, she has split one fact in two, and given us two mysteries, where before there was but one. Science does not bring us to the end of things, nor to the beginning—rather sets us farther away. Once it was six thousand years back to the beginning, now it is as many million. The doctrine of evolution, whether sound or false, has not explained our origin, only postponed it. Science has not solved difficulties, only shifted the points of difficulty.

Much of scientific discovery is only generalization of difficulty, as when Newton made gravity cover the phenomena of the sky as well as of the earth. We do not dissolve our ignorance by designating the matters we are ignorant of, by a Latinized nomenclature. Saying that the earth is sustained by gravity, is a good deal the same thing, only in a more refined form, as what the ancients said when they rested the earth on an elephant, and the elephant on the back of a tortoise. I confess that it is an improvement, only (and this is the point we are on) it has not cleared up anything. So far as relates to ex-

planation, and to getting to the end of the matter, it makes very little difference whether we spell our theory "Tortoise," or "Attraction of Gravitation." It is much as Byron says in his "Manfred," that

"Science is
But an exchange of ignorance for that
Which is another kind of ignorance."

We might express it by saying that we are becoming more and more learnedly ignorant.

And, my hearer, if it happens that your mind rebels against faith as something that is at variance with wholesome intellectual action, and under the ban of all that is scientific, and mentally discreet, I wish you would, with that in mind, read largely of our standard works of science, late or early. Take such a work, for example, as Darwin's "Origin of Species." To me one of the most impressive features of the book is the ease and good humor with which in it science and faith get along together. I do not mean his faith in God—perhaps he had none—I mean his faith, his constant walk by the assurance of things hoped for, by the conviction of things unseen. That is faith, and Darwin had that in proportions that were simply colossal. He had a magnificent faith in his theory, the theory of Evolution. He could not prove the theory, and he knew he couldn't, and what is more, he continually confessed that he couldn't. Over and

over again, with all the simplicity of a child, he admits that his convictions run away ahead of his proofs. And it is so in all of these books so far as I am familiar with them. Their conclusions are a great deal larger than their premises. That is not spoken in a critical spirit. I am not finding fault with Evolution, nor with Mr. Darwin's book. I am only saying that he was a man of immense faith; he could not have written as he did if he hadn't been; he reached results without stopping to be logical; that is faith. He had faith, just the same kind of faith that Isaiah had, only exercised toward his doctrine instead of exercised toward God. If he had been as disposed to walk by the conviction of an invisible God as he was to walk by the conviction of an undemonstrated hypothesis, he might have turned out as sublime a prophet as Isaiah, or as superb an apostle as St. Paul. I have no controversy with Evolution. Men object to religion because it is such a tax on faith; and I only want you should look directly at the fact, that in the priests of science, faith, just such faith as Peter and John had, is a distinguishing feature—in fact it is to faith as much as to anything that their supremacy in the priesthood of science is due—and if the faith of Darwin, of Tyndal, of Huxley, of Haeckel, of Herbert Spencer, had been as sublimely exercised toward God as it was toward the conjectures engendered in their own brains, there

would have been power enough in them to found in the middle of the nineteenth century a second Church of the Apostles.

Besides this, you will, I think, be helped to regard religious faith with more respect if you will consider the mental calibre of some men who have been religious believers. I do not mean that this is a matter that can be settled by ballot. We are not going to vote God in or out by show of hands. Only if you have a suspicion that faith is a euphemism for intellectual debility, facts are at hand to controvert the suspicion. Daniel Webster died at Marshfield, October 24, 1852. I had the privilege awhile ago of seeing the original paper on which, under date of the tenth of that month, he penned a few lines of confession. At the top of the page are the words from Mark, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." Underneath, among other sentences, is this: "My heart has always assured me, and reassured me, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be a divine reality." In some sentences of Bismarck's occur these words: "The firm stand that for ten years I have taken against all possible absurdities of the court, I owe purely to my decided faith. If I were not a Christian and a firm believer, you would never have had such a chancellor. Take away from me my relation to God, and I am the man to pack up to-morrow and be off for Varzin" (his ancestral estate). Gladstone,

whom we so easily think of in connection with Bismarck, has spoken with far more of tenderness and effect. In the department of literature are to be cited the names of Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe. "Jesus Christ was more than man," said Napoleon. Prof. Tyndal, in an address to English workingmen, has within a little time not only explicitly denied that he was an atheist, but went so far as to say that in view of the daily wonders of nature, "only a shallow man" (those are his words) "can be satisfied to be an atheist." It was one of the last utterances of the late physicist, Maxwell: "Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." In opening his school at Penikese Island, Agassiz gathered his pupils around him and said: "It is becoming that we first of all bow in the presence of the Infinite One, and thus recognize His sovereignty, superlative wisdom and beneficence." Other names which belong in the roll of illustrious scientists who were at the same time religious believers, are such as Galileo, Kepler, Bacon, Newton, Cuvier, Herschel, Owen, Faraday. As I said, we are not calling the ayes and noes on the question of God and no God, only such a list of names illustrates that strong mental grasp and strong faith-grasp can coexist easily and pleasantly; that there is therefore no inherent antagonism between

the two, so that if we have keen intellects and are unbelievers, it is something beside our keen intellects that causes us to be unbelievers, and the most practical and impressive question we can ask ourselves, is what that something is.

And now to this same hesitant class of hearers there is one other thing I want to say in behalf of faith. It is not intellectual debility: that we have seen. On the contrary (and this is the point I want to make), on the contrary, faith is the very heroism and enterprise of intellect. Faith is not a passivity, but a faculty. Faith is power, the material of effect. Faith is a kind of winged intellect. The great workmen of history have been men who believed like giants. Take the eleventh of Hebrews, that famous roll-call of God's men of faith, and the men that made events for two thousand years are all in it—Noah, Abraham, Moses, Gideon, David. And ever since then the men that have helped the world forward and wrought great effects in the world, have been those who have lived by the power and fascination exerted upon them by the things outside their horizon, by the power of unseen things flung up upon their sky in mirage. Standing upon the shores of Spain, Columbus reasoned upon the driftwood borne in on the western tide, but there was a million times more in his conclusion than there was in the driftwood. His winged thought had reached the great

West before the *Santa Maria* weighed anchor in Palos. *Faith* discovered America and made Columbus more royal than the crowned heads of Europe. Faith is the heroism of intellect. Nothing would ever have been done in the world if before the deed the doer had waited to calculate all the elements in the case and compute all the contingencies. Every great effect and grand discovery begins as an inspired guess. The best things have not been reasoned out, but conjectured. As some one has said, "Newton's passage from a falling apple to a falling moon was a leap of the imagination." Such an imagination as that of Columbus or Newton, is but another name for faith ablaze. My friend, if you have not faith-power enough to outrun your thought, you will not have deed-power enough to overtake your thought. Faith is not debility nor phlegm. Faith is mind at its best, its bravest, and its fieriest. Faith is thought become poetry, and absorbing into itself the soul's great passions. Faith is intellect carried up to its transfigurement. Don't you dare think one disrespectful thought of faith. The power of grand living and superb doing is all in it. Think on these things; brood over them, and may the power of the Great Unseen put its spell upon you, the invisible continent cast itself up upon your sky in mirage, holding your ship's prow onward, forever onward to the great West, till you stand down on the new shore, hope ripened into fruition, faith flashed into vision.

V.

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT.

"But if ye be led by the Spirit ye are not under the law."—GAL. v. 18.

IN approaching the matter of the Spirit's guidance and control, there are two facts to which we shall do well to hold closely, to the end that our study may prove disciplinary to heart as well as to intellect, and to the end also that our regards may draw closely to that Lord about whom it is so essential that our thoughts should centre in these days of reflection and sacramental preparation.

One of these facts is, that the Spirit, under whose leadership our text recognizes the Christian to be placed, is a person. The personality of the Spirit is a doctrine freely confessed by us in our creed, but often denied by us in our thought, in our converse, and in our prayers. We easily fall into the use of non-committal terms and neuter pronouns in our designation of Him. Though writing Him with a capital we are continually substituting by the pronominal "it," and He readily comes to have with us only the indefiniteness of

an impulse and the impersonalness of an influence, with none of that substantive being, intelligence, and will that constitutes the Holy Spirit a true and complete personality.

The other preliminary fact to be observed is, that this person is in some way the continuance to us, under altered conditions, of that same Jesus, who once walked among men in visible form, and in the utterance of tones that were audible. I have no ambition to dogmatize about it. He came from the Father and from the Son. He in a way takes the Son's place. In a way He is the Son's messenger. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart I will send Him unto you." Elsewhere the Holy Spirit is represented as the baptismal element, answering to the water with which John baptized his disciples; and still again Christ says that He is going to be with His disciples alway, as though the Spirit were His own personal prolongation, in new ways and manifestations, into the weeks and years that followed on after the ascension. We have no care to speak any exact words about it, only to enjoin it upon ourselves to-night in all our efforts to come in more snugly under the dominance of the Holy Spirit, to feel that we have not broken with Christ, but rather that in letting ourselves be actuated by the Spirit, we are living still under the same personal régime as did the disciples who walked abroad through

Judea and Galilee in the companionship of Jesus; and that if the Holy Spirit were to take upon itself form, we should have back with us again in some way the same holy person who blessed His disciples out at Bethany, and was parted from them in the cloud that divided itself over Olivet.

If ye be led of the Spirit ye are not under the law. You perceive that the text has its affirmative and also its negative element. In neglecting the latter, and addressing ourselves (as is more satisfactory) only to its affirmative and constructive aspect, it needs to be accepted as our basal principle, that through whatever stages God's government passes, God's government never ceases, and that changes of dispensation are not breaks in divine authority, but alterations simply in God's method of *administering* His authority. This principle is distinctly implied in our text. The Jew as such is under the law, amenable to God's authority as exercised through Moses: the Christian as a Christian is also under a kind of law, amenable to God's authority as exercised through the Son, the Holy Spirit,—sovereignty, *divine* sovereignty carrying its exercise through both dispensations in one uninterrupted continuity without hint of break or of interregnum. Now the conception we are likely to have of Christianity is of a system under which there is larger liberty enjoyed than under the system of Moses; and this conception, provided only we as-

sociate with the word "liberty" its true notion, is justified, and justified by the Scripture. Christ says, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Paul says, "He that is called in the Lord, is the Lord's freeman." Again, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." He exhorts the Galatians, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." But I question if we *are* all of us, or even most of us, quite careful or accurate in the notion we have of the thing called "freedom." Freedom is not exemption from government; rather is freedom a form of government. Anarchy, lawlessness, is the opposite of government; freedom is a special variety of government. Political freedom is civil authority vested in a particular way. Christian freedom is divine authority vested in a particular way; so that in coming out from the bondage of a Jew into the freedom of a Christian, there is no inquiry to be had respecting the *abatement* of authority, but only respecting the new point at which authority is vested and the new manner in which it is exercised.

Two or three remarks here before we proceed to statements more explicit. Our investigation, then, it is easily enough perceived, is not being pursued at the impulse of any antagonism on our part to that element in the ten commandments that constitutes the essential ingredient of the ten commandments, viz., the divine will they embody. The will of God,

whether written with the finger of God on Sinai, or traced with the blood of God on Calvary,—the will of God and the blessedness accruing to the man that does that will, is one of the bottommost facts of our holy faith; and it is in pure loyalty to that fact that our inquiry here is being prosecuted, and any opposition that might arise to this method of expounding the text would be quite as likely to proceed from such as find themselves unpleasantly restrained by this form of exposition as from such as are anxious to see recognized the Gospel's essential dignity and gracious strenuousness.

Another remark to be made is, that by the terms of our text, whatever enjoyable escape may be had from the old law, it is to be had only on the condition of being a Christian. "*If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.*" A man may live in an age of Gospel, but it does not follow from that that he lives under the administration of the Gospel. Christ has come into the world, but it does not follow that He has come into my heart and set up His throne there. The Holy Spirit is abroad in society, and there are thousands and hundreds of thousands that are being led by that Spirit. It does not follow from that that I am being led by it. If I am led by it, I am not under the law; if I am *not* led by it, of course I am under the law. I have not escaped the pressure of divine authority at one point

until I have first put myself under the pressure of divine authority at another point. We read in the book of Numbers that a man gathered sticks on the Sabbath, and he was stoned at the Lord's command; and our thought perhaps is that God *used* to be very particular. We read in the book of Joshua that Achan, the son of Zerah, was guilty of embezzlement, and that at the Lord's command he and his sons and his daughters were stoned with stones and burned with fire; and our thought perhaps is that the Lord *used* to be very particular. He used to be particular *to be obeyed*.

There is so much in the *New* Testament respecting love, liberty, and the abolition of old ordinances, that we allow ourselves sometimes to be betrayed into supposing that the old dispensation was the dispensation of man's submission to God, and that the new dispensation is the dispensation of God's submission to man; that the Gospel is a kind of giving up on God's part, a sort of confession that He is not disposed to be particular about little things any more, and that it hardly avails Him to *attempt* to be particular about little things. Now, this conception of the Gospel as an economy of divine "relaxation," divine "letting down," divine "giving up," is one that yields bitter fruit; it makes the Gospel contemptible by making it irresolute. And nowhere in the Scriptures do I find such evidence of God's inflexibility, of

His resoluteness, and determination, that, come what will, He will be obeyed, as I do on Calvary. Calvary shows us that the Almighty had rather see His Son crucified than give up His own holy will.

Calvary means that God thinks so much of His own sovereignty that He would rather have divine blood shed than not have you and me respect that sovereignty and come into terms of gentle allegiance to it. Calvary proves, by the most thrilling of all possible demonstration, that God is as particular to be scrupulously obeyed now as when He ordered the execution of Achan and of the Sabbath-breaker in the old days of Sinai. "With Him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." And the man who discards the punctilious observance of God's outward statutes because he lives in an age of Gospel, without having first submitted himself to the governance of an inward Christ, and to the laws written by the Spirit upon the fleshly tables of the heart, has detached himself *from* God at one point, without having first attached himself *to* God at another point.

We are prepared, then, to find the government of God, as administered in the Gospel economy, as constant and inflexible in its operations as in its administration under the economy of Sinai; and we are now to examine this new economy of Christ and the Spirit somewhat more narrowly with respect to its nature and methods.

Paul characterizes this new administration under which we stand as Christians, as a leading of the Spirit: "If ye *be led of the Spirit*, ye are not under the law." The old administration was an administration of exterior lines that men could see: the new administration is an administration of interior personal impulses that men can feel. God drew the lines. God gives the impulses. Moses was the agency then; Christ is the agency now; one government underlying both, one sovereign administrative in both. In one case it was government by communicated statute; in the other it is government by immanent leadings. In one the law was a thing distinct from us, and laid down for us to run upon, like railroad-irons spiked and bedded before a locomotive; in the other the impulse is a thing inwardly contained and inseparable from us, in a certain way like the instinct of a bird guiding it southward at the approach of winter.

In various ways might this distinction between government by applied constraint and government by contained motive be illustrated to us. Any bar of wood or metal you can balance upon a pivot and constrain into a north and south direction; a magnetic needle delicately suspended in the same way will constantly constrain *itself* into a north and south direction. An applied constraint in one instance, an immanent tendency in the other. Although it will

occur to you, I hope, that even this immanent tendency of the magnetized needle becomes operative only as celestial polarity makes itself in a delicate way inwardly felt. The needle would not move only as the heavens move in it.

Or again—one pupil solves a problem according to the rule stated in his arithmetic; another pupil solves the same problem purely at the direction of his own mathematical insight. The result may be the same,—the steps by which the result is reached may be the same; but in the latter instance the process will be purely intellectual, and in the former, to a considerable degree *mechanical*; for between such constrained operations of mind and the operations of a Babbage's calculating *machine* the points of resemblance are obvious and striking.

This contrast, however, must not betray us into supposing that our gifted problem-worker is not as amenable, quite as amenable, to authority, as the boy who ciphers with his finger on the rule. When a man becomes a genius, a mathematical genius if you please, he passes out from under the constraints of his book, but not from under the supremacy of his science. There is no caprice about genius. Genius does not care much for a set of explicit regulations, but that does not mean that genius is lawless; in fact no mind comes so close to, and into such loyal intimacy with, the very substance of mathematical law,

as the free and the gifted mathematician. So far from genius discarding law, rather is it the supreme joy of genius to re-enact the eternal and unwritten law in the chamber of its own intellect. And however the Christian, the moral genius, may discard systems of detailed ordainment suited to a slow-paced Hebrew, so far from a Christian's denying the great supremacy beneath which he stands, rather is it his sovereign joy to re-enact in the senate-chamber of his own conscience the unwritten law that abides eternal in the bosom of his Lord.

I solicit your attention to another feature of this prolific illustration. Notwithstanding the disparity between our two students, one a genius and the other not, one governed by his intuition and the other by his book, it is nevertheless certain that in the vast majority of instances, if the same problem be submitted to the two for their solution, they will take the same steps in laboring toward its solution. Where the one performs a process of addition (because his book requires it) the genius will also, it is likely, perform a process of addition, but at a different impulse. When the first goes through a process of division because it is so enjoined in his rule, the genius will also, presumably, perform a like process, though for a different reason, and for a reason that his less gifted companion would scarcely appreciate. So that when our talented arithmetician says that he

has no personal interest in the arithmetical rules of our books, that is not because he has ceased to find it necessary in his arithmetical work to follow the methods and go through with the processes laid down in those books. We have not outgrown the necessity of carrying one for every ten in adding a column of figures, though we have most likely outgrown Greenleaf's *statement* of that necessity; and what was the outward constraint of our text-book is now the inward impulse of our intelligence. Moses' law said to the Jew, "Thou shalt not kill"; it says nothing to me; for as a Christian I am not under Moses' law. It does not follow from that that I am at liberty to commit murder. I have not outgrown the obligation to refrain from bloodshed, however I have outgrown Moses' statement of that obligation. I believe that will make distinct matters that careless thinking is liable to confound. We may break the two tables into as many fragments as Moses broke them into when he came out of the mount, but that breakage involves no advocacy of murder, adultery, theft, or desecration of holy time.

Moses broke the tables and they were renewed in the same form. Christ broke the tables and now they have been renewed in a different form. "Ye are not under the law if ye be led of the Spirit." To us, as Christians, God's handwriting upon stone has been replaced by His handwriting upon our hearts. "If

ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Obedience to God's will displayed outwardly was Judaism ; obedience to God's will revealed and operating inwardly is Christianity. It was the belief of the Jews that God spoke upon Sinai. It was the belief of Paul when he wrote our text that the Holy Ghost speaks and works constrainingly wherever there is a spirit still enough to hear, and willing enough to yield, and that the divine presence templed in each Christian soul is the one single sovereign to which that soul is amenable.

I do not suppose that this will be interpreted by any to mean that Christ pronounces in any precise and oracular way upon the various questions of right and wrong that daily submit themselves to us for decision. Rather is it the conception of Scripture that as Christians we have God's seed abiding in us ; that our Christianity is a living fact, gradually evolving from that seed ; that our Christian activities, inner and outer, are all in the nature of blossom and fruit, steadily enlarging and gradually diverging from that same divine and inward seed ; that to whatever proportions our Christianity may attain, it is all of it the outcome from this one divine point, vital and germinal. The vegetable seed determines the quality and form of everything that flowers out from it. That is why all the parts of a blossom are so delicately consistent with each other ;

they all emanate from one point, and are all of them therefore loyal to the one living law lodged at that point, and carried up and executed by them through all their circles and sections of growth. Just the thing that always makes a wax flower grotesque is, that, while it purports to be the product of a seminal unfolding, its numerous incongruities declare it to have been the result of an outward compiling; which precisely is the nature of that grotesque thing that passes sometimes under the name of Christianity. Our man takes one petal from the law of Moses, selects another from the Sermon on the Mount; inserts one stamen from the traditions of the church, another from the local sentiment of his community, perches all upon a stalk of self-interest, suffuses it with an aroma of the Holy Spirit, fastens it all together, calls it Christianity, sets it out, prays that the dew of the divine Spirit may water it, and from time to time comes to examine it, and wonders why it does not grow, take on finer colors, larger strength, and heavier fruit. His grand mistake lies in conceiving of Christianity as a mixture and a manufacture. Christianity is first and last of all Christ in us, inwardly revealed as a law-giving direction to our life, inwardly at work as a force, developing our life in conformity with that law.

In this way the entire matter is brought back to the point where Paul rested it, to the point of the inward, constant, and personal sovereignty of Jesus

Christ in the individual soul. It comes back to the point where the Lord himself put it, "Follow me." It comes back to the point where last of all the beloved disciple put it, that Christianity is the seed of God abiding in the human spirit, and qualified therefore, *as* divine seed, to impose its own law, give its own shape, prescribe its own direction, to every stage of the Christian's growth, every movement of his Christian thought, every deed of his Christian achieving.

My Christian friends, I commend to your prayerful consideration this conception of personal Christianity as one that I am assured faithfully reproduces the intent of the Gospel and the mind of Christ. It gathers the whole matter within one circumference drawn from a single centre, and grounds it upon one supreme fact. And, in fine, it puts us upon concentrating our energies of thought, not upon ourselves, but upon Christ, as the one focus of regard, and seeking after Him with our whole hearts as the single object of pursuit, certified of this that if indeed Christ be formed within us, then will He, in His own trusty way, effect within our soul all desired reconciliation of discords, lead us into all truth that is needful for us, make *His* way straight before our face, and cause our simplest word and commonest performance to be the daily and hourly expression of His most perfect wisdom and holy pleasure.

VI.

METHODICAL PIETY.

"Evening and morning and at noon will I pray."

—PSALM lv. 17.

NINE o'clock in the morning, twelve o'clock and three o'clock. Systematic piety. And it is system in piety rather than piety itself that will occupy us this morning. Methodical holiness; goodness by rule; clock-work religion. We are conscious of a certain incongruity in this mode of representation. We are prepared to stand by the representation, however, and to push it. The involved absurdity is apparent as soon as the case is stated baldly. We may, however, discover that, in this instance, as in some others, what looks first-off to be absurdity, may some of it be good sense seen foreshortened. At any rate, the incongruity is all in our text. David's piety worked itself forth in periodic displays. Three times daily, and at set times. "Seven times a day do I praise Thee," says the unknown writer of the 119th Psalm; only a fanciful accommodation, that may be, to the numerical symbol of Judaism. Three times daily and at set times.

Our verse then exhibits in sober earnest the mechanics of religion and the arithmetic of it. The mathematical idea really lies more or less apparent in almost everything great and good. An algebraic formula has been written, containing but six symbols, that embraces within itself the whole completed history of the material universe with all its forces and phenomena. In the 21st of Revelation the heavenly Jerusalem is laid along the lines of a geometric solid. St. John is continually falling back onto figures in the exposition of the Apocalypse. Holiness and arithmetic may not be as mutually exclusive as seems at first sight. And so, I say, David prayed three times daily and at set times.

The entire Old Testament is full of allusions that are similar. Old-dispensation righteousness was inlaid with method. There must have been meaning in this, and a meaning, we might imagine, that would naturally survive in some measure the transition to the righteousness of the New Dispensation. It had elements of exactness and precision. This comes to the surface incidentally in the story of Daniel, who prayed three times a day, and not only that, but had a particular place for praying, and a particular window that he prayed at, and a specific point on the western horizon toward which his devotions aimed themselves. All of which was quite mechanical and formal; and yet we remember that Daniel was an ex-

ceedingly safe man in an emergency. The movements in the astronomic heavens are all of them along lines of mathematical precision, which at the first look may appear to rob the firmament and the dances of the stars of something of their poetry and song; and yet the fact, cold and unmelodious though it be, enables us to compute the right ascension and declination of those stars for any given moment of the day, year, or century, which is something. Daniel was more methodical than may be poetic; but it is something to be able to forecast a man's latitude and longitude as Daniel's could be. The clock-work element in his religion was quite conspicuous, and yet it is worth a good deal to have a man in trying times that will tick the minutes as distinctly as he, and strike with so full a ring when the hour comes around. It is good to have men in community that run so close with the sun, that when it is foggy you can tell what time it is by looking in their faces. I should say, then, that the Daniels and Davids help reconcile us in a degree to the idea of goodness and devotion that is devout and good by rule.

Whatever, then, may be our natural disposition toward methodical piety and systematic religion, it will be worth our while to look at the matter with some care and see what we can make of it. It lacks that fine quality of spontaneity that is so dear and precious, and so excites in us some opposition and

distrust, and still may be a thing that can not lightly be dispensed with. It is ceremonious, yet there are things that are worse than ceremony. Ceremony is something like the bones in the body, which need to be neatly covered with tissue, and yet serve an admirable purpose in maintaining the proportions of the body and securing its stability. Even a form of service as free and simple as our own, is, after all, exceedingly ceremonious and arithmetic. For example: Every Sunday morning, almost precisely as the sun is crossing a given meridian, we commence what is called the "long prayer." We sit or stand in the same place, assume the same posture, pray for about the same things in very nearly the same words, and when the sun has traversed three degrees, say "Amen," and take up the next part of the service. We may not be in the mood of prayer always when we begin, and it may be at times with a sense of relief that the end is reached; still we follow the method with reverent particularity, and consider the arrangement a wholesome one. There is with us all a sense of time-piece and sun-dial in our public worship. The clock is hung directly in front of the pulpit, in order that the processes of the minister may not fall out of beat with the swing of the pendulum. The whole service is stretched upon a framework of ceremony, and hung upon bars arithmetically distanced, and that really is what saves our service.

Worship at its best is spontaneous and untimed, so that all this mechanical and numerical element must jar a little upon all true conception of the matter. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit"; and in using that language our Lord was speaking very close upon the matter we have in hand. Quite coincident with those words of His is the sentiment of our hymn: "Prayer is the Christian's native air"; and yet we sing that hymn and others like it at our *stated* meetings of social devotion, meetings so contrived as to have the first word of invocation spoken just as the hour-hand is at the top of the dial-plate, and the last word of benediction exactly as the hand returns to the same point. That is, we plan to be devout just sixty minutes, and the method is a most admirable one. It is not an ideal method, but, what is a good deal more to the purpose, it is as good a method as we are equal to. In any matter the best way to become equal to better methods is to be very loyal in our use of present ones that are not as good. Paul outgrew Judaism, because he had been so good a Jew. The best way to become bigger is to be as big as we are, *with all our might*. The best way to learn how to do a great thing is to acquire dexterity in doing small ones. The quickest means of reaching perfection in any line is the cultivation of our powers in the assiduous practice of what is a little short of perfection. The boy who will

spring high into the air takes care to select a solid bit of ground upon which to base and steady his spring. Praying by the clock is not ideal, neither are we, and trying to adopt ideal methods into situations that are not themselves ideal, not only gives us no perfection in the result, but only a very ordinary sort of imperfection.

Too much ideal may be the worst hindrance to our reaching the ideal, just as too much sun not only prevents our seeing the sun, but blinds us so that we can not see anything else. We try to do the works of genius, and in the very way that genius does them, before we have reached the estate of genius. It does not appear that Christ was subject to particular days, places, or rules. Godliness with Him was spontaneous. Holiness in being and in act was in Him a genius. Now, our foolish ambition is to do as Christ did, without first having become what Christ was. We judge ourselves by extreme standards. We are forbidden to judge others. Paul says: "I judge not myself." "In your patience possess ye your souls," has its bearing upon the way we feel toward our own imperfect ways of being and doing, as well as toward the faultiness of others.

It is our ambition to have goodness so become a second nature with us that we can do right, and be devout and gentle and sweet and forgiving, without taking any pains to be, and without laying down any

rules for ourselves in the matter. Anything else than that is artificial goodness and machine holiness. How devout and humble and honest and forbearing we would be if we could be so without its tiring us. A child with a little peevishness in her disposition commences the day with a resolution not to speak an unkind word. The effort wearies her, and before noon she drops back into the old current. She hears the bird singing in the cage, and thinks how delightful it would be if only pleasant words fell from her as easily as pleasant notes fall from the bird. The problem of improvement is to become a perfect thing by patient continuance in doing what is not perfect. The only way a child learns to walk perfectly is to persist contentedly in walking awkwardly and tumblingly. It is full of effort and bumps; but that is the coin in which all the staples of this life and of the other have to be paid for.

A talent for goodness has to be acquired as much as a talent for trade or sculpture, and is reached in either case over a rough road of rules and prescriptions. We have to learn to be good as well as to be artists in other lines. Goodness is certainly an art; and art-power here, as elsewhere, is preceded by no end of drudgery. We are all born at the foot of the hill. Whether we are born sinners or not is matter for the schools, but that we are not born saints you and I know as well as the theologians. Making up

our minds to be good no more makes us good than making up our minds to be scholars makes us scholars. We have to *work* out our salvation. We have to *learn* to do well. And there must be constant resort to the artificial and the mechanical till the lesson is learned, doing by rule what we have not yet the heart to do by impulse. We become better than we are by doing better than it is in our heart to do, better than it is yet our new nature to do, and so observing rules of behavior. The Law is a school-master to bring us to Christ. Everything at the outset has to be done by rule. We talk by rule, we walk by rule, we read by rule, we sing and play by rule. The quickest way to outgrow rule is to make faithful use of rule. The melted iron can dispense with the mould by having been run in the mould. The more pains we take to make the letters in our copy-book like those at the top of the page, the sooner we can get along without any copy-book. The element of the formal and the mechanical is the threshold over which we step forward to any new acquisition.

God's discipline of the world began, therefore, with the announcement of statutes. The first thing God gave Adam was a rule; and the first thing Adam did was to break it, which shows that even the first man had no native talent for being good and doing right; men have to be trained to it, established in it by discipline. The Old Testament is loaded with statutes,

and as soon almost as we turn the fly-leaves we find Christ reaffirming those statutes. There is never so much or such sort of wind in the sails as to make it safe to dispense with the rudder. I should not be surprised to know that a perfect man needs no compass apart from the holy impulses that are in him. But not we. Men are enjoined to do better than it is their nature to do. We become better only as we do better than we are. We outgrow rules by obeying them. Our life can become unmechanically holy only by first being artificially and laboriously holy. Spontaneous holiness, purely such, means Heaven, not earth. We are apprentices here. We have to try to behave better than we are in order to succeed in becoming as good as we behave. There is no man here who is not retrograding, unless his deed is better than his desire, and his life so far forth an affectation. We can not trust our intuitions, and so we are obliged to think by rule, that is, be logical. We can not trust our impulses, and therefore we have to behave by rule.

But it is for our encouragement to bethink ourselves of this, which we must all to a degree have experienced, that even an outward rule observed with patient fidelity begins to become in time an inward bent. What we admire as spontaneity is very often only the flower that has, with imperceptible steps, unfolded from the coarse calyx of painful effort ; just as we know that with the piano-pupil, what begins as

a painful and laborious touching of individual notes, without any break, culminates in the end in an artistic rendering full of delightful and unconscious facility; and just as probably what we dignify as intellectual intuition, is only reasoning that knows how to be expeditious, logic on the wing.

And now more than anything for the sake of sampling the applications of which our principle admits, we shall mention three or four matters of religious observance and the like, which it is not safe to leave unregulated. First, *prayer*. This is the matter which is particularized in our text. Several references have already been made to it in our effort to make clear the matter of method and the need of rule. Prayer at fixed times is awkward. If our devotions were like the bird's note, that warbles itself forth in delicious unconstraint; if we were like the flower that exhales perfume because it is a part of its nature, regulation could be dispensed with. But not only is it awkward to pray at fixed times; a little neglect would easily make it awkward for us to pray at any time. When necessity has detained us from our closet for one day, indisposition will easily detain us the next. At whatever height the bird may be sailing, it begins to near the earth as soon as its wings stop. It is therefore we need a prayer-law for ourselves, closet-regulations. Our impulses can not be relied upon. If we never prayed except when we

felt like it, we should soon cease ever to feel like it. A rule of prayer is a staff set up for a weak and inconstant impulse to lean against and be bound to. The branches of a tree need to be trimmed and its trunk kept erect, as well as its roots watered. The ideal of prayer is to pray without ceasing, to have a life as pleasantly in fellowship with heavenly influences as is the earth constant in its sense of the solar drawings upon it. But such an ideal is always still far forward of us. There are not many men here that can for six hours work with all their might in their office and not drop a little from the mood of prayer. Our secular and our religious life do not pull evenly together. We resolve in the morning that we will save a moment for heavenly conference here and there through the day, and the next time we think of it is to-morrow morning when we resolve the same thing over again. It is not safe to leave the matter to the disposal of a planless sentiment. When we have prayed a deliberate, and if you please, formal prayer in the morning, we shall be far more likely to have a thought slipping Godwards from time to time in the push and distraction of business, than if the day begins without some such formal devotement of ourselves before Him. It is easy to ridicule the formality of it, but the chances all are, that you will have nothing better than that without that. There is peril in cutting loose from the habitual and the stated. Disposition

needs training. Character is impulse that has been reined down into steady continuance. Set times for meeting God help develop in us set times for wanting to meet Him.

Second—Sanctuary Worship.—We are creatures of time and place, and till we become completely sanctified like the angels, we shall depend upon days and houses of worship. “The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father.” In heaven we are told by John there is to be no temple. By that time it is to be supposed we shall have outgrown the need of it; but not yet. In our present estate place is an essential of worship. We lean upon the idea of place and are stayed by it. I have no hesitancy in saying that the men who are becoming most rapidly fitted to worship God in the untempled city, are those who stand most constantly in the temple courts of the cities that are terrestrial. Something besides pretty fancies about worshipping God in the tabernacle of nature—something besides that is what puts iron into the blood of men and women that are devoting life to the conversion of men and the saving of the world. The man who sees most of God in nature and comes closest to Him among the mountains and out under the stars will be he who has first felt the strange presence of His Spirit at the altar. *Æsthetic* exhilaration must not be confounded with devout communion. Nowhere is

the presence and glory of God in earth, sea, and heavens so sublimely celebrated as in the Psalms; and nowhere else are more fervid eulogies pronounced upon the sanctuary of God and the courts of the Lord's house.

And the matter may judiciously be pressed still one step farther. As at present disposed we need not only a sanctuary to worship in, but one is a great deal better than two or any number greater. About as well have half a dozen domestic homes as half a dozen religious homes, sanctuary homes. There is in every such city as this a vast number of churchgoers that are in a distinguished sense pilgrims upon the earth. There are laws that can not be transgressed with impunity. The benefits accruing from the services of the sanctuary depend very much upon the fixity of the sanctuary. There is a wide difference between sitting under God's truth and going around sampling the preaching. One is using the church as we should use a theatre or concert-hall; the other as we should use our dining-table, spread with favors for the nourishment of the body. One is business, the other is amusement. This is no reflection upon people who sample the churches for the purpose of finding one that can be to them a true church home, and then settle in it and become a fixture; although even such experimenting can easily be prolonged to a man's detriment and engender restless

instability even where it did not exist before, as men who go upon the road in search of work and a home, readily degenerate into tramps, with the loss of all sense of home, and anxious for nothing so much as to evade work and draw gratuitous sustenance from a long-suffering public. Nomadic hearers dissipate what religion they have, faster than they accumulate it. Trees that are pulled up and set out in new soil each week make lean fruit-bearers. Peripatetic worshippers that are established in their instability neither help us by their presence nor gain from us by our presence.

There are other points in regard to which I wanted to say a word, but will only speak in addition of *church-membership*. A Christian says to me: I do not care to identify myself with any particular church, for I am a member of the Church of Christ, and that transcends all local churches and all denominations of churches. There is a great truth in this if only we will *use it truthfully*. Sometime, most likely, there will be nothing just like our churches or like our denominations. So much organization as we have at present is an accommodation to our weakness. We outgrow law by being true to law. We outgrow organization by being true to organization. It is a great deal easier to be all bound up in a local church than to be all bound up in the Church universal. It is not so sublime, but it is easier, and is as much as

we are equal to, most of us. Denominationalism is certainly not the ideal, but I am thoroughly persuaded that the best way to outgrow denominationism is to be grandly and generously true to the denomination we are in, and it makes not much difference which that is. There is not nearly the difficulty in sympathizing with a concrete fact that there is in sympathizing with an abstract idea. What we gain in breadth we are likely to lose in intensity. Sheer liberality of idea, and pure unprecision of loyalty, is not doing the world's converting work. The rays of light that stream in at your bedroom window affect you far more deeply and do a great deal more for you, than a whole heavenful of light lying outside, that you can only form ideas and conjectures about. If we are cold we go and warm ourselves at the particular register that opens into our room. When the Hebrews set about rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, each man was instructed to build over against his own house. That was better economy than for each man to do a little everywhere, and by that means not do much of anything anywhere. The results are a good deal of the latter sort when a man stops with being simply a member of the Church universal; he neither denotes much to the church nor the church much to him. We get affected by close contacts with live things at specific points. If our arms were long enough we might reach around

the world and put our stamp everywhere. But it is silly for us to spend in contemplating the ideal grandeur of such an embrace the time we might turn to account in putting practical pressure upon the little spot where we stand. It is a great thing to love all mankind. There is nothing like it. But it is better to say a single word of cheer and comfort to the man who stands next you, than merely to love the whole race with a thin dilute of affection that never reaches the point of doing anything for anybody. The best way really to know how to love the man that is farthest from you, is to begin by loving and blessing the man that is next you. It is a small matter, I confess, to love your neighbor, but the slumbering potencies of universal love are all in it. So I confess it is a very narrow thing to belong to a single church and love it with all our heart, and pray for it and work for it seven days in a week; but for all that, it is the only means I know of getting into such vital connection with the Church universal as shall really make that church anything more than an idea, or my relation to it anything better than a theory. We may well withhold our confidence from any breadth or liberalism that does not first begin in narrowness and outgrow the narrowness by being as immense as it can inside of its limitations, and so bursting those limitations. That will give us breadth that will be something other than a pet name for thinness, and

liberalism that will be something better than a euphemism for indifference.

Such are some of the applications of which our principle admits. I had intended to speak of creeds and beneficence in the same connection, but our time is expired. And the general thought with which I want to conclude is, that we should be satisfied to creep before we can walk, and satisfied to walk before we can fly; that we should recognize that we are apprentices; that life is a fitting school; not be discouraged by our infirmities nor by the inconstancy of our impulses, but thank the wise Providence who has given to us laws for those inconstant impulses to stay themselves upon, till they shall have risen into strength and been disciplined into stability. And may we be disposed especially to take the laws of this Holy Book, and the heavenly statutes as they stand revealed in the incarnated life of the Son of God, and use those laws of giving, loving, praying, helping, forgiving, constrain our behavior to them, lash our impulses to them in patient endurance and obedience, strengthening our hearts forever with the hope of the good time coming, when at length prayer shall have become a joy, service a delight, and all God's children full of genius for doing the things that are pure, gentle, and true; when they shall all mount up with wings as eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint.

VII.

PIETY AND BUSINESS COMPATIBLE.

“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house ; and, his window being opened in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.”—DANIEL vi. 10.

THE incident then yields us a glimpse of the *ordinary* tone and temper of Daniel's mind :—“as he did aforetime.” The devoutness remarked in the verse the writer takes care to imply was not a paroxysm of godliness excited by present exigency, nor an assumption of godliness induced by present intimidation :—“as he did aforetime.” Daniel was then what we should call a *spiritually-minded* believer ;—if the term does not grate a little harshly—a *pious* believer.

Piety gets reckoned sometimes as a supernumerary grace, as though, *without* it, religion could reach as fine a point as is needful, practical, or practicable. Judging from this, and other passages of the book, Daniel's faith was essentially a devout, a pious faith.

Piety perhaps can not be stated so exactly, but its general scope it is not hard to appreciate. It is a subjective matter. It relates less to what a man is seen to do outwardly, than to relations that he is supposed to sustain inwardly. Daniel's piety betrayed itself by his thrice daily devotions, and otherwise. He was not pious because he prayed; he prayed because he was pious. He was a praying man: he lived close to God; maintained personal intercourse with Him. Like Enoch he walked with God, whatever in particular that may be construed to mean. Religion we all believe in, but piety, possibly, is something that is not to us quite as generally congenial, even to those that count themselves believers. The word at any rate expresses something, or at least suggests something, with which there is considerably less than unanimous sympathy. Daniel's piety consisted not so much in his belief in God, as in his constant intimacy with Him. He was a man whose integrity was beyond question,—so the earlier verses of the chapter intimate; but quite beside this, God stood near to him and was a very real and personal thing to him. He confided in God: he talked over with God his wants and distresses. He did not *say* his prayers. Prayer meant with him coming within speaking distance of God and getting into social relation with Him. He told God the secrets of his heart, and in consequence God told him His. When we let God

into our confidence He lets us into His. And so all the way through the last half of this book we have nothing but a record of the way in which God made Daniel His confidant. The last six chapters of it are only a series of the secrets that God told Daniel,—revelations, visions, we call them,—but that is only another name for secrets, and means that now and then God makes a man His confidant, and trusts His secrets to the man, because the man first trusted his to Him. That Daniel therefore should have been a prophet is only an additional showing of what our text implies, that he was a devout, a pious believer. Piety denotes the holy affection with which we draw nigh to God, and in response to which He draws nigh to us. It is the Latin word “*Pietas*,” which denotes the reverent regard with which in any instance the inferior approaches his superior, as when Cicero says, “*Pius in parentes*,”—“devoutly loyal to one’s father and mother.” And all this is so perfectly fulfilled in Daniel that we say of him that his was a devout, a *pius* faith in God.

And yet as already intimated, piety is not infrequently discounted in the esteem of the world and even in that of Christians. The word, or some of its associations, works a certain repulsion. It is not of frequent occurrence in modern discourse. I hear good men employing it lightly and slightly. Either the word has lost caste or the thing it stands for has lost caste. It may be some of both.

In some cases this disesteem proceeds from its supposed inutility. Piety is not thought of as being related to life in such a way as to be at all the groundwork of life or a practical efficiency in life. Life and piety, character and piety, are conceived of as having neither of them much of anything to do with the other. Character is rated as a utility, and piety only as a luxury, which it is well enough to indulge in if one has the taste, and if there are no more sturdy and practical concerns to which his attention needs to be directed. The matter is surveyed from a utilitarian stand-point. That is the temper of our generation. Men and things are rated by their capacity to yield certain effects that can be stated and registered. If a business man sends his boy to school, the chances are that he will want him instructed only in such branches as will bear with evident directness on the boy's ultimate business success. The utilities and the humanities are sharply discriminated. And so in the matter in hand, piety gets denied a place among the utilities. It is not conceded that it tells with certainty and directness on a man's success as a man. Piety is treated as a kind of annex to character, neither character supporting piety, nor piety character, but the two lying off on distinct foundations with no intercommunication between them except such as is accidental and non-essential. That is one secret of the disfavor that piety is regarded with, it is counted as one of the dispensables, a sort of moral extravagance.

Another ground of this disfavor is that piety is so easily shammed. Integrity is more a matter between man and man, so that its counterfeit is more likely to be detected. Piety is a matter between man and God, and so can be assumed with considerable ease and safety. "A man may pray and pray and pray and be a villain." Scripture, even, encourages laying more stress on the proofs of integrity than on the symptoms of piety. "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." The word "chant" had to part with only one letter before it became "cant," and "piety" adds but two to become "pietism." And even without any change in spelling we have to notice how the word "piety" is spoken to know whether the speaker means by it holiness or hypocrisy. Perhaps the readiness with which we suspect professed piety is a subtle evidence of the respect with which we regard genuine piety, just as it is the gold crown and not the nickel penny that we look at twice before taking. As has been said, "Hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue." Still the prevalence of the counterfeit does work distrust; and if all who profess to be the intimates of God were so, some, who are not so, would find one obstacle removed to their becoming so.

But the greatest hindrance to piety, among the

class that I am addressing particularly, is not that it is so easily counterfeited, nor the supposition that it is unpractical, but a half-formed suspicion that piety, all things taken into the account, is not exactly practicable. And I have selected this topic for the reason that I imagine, and indeed am quite sure, that there are those among us who consider themselves Christians, but who feel in their own Christianity the absence of just this deep, earnest element of devoutness and holy closeness to God, but who have the feeling that a warm spiritual life and a hearty secular life are somehow not quite compatible; so that if a man is in trade, for example, he will either have to give up piety and make a business of trafficking, or else give up trafficking and make a business of piety.

And with this class of people we can certainly afford to feel a good deal of sympathy, and to exercise toward them a good deal of charity. Very likely we have not any of us got this matter so exquisitely adjusted that we can both pray in such a way as not to lose interest in our business and do business in such a way as not to lose interest in our prayers. I know of no preacher in New England of a more devout and spiritual cast than the one who said recently, "I think we all find it the hardest and most hopeless work of all our lives, the effort to keep our highest ideas and our commonest occupations in constant and healthy contact with each other." Almost

every prayer we utter or hear uttered contains evidences that our secular interests and our spiritual ones have not come yet into any arrangement that is perfectly amicable. We can abandon our religion and find no difficulty in observing the apostle's admonition, not to be slothful in business; or we can go out of business, and so gain a new facility in following his other direction, to be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. The problem is to observe the two simultaneously, and so to stand in both relations that we shall feel that in neither are we obstructing hearty and successful engagement in the other. Of course, all such adjustment each has to make for himself, and the most that I can do will be to state and illustrate two or three principles, in the recognition of which all successful efforts at adjustment will have to proceed.

And the first of these is that a Christian, to be such in anything like its New Testament sense, has left him no choice to stop short of anything less than spiritual-mindedness. Devoutness, prayerfulness, entrance into God's intimacy, or call it by whatever other name you will, is not a thing that Gospel Christianity can don and doff at its option. Christianity is not believing that there is a God, but it is believing God; and so, fresh from the start, it is a matter purely *personal* between Him and us. The Christian religion, so soon as it is regarded intently, does not

taper off into piety, but pyramids up from piety. Piety is not the fruit, but the kernel. We *begin* to be Christians by drawing near to God. It is no more than philosophy to conjecture that there *is* a God. Atheism is not so far below such a conjecture as personal communion with God is above it. Religion commences with the commencement of direct personal relations with God, and continues so long as those personal relations continue. Prayer and communion are as much a part of religion as converse and communion are a part of friendship. Christianity is substantially friendship with God in Christ. Our very love to God will needs draw all sorts of hearty address to Him and spiritual fellowship with Him in its wake. And Scripture is loaded with multiplied affirmations and diversified implications of this. Its pages are saturated with the spirit of devoutness. Prayer and communion, all that combine to compose spirituality of life, are involved by statement or by inference in almost every chapter. There is not addressed to us in Scripture a plainer command than the command to pray and to have a spirit animated with the instinct of prayer—"Pray without ceasing"; "Draw nigh to God"; "Watch and pray"; "Ye shall seek Me and find Me when ye seek Me with all your heart"; "Continue in prayer." If we are trying, any of us, to be Christians, without being spiritually-minded Christians, we are attempting to compose

the music of our religious life in a key nowhere set for us in the Holy Word.

And such piety is no matter of unpractical extravagance. It is no bare annex. If there are better and clearer hopes of the future than there were two thousand and three thousand years ago, it is because men have drawn near to God, and in Him have passed already under the power of an endless life, and Christ himself become in them the hope of glory. And if a better morality prevails now than before Calvary and Pentecost, it is still because men have drawn closer to God, have put themselves under the power of His Spirit, and let that Spirit ripen out in them into all that luscious fruitage of virtues particularized in the fifth of Galatians.

And *our* exigency is not met by *listening*, on occasion, to the devout supplicatings and spoken communings of any who may happen to be standing in fellowship with God. His spiritual-mindedness is valid for him, not for others. Devoutness is not transferable. The officers of a church can not be devout for the rest of the church. The father of a household can not be pious for the family. If I am to be rained upon, *I* must stand out under the cloud. The buds will not start in my orchard at the impulse of the south wind that blows across my neighbor's orchard. There is no proxy in Scripture. Vicars are a thing of the past. Priests are obsolete.

The Gospel appeals to the individual. That, then, is our first principle. We may find it difficult to arbitrate the claims of religion and business, but the first thing about the matter for us to consider as definitively established is that there is no hint in the New Testament of a religion that does not pray deeply, earnestly, strongly, fervidly,—that does not come near to God and walk with Him, and find delightful companionship with Him and win from Him daily strength and stimulus.

And the second general principle to be stated is, that whatever our secular vocation may be, provided always it be a proper one, that, too, we are to thrust ourselves into with just the same intensity of energy and heartiness of resolve. We shall never make a success of life, and compose its contradictions by entering into its business pursuits with half-heartedness. We are not going to make secular work holy by doing it in a languid and slipshod way. There is no more godliness in doing a secular thing listlessly and indifferently, than in doing it with the best energies that are in us, and not so much. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily." And that injunction the apostle addresses not to preachers, evangelists, distinctively Christian workers of any kind, but to the slaves at Colosse, who had nothing else to do but the secular drudgery at which their masters set them. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

It is in us, whatever vocation we have chosen, to enlist in it all our powers. We run against ineradicable instincts when we do otherwise.

To a young man I would say, if you are aiming to be a preacher, study to be the best preacher you know how. If you are looking to law, medicine, trade, mechanics, put every energy of mind under contribution to your purpose. There is nothing unholy in succeeding in any noble enterprise we may undertake, and to do that, our best thoughts, affections, powers, must be harnessed to the work. This is a busy world, and it was intended to be. "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread"; and perspiration has been the law of life for six thousand years. We may decry filthily lucre Sunday, but shall have to earn some of it Monday. Work, hard, sharp, and interested, is one of the facts that can not be weakened or displaced: and there is nothing else worth saving, religion and piety even, that will not admit of being established with this in relations of fair adjustment. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

Of course there is an extreme to which this might be pushed that would work mischief. Our only point here is to meet the difficulty felt by so many, who dare not quite shake out the reins over their interested energies in any secular employment, lest somehow they should come thoroughly to enjoy it, and so

be unable to have so much religious experience as seems desirable and obligatory. It is an attempt to portion out their powers and interests into two parcels, and lest they give more to one than consists with the demands of the other, dealing with neither very generously, and obtaining no large satisfaction or success from the two combined. There will be no adjustment that will stand, which does not allow of our letting our energies have as free scope in heavenly things as though there were no earth, and as free scope in secular things as though there were no heaven. Some of the very best secular work, scientific work, literary work, work mechanical, political, and military, that has ever been done, was done in vast and glad expenditure of power by men that were Christians, and had entered deeply into the hidden things of God.

Much confusion has come from assuming that secular life and religious life necessarily work at cross purposes, so that what is taken from one is added to the other, and Christianity a draft upon a man's resources for doing business, and business a draft upon his resources for being a Christian. On the contrary, a man's chances for holiness are bettered by his laborious intercourse with things, as certainly a man's chances in business are enhanced by his intimacy with God. Piety regularly retrogrades when it draws away from the business and contacts of secular life.

Hermit religion is spindling and stalky like wheat grown in the shade. I was reading the other day of a religious exquisite who said that he could not even withdraw from a spiritual atmosphere long enough to buy a barrel of flour without feeling that he had lost a little grace by it. There was something needing to be done for him that only contact with things, and that of the harshest kind, could have sufficed to effect. Quite a different and more robust sentiment was expressed by Dean Stanley when he said : "Degradation, by an almost universal law overtakes religion when it loses the vivifying and elevating spirit breathed into it by close contact with secular influences."

So that in whatever way the adjustment between the secular and the devotional is to be effected, it is to be by some way that leaves each of the two tendencies in its glad and original strength, just as in the tuning of a piano, the two wires that are struck by the same hammer are not restrained from discordance by muffling either of the two, but by taking care to have them both brought to one pitch. So these two tendencies, the devotional and secular, are too precious in themselves and too needful to each other to allow either's being muffled, and yet, as all along said, they must somehow be reduced under one yoke and induced to sound the same tone. And it is at least an encouragement to know that just such an

adjustment has been in instances effected. A thing hard to be done is made a little easier by our assurance that it is a possible thing, and that somebody has somewhere and at sometime done it. It is for this reason that a devotional text was selected just from this book of Daniel, and in particular from this sixth chapter of the book; for in its first verses it details the earnest interestedness with which Daniel entered into the discharge of his secular responsibilities. Daniel was a man of affairs as well as a man of prayer, and chancellor of Darius' exchequer as well as a seer of holy visions on the banks of the Hiddekel. Success and fidelity in neither of the two militated against fidelity and success in the other. His financiering was doubtless better for his praying, and his praying for his financiering. Moses is another instance of the same,—as distinguished for his military genius as for his piety; who both delivered a nation from tyranny, and by his devoutness so won the confidence of God, and entered into His intimacies as to gain from Him a code of divine enactment which lies at the basis of all our present civilization. David is a third example, at once king and psalmist, who had not only the heart to marshal an army and establish a kingdom, but who with the same earnestness and intensity walked in all devoutness with God, and uttered melodious prayer that has been a solace to the afflicted, and an inspiration to the irresolute and the unbelieving for twenty-five hundred years.

And it need not be mentioned how often in later times and in our own times, the men whose lives are fullest of business and secular engagements are the ones also whose hearts are most richly charged with tender regard for the needy, and their spirits in nearest and easiest access to the throne of the divine grace. And so it becomes a little easier to do the difficult, by knowing that it is possible, and has been done in times both earlier and later. With such examples confronting him no busy man of us will quite as easily release himself from the obligation to live day by day in the near fellowship of God, by such a plea as that piety and business are incompatible, and that there is no time in this short, hurried life for both.

Besides this, there are certain experiences familiar to us all that may also render us assistance here and give us at least a clue how this adjustment is to be effected. There *are* divers interests that lie in our minds, side by side, and take strong hold of our regards that yet lie there, without quarrelling or trying in any way to trespass upon each other or rule each other out. Your heart, for example, is full of your family; home is a dear, warm place to you. Your spirit is tender when you go away, and there is a good deal of heart in your good-bye. You go down-town to your business and plunge with all your might, let us hope, into its engagements and competitions. Yet, in the lulls of the stress and conflict, thoughts of the

household do light down upon you ; and without in any manner interfering with—more likely stimulating a little your business devotedness, these thoughts of home, wife, family, children, lie in your mind as a sort of quiet undertone that yields unobtrusive music all the day long,—just as the singer half unconsciously carries the key-note in his thought through all the progressions of the melody, and as the sunshine lies about us all the day as a kind of unsuspected presence, and yet as a presence which does somehow contrive to give a little more color to our life, and to put a more genial complexion upon all that transpires in it. So, in very common and familiar ways, we do have interests lying in our minds side by side that engage us deeply, but that never fall into controversy with each other, and do not try to spend on each other, but are like the wires we spoke of, that vibrate side by side, and re-enforce each the other, and utter two tones that seem hardly more than one, they are so nicely adjusted and so deftly attuned.

And now, friends, only a few sentences more. I have done all that I set out to do. I have stated as clearly as I can the general facts, in recognition of which all efforts at adjustment, to be effectual, must proceed. Our religion is not of the kind yet which it is the aim of the Gospel to set forth and exemplify, unless it is one which works in us devoutness of heart, that sets us and our heavenly Father near

one another, and gives us peace and delight and strength in His fellowship. From the same Scriptures we learn also, as well as from the general instinct and reason of men, that our secular vocation is a sphere in which our best energies of body and mind and soul are to have similar room for their freest play and most delighted exercise; that we are to love and commune with God with the best that is in us, and also love and attend to our business with the best that is in us. I have cited instances, which commend themselves to your approval, of men who have succeeded in doing this, and have been keen financiers, skilful generals, and laborious sovereigns, and yet in it all have walked steadily and cheerily in the light and comfort and presence of God. And so there we leave the matter. If your life does not yield one strong accordant tone, you will not mend the matter by tearing out one of the strings. The details of the adjustment I do not care to talk about. Perhaps it is as well to let the divine tuner draw to its proper tension the string that vibrates in loving service to God, and then tighten or loosen the other till it pulses with that. But all such details are a matter with you and God. If you have any difficulties, you will do best to go into the wilderness or the mountain with them, where Moses went with his, or into the closet, where Daniel carried his.

VIII.

CHRISTIAN LOVE.

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."—EPH. iv. 31, 32.

THERE is in these words a quiet flow, and in their sentiment a tender rhythm, that makes them very musical both to the ear and the heart. Though so full of difficult requirement, they appeal to us with a grace that is irresistible and a truth we can not gain-say. They set before us in all clearness and delicacy an ideal almost too pure to become real, yet our thoughts draw toward it respectfully and reverently, even as the flowers bend themselves toward the sun that is too far away for them ever to rise up to and touch.

There is something a little disheartening in so perfect a standard of Christian dealing, "Let *all* bitterness and evil-speaking be put away from you, and be ye kind one to another, forgiving one another, *even*

as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"; there is something a little disheartening, I say, in an ideal so pure and exacting; but may the humbleness it induces only throw us back more utterly upon the strength of God, whose help alone can suffice to cleanse our hearts from the last traces of their untenderness, and open them in large forgiveness toward one another, even as God's heart, for Christ's sake, is opened in large forgiveness toward us.

All the graces and tendernesses mentioned in our text are only so many separate blossoms clustered upon the single stalk of Christian love; and I want to say something respecting Christian love, and the tenderness of sentiment, gentleness of dealing, and charitableness of judgment that are its easy and necessary outgrowth.

There is no one of the Christian graces which the Word of God has treated so exceptionally, and underscored with such marks of peculiar emphasis, as the grace of Christian love. It is not only commended and applauded, but is lifted into distinction in the midst of the other delicacies and dignities of the inward life, as the sheaf of Joseph stood up and the sheaves of his brethren stood around about it and made obeisance unto it. Even the apostle of faith has to say that of these three—faith, hope, love—love is the greatest. It is love, said the same apostle, that is the fulfilling of the law. And you remember

those diviner words of which these of St. Paul are only the later echo. It is only upon the law of love that St. James sets the distinguishing crown and names it "royal." It is love which St. Paul in his letter to the Colossians calls the bond of perfectness; that is, the silken cord that, bound around the other several graces, holds them in the unity and compactness of a completed character; like the girdle which detains the flowing garments or the thread that secures the bouquet. God *is* love, wrote St. John, the apostle of love. And it is love, you will remember, that St. Paul specifies first in his enumeration of the fruits of the Spirit. "The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering," etc.

And this last reference is of account not only because it implies the supremacy of love over the other graces, but because it also indicates the source of its supply; love is the fruit of the Spirit. Love is not a plant that grows in the human heart natively. This is not a pleasant thing to say. But experience and observation bear us out in it and Scripture sets to it its seal. Love is not indigenous. It does not spring up in our hearts of its own accord. There is nothing in us by nature that becomes love by stress of cultivation. There are no seeds scattered through the soul's original material that spring into love by germination. It is not a part of our dowry. Love is an importation; an exotic. The fruit of the Spirit

is love. Of course there is in hearts that are unaided by grace much that resembles Christian love; but that we must be careful and not confound with it. Because if love is the fulfilment of the law, then if we love by nature, grace is unnecessary, and all we need is to love more and more, and to become more and more by cultivation what we already are potentially by birth; which is not the intent of the divine word. Love is the fruit of the Spirit. "Every one that loveth," says St. John, "is born of God." Perhaps some are born of God that not only do not declare it, but have not of it, even themselves, a complete consciousness. I love to think that it is so. Only let it be remembered by us now and always that the love which the Gospel distinguishes and which St. James imperializes is the love which a man is able to exercise by virtue of his new birth. "Every one that loveth is born of God."

Considerable of what passes as love is no more than what St. Paul in his letter to the Romans and in one of his letters to Timothy calls "natural affection." Natural affection is only a sort of forerunner of love; just as when we examine the animal remains of the early geological periods we find very much that reminds of man and that we construe now to be a kind of unconscious prophecy of man that was afterward to be. In the same way natural affection is a kind of prototype of love. Nothing can make

natural affection love, just as nothing can make a fish a man, although containing in its structure much that is suggestive of man. Natural affection, I say, is a kind of prototype of love. It is as near love as a man can get without being helped by the grace of God. Natural affection is between men in their natural relations just what love is between them in their spiritual relations. A part of what we call love is then only natural affection.

Much of what passes as love, also, is self-interest in some one of its finer forms; concealed self-interest; very likely unconscious self-interest. It is surprising and disheartening to discover how many ingredients of self-regard lurk in our best endeavors and most generous deeds. A kind of unconscious barter, a good deal of it is; I like you because you like me; I do for you because you do for me; I love you because you love me. "But if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." And the perfection here meant is God's love in its self-regardlessness. In His love, God lets clean go of Himself. He loves men as such; loves them because they are men. "God is love," and "he that loveth is born of God."

The love that the Gospel celebrates, then, is that

in which self-regard is held neither visibly nor invisibly in solution. It is investment without thought of dividend. It is putting ourselves utterly out of the account for another's sake. It is consciousness of nothing but of the one we would do for, and works in us all kinds of beautiful service. But when we look into it ingenuously we discover that we hold most of our love within certain lines and inside of particular circumferences, and that most of those lines are drawn in some little degree relatively to us, like the boy who throws his ball at such an angle that when it bounds back it will fall near his own hand again. The cloud of our beneficence we are likely to suspend at such a point that when it falls in rain we shall be found standing under some little corner of it, and absorb some inconspicuous moiety of the baptism. The heart is deceitful above all things and bears watching. You will recall, perhaps, the words that Shakespeare makes the king of France say to King Lear:

"Love is not love
When it is mingled with respects that stand
Aloof from the entire point."

All of which our Lord expressed more briefly and simply when He said, "Lend, hoping for nothing again." Investment without thought of dividend. That is love; that is *Gospel love*; better than faith and better than hope; the first among the graces;

the fulfilment of the law. And "he that loveth is born of God."

If now this fundamental fact is already accomplished in us, there are others that will rest easily upon it and grow readily out of it. If we have reached the point of being able to love men, as such, with a Christly disinterestedness, we shall in the first place find it very easy to make allowances for them in those respects wherein in point of behavior they differ from us. It is in the very nature of love to want to make allowances. It is easy for a selfish man to make allowances for himself; and love feels toward another just as selfishness feels toward self. Love is seen thus to be selfishness turned inside out. I do not think that men would seem as bad as they do if we loved them more. It is surprising how rapidly men begin to mend after we commence to get interested in them. The characters that men have depend a good deal on the way in which we look at them. Everybody is a criminal and a sinner as soon as he is inspected judicially. "If thou, Lord, shouldest *mark* iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"

There is in this no attempt to break down the distinctions between right and wrong; but people are to us about what we look for them to be. Those that we believe in are good, and those that we do not believe in are bad. Love always finds some way out. That principle underlies redemption. A mother can

always find much that is good in her own children. A father believes in his own boy. Love makes allowances. And it is worth a good deal to be believed in. Some boys have been saved by it. "Love shall cover the multitude of sins." I do not know what that means, it has been explained so variously; but I have quoted it because somehow it seems to me as though it is in place here. The good that there is in a bad thing, in a bad heart, is out of sight; love can see farther than can indifference or malignity; and it is one of the blessed facts of the last day that He who loved us enough to throw Himself away for us will be our judge.

Love softens our estimates of people because it enables us to put ourselves in their place. I can not judge a man without a knowledge of his principles. Temperament, education, and other circumstances go far to shape a man's principles, and it is his own principles and not mine or yours that he is amenable to. The question is not whether he does what we think is right, but whether he does what he thinks is right. Love will help me to appreciate his principles and to estimate the case from his own personal stand-point. Of two judgments, the more lenient, I suppose, is generally the more just. Love believeth all things, said St. Paul. Count Cavour said, that, as the result of his experience as a statesman, he believed the man who trusted men would make fewer mistakes than the

one who distrusted them. "Love believeth all things," and when the facts do not seem to square with belief, it "hopeth all things," and when hope fails, it "endureth all things." And in this effort to feel kindly and to be tender-hearted, I am sure we shall be helped by remembering that there is no one toward whom Christ does not feel tenderly. We suppose that the severest thing about the woes pronounced in the sixth of Luke was the tenderness with which they were uttered. How is it that any of the followers of Christ can give any place to malice toward any, if Christ could look up from the cross where He hung crucified and pray,—“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

It will also tend to foster kindness in us, if when a wrong has been done us we discriminate between the deed and the man who did it. It is possible, by the grace of God, to be angered with what a man does without being angered at the man. A true father loves his child through everything. God loves us through everything. “Thou wast a God,” said the Psalmist, “that forgavest them, though Thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.” Christ commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” This solves the difficulty of the command, “Be ye angry and sin not”: be angry without sinning: offended at the deed, but tender-hearted toward the doer. St. Augustine said:

“He is not angry with his brother who is only angry with the sin of his brother.” We are none of us so without fault as not to need to have the best possible construction put on what we do. And that will not be accorded to us unless we accord it to others. “For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.” And if we do not treat with the largest tender-heartedness the wrongs that others do us, neither will God treat with forbearance the wrongs we do Him. “Forgive us our debts as we *have* forgiven our debtors,” is the proper reading of the fifth petition of our Lord’s prayer.

And then, only once more, if we have reached the point of loving men, as such, with Christly disinterestedness we shall feel disposed always to *say* the best thing about them that can be said, and to leave the remainder unsaid. It is a singular fact, and a sad one, the ease with which our thoughts shape themselves into adverse judgments. There is an unhappy fact wrought out in the history of that word “criticise.” It used to mean to estimate, and now it means to depreciate. So readily do our opinions fall down into a minor key of disparagement. So of the word “judge.” Properly it means to determine; in popular usage it strongly inclines at least toward condemnation. “Judge not that ye be not judged”; and that means condemn not that ye be not condemned. All of this shows that the human mind leans toward

detraction; that is its bias. It is more congenial to the natural heart to convict than to acquit. Our first impulse naturally is, not to say pleasant things about people, but unpleasant ones. Were it contrariwise, then "criticise" would have come before this to mean "to commend." And our criticism, *now*, is commendatory in the case of those we love; which shows that our estimates proceed quite as much from our hearts as from our heads, and that it is the wish that is parent to the thought. We find just what we set out to find, and see exactly what we want to see. And because we do not much care to see excellences in people, the first thing we mention about them regularly is their faults.

You see there is a good deal of the original paganism still in men naturally. A man is not made a different man by living in the midst of Christianity unless Christianity lives in the midst of him. Except as the grace of God works in us, the same is true here as was true in Greece 2,000 years back: that to us a man is a barbarian if he is not a Greek, and an enemy if he is not an advantage. The fault is not in men alone that their blemishes are so conspicuous, but in the jaundiced eye that puts its own bad complexion on all it beholds. A part of what we see is only the dingy shadow cast by our own spirit. The chameleon takes its hue from the spot it is upon. We *give* our hue *to* the spot we are upon. It is the inward dis-

comfort oftentimes that makes outward things disagreeable, and some of the unpleasantness that we see and talk about in others is no more than our own unbearableness feeling itself and working to the surface. Criticism of this sort is, then, a sword that cuts two ways: it is both a verdict and a confession. Spiders do not weave their webs in a clean room, nor suspicions build their nests in a guileless heart.

There is no person but will afford us some opportunity for eulogy, if only we seek for it earnestly and feel after it affectionately. The story is told of a good old Christian woman, that she was never known to speak of any person a word in disparagement. One of her children knowing this eccentricity of hers, asked her, for the amusement of the thing: "Mother, what do you think of the devil?" "My dear," she answered, "I think it would be well if we would all be as diligent in doing our work as he is in doing his." There is nothing but what glistens if approached with a beaming eye, and there is always some admirable quality patent to the mind that is so genial and gentle as to desire to detect it. There is something in the habit of looking on the bright side of people as there is in looking on the bright side of things and events. Even the children should be made to understand that talking about the disagreeableness of people is an offence against good breeding and household propriety. Our hearts can in some measure be

trained to find pleasant things in people, just as our eye can be trained to find buttercups in the meadow or stars in the sky.

There is, too, an element of power in this sweet habitude of mind that thinketh no evil and taketh up no reproach. Such people win their way everywhere. The door is open to them everywhere and every heart made ready. Their shadow always falls behind them, and their coming is only brightness. There are faces that are a benediction, and it is not necessary to say to this congregation that such faces create a great, sweet, compelling light around us while they are with us, and leave a long, quiet twilight in our memories after the sun-setting.

Which brings us easily to say in closing, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." And more and more may there abound in us all by the working of the blessed Spirit, that love that shall make all our thoughts to be thoughts of tenderness and cause our speech always to be with grace.

IX.

LIGHT THE OUTCOME OF LIFE.

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men."—JOHN i. 4.

IN no department of literature in these past twenty-five years has more evident improvement been made than in that of life-writing. It is one thing to collate the events of a man's life and arrange them in the order of years, but a distinct matter, and one involving peculiar tact and appreciation, so to arrange them as to set loose before the reader the real quality of the man and the true genius of his life. The perfection of a biography is not that it relates all that its subject ever did and said, but that with the smallest array of facts possible, it gains for us admission into the man's true inwardness. And the biographer's great embarrassment is that the real spirit and innermost quality of a man slip out in so many little, quiet ways that are appreciable enough in the interchanges of familiar intercourse, but so delicate and intangible as to slip through the meshes of verbal representation. We have all known persons, some sin-

gle gesture of whose hand, expression of countenance, twinkle of the eye, play of the lip, really set free more of the essential flavor of the man than any amount of biographic detail could do. For it is not the man's performances really that we are trying to get at, but something more interior—something that inspired those performances and worked itself out through them. It is not performances that compose life, but life rather that composes performances.

And it is in just this more careful way that the word "life" gets used in our text: "*In* him was life, and the life was the light of men." So it was not what He said, did, or suffered that enlightened men and drew them under His power; it was only the glimpses that through His words and works they got of *Him*. His sermons, miracles, agonies were only the rifts through which they looked up into *Him*, and beheld the life—wise, strong, and tender—that was *in Him*. For you know it is not the rift in the cloud that gives the light; the rift is only the fracture through which the light breaks. And real greatness often and usually discloses itself most adequately and effectively in ways that hardly admit of being worded. It is just here that the biographer's difficulty lies. He is all the time struggling with the sense that his man is more than can be stated; that he is greater than anything he definitely did or said. So every eulogy is necessarily a failure. That is why

the same person becomes so frequently the subject of several biographies. To use the phrase we employ when ciphering in division, there is no biography that will go in a life without a remainder. If you attempt to describe a landscape, and are anything of a word-painter, you will do it with measurable success. But, with the greatest facility in the art possible, there will be a residue that will elude your best attempts at description, and it is just the best thing always that will slip out and get left.

If the life-power and the life-meaning were lodged in words definitely spoken and in deeds definitely done, then a man's biography were best composed of the stenographic report of his speeches and the linear gauge of his performance. But life is an inward matter:— *n* him was life"; and the influence emanating from life and working in power upon others, is more apt to be like the water which lies in the grass of a summer morning, of which more will dissipate itself in silent evaporation than will trickle down the hill-side and sing itself away audibly toward the sea.

There is no life that has been so numerously written as the life of Jesus Christ. Four inspired biographers have tried their hand at it; no two of their biographies alike, and no one of them in the broadest sense a success. It is a most remarkable comment upon Christ that men have never got over writing commentaries upon Him. It is a long matter that

never gets spoken to the end when there are so many that are trying to speak. And the difficulty here is in part like that of biography generally. It was not the wisdom of Christ's words, nor the splendor of His works that filled those three years and a half with great events: it was *He*, the life that was *in Him*: and with all that was stimulating in His discourses, startling in His works of wonder, and harrowing in His sufferings, the life that was in Him would be quite as likely to issue in effects that would be healing, when its creeping forth was a quiet and stealthy one—just as it is the light, not the lightning, that best fills the earth with radiance; not the hurricane, but the gentle breath out of the south that stirs air and sea and standing corn into most healthful play; and not the deluge, but the rain that drops upon the furrows with most of fertility.

And when we fully feel that the life that was the light of men was something that was in Him, and something too that was quite likely to do its best work silently and in a manner to defy record, I think we shall be able to understand some things about Christ and His kingdom in the world that are otherwise a little difficult, and to draw some inferences that will be of value to us in a way quite practical.

It explains the difficulty we have just noticed in composing any history of those three years that shall be in any manner adequate. It explains how Christ

could have founded His kingdom and yet drawn to Him so little of the world's notice *while* founding it. His working was a silent and stealthy working. He did not ground His kingdom in event, but in and upon Himself. I think we must often have felt in reading the Gospels, how much there must have been in Christ and in His moulding, and renewing, and upbuilding influence exercised upon His disciples that has never come to any expression in the Gospels, and never could have come to verbal expression anywhere: quite as we never could find it written in any treatise upon plants all the quiet but potent influences that braid themselves in together so skilfully, but so unpretentiously, to foster the life that lies back in the germ and unfold it into grace and years and stature.

It has been used as an argument against the Christ of the Gospels, that the nations knew nothing about Him. It looks more as though the argument leaned the other way. Here is the kingdom of heaven established, and as we generally interpret facts, the very quietude and noiselessness of its founder is only the proof of a more superlative power. Romulus founded Rome; Rome was a great empire and the world knew something about Romulus. Cyrus founded the Persian Empire, and records that were contemporary have taken some notice of Cyrus. Alexander established the Græco-Macedonian Empire, and there is in the

profane annals of the period abundant mention of the son of Philip; but nobody outside of the little dot of land called Palestine knew anything about what Christ so-called was doing. But then here is the kingdom established, and it has got to be explained, stronger than that of Romulus, more intense than that of the Macedonian, and broader than that of Cyrus. Certainly there are no *events* known to us that are staunch enough to support it. But here is the kingdom established; Christ's kingdom so-called. Something must underlie it. A castle that has stood two thousand years is itself proof positive of foundation, and if the foundation was laid noiselessly like Solomon's temple, in which was heard neither hammer, axe, nor any tool of iron, so much greater the splendor of its founding; for however laid, two thousand years of history put their pressure upon the foundation-stone; and the citizens of the kingdom, even their enemies being judges, never had greater occasion to rejoice and glory in its stupendous solidity. Clearly the argument leans the other way. Alexander laid the foundation of his empire in strokes that rung across the continent from the Pillars of Hercules to the Indus. But Alexander would have had to be much more than Alexander to have planted his empire in the gentleness and noiselessness with which the Judæan founded his kingdom on the banks of the Jordan. The argument leans the other

way, and the very quietude with which the empire of the Lord was inaugurated only shows that it was not upon event, but upon a person and upon a life that it was built; and upon what life shall the centuries, the continents, the nations, and the islands of Christianity sustain their pressure if not upon the life of the Son of God?

And then there is another fact explained by a certain quiet and necessarily unexplained influence that was incessantly emanating from Christ and that told upon men more than any startling works of His could have done, and that is the way in which the people about Him and particularly His enemies seemed many of them to be affected toward Him. There is a hint of it in the way in which the multitudes received the sermon on the mount. They are not reported as having been much moved by the sermon, but there was something about *Him* that arrested and riveted their attention, that the Gospel does not quite explain. But cases that are vastly clearer than this are such as His making a whip of small cords and going into the temple and driving out the cattle and the money-changers, upsetting the tables and pouring out the money; and no one seems to have argued with Him, or to have withstood Him; and the Gospel-narrative makes no effort to explain it. The scourge of small cords is no shadow of explanation. There was something in the Lord's eye, or some ema-

nation from Him of resistless sovereignty that the story does not tell, could not tell probably. Then we see in another place that His enemies were afraid to arrest Him. They sent officers for this purpose. They came back without Him. "Why have ye not brought Him?" the Pharisees asked. "Never man spake like this man"; and the matter dropped there. And then further on, when they came to the point of arresting Him they shrank back in a most inexplicable manner from laying hands upon Him, and as the evangelist says, "went backward and fell to the ground." When we have read the incident I wonder what reason we have assigned to ourselves for behavior so unsoldierly. What sight hindered them, or thought detained, or invisible influences repressed them? If we had not become habituated from childhood to the idea of Judas' suicide I think that it would set us all a-querying in what way Christ had so worked upon the traitor that death was pleasanter to him than life with its bad retrospect. The Bible is interesting in what it does say and almost as much so in what it does not. Pilate in saying—"what I have written I have written," shows ample evidence of surmises and suspicions that Scripture does not clear up. And the Roman centurion that stood watching Him while He was dying on the cross, from some cause that the story does not make clear, had suggestions started in his mind that were quite un-Roman.

And I think that whatever we read in the Gospel, whether bearing upon the Lord's relation to His enemies or to His friends, we shall continually find results out of all proportion with stated causes, and be put upon reading a great deal between the lines. I am persuaded that we lay too much stress relatively upon those acts and words of the Lord that were so definite that they could be reported, and vastly too little upon those finer influences that went out from Him, which were too urgent not to be effective, but too subtle to be comprised inside any reporter's record.

Now while in this I have had it as one object to make us more inquisitive and appreciative readers of the holy story of the working Christ, I have had also another purpose. We have, I am sure, overestimated the redemptive power of the *conspicuous* acts of Christ's life, and underestimated the efficacy of the influence that silent and gentle was in course of constant emanation from Him. We have forgotten that the life that was the light of the world was primarily not His teaching, His miracle, or His cross, but the life that was *in Him*. "I am the life."

Quite the same mistake we as Christians make about ourselves, for in the measure that Christ has been formed in us, we too are the light of the world, as Jesus said upon the mountain, and *our* life that is the light of the world is the light that is in us. We live

in a demonstrative time and in a demonstrative town. It is quite in the spirit of the period to estimate things and men by the figure they will make, to calculate values cubically and rate forces by their capacity of detonation. And this idea has stolen into our theories of Christian aggression till a man signifies pretty nearly nothing as an agency of evangelization unless he is doing some conspicuous and loud work for Christ. I am not antagonizing any most earnest and indefatigable Christian worker that may be among us; there is no quarrel between us. All I want to claim is that if a man is a Christian there are no better Gospel results wrought in the world, than will be wrought by the simple, quiet, every-day shining of his Christian life and light. "Ye are the light of the world," Christ said to His disciples. I have heard that explained as meaning that Christians are to *become* a light by going about and preaching and exhorting men to holy affections and practices. Well, now, it means nothing of the kind. It does not mean that Christians have got to do something in order to become a light; it means that just because they are *Christians* they are a light. "*Ye* are the light," not the great brilliant deeds that you perform, not the great persuasive words that you speak. "*Ye* are the light." Christians shine without being obliged to go out of their way—without being obliged to put themselves to any pains. It is in the very nature of the

case that light should drop off from them as light falls from a blazing candle. Salt, too, does not have to go out of its way to be conserving. It is just its nature to conserve. *Ye* are the salt of the earth. It is the whole drift of this allusion to the light and the salt, lodged as the allusion is in this chapter right in the midst of a discourse that is busy only with the sweetnesses and purities of the inward life, to teach that the same thing holds of Christian men as holds of Christ, that it is the life, the man himself in his Christianed nature, that is the light of the world. And while the delay of the millennium is certainly due in part to the feeble refulgence of the preachers who shine in a public way on Sunday, it is doubtless due as much to the feeble refulgence of the laymen who shine in a less public way on week-days.

And there are several advantages which you as lay luminaries have which pulpit luminaries do not have. A living Christian out among men in daily employment is an incessant fountain of Gospel light ; that is, if he is a Christian. He preaches all the time. A formal discourse is but for a half hour. A Christian life lived out among men is all of it text, argument, and application, and never lets go. When our Sunday service is over, whatever effect may have been produced, is most likely evanescent ; and, when we turn up our faces to be preached to a week hence, the service will not find us exactly where to-day

leaves us. A sermon does not record itself in fast colors. Nothing is more evaporative than a good impression. But a holy life preaches all the time; it is an incessant sermon. It accumulates effects and adds results together.

Another advantage your preaching will have will be that it will reach men that never come into the house of God to hear preaching of a more formal kind. There will be just as many Christian pulpits in the streets and shops and banking-houses downtown to-morrow as there are living Christians downtown to-morrow. The reference is not to talking the Gospel, but to the Gospel power there is in the simple living of a man that has had Christ formed in him. And you will reach a much larger congregation than is gathered here, and a much more miscellaneous one, and of which, perhaps, not a tenth hear the Gospel preached in a formal way. You have in this respect eminent advantage. Ye are the light of the world. Ye are the salt of the earth. Suppose you have twenty unconverted men in your employ. You are a Christian. It is safe to assume that the twenty are becoming inclined toward Christianity under the pressure of the mellowing and subduing quality of your Christianity. I go to a man and ask him if he will take a class in the Sunday-school or mission-school. He pleads secular pressure of duty, and very likely the plea is an adequate one. But has it occurred to

him that by arrangement of Providence his unconverted employés or companions are to all intents and purposes a mission-class held six days out of seven under the discipline of his Gospel living?

“Down-town is a busy place to think of importing into business hours Gospel aims and influences.” I know; but did you never think of it that the light that is run up on the mast-head of a steamer never has to *stop* in order to shine? Did it never occur to you that the exceeding velocity at which the sun moves never interferes with its refulgence? It would be a sickly sort of luminary that would have to stop in order to shine. A Christian ought rather to be in that respect like a fire-fly, which lightens most just when it is on the wing.

The simple living of the lay Christian has this advantage, too: that his preaching is unprofessional preaching. There is little likelihood that his piety will be discounted. There are certain aspects of ministerial life that are liable to put men upon thinking about the clergy a little in the vein in which Satan thought about the man of Uz, when he asked, “Doth Job serve God for naught?” I confess to you frankly that there is to me something a little awkward about this. Christ had not where to lay His head. Paul was content with food and clothing. The present adjustment may be quite right, but it is certainly the case that more would be accomplished for men in the

direction of salvation if they were quite sure that everything done clerically for souls was done with a pure and untarnished desire to save souls. I only mention this to show the advantage in which a lay Christian is set in this particular. The unconverted man who comes under the discipline of your simple, uncompensated example, will feel no impulse to make that example mean less by deductions and subtractions. As things are now, there is nothing that can quite compare for power with piety and preaching, that have about them no taint of the professional.

I mention only one other advantage that you have as preachers, and that is, that in the Gospel life of a layman, practicing and preaching do not get divorced. The two are naturally in wedlock. In Christ the two never fall asunder. Preaching may be practical, preaching may be about life, and yet be just far enough from life to disclose a cleavage. "Cheap as preaching" has become a proverb. Between you and those to whom your Christian living addresses itself preachingly, there is no such unlikeness of temptations and pursuits as to make your holy living seem to them in the least degree unreal or impracticable. The principles by which you profess to live tell upon them with a power redoubled by your own witnessed observance of those principles. There is no discourse on honesty so pungent as to do honestly. Dishonesty would soon become infamous in New York if

every man that professes to be a Christian would simply observe the eighth commandment.

The power of the Church is then really in the pew, not in the pulpit. And now as we go into our place of prayer for a few moments, I want each to make serious with the question whether there is in him any of that life that is the light of the world. Whether in the midst of the unsanctity and irreligion that prevail he is a light shining in a dark place, a living gospel open to the perusal of every eye, a living epistle known and read of all men.

X.

PROSPERITY A TEST.

"When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God."—DEUT. viii. 10.

WHICH occurs in Moses' farewell charge to the Hebrews. Moses had long stood to his people in the relation of father as well as general, and, like a father, has at the end a good many last words to speak. This whole book of Deuteronomy is made up of last words; his last will and testament to the Hebrew people. He wanted to clinch the instruction that had been given them already; wanted to make sure of them. His anxiety outran his responsibility. He had been their saviour in the past and now would like to take out a policy of insurance in their behalf for the time to come. It was hard work for him to vacate his office and speak the last word he would have the opportunity to speak officially. There is something quite pathetic in this long, lingering, holding on of his, in this wordiness of the old man, that does not know how to stop and has not the heart to stop.

And they needed everything in the shape of coun-

sel and insurance that could be given them. They had hardly earned the confidence of their leader. He did not much believe in the Hebrews. This exhortation of our text was spoken by him with evident misgivings. He did not expect they would bless the Lord when they had eaten and were full. They had hardly been a match for adversity, still less could they be expected to be for prosperity. He knew them, knew the ins and outs of them. He had carried them forty years and been one of them a hundred and twenty. He understood their composition and drift. They were a nation of backsliders, fluctuating, paroxysmal. Their history was full of ebb-tides. They were not to be trusted. God had kept them worn down into manageableness simply by force of disaster; had always driven them with a curb and a check. Liberty they regularly corrupted into license. Every possible luxury had accordingly been withheld from them; temptations reduced to a minimum; intercourse with other peoples thwarted; even their food made purposely unsavory and monotonous. All of this even had scarcely kept them within bounds of duty and decency. They were not allowed their own way, for the clear reason that their own way was uniformly a bad way.

The point is reached now, however, where a new experiment is to be tried with them. There are some elements in the case that warrant at least a hope that

the experiment will succeed. The wilderness and the manna are now put behind them; in front is the Jordan, and across the Jordan cities and well-watered plains: a land flowing with milk and honey. God has kept His people restrained by the taut rein of hunger and reverse. How will they bear the longer, laxer tether of plenty and prosperity? It lay in Moses' thought as a question. It was the burden and anxiety of his mind as he looked across imaginatively and prophetically to the larger and more affluent days that awaited them. In this there is the explanation and point of our text, "When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God." Springing from this situation are a number of considerations that will bear practically, in the way, I hope, both of instruction and relief.

It is important to understand and be assured that it is God's ambition for His people to load them as heavily with luxuries and gladnesses as they can bear. Evil and suffering are all around us, but it is a part of our faith in the fatherliness of God to believe that "He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men"; and to say with the psalmist, "I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." The universe is in the interests of comfort and happiness and joy. It is God's ambition that we should eat and be full. Everything looks to a good time coming. Every-

thing is contrived to bend toward a blessing; God started man in Paradise; as good a Paradise as he could bear and a good deal better; and all that lies after Paradise is preparation for a Paradise improved. The Paradise regained is not the Paradise that was lost. God does not willingly afflict. There is no sorrow that has not lodged in it the possible seed-kernel of fruition. Faith in the fatherliness of God involves all this. When we experience vexation and tribulation we must always bethink ourselves of the issue to which in our Christian faith we are sure it is divinely designed to conduct. The Lord took no pleasure in confining the Hebrews within the wilderness; everything was preliminary to Canaan. Like a musician he strained the strings that their tones might be in accord. God is ambitious that His children should be happy. It is the ambition of every man to be happy. God wants the same thing for us that we want for ourselves. We crave satisfaction. "When I awake," said the psalmist, "I shall be satisfied." God wants to have us satisfied. "There shall be no night there." "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." All Scripture phrase, all holy imagery is contrived to show that God wants for us the same thing that we want for ourselves. God is on the side of man's comfort. "Give her something to eat," He said to the father and mother of the little girl He had raised from the dead. It is a little thing,

but it shows that the Son of God wants man to be comfortable. So when the Lord got breakfast for the fishermen that had been all the night toiling fruitlessly on Gennesaret. A little thing, but shows where God's interests are, and that He wants to have us eat and be filled. A little thing, but reaches a long ways, like the light of a flickering candle which, nevertheless, does not stop short of the sky. "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to *enjoy* Him." The mountain-sermon begins with the promise of blessing. A whole octave of blessedness ushers in the Gospel. This is a wholesome reflection for our mind to rest in. That there is sin in the world and suffering, we can get along with as soon as we learn to interpret them instrumentally. Sin is a means of Grace, and is education toward a better holiness. The world saved from sin is a better world and a happier than a world that never needed saving. I am certain of all this, because I believe the Gospel. The Gospel means that God is on the side of man's happiness, from first to last, and so fully on its side as to be willing to incur any expense in order to secure it. There is no sacrifice God is not willing to make in order that I may be happy. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered *Him* up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" I wish we had a more actual and producing faith in God as a father, so that we could say: "The Lord hath given, the

Lord hath taken away, *blessed* be the name of the Lord." "There shall no evil happen to the just." "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." "All things work together for good to them that love God." Such an estimate of things lies before all safe and just discourse upon the providences and dispensations of life.

It is a singular thing, however, that although gladness is the soul's destination, and a destination that God is concerned to have us reach, yet the fact of the matter with us is, that gladness is itself very apt to impair our capacity for gladness, and to hinder our attainment of it. We are, in this respect, like a sick man who requires nourishment, but has not the power to digest it, and so is harmed by the very thing he needs. Recognizing as we do, that every good gift is from God, it would certainly seem as though everything we obtained from Him would be a fresh reminder of Him and a new bond to bind us to Him. But we know how it works with children sometimes, whose parents, the more they do for their children the less are they regarded and loved by their children. This was the point of Moses' anxiety in our text. He feared that the occupation of a land flowing with milk and honey would alienate the Hebrews from the very God who gave it to them. In their years of hunger and emptiness they had been kept tolerably loyal to God, and now he cautions them against

neglecting to acknowledge God when they have come to a place where they can have their wants satisfied and their mouths filled.

This fact of the dereligionizing power of prosperity is a practical and a serious one. Prosperity is dangerous—dangerous for a man, a family, a country; it makes men indifferent, infidel, atheistic; if not in their creed, at least in their life. The more God gives us, the less, as a rule, we have of God. It is not easy to escape being injured by mercies. It is easy to be ruined by success: success is very often failure, and failure success. It is surprising how soon children come to take the conferments of their parents as a matter of course. It is surprising how soon we come to take the conferments of God as a matter of course. Paul said to the Lycaonians: “God left not Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons.” And yet I imagine that even among us there is a considerable number who would think it a bit old-fashioned either to pray for rain or to think of God when it comes. To our eye God gets eclipsed by His own bestowments. It is a simple thing, but I incline to think it means something that when we thank God for our daily food—ask a blessing, as we say—we thank Him before we have eaten rather than after. We are more devout when we are hungry than when we are sated. There is thus an interior connection shown between

prayer and fasting. Want, within certain limits, is more favorable to piety than plenty. Even as early as Eden the luxuries of the garden obscured the giver of the garden. The tree came between Adam and Eve and the Lord God. When *they* had eaten and were filled they ceased to bless God, and became estranged from Him.

I have, in certain instances, at your request, prayed friends of yours clear across the Atlantic, out and back. Such requests are numerous in the months of June and September especially. I would not discourage such requests. I believe there is saving power in the concerted prayer of a congregation of worshippers. It is, beside, pleasant and comely that such a family of believers as this should remember any one of our number that is in any kind of exposure or peril. But there has been hardly an instance in which, after the safe arrival out, or home, of the party prayed for, I have been requested to return thanks to God for having made their voyage safe and prosperous. We bless God when we want anything, and congratulate ourselves when we get it. "When thou hast eaten and art full, *then* thou shalt bless the Lord thy God." It takes considerably more piety to make a man thankful to God for what He has done than prayerfully dependent upon God for what we would like to have Him do. It is for that reason that thanksgiving forms so small an element in our

prayers; and one reason, most likely, why our petitions bring us so little that is new, is that our thanksgivings so scantily recognize what is old. You remember Luke's story of the ten lepers that Jesus healed. "One of them when he was healed turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face, giving Him thanks: and Jesus answering said, Were there not ten healed? but where are the nine?" Ten of them had faith enough in Christ to supplicate Him when they were sick, but only one had faith enough in Him to thank Him after he had been made well. It takes a good deal more grace to be devoutly satisfied than it does to be devoutly solicitous; so that Moses was enjoining no easy thing upon his people when he bade them bless the Lord when they had eaten and were full.

It is the tendency of the heart to forget God, and the more sunshiny things are, the more likely is that tendency to become realized. Our thoughts and regards are continually slipping away from Him. Our eyes drop from God to some representation of Him, and we become idolaters; from God to some theories of Him, and we become philosophers; from God to the gifts He confers, and in our fulness we fondle the gift and ignore the giver. The benefit monopolizes the eye, and the tree in the garden comes between Adam and the Lord God. "He gave them their request," said the psalmist, "but sent leanness into their

soul." Agur appreciated our tendencies when he prayed: "Feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny Thee." Exactly the secret of Moses' anxiety in our text: "Lest I be full and deny Thee." Whatever effects we happen to have, culture, wealth, beauty, possession of any kind, our energies and loves tend to soak into them as the sand drinks in the rain. We are all the while slipping toward the surface of things, working out from the core to the peel. The plow has to be continually pressed, else the share will slip out onto the turf. It takes much beside still weather to make things flourish and mature. Some one has said: "The lightnings take part with the dews in the growth of the world." Sunshine is not the only parent of the harvest. Men fell in Paradise. Angels fell in heaven.

I do not know that there is any good thing that can not be given in so great measure as to alienate the recipient from the Giver. Even the gifts of the divine Spirit are no exception. The fruits of the Holy Ghost can be produced in us so profusely as to work disaster. You remember how when the seventy returned from their evangelistic tour they commenced to parade the fact of the submissiveness of the devils unto their word. And the Lord rebuked them and bade them rejoice, rather that their names were written in heaven. We sometimes think it is well and possible for us to have all the grace we are willing to

receive. I am not *sure* of that. I have met people that I thought had more grace given them than they had grace to bear; people that were really so holy as to be conscious of it. The pinnacle of the temple, even, is not quite a safe place to sit. St. Paul mentions his inexpressible experiences when caught up into the third heaven, and says his thorn in the flesh was given him as a counterweight to prevent his being overcome by the abundance of the revelations. I think one reason why we have not more spiritual power given us is that we have not the strength to sustain more; we have not grace to carry and exercise more grace with composure. Men get puffed up even by their heavenly enrichments. This is one reason doubtless why revivals of religion in our churches are of so short duration. When the condition of a church is in general one of listlessness and stagnation, a few earnest souls can be so burdened and crushed with the helplessness of the situation as to cry up unto God with prayers that take directly hold of the throne of divine grace, and Christians be quickened and souls converted. But when the work has been progressing for a time, men slip almost insensibly into the idea that the work is *their* work, into a consciousness, and then a conceit, of spiritual power as their power, and the Holy Ghost withdraws and the revival stops. We might have a revival all the time if we would be as conscious that the work

is God's work when it has been in progress six months, as we were when the work first commenced. Men who can be as humble as children and as full of the Holy Spirit as an apostle are the men whom God delights to honor in the enlargement of His Church. If you will mark all the passages in the Acts and the Epistles that indicate the humility of the apostles and their ability to acknowledge and bless the Lord when they had eaten and were full, you will see very much of the reason why it was that in apostolic times the Church was continuously progressive.

Any possession or power we may happen to have stimulates self-consciousness, and that alienates us from God. I once heard a professor in one of our popular classical schools make this petition at evening prayers : " O Lord, Thou to whom the darkness is as the light, we commit ourselves unto Thee for the night, praying that Thou wilt care for us in those hours when we can not so well take care of ourselves." It is so easy to think that we can almost get along alone, and should hardly need to put our trust in God were it not for dark nights, and days that are stormy. Such a prayer as the one just mentioned is, of course, an extreme instance, but is interesting as being symptomatic of human tendency, and is perhaps in its spirit not totally unlike that " Now I lay me " which we prayed as children and continue to use, still, some of us.

It is such facts as these that explain why it is that our lives have sometimes to be made desolate and vacant. Read the entire book of Judges, and you will find it the continuous repetition of the same sequence of events. When the Hebrews had gone across Jordan and tasted the milk and the honey and were full, they stopped blessing God, just as Moses told them not to do, but as he expected all the while they would do. Then the Lord sent in upon them an invasion of Philistines, or of Hivites, of Jebusites, or Moabites or Midianites or Ammonites, who ground them, and trampled upon them, and devoured them till they were willing to cry unto the Lord and acknowledge Him again; and then a deliverer would arise (the man always comes when the times are ripe) and drive out the invaders; and the Hebrews would rejoice in their goodly land till they had eaten and were filled once more, and God had fallen out of their thought and the tragedy had to be repeated again.

This gives to us the philosophy of disasters in national life, and explains to us as well the impoverishments and emptinesses that have to be wrought in our individual lives. Men are quite uniformly disposed to be devout when they get into difficult places. Men are like certain kinds of vegetation, which do best in poor soil. I have somewhere met with this illustration: "The Alpine flower does not bear transplanting, and can only thrive, perhaps like some

souls, amidst wind and tempest, with only brief summer sunshine and heat." I do not believe there is any man but what prays when there is nothing else left that he can do. The story is told how "at the darkest hour of our civil war, when the life of the country seemed trembling in the balance, the Government proclaimed a fast. The people in immense numbers thronged the churches. An eminent citizen in one of our Atlantic cities who seldom sought God's house on Sunday, was observed on that fast-day kneeling devoutly with God's people. When asked what brought *him* to such services, his answer was: 'I thought it was high-time to get *help* somewhere; we are in a tight place, and we need it.'" We have seen illustrations of the same considerably more recently. There is not a man here who would not pray if he stood on the deck of a steamer burning at sea or confronted starvation on the desert. 'When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord.'

It is a large part of the philosophy of distress that it makes us look up. We ask when we are hungry. When we are empty we are devout. "When he slew them, then they sought him," said the psalmist. "In their affliction they will seek me early," wrote Hosea. The prodigal went back to his father when he got down as low as the husks. One of the most cordial expressions of gratitude I ever heard was

from a man who was suffering most excruciating pain. Steady sunshine is ruinous. Jeremiah explains the profitlessness of Moab by saying that "Moab had been at ease from his youth, had settled upon his lees, never been emptied from vessel to vessel, never gone into captivity." We have to be shaken out of the stupefying routine of quietness. "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God," wrote David. Earthly splendors eclipse the celestial, just as the sun that hangs comparatively close by, so fills our eyes with near light that we know nothing, *till after nightfall*, of the larger suns that blaze out in the deeps of the sky. We touch things celestial and divine when the air is not loaded with things human and earthly. The bruised flower yields the sweetest perfume, and the finest poetry of the Church has been inspired in seasons of persecution. Horace Bushnell once said: "I have learned more of experimental religion since my little boy died than in all my life before." It was he also that wrote, "Deserts and stone-pillows prepare for an open heaven and an angel-crowded ladder." St. John did not receive his revelations till he was shut up in little sea-girt Patmos. St. Paul's most jubilant epistle was written in jail; as birds sometimes have their cage darkened in order to teach them to sing.

A considerable number of considerations have then, as we hoped, sprung from the situation of our

text, of a character both to relieve and to instruct. I trust that if we have eaten and are filled with the pleasant outward gifts of the Lord, we are able still to live in distinct and hourly recognition of Him from whom they flow, and to walk with Him in relations of reverent but friendly intimacy. We often pray that God would enable us to bear adversity; there is quite as much need of His grace to keep us from falling in seasons of prosperity. Or if you are walking in any kind of darkness at all, I pray that the God of all grace who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, may make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you; and that we may all of us be so animated by faith in Him who doeth all things well, that even the night may be light about us, losses only leave in us place for larger gain, and our lives draw toward His in daily closeness, even though it be a cross that raiseth us.

XI.

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

"Make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations."—

LUKE xvi. 9.

IN this verse (blindly, as our version reads it) is gathered the meaning of the foregoing parable, that of the unjust steward. This verse applies the meaning of that parable, in a manner practical, and, as I think we shall find, in a manner quickening, cheering, and comforting. The parable has often been treated harshly, and so has been slow to tell the best thing that it has to say. It has been puzzled over as a kind of divine conundrum, and meanings have been wrung from it. Truth is better coaxed than coerced. The way to read a parable is the way we read a picture, which is a parable on canvas. There does not want to be too much trying to see what a picture means; nor a parable. Both are, in this particular, like coy children that begin to grow talkative just when you let them alone. When our eye is allowed to play upon a picture that has been artistically wrought, it will

gravitate, generally, with a good deal of ease, if allowed to, to the point where the artist's interest centres, and around which other lines and figures have been introduced by him as accessories to the main effect.

Another fault in our way of treating these pictures, these word pictures, is that we overwork them, think into them more meaning than it ever lay in our Lord's mind to express by them. We see more between the lines than there is space between the lines to hold. We must be satisfied to find in a parable a little truth scattered over considerable ground. Parables will be better treated telescopically than microscopically. This parable of the unjust steward has been shaken through too much fine sieve.

I said the meaning of the parable is gathered up and applied in our verse. We shall spend only enough time on the parable to get at that meaning. A certain rich man put the administering of his estate in the hands of an agent. After occupying the position for a season, his master, for reasons that we need not stop to state, gave him notice that after a certain time his services would not be wanted. The agent had laid up nothing, was not equal to manual labor, and too proud to beg. The question that pressed upon him was, who was going to take care of him after he had served out his notice. After considering and then dismissing one expedient after another, it

occurs to him that he will compound with his employer's debtors; in that way take a mortgage on their affections, to be paid off in terms of bread and shelter after his wages have stopped. The dishonesty of the transaction is apparent enough; but that, let it be remarked, is only an accident of the case, a mere accessory stroke. He accordingly calls his master's debtors to him, one after another, remits in part the obligation of each, and while opportunity serves, plucks from present circumstances, down sufficient to feather the nest upon a higher branch. The man who owed a hundred measures of oil was permitted to make out a new due-bill for fifty. The debtor who owed a hundred measures of wheat was allowed to substitute a bond for eighty, and so on around, that when he was put out of the stewardship they might, at the instance of gratitude, receive him into their houses. He made sure of a pleasant home by and by, by converting into friendship the resources of the instant.

If now we will make one or two substitutions in our verse in accord with the reading of the new revision the meaning of the verse and the purport of the parable will become easily and pleasantly intelligible. The text says, Make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. "The mammon of unrighteousness" is a way of saying "the unrighteous mammon." Mammon is here the personification of

earthly wealth, and called "unrighteous" because it is so apt to be unrighteous both in the manner of its acquisition and in that of its expenditure. The preposition *of* ("Make to yourself friends *of* the mammon of unrighteousness") is in the new revision replaced by the expression "by means of." So that the first clause of the text has now been corrected and simplified to read,—“Make to yourself friends by means of your earthly possessions.” In the second clause a single change is shown by the new revision to be necessary: “That when *ye* fail,” so it stands in our Bibles; that when *it* fails (that is, when the earthly possession fails) is the revised reading. So that in its altered form and dress our whole verse runs in this way: “Make to yourself friends by means of your earthly wealth, that when it fails they (the friends you have made by means of it while you had it) may receive you into everlasting habitations.” The man in our story used his resources while he had them to increase the number of those that loved him, that when his resources were gone there might be those who in hospitality and affection would welcome him to their homes. Now the Lord in our verse applies the lesson to His hearers, and says to them for substance,—Do you in the same way make to *yourselves* friends by means of *your* resources, that when your resources by and by slip out of your hands, you too may have friends away yonder who shall give you a glad and

loving welcome, not to temporary residences as in the case of the steward, but to the mansions and the home that shall be everlasting. Out of the verse as thus phrased three or four lessons offer themselves, which we pray that the preacher may be so guided in conveying, and all of us so assisted in appreciating and receiving, that our meditation may prove fruitful in wisdom, strength, and comfort.

Our first lesson has reference to the convertible quality of earthly values. Property of one value was by our agent converted into property of another value, a greater value, and what is important to notice, a higher grade of value. As a matter of practical result, the oil and wheat at his disposal were by him converted into,—not more oil and wheat,—but into affection and hospitality. Somewhat of the same purpose inheres in all trade. Property in hand is not treated generally as a finality. No man has ten thousand dollars invested, or, indeed, one thousand, who does not keep an eye pretty steadily open to the possibility of doing better with it. That is the animus of trade. That is what you mean by watching the market. Trade is not an exchange of equivalents. There is no such thing as barter pure and simple. When you lay down one value you do it with the purpose of taking up a larger value in its stead. You succeed in your purpose, and “make.” Your purpose miscarries, and you “lose.” The farm-

er puts one bushel of seed into the ground and in the Fall gathers sixty bushels in its stead. That is *trade*, in a sense; only nature, and not the ordinary run of grain-dealer, is the other factor in the transaction.

The peculiarity of all this grade of transaction is this, that it looks to a return in kind. You plant corn to get *corn*, only more of it. On the street you take money which is in one kind of stock and put it into different stock; but money is the aim of the transaction, only more of it. It is still a return in kind. The transaction is legitimate, or may be; the point of the illustration is, that your object in the transaction is to get out the same kind of thing that you put in, only in greater abundance. It is the same thing that our agent would have done if he had taken that fifty gallons of oil in the first instance, and instead of converting it into affection and hospitality, had put it into the oil trade, with the intent of gaining more of the same commodity in the issue.

There is another sort of transaction in which men engage which has its financial aspect, and yet which is a shade off from those just referred to—in fact, several shades off. You take a thousand dollars, if you have it to spare, and put it into a work of art, a painting, for instance, not as an article of merchandise (you are not supposed to be in the picture-trade), but you purchase it as an adornment to your home, and it becomes a bright thing there. You hang it

upon the wall, and your eye and heart feed upon it ; and after you have had it awhile some one makes you an offer for it, double, perhaps, what you paid for it, and you say, "No ! that picture isn't in the market." Now, that is really a great thing. It means that the man, however mercenary he may be reputed to be, nevertheless has something whose value, even in his own estimation, is not readable in terms of dollars and cents. Now that is more like our agent in the story, who, while he used the purchasing power of his oil as a means of obtaining something better, would never have willingly allowed that better thing to be converted back into oil again. The value of his friendship was not with him readable in terms of oil, wheat, or other staple. He had gotten up into worth of another grade—values of a higher scale. So we may have other treasures, such as books, articles of vertu, or a house, or rather a home ; for that is part of the difference between a house and a home. One might be willing to sell his house, but the home, though money may have obtained it, he nevertheless would not convert it willingly back into money ; its value is not computable in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence.

Now that is our lesson just at this point, that values lower and higher are ranged like the steps of a stairway, each step being placed to conduct to the one superior ; so that each grade of value is in its

best sense worth what it will buy out of the grade next above; that the value of money thus is not in the money *eo ipso*, but in the purchasing power of the money. That exhibits to us exactly the real gist of all miserliness. With the miser money is not a purchasing power, but a finality. All values reduce with him to a gold basis. To him the meaning of a dollar is in the *dollar*, or at most in the procreative power that may lurk in the dollar to make of itself two dollars. Interest, affection, effort, terminate in the coin. Now that is a lesson that a good many men are not learning, that the best significance of a dollar is what the dollar will do: that what the oil will procure is worth more than the oil. A man of large property died here awhile ago, who late in life made one or two munificent benefactions, but said before he died that he wished he had commenced to give earlier. He learned late, but he learned, one of the best lessons of life, that a dollar carefully *spent* denotes more than a dollar scrupulously *kept*, that the best thing about lower values is their convertibility into higher values, and that with the man, as with the reservoir, distribution as well as accumulation is conditional to his being either a thing of beauty in himself, or a well-spring of gladness to his times.

Our second lesson has reference to the fact that the time comes, with every man, sooner or later, when these lower values cease to signify, and when, unless

they have previously been converted into higher values of an indestructible kind, our poor friend is left stranded in a condition of utter and irremediable pauperism. That time, that crisis, of course, is the moment of his death. The agent in our story had his crisis, of a different kind, to be sure, but nevertheless intended by our Lord to be typical of death, and the agent anticipated his crisis: he got his resources into such shape that they could survive the crisis. The oil and the wheat he could not carry with him out of his stewardship—you can not your houses and bonds—but while he was still steward he could convert some of those staples into a commodity such that his discharge from stewardship could not alienate it from him.

That exactly is what we mean by treasure laid up in heaven, possession of such a sort that death can not impair nor diminish it—of that indestructible quality that the death-power can work in it no corrosion. That was what was intended when it was said of a recently deceased philanthropist that he took his wealth with him, by which was meant that he carried up with him to the heavenly home and the throne of God the friendships, the loves, and the prayers of the multitudes all around the earth who had had their burdens lightened and their lives strengthened and sweetened by his tender beneficence. He indeed took none of his money with him,

but before he was called hence he had converted a good deal of that money into something which he did take with him, and which to-day composes part of his crown of rejoicing as he treads the golden streets of the celestial city. If you have property in buildings you insure it. Insurance is a sort of contingent and anticipative conversion of combustible values into incombustible, so that they will survive the conflagration, if it befalls, and be ready to your hands on the other side of the conflagration, undiminished and unscarred. Or, if you are a man of wealth and your property is scattered, and disaster of any kind impends, with the first suspicion of disaster or the first rumor of war, your instant care is to convert it, so far as may be, into values of so impregnable a sort that the shock of war and its devastations will not shatter them, and thus you be let through onto the thither side of disaster, with your estates and effects in the least possible measure uninjured. Now, my friend, let me ask you if you are in the same way anticipating this other crisis, along toward which you are stepping a little nearer every day? You secure your buildings against disaster. Are you in the same way securing yourself against death? And, as the years multiply upon you and your hair grows whiter and whiter, are you gradually working lower values into higher, converting your perishable possessions into forms that are indestruc-

tible, and your earthly wealth into treasure laid up in heaven?

We have not said much about what it is that these lower values can be converted into, to the insuring of their permanence and indestructibility. Our third lesson concerns that matter. "Make to yourself *friends* by means of your earthly possessions." Carlyle was speaking quite closely in the line of Scripture when he said: "The wealth of a man consists in the number of things he loves and blesses, and in the number of things he is loved and blessed by." A friend, as it is meant here, is a person that has so come under the power of our love as to love back; loving us because we loved him. Such friends we take with us. Death does not terminate the possession. They are value which survives the good-bye. They are celestial treasure: if they are gone up before, they are treasure laid up in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt. By this love we do not mean mere pleasant acquaintance between person and person. That is another matter. It is a Gospel affair, this love. It is the same sort of going out and losing ourselves in other people that was in Christ's case. In Christ's case we call it giving Himself for others. That is love exactly, letting go of ourselves in the taking hold of another; and one that gets under our hold in that way is our friend; he is our treasure; he is our jewel. He may be here or may

be there ; we may be here or may be there, but he is our jewel. And our possessions of money or talent or otherwise will help us make friends, not because friends can be bought, but because we can make the things we give the emblem to them of our self-giving, even as sympathetic tears win our hearts just because they are the glistening *symbols* of sympathy. That is certainly a great deal of the meaning of Christ's blood ; it came from the heart, and meant heart. And men are saved by Him because they are loved by Him, and know they are loved by Him.

And love of this kind, the love that makes friends, does not work inside of fixed lines : it is not a matter of *lines* ; any more than warmth will slip along a groove or light go by latitude and longitude. Christ loved up and down, all the way from the throne of His Father to the spirits in the nether prison. Love that works at particular levels is always to be suspected. Christly love is like the sun which sheds its beams vertically as well as horizontally. When I find a man of great means whose lovers are only from the class of the well-to-do, the beautiful, the cultivated, I am not authorized to say that his friends are not friends in the Gospel sense of the word ; but when I know that the turf on his grave is moistened by the tears of the poor, the degraded, I know that that man was a Christian. Love that works vertically is born only of God. And let me say just there, that

there is nothing that the poor and degraded need so much as they do *love*. They need love more than they do money ; if we gave them less gold and more affection they would be better off in heart, mind, and estate. Christ instituted no charitable organization, only as every Christian is designed to be himself a charitable organization, collector, treasury, and committee of disbursement, all in one. Men are to be redeemed by love ; love is power, personal power working toward another winningly, operating in him actuatingly, resting on him as a benediction. Love is the redeeming element ; love is the pith of the Gospel, the axis on which all turns. And men grow surprisingly lovable as soon as we begin to love them ; startingly interesting as soon as we begin to be interested in them. And we shall find in people just as much heart as we have the heart to find in them. As soon as we begin in a Christ-like way to love people we shall discover that they love to be loved. They are in our power if our power is heart-power. It is an easy thing to make a friend. It is like God to make a friend, and a friend is a permanent possession, treasure in heaven, imperishable jewel, star in our crown of rejoicing, out of which the light never fades.

And the friends we have made in this way, knit to us in the meshes of an undying love, if they pass up before us will be there waiting for us. That is a part

of the meaning of the parable, "That when your possession fails, those whom you have made to love you, may receive you into the home that is everlasting." It really takes that to make out the idea of home, somebody waiting for you. When you have come back from the church-yard where has been laid the precious dust of your companion, and have crossed the old threshold, and entered the familiar room where so many times, as you have entered, a tender greeting has been given you, it is just the loss of that, and the knowing that he or she is never going to be waiting there for you again that unmakes the home. So this verse contains another of those hints that here and there, like stars dispersed in a dim firmament, give our hearts something to take hold of and wind themselves about. And so heaven comes into a little more real and social relation to us. A bridge, light and impalpable, but strong enough to bear the freightage of a great hope, gets thrown across the interval. I know we are going to have Christ there, and so we have Him here; but that does not destroy the need of human fellowships, but rather makes the need the greater. We shall love there more, not less. That the sun shines in the sky with such splendor, makes not other objects less needful, but more so. It is through them in part that the true power and glory of the sun gets disclosed to us. We have Christ here; and a part of His felt power and

loveliness now is in the beautiful relations that, at His hallowing impulse, contract themselves among men.

It seems a little transcendent to say that there Christ is to be our "all." But it does just cover the ground to say that there He is going to be our "*ALL IN ALL.*" When you have crossed the sea, and on nearing port and coming up to the dock, have seen among the throng of eager expectants no eye that was looking for you, no face that was flushed with a glad welcome for you, your heart has faltered within you, and you have turned back a wistful glance over the tired leagues that divide you from country and friends. But if among the throng you detect a responsive eye that is waiting for you, and a face flushing with old-time love that has been strengthening with the interval, right there, just on the threshold of the strange continent, there grows up in you a deep, restful sense of home.

Dear friend, remember that your stewardship here is not for long. Use carefully and lovingly the things that God has given you. And when it comes time for you to depart, may there be many hearts here that shall be orphaned by your going, and many waiting hearts there that shall be gladdened by your coming.

XII.

THE PHARISEE'S PRAYER.

"God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are."—LUKE xviii. 11.

A PART of the Pharisee's prayer, if it was a prayer. More soliloquy than prayer. "Prayed thus with himself," the context quietly and slyly interpolates.

The narrative leaves us with an unpleasant estimate of the Pharisee. The whole trend of the narrative conduces to this, particularly the words with which the narrative stops, without its being altogether easy to explain our estimate. We are continually reaching conclusions, and right ones, without appreciating all the steps that lead to them. This Pharisee interests us. Every man is interesting. Almost every one loves to watch machinery in operation, and trace the play and interaction of its parts. How much more when, in place of cogs, wheels, and levers, we have the intricate mechanism of motives, passions, and purposes playing backward and forward upon each other. The Pharisee, then, is interesting. There was something at fault in him without our being

easily able, perhaps, to specify with exactness what that fault was.

The publican told the whole truth about himself, so far as he knew it, when he confessed himself a sinner. For all we can infer the Pharisee also told the whole truth about himself, so far as he was aware of it. The publican was a sinner and knew it. The Pharisee was a sinner and didn't know it. One had the sense of sin, the other had lost it. The publican knew sin as sin, felt sin as sin; the Pharisee did not. That was the worst feature of his case, the most difficult and perplexing feature. If it happens that you are a teacher, the most difficult pupils you have to instruct are not the most ignorant ones, but those that have not the sense of their ignorance. Some of the most delicious pupils I ever had anything to do with were those who knew least, but who knew enough to know how little they knew. That afforded me as a teacher something upon which I could fix and fasten. The pride of ignorance is like the stopper in an empty bottle, which renders the interior vacuum inaccessible. Change the terms and we have the description of our Pharisee. The narrative means to have us understand that he was as much in need of God's mercy as the publican, but that he was without that sense of need that made mercy apropos and intelligible. Instruction derives its meaning from a sense of ignorance; medicine, from a sense of disease; liberty,

from a sense of bondage; mercy, from a sense of ill-desert; pardon, from a sense of guilt; the Gospel means in the second instance only as much as sin has meant in the first instance. Therein is the relation of the law to the Gospel, not that the law can save anybody, but that it may produce in man the sense that he needs to be saved: "By the law is the knowledge of sin," said Paul. If we are certain we are right we do not ask to be set right. They that are whole need not a physician. An umbrella means nothing in dry weather.

The Pharisee did not feel sin as sin. That is the worst effect of sin that it dulls the sense of sin and wears out the conscience. It is a sad wreck that costs the captain his ship's compass. Conscience is the moral eye, the ethical sensorium. The hardening of the heart is in morals just what the softening of the brain is in intellectuals; ethical insensibility, idiocy; horrible because of the magnificence it just misses. "Dead in trespasses and sins." "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." That is my conception of devil, unconscenced intellect; personality that has worn out its conscience till it has no sense of holiness or sin any more; has lost from the harp forever the string that sounded that note, and hell a great moral madhouse. "The devils fear," says the Scripture, which is not much. So does the imbecile, the madman, and the dog. If I thought, perhaps Satan

had left in him even a remote suggestion of conscience, there would be just so much possibility of penitence, and penitence is heaven's latch-key.

Christ therefore gained little hold upon the Pharisees, and gave them little attention. He was known as the friend of publicans and sinners. A man may do a bad thing, a gross thing. That does not signify so much as whether there remains in him power to appreciate the badness as badness, the grossness as grossness. The power to loathe one's self is candidacy for sainthood. The force of an appeal must lie at least the half of it in the heart of the man appealed to. Tone is half in the air and half in the ear. Preaching, Christ's preaching, waited, for its effect, upon echo. There was in the heart of the Pharisee no echo. He did not find himself under Christ's preaching, and feel himself. He was not reached, touched. The words even of the Lord did not find out in him the nerves. His heart did not understand the language in which Christ addressed him. Such preaching is discouraging and hardly pays. A gross sinner with lively moral sensibilities is closer to the kingdom than a "proper" person, void of moral resonance. We are not lost till our moral sense is gone—our appreciation of right and wrong as right and wrong; when that is gone we are lost, even though the grave be forty years away. Hell is both sides of the tomb, and a devil may be respectable and wear good clothes.

And then, too, a man may be to all intents and purposes lost even before the sense is altogether gone. When you see a man dropping down the rapids, it is not necessary for him to go over the falls before you will say of him that he is lost. When you see a man falling from the roof toward the pavement you will not wait till he strikes before saying of him that he is a dead man. There are matters here that the best as well as the worst one among us needs to think about. This getting into a current and having it sweep us, this pressure of momentum that is taking on new increments, is earnest business. I do not know how any man can see himself even in a single instance conquered by temptation, and not suspect his own awful possibilities. To do deliberately what is wrong is to confess that lust has more the management of us than conscience. Twelve ounces of lead have outweighed eleven ounces of gold. Our only hope is less lead or more gold. To do wrong and not be pained by it is the first installment of damnation; it is beginning to be a devil—unconscienced intellect. Numbness that does not disturb us is the fore-porch of death. It is very near to dying already to be chilled in the winter storm, to grow sleepy without being alarmed by our sleepiness, and not to like to have our friend arouse us. "Awake, thou that sleepest!" "I know it," says the old hearer of the Gospel, "but I don't feel it." Poor man.

And there is much of that same thing abroad and at home. We all understand one another here, for we are mostly sharers in one experience. This is part sermon, part soliloquy. I want something for myself here, and I want the same for you. I want the wrong to cut a deeper, bloodier gash into my heart when I either do the wrong or see it done. "Dead in trespasses and sins." "Dead." A good topic for a sermon would be, "Remorse as a lost art." I have told you before now that I feel quite a little admiration for Judas. My admiration comes back to me again this morning. Whatever he lacked, he had a genius for remorse. Sin stung him. "I have sinned." Remorse was the rope with which he hung himself.

Something of this has gone out of our lives since we were little. Witnessed vulgarity of speech or act grieved us when we were children. Those were the times when we used to go to our mother and with brimming eyes confess our own wrong and tell her all about it. It took us a great while to make up our mind to tell that first lie, and it took us a good while to get over it after we had told it. There is something about a child, after all, that can hardly be improved upon. "Suffer the little children to come unto Me," said the Lord, "for of such is the kingdom of God." I know it is a bad world and a bad city we live in; but I do wish that all these children might

be so kept that this delicate sensitiveness should all be preserved in them, that they should never cease to be wounded when they see what is evil, and never part with their facility of penitence over whatever they themselves do that is wrong.

This keen and pained appreciation of what is evil in us is an element that is sadly lacking in our experience, and we would have more of it if we were better men and women. The shadow that is cast is just as dark as the interrupted light is bright. The more we know, the more thoroughly we appreciate the vastness of our ignorance, and the farther the hallowing work has progressed in our hearts, of course the more conscious we become of the residue of unhallowed elements still lingering inwardly. When the grace of God has really begun to work in us, our first impulse will no longer be to say, I am as good as this man and better than that man,—to say, “I give so much,” or “I do this, or that, or the other”; all of that is exactly our Pharisee; but, “Lord, I am a sinner; be merciful unto me.” When we obtain a strong, clear sense of holiness, the first thing that will show itself in the light of it will be the uncleanness of our heart and of our life. When a sunbeam is let into the dark room, the first thing that the light reveals is the specks that float in the light. The publican did not find God because he confessed his sins, but he discovered and confessed his sins because he

had just found God and felt the holiness of Him, and if ever that Pharisee also found God he ceased his complacent soliloquy and the advertisement of his beneficence, and knelt down just where the publican had knelt, and (not soliloquized any more, but) prayed, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner."

I shall mention two or three of the ways in which we can keep this sense of right distinct and pronounced, so that evil will be felt by us as evil, sin's sinfulness realized, and we be thrown back upon God as our deliverer from evil.

First, avoiding bad contacts. We become like the things we touch. We take the features of that we look upon. Witnessed vice makes us vicious; depravity spreads. Vileness becomes less and less repulsive the more we look at it. "Vice is a monster of such hideous mien," etc. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." An immense amount of adult depravity has its foundations laid for it in the child's first years. The street is Satan's nursery and flashy literature his circulating library. It takes a great while to wear out a soul's scar. Sin's colors are put on with mordants. Parents are careful to keep their children away from diphtheria and small-pox. Sin is worse than scarlet fever and more catching. A mother said to me only this last week, "I will not have my children playing in the street." The average boy that runs the streets is a bad boy. If

you let a good boy run alongside of a bad boy the good boy will learn all the bad boy's tricks, without communicating to him any of his own goodness. Iniquity is spryer than virtue. Diseases are catching, health is not. Flowers die, weeds spread. Human nature is like water; it never runs without running down-hill, and left to itself does not stop till it reaches the bottom. Of course there is no making a bad man better except by coming in contact with him. But that is another matter. A missionary will scarcely become a heathen by heathen contacts. Paul ran no risk in living at Corinth. Sea-water will not set back up the river when the river is making steady discharge down into the sea. Sunshine that is trying to illuminate the darkness will not get crushed by the darkness. Social contact with depraved people depraves us; and notably intercourse with coarse or equivocal literature. The one comprehensive fact is that published crime breeds crime. Thinking what is bad soils the mind, breaks the edge of moral delicacy; and it is all one whether the soiling thought is started by crime dramatized, indelicacy sculptured, indecency painted, or sin printed in a paper and called news. There is no man so clean that he can afford to let his mind rest on a dirty thing.

Another way of keeping the tarnish off our moral sense is to call things by their natural and simple names. The real name of a bad thing regularly stig-

matizes the thing, and so stirs in us an antipathy to the name. There is much in a name. A fit name not only keeps things distinct that are different, but keeps the snarl out of our ideas of things. A certain amount of distinct thinking is necessary to the maintenance of a conscience that shall work promptly and speak definitively. The Lord never compromised Himself or the truth through the attenuating words employed by Him to state matters He had in hand. The whole Bible is a tonic in the method in which it meets situations and squares itself to facts. A long name for a short sin argues either poltroonery or moral obliquity. We can play with words, but words will take their turn and play with us. An ambiguous name given to a bad thing saps from the bad thing its essential ugliness. "Lie" is better than "prevarication"; "adultery" preferable to "conjugal infidelity"; "theft" cuts closer to the marrow than "embezzlement," though less specific; which last example reminds me of a couple of stanzas I met with a while ago, hardly poetic in spirit or elegant in form, but moving to the point by straight step and a breezy swing, and with an ample commentary furnished them by last week's events:

"In olden times when people heard
Some swindler huge had come to grief,
They used a good old Saxon word,
And called that man a 'thief.'

“ But language such as that to-day
Upon men's tender feelings grates ;
So people smile and simply say
He—‘ rehypothecates.’ ”

The safest words are always those which bring us most directly to facts. If we want to keep good and evil apart from each other in our acts, we can not be too careful to keep them distinct in our thought ; and distinct thinking waits on precise and honest wording.

And now only once more (of course these are illustrations merely, not with any thought of exhaustive application). This sense of right, in order to be able to do its work, must have positiveness given it, and be built up into one of the vertebral facts of our life and thought. It is not enough that it be not tarnished ; it must be scoured and brightened. Negative work goes only short ways. To be sure, a man may have a distinct sense of right without being a good man or doing right ; still, everything depends on that sense and comes back to it. Without that we have nothing to appeal to, and nothing to start from. The Pharisee hadn't it, and therefore nothing could be done with him or for him. The prodigal son had it (“ I have sinned,” said he), and it opened the way back from the harlot and the husks to his father's house.

But there is no sense of sin without prior sense of

holiness. There must be sunshine before there can be shadow. And the only way to have the sense of holiness stimulated is to see holiness exhibited. No beauty, no artist. If my intercourse is only with unschooled people, no sense of ignorance is stimulated, no appetite for culture generated. A poorly-dressed boy is well dressed till he sees another boy dressed better, and then he looks down at his own clothes. We are dealing here, then, with fundamentals. The moral sense, like any other sense, can be educated, and much in the same way. A man does not become a painter by having the unshapely kept out of his sight, but by having the beautiful kept in his sight. Impulses live by bread. So every good thing seen or heard is that much toward giving tissue and tension to our sense of the good. Sense of the good is not goodness. We are not going to forget that; but the right will not become a distinct thing in our being without first being a substantial fact in our thought. When we have seen a good man, and walked and talked with him, it is not so easy to go away and do what is evil.

That gives us the clue to the whole matter. A dark room becomes still darker as soon as we go into it from out the sun. To the boys I would say, get as good a boy as yourself to play with, and, if you can, one that is a little better. I mentioned recently the thief who, when he was dismantling a room,

turned to the wall the crucifix that stood on the mantel. A thief, but not far from the kingdom of heaven, I imagine. You remember the other thief, and how the Lord and the Lord's cross affected him. Let us hold ourselves always as close as we can to everything that will keep conscience alert and give tension to our own sense of the things that are right. There is a sense in which we are consolidated even by our own good acts. We go to school even to ourselves, as wicked men besmirch themselves by rehearsing their own iniquity, and as David might always have been kept nearer God by reading his own fifty-first psalm. That is the service that is being steadily rendered by every thoroughly good man among us; he is exhibiting holiness as a fact, and in that way is chaining unrighteous men to their own neglected sense of holiness, and burnishing their tarnished ideals till they gleam again.

The perfect Jesus keep us all close to Him. Goodness incarnate! fleshed holiness! Friend, turn the crucifix back from the wall. Let us look on God, and our conscience will get its voice; let us be done with looking down to the man that is more miserable than we and satisfiedly measuring ourselves against him. Look up! Salvation is over, not under. Let down into your soul the ray of glory from off the face of God, and you will see the black motes floating thick in the bright swarth of it; and like Peter, with his

eyes turned on Jesus in the judgment-hall, we will find what we didn't know before, and go out and weep over it; and then, like the same Peter on Genesaret, feeling that the waters really are parting beneath our feet, we shall thrust up suppliant hands and cry, "Lord, save me!"

XIII.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

"And he set him on his own beast."—LUKE x. 34.

A SINGLE clause, as you will recognize, from the story of the Samaritan. The one act, as it seems to me, in which the Samaritan's Samaritanism was most deeply lodged, and most gently and suggestively evinced. The Samaritan had nothing left him but to walk. So we conclude. The weariness of it denoted less to him than his co-traveller's comfort denoted. His own comfort was in having his companion comfortable. His consciousness was of the other man. He *became* practically the other man for the time; felt his bruises as his own bruises; forgot that he was not working for himself in working for him. He felt not *for* him, which is nothing but pity. The Levite pitied. Pity is speculation. Most of us do not care to be pitied. Pity is not enough better than indifference to benefit materially either agent or recipient. Therefore I say, he felt not *for* him, which is nothing but pity. He felt *with* him, he felt *in* him, which is sympathy and Gospel. "He set him

on his *own* beast." "Remember them which are in bonds as bound with them." "In all their affliction he was afflicted." Becoming the other man, that is Samaritanism: seeing with his eyes, feeling with his sensibilities, subject to his limitations, obnoxious to his exposures. This affords us broad pasturage to range over as time gives us opportunity.

That was Christ's way of effecting our recovery, our redemption. There is no such thing as saving at a distance. Relief stamped with a foreign postmark is unable to get underneath our necessity. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him," not because of His ill-desert, but because of His identifying Himself with us in our condition of ill-desert. He thought Himself into our situation, felt Himself into our situation. Our bruises were felt by Him as His bruises. Love is the power of becoming the other man. Sympathy is two hearts tugging at one load, bent beneath one sorrow. If I lose a friend and suffer, and you lose a friend and suffer, that does not make it out that we sympathize. That would be two hearts tugging at *two* loads. Sympathy is two hearts tugging at *one* load—a very different matter in its animus and effects. Christ, in order to redeem us, became first of all one of us, one among us and in us. He took upon Him our nature: got into the inner side of our experience. In all our affliction He was afflicted; He had no sorrow of His own apart from our sor-

row; not sorry *for* us, but sorry *with* us. And in His advocacy for us, He pleads for Himself; He is one of us; our matter is His matter. What the Father grants for us, is so much granted to Him. Half of the time when we close our prayer with the words "for Christ's sake," we have no sense of their import; they degenerate into a habit of speech, a convenient way of getting to the end of our prayer. Their meaning lies in the fact of Christ's identity with us in the things asked for. It is as though we said to the Hearer of prayer, "We do not ask you to give it to us because we ask it, but our cause is Christ's cause; Christ wants for us divinely what we want for ourselves, only weakly and humanly; do not give it to us because *we* want it, but give it to Him and us because *He* wants it: give it 'for Christ's sake.' " "We have an advocate with the Father."

There is no end of comfort in this doctrine of Christ's advocacy. And its assuring power lies just in this, that His advocacy grows out of His perfect identity with us in our needs, distresses, and aspirations. We would pray better and more, and with vaster confidence, if we would in our supplications just enter into the spirit of this, and pray as though we thought God's Son was going to take our suit and plead it before the Father, not because He wants to have *us* gratified simply, but because He is one of us, one in us, and His pulse beats with ours, and our

wants are really His wants, and our distresses His distresses. That precisely is the drift of the apostle's argument at the end of the fourth chapter of Hebrews: "We have not an high-priest which can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are." Our high-priest, our advocate, the apostle will say, has adopted Himself into our circumstances. Whatever divineness may be in Him, He is definitely ranged also on the human side of the disparity between the human and divine; He feels us perfectly in Himself; He is not merely half-way between us and the Father, so that He can reach up in one direction, and reach down to where we stand in the other direction, but He is entered into our circumstance and into us—made one with us. Then comes in the next verse, the conclusion from this premise: "Let us *therefore* come boldly to the throne of grace." Bold praying, based on the divine advocacy of one who is as human as ourselves. I think I can pray better and with fresh assurance, after having come into the truth and meaning of Christ's advocacy in this way, and I trust we all can.

And this is a model of the way in which *all* help comes. We can help a man only by identifying ourselves with him, getting into his circumstances, getting into him, becoming he. This can be easily illustrated. It holds in all teaching. Success in teaching depends on two things—knowing

the man you are trying to teach, and knowing the thing you are trying to teach him—and the first is as essential as the last. The teacher will have not only to see things in his own wise way, but at the same time to see things in the pupil's own ignorant way, and in the same instant stand both above the pupil and in him, which answers to the coupled humanness and divineness in our great Teacher, Christ. There is no understanding a student's difficulties except by being able to look at them from the same angle at which the student looks at them. Our power to help as an instructor stops exactly at the point where stops our power to reproduce in ourselves the mental perplexities and limitations by which the pupil is beset. I can not make him see things as I see them, unless I am able first to see them as he sees them, which is to say that I must become the student before I can become his teacher. When a man has gotten to be so old or otherwise that he is no longer able to come at things and take hold of things in a boy's way, he will never be able to do anything more for the boys, and never be able to get a hold upon the boys.

If you have a temptation that you want to get the mastery over, the man for you to go to for counsel and relief is the man who has been in your place and gained the victory that you want to gain. The best man to convert a drunkard is a converted drunkard.

The power to appreciate temptation is the prime condition to being able to help others out of temptation. In a certain way it holds that the more bad and awkward situations a good man has been in, the richer may prove his ministry and the more various his apostleship. Almost all the men in the Scripture story that ever proved a great advantage to anybody, had at some time been themselves in sad need of succor. The first step God took toward making us become like Him, was for Him to become as far as He could like us. If you have any doctrinal perplexity, your resort for assistance will always be to some one whose doctrinal experience has been complicated in the same way. And it is not by any means enough to be able to understand another man's difficulty, burden, temptation; we need to go a little farther and feel it as our own difficulty, burden, temptation, just as the Samaritan not only appreciated his fellow-traveller's distresses, but felt them as his own distresses, and therefore set him on his own beast; and as Christ not only understood our sins, but Himself put Himself behind our sins, underneath them, carried them, and in such a whole-hearted way, as really to suffer the pain and penalty of them. There is always more or less of the vicarious when there is any good done, any release wrought, any redemption effected. Redemption is a form of sympathy; it is two hearts tugging at one load.

And there is no end of difficulty in really getting over into the inner side of another man's experience, so as to be able to see things as he sees them, and so be in a condition to bring relief when it is needed, and enlargement and amelioration when it is required. There is no doing anything of account for our neighbor unless, first of all, we love him. Now there are some people that we do love. Our hearts are not so large yet that our affections distribute themselves with anything like generality, as the dear Lord's love is wont to do. But we do love two or three or half a dozen people, and it is full of revelation, the facility with which we can appreciate the difficulties, perplexities, untoward limitations, and handicapping temptations of those few people. It suggests how gentle and generous-minded and tender-worded we would be toward all, if only we had enough of the love of Christ in us to love all as we love a select few. Just as soon as we love a man, we can feel and realize the pressure on him of his antagonizing environment, and are keen to see how allowances ought to be made here and discounts made there. Love is certain to find some way out, just as the Lord himself prayed, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

If we would get into the interior of another man's life, and be able either to rate him at his worth or help him to larger worth, we have got to study the

effects of education, temperament, environment. It is more important to know how things look to him than how he looks to us. You are to estimate me more by my standards than by your own, and I you. "Happy is he that condemneth not *himself* in that thing which he alloweth." I have met very few men who do not improve on acquaintance. The better I understand them and the more nearly I can place myself at the stand-point they occupy, of course the more they and their motives, acts, and opinions come to seem to me as they seem to them.

We are distanced from one another also by the diverse estimates which different people will accord to the same virtue or the same vice. A man who is dishonest and generous will not be able to contemplate with patience his neighbor who is penurious, though honest. The longer an honest man is honest, the harder it will be for him to tolerate a man who is disposed otherwise. One man will put the stress on one virtue ; another, on another. Conscience by use (or by misuse) becomes unevenly pronounced in its verdicts. We become more and more impressed by the righteousness of what we habitually do that is right, and less and less impressed with the unrighteousness of what we habitually do that is wrong. And all of this embarrasses our estimates of one another, and hinders our getting into interior and sympathetic relation with each other. The honest

miser will not forgive the dishonest spendthrift for being dishonest. The dishonest spendthrift will not forgive the honest miser for being miserly.

It will operate to bring us into somewhat closer proximity, and at least foster mutual appreciation, if we think of it sometimes that a good deal of what we call our virtue is only another name for vice in us that has not had a clear opportunity to show itself nor a fair field in which to work; and that a good deal of what we call our neighbor's vice or criminality is a stern way of designating virtue that has not had gathered around it suitable checks and limitations. Without doubt there is not that degree of difference between men in point of inherent depravity, between men who walk the street and employ their own tailor, and other men who wear uniforms and look out between bars, that the discrepant circumstances in which they find themselves would seem to denote. The best do not rise so far above the average, nor the worse fall so far below the average, as the more palpable symptoms of condition would indicate. This is not to the intent of making wickedness seem less wicked, but rather to suggest that the average disparity in point of wickedness is not such as to work among men any overwhelming sense of isolation or loneliness. Some particular species of depravity that Mr. A. lacks, Mr. B. may possess, and *vice versa*, and mutual repulsion be the consequence. But

all sins have a common denominator, with hardly an inequality in the numerators that is worth mentioning.

It will draw us into a little closer fellowship if we remember that probably not one in a hundred of us but would do more evil than we do, were it not for the mutual surveillance that we exercise over each other. No man is so good that it will not help to keep him good if he is watched. The possession of unlimited power lies very close to the unholy exercise of that power. Few men can be trusted, for example, to handle large amounts of other people's money with the knowledge that no check is being put upon them as respects the methods of their handling it. It is foolhardy for any man to allow himself to stand in such a position; but if malappropriation ensues, then the public must be instructed to distribute its censure with some degree of impartiality between the man who malappropriates and the men whose business it was to checkmate such malappropriation, and who possibly advertised themselves as officially designated for just such or similar purposes. The more there is in us of the discrimination, the cleanness, and the love of Jesus Christ, the less the difficulty we shall experience in getting, in a manner of brotherly appreciativeness, into the inner side of even wicked men's experience. Never man dealt with even the debased classes of society with such gentle sympathy

as the Lord Jesus Christ, and there is not one of us that would like to have a less than He sit in judgment at the great day of award.

And beside this, just so far as we succeed in finding ourselves over again in the man who stands next us, we shall find it our instant impulse to carry ourselves toward him in ways of courtesy and gentleness. Each man becomes then only a second self, with but slight difference in the make-up and finish. It is hazardous living in a town where there are as many people as there are here; it is so easy to fall into the habit of looking upon them, ninety-nine per cent. of them, as being practically nothing but things. And that consideration determines in a degree the way we comport ourselves toward them. If I should get wrecked at sea and be cast alone upon an untenanted island, there are few people even in this heterogeneous city that I would not find enough like myself to make the tedium of exile more endurable. It is circumstance as much as it is personal qualities that determines our acquaintanceship and friendship. It might help us to remember that one reason we get along with ourselves so well, is that we have lived with ourselves so long as to get accustomed to our own eccentricities and disagreeableness. If we were to meet our own duplicate, we should most likely look farther before selecting our companion. It is generally allowed that it is the unlikes that attract. Unlike saves dislike.

All of this gives us matter that we can take into daily life with us. Brotherly love is the power I have to feel myself in the next man. It is the disposition to put myself in his place, in my thought to become he, so far as I can, and to determine all my bearing toward him by the rule of what I should want done to me were I *altogether* he, which is the "*golden rule*." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Perhaps that does not mean simply, thou shalt love him as much as you love yourself; but love him as though he *were* yourself; feel yourself in him, and so love him *as* yourself. Love is the power to feel an unselfish interest in the next man.

Here is something in regard to which there can be no quarrel among us. Everybody believes in the Good Samaritan, and love grows by loving. Whether, therefore, I am speaking to the little folks or to the older folks, let us always make it our study to see how many friends we can make, how many lives we can get interested in, how many hearts we can get into the inside of, so as to feel as our own pleasure whatever is pleasant to them, and so as to carry a little upon our own shoulders whatever burdens them and makes them tired and discouraged. In that way, my dear friends, we shall be becoming more and more like Him whose love-power it is that is working in us, whose heart takes gladness from whatever makes us glad, and has fellowship with all of us in whatever

makes us sad. A friend is treasure, and a friend who has gone up higher is treasure laid up in heaven. So that we shall be winning for ourselves the assurance that when matters stop here, and things fail here, we shall have procured for ourselves the upper hospitality of them who shall receive us into the habitations that are everlasting, and welcome us to the home that is on high.

XIV.

THE HIDDEN LEAVEN.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened."—MATTHEW xiii. 33.

OUR Lord had His own way of seeing things, and therefore had His own way of telling them. His style was true to Him, and He true to His style. This verse in Matthew was composed in His own vein. "Is like unto leaven." He never tried to say exact things about a matter, nor to talk clear out to the end of the matter. When we read His words appreciatively we bear in us always a deep sense of overplus and residue. Truth is more than anything that any one, even the Lord, can say about it. The kingdom of heaven is better, and other, than anything that any one, even the Lord, can declare of it. And so His aim was less to give the mind something definite to feel *of*, than it was to give the heart something undefined to feel *after*.

Christ's preaching was such a matter that considerable error in the report left us of it would not ma-

terially impair its truthfulness, nor materially detract from its power. Truth is a separate matter from the forms of phrase along which it is conveyed, or the forms of thought under which it is apprehended. "Not in word only, but also in power," Paul said of the Gospel. Truth is in this respect like the light. No painter can paint light. He can give you colors, the greens, the blues, the crimsons, but he can not give you light; and yet if he is a genius he will succeed in filling his picture with those tinted suggestions that will somehow quicken in you a deep thrilling *sense* of light. So Christ, in a similar manner, not pointed out to His disciples this particular thing and that particular thing, but loaded His sentences with suggestions and started in men's minds presentiments that went leaping along ahead of the spoken word. As in our text, He so served Himself with simile, metaphor, as always to leave open the door. He never spoke the last word about a matter; never closed a case. Finalities are fatal. Truths He hung like suns in broad firmaments with large place for them to broaden themselves out in luminously. He cut no grooves for men's opinions to slip in, fashioned no moulds for those opinions to be cast in; did not care to have them think *precisely* this, or *precisely* that; tied them to no nice forms of declaration; did not accentuate with periods. "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus *began*

both to do and to teach." And so their minds (the disciples' minds) moved as vessels move at sea, at the direction of the compass, to be sure, but without the sea ever being worn down into ruts and roadways. He drew for them pictures of the truth, and then let them make what they could of those pictures. A truth never can be quite told. It is best seen when we are not trying too hard to see it, not straining our eyes to see it, as faint stars become visible when we look a little off from them.

Christ's habit, therefore, was not so much to tell what things *were*, as to draw pictures of them and mention some familiar thing they were *like*; as a boy really knows more about the earth when told that it is shaped like a big bat-ball than when taught to say that it is an oblate spheroid, with a polar diameter of 8,000 miles. Christ, therefore, was continually telling, in an easy way, what this and that was like (drawing pictures), which is to say that He taught by parables, "and without a parable spake He not unto them." I am not sure that there is anything that Christ said that would not be misunderstood were we to suppose there was no element of parable in it. And so He says in this same chapter: "The kingdom of heaven is *like* unto a man which sowed good seed in his field"; "*Like* unto a grain of mustard-seed"; "*Like* unto treasure hid in a field"; "*Like* unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls"; "*Like* unto a

net which was cast into the sea." It is the constant danger of our teaching that we shall make truth less by making it exact. A truth felt is more than a truth stated. Christ was continually dropping hints that let His disciples forward into a new surmise; kept treading down their horizon; did not let their opinions go to seed. He knew how to talk with them in such a way as to make them feel that what He did not tell them was considerably more than what He did tell them. And so while we may not, in contemplating the picture in our verse, be able to say much that is exact and final about the kingdom of heaven, we may nevertheless have fresh suspicions started and our hearts acquire new confidence as to the possible much which the kingdom of heaven denotes and betokens.

"Leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal." This kingdom, then, whatever it may be, is not an offshoot from the world, but some sort of an importation into it. So much, at any rate, lies upon the surface of the picture. The woman took the leaven deliberately, and hid it in the meal with a distinct intent. Which means, among other, that the kingdom of heaven is a new ingredient put into society. So much is taught simply and effectively. Not an outgo, but an income. This is vital and cardinal; the hinge upon which the whole meaning and scope of Christianity bends. She put the

yeast into the dough; the dough did not develop the yeast. The sciences are being reconstructed on the basis of development; we find ourselves every day thinking along that line. It is an immense thought, this idea of unfolding, this bud and blossom conception. It is not specially to our discredit if the sobriety of our thinking has been a little disturbed by it and our equilibrium jarred. It is not unnatural if, in the first flush of discovery, we feel interested to have the new idea allowed monopoly. When a farmer has found a fruit-tree that seems exceptionally suited to his soil, he goes about contriving how much land can be spared for its cultivation; and if his enthusiasm reaches to the point of bewilderment, quite likely he will go to cutting down old trees that were already doing very well in order to give the new variety still better chance. In this way the thinking world has undoubtedly gone a little daft over the idea of development. We can not afford to be too fault-finding. Philosophic delirium is better than philosophic apathy any time. There is more sense in insanity than in insensibility. Matters proceed in this way as a rule. It takes time for every new thing to settle into the place that was made for it, and that it was made for. When our farmer has gotten back his composure a little, he will begin inquiring whether, perhaps, his farm is not large enough to domesticate the new without sacrificing the old variety, and

whether the same soil may not support both successfully and comfortably.

Just at this instant, as I say, everything is being developed; man is made the offspring of the brute; the organic, the creature of the inorganic; higher grades of enlightenment, the lineal descendants of the lower; and even integrity and holiness blossoms that have unfolded on the stalk of the old civilization. Christ back there at Tiberias anticipated the nineteenth century, and said for substance: "Yes; there is truth in this view of the matter; there is development in the moral and spiritual world even. The tendency is toward what is better in character as well as elsewhere. The fittest tends to survive." And yet He goes on to say that the thing works in character only just as it does in unleavened dough after all. When once the rising process is begun in the dough it is certain to go on in a course of steady encroachment till the whole mass has been leavened. The dough, however, did not produce the yeast, but the yeast, when once it had been introduced from outside, went to work leavening the dough till it was all leavened. It is to our advantage that Christ has drawn so accessible a picture of the matter; and it is to our relief that His picture leaves the matter in such pleasant and sympathetic relations with material events and methods after all. And, indeed, that our Lord is able so constantly to illustrate spiritual proc-

esses by physical ones ought to assure us that there is somewhere a common ground in which the roots of all classes of event hide and intertwine themselves.

Scripture is everywhere consistent with the representation given in this 33d verse. History did not produce Christ. He came into the world from beyond the world. Two Gospels have taken pains to determine and establish the fact. The Law, too, came into the world ; it was not a Mosaic transplant from Egypt, but entered the world at the point where Sinai and the sky meet. The whole series of communications from Eden to Patmos is consistently exhibited as so much importation. Our own experience, too, has something to say in the same line. We are succumbing every day to influences that are not set down in the books. A world of unseen facts and forces lies against us as the sea lies against the shore. Impulses report themselves in us that have a foreign air, and that we do not know how to call by name ; polarities that do not spring from our hearts, but that are continually tugging at our hearts, as this earth of ours is thrilled with the currents that play through the spaces and flash among the stars. What we call conscience is no barren discernment between what is good and what is bad ; it is the organ through which the unseen comes near to us and becomes within us both a consciousness and a power. We are not left alone ; are not let alone. O God,

Thy kingdom comes! It does come, keep coming. An eye peeps in at the skylight. Impalpable fingers tap at the window and knock at the door. The sky mixes itself with the ground, the sea shimmers under the light of the stars, and the meal stirs and is made quick at the touch of the entering leaven.

The kingdom of heaven, then, whatever else we may say about it, is in the nature of a force. We have already intimated as much; our text teaches as much. It is not an idea, not a theory, not a condition; it is what yeast is among the meal. It raises the dough, makes it alive, more and more alive. You may call it God in the world, or the recreative Spirit, or the immanent Christ, or operative principle, or a power making for righteousness. The name is less important than a sense of the realness and vigor of the thing that you give the name to. The kingdom is an agency, an energy, an efficiency; something that works results, spreads, revolutionizes, takes hold of men—and with such a grip that they *feel* they are taken hold of; changes things, grapples with society, transforms institutions, undermines those that are bad, establishes and builds up new ones that are good; alters relations among men, habits of society, and interrelations between peoples.

No serious reader of history can track the progress of event for any considerable time without detecting that there are leavening forces at work which have all

the way along been yielding beneficent and growing results. I can not conceive how a man can be in any measure familiar with the present and the past ; how he can note the peculiar inflection with which from century to century event pronounces itself, and ever fall into moods of distrust and disheartenment. A man can be so environed and familiarized with current evil, and he can so narrow his regard to instant depravity as to be put out of all position to pronounce comprehensively, or to detect the grand forward drift of event, certified to by history read consecutively and integrally.

It is vastly to our advantage in this respect that we live so long after the era-making coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There is hardly an aspect of life, hardly a single relation among men, that has not had during these nineteen centuries great and, indeed, pretty steady experiences of betterment and enrichment. Instance the relation of father to children, once a relation of despotism, now a relation of affection. Instance the relation of husband and wife, once a relation of tyranny, now a relation of equality, equality before God, and more and more so before the law. The rising water-line of Christianity is seen in the case of certain unnatural vices, once reputable, now unmentionable. Other examples are the gradual cessation of serfdom ; the improved condition of men under bondage, until the

final abolition of the whole slave system (and the progress of abolition from Christ's enunciation of the Golden Rule to the issue of the American proclamation of emancipation was almost as steady as the ascent of the sun from the horizon to the zenith); diminished frequency of war, and diminished barbarities in its prosecution; increased humanity to the shipwrecked; disappearance of torture in eliciting testimony; almost entire abandonment of the duel; improved treatment of prisoners, whether criminals or captives; a nearly complete exemption from persecution for religious purposes; the establishment and enormous multiplication of retreats, homes, hospitals, asylums; ministering to the sick instead of turning them adrift, and caring for the aged instead of burying them alive; settling disputes by umpire, and national differences by arbitration. In a word, the broader and clearer recognition from generation to generation that man is a person, and can therefore lay righteous claim to my respect; and that man is a brother, and is therefore entitled before God to my love and gentle ministration. Now, each one of these specifications admits of prolonged exposition and various illustration; and combined they compose an argument of tremendous cogency touching the forward drift of event and the potency of the leaven that is working quickeningly among the meal.

In this way we are enabled with strong hands to

climb up into the confidence that it is God's intention to have the whole world in course of time made thoroughly good ; "till the whole was leavened," our verse says. In mathematics we can calculate the whole circumference from the arc, and in history, likewise, so soon as we recognize it as substantially a divine matter. The kingdom of heaven is a dynamic. It holds us back ; it constrains us forward. It is not an idea. Society gets touched by it, and wrought upon by it, as the meal succumbs to the power of the yeast ; not making us as good as we ought to be, but preventing our being as bad as it is our nature to be. We were made to be laid hold upon, and the kingdom of heaven was made to lay hold upon us ; and, unless that is taken into the account, history is as unintelligible as astronomy without the recognition of gravity.

I wish that any of our young men who are skeptical about the future, and think everything is going to the bad, would take the historic facts in the case as they are developed, for example, by Uhlhorn in his book, "Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism," or in "Christian Charity in the Ancient Church," by the same author, or as illustrated by Brace in his "Gesta Christi." These are things to be known, understood, and appreciated. A power making for righteousness is as necessary a conclusion from the ascertained facts as is universal gravity deducible

from falling apples and falling moons. We talk about the great historic forces; this is one of them, contrived for a purpose as definitely as leaven was devised to leaven dough. It is one of God's thoughts working itself out in realization. I have the same confidence in it that I have in gravity. There is nothing contingent about the case. The matter is all of it in God's hands, and has never been staked upon human caprice. Hid in the meal till the whole was leavened. That expresses determinate purpose and the means for executing it. It is no experiment on God's part. God's sovereignty does not get elbowed into a corner by man's agency. There is no question about the agency; but God was a sovereign before man was an agent, and never pivoted His supremacy on a contingency. He never made men to do as they wanted to do, with only a hungry hope that they would want to do as He wanted to have them. In the great lap of gravity every drifting orb lies fostered, and in the folds of God's will every erratic creature lies embraced. Hid in three measures of meal till all was leavened.

I do not know that anything exact is denoted by the *three* measures. It may refer to the totality of the race as represented by the three sons of Noah by whom the earth was peopled: perhaps to the totality of the individual man as composed of body, mind, and spirit. At any rate, this threefoldness points, as

usual, to entireness and completeness. The kingdom of heaven has come on earth to stay and to work a whole work. This irresistibleness is a ground of vast encouragement.

To be sure, this force is one that works stealthily. We do not always realize what is being done or that anything is being done. This is one of God's peculiarities. We do not see processes. He constructs the machinery of event as we make clocks, with all the pinions and axles packed in behind the dial-plate. We see the pendulum swing, but do not think of it as result, because we do not see the weight that, with cunning indirection, is all the time pulling at the pendulum. So with the workmanship of God generally. Processes are hidden ; only results lie out in the clear, and those altogether minute and gentle. We do not see the sun in its moving nor the Spring in its coming, nor the Autumn in its deepening, nor the corn in its yellowing ; nor do we hear the leaven as it taps at each little particle of the meal and wakes it into life. We must be careful and not underrate the influences that work without show or noise. The unseen and the unheard really make out a good deal more than half of the universe.

Besides this, it is to be noticed that there are effects produced that really compose part of the coming of the kingdom of heaven without their being reckoned by us as such. Prophecy gets fulfilled without our

knowing it. Some as John the Baptist came, and only later did people know that in his coming was fulfilled the prophecy that *Elijah* should come. It is said sometimes that there is less religion than once; churches not so well filled; less distinctively religious life. And, indeed, it would be well if our appointed services had somewhat more heed given to them. But that is only part of the case. The time will come, I suppose, when men will attend church less than they do now. In the New City come down from God we are told there is to be no temple for them to go to; no temple, no Sunday, probably. I am not aware that Christ ever enjoined it upon men to go to church. Church-going is means, not end. I would do everything to encourage the habit, for at present, at any rate, I do not know of anything that would take the place of it; still, it is only good for what it will effect.

Christianity is not a matter of places and days, rites and observances; it is a matter of having the leaven of God so work in us that we shall be gentle as God is, and pure and unselfish and sympathetic as God is. Christianity is not a religion in the sense in which that word is ordinarily taken by us—a system of observances and pious usages. Christianity is a matter of becoming at heart just such an one as Christ was. And men have made at least a commencement toward becoming so. It is not natural for men to de-

vote their time to others' interests. But more and more time is being devoted in this way, and money too, which means that the kingdom of heaven is gaining a closer and closer grip upon us : the kingdom of heaven *is coming*. Men are sorry for the distressed and try to relieve them. Why, *that* is Christianity. We know that we love God because we love the brethren. And this sort of Samaritan expenditure is being made in grander and grander munificence. Churches help it, Sunday-schools promote it, but the great fact we have to look at and stay ourselves upon gratefully is, that men are more human than they were two thousand years ago ; and that really is what the Church and the Gospel are being worked in pursuit of, not to make men divine, but to make them more human, with a larger human heart, and broader human sympathies and warmer human loves. "All the law is fulfilled in one word, thou shalt love." And that is what the world certainly has been getting. "Not as though we were already perfect." There is knavery, selfishness, uncleanness of all sorts and degrees. Yet the leaven is certainly working, and such a review of the centuries as has been suggested makes it clear, to the point of demonstration, that the will of God is being increasingly done, and especially that the ideals of gentleness, mutual interest, reciprocal sympathy, with which the Gospel is so thickly strewn, are being growingly realized.

And now, dear friends of this church and congregation, we stand confronting another year of duty and privilege in this respect. The relation in which we all stand to one another means that we want that this leavening work should be still farther prosecuted in us, and means at the same time, I am sure, that we want to be used of God as instruments for promoting this leavening process in the world about us and at large. We have no unreasoning ambition in the matter ; we do not expect to work any startling revolutions ; it does not occur to us to attempt any great thing. It is not by such strides that the will of God is effected.

The kingdom comes as the morning comes. The kingdom comes as the Spring comes, drop by drop loosening itself from the hard embrace of the Winter. And I know no better petition to offer, in view of the multitudinous opportunities that throng the coming months, than to pray that we may have faith in God, faith in the future, and faith in the meaning of every smallest word and most inconspicuous deed that He may lay it upon our tongues and hands to utter and perform. It has been very aptly and gracefully written by Mrs. Preston :

From his home in an Eastern bungalow,
In sight of the everlasting snow
Of the grand Himalayas, row on row,

Thus wrote my friend :

“ I had traveled far

From the Afghan towers of Candahar,
Through the sand-white plains of Sinde-Sagar ;

“ And once, when the daily march was o’er,
As tired I sat in my tented door,
Hope failed me, as never it failed before.

“ In swarming city, at wayside fane,
By the Indus’ bank, or the scorching plain,
I had taught,—and my teaching all seemed vain.

“ No glimmer of light (I sighed) appears ;
The Moslem’s fate and the Buddhist’s fears
Have gloomed their worship a thousand years.

“ For Christ and His truth I stand alone
In the midst of millions ; a sand-grain blown
Against yon temple of ancient stone

“ As soon may level it ! Faith forsook
My soul, as I turned on the pile to look ;
Then rising, my saddened way I took

“ To its lofty roof, for the cooler air ;
I gazed and marveled ; how crumbled were
The walls I had deemed so firm and fair !

“ For wedged in a rift of the massive stone,
Most plainly rent by its roots alone,
A beautiful peepul-tree had grown ;

“ Whose gradual stress would still expand
The crevice, and topple upon the sand
The temple, while o’er its wreck would stand

“ The tree in its living verdure ! Who
Could compass the thought ? The bird that flew
Hitherward, dropping a seed that grew,

“ Did more to shiver this ancient wall
Than earthquake, war, simoon, or all
The centuries in their lapse and fall.

“ Then I knelt by the riven granite there,
And my soul shook off its weight of care,
As my voice rose clear on the tropic air.

“ The living seeds I have dropped remain
In the cleft ; Lord, quicken with dew and rain,
Then temple and mosque shall be rent in twain.”

XV.

THINGS SEEN AND THINGS NOT SEEN.

“ While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”—2 COR. iv. 18.

“THINGS,” recurring four times in our text, is a broad word,—gives much of room for us to move around in; yields points without number at which thought and experience get readily reached and easily touched. I pray that with so much of amplitude encompassing us we may not err from the way, but be guided of God to such a use of our verse as shall work in us that same sobriety and quietude of life which it was the aim of the apostle in writing the verse, to have procured in the temper of his Corinthian readers.

Living in the things which are not seen. There is something a little embarrassing in the statement of such a theme. I should be glad if I were assured that the statement of it had not already excited just a little half-unconscious opposition on the part of

some of us who have listened to its statement. There is a difficulty lying directly at the door of the matter which we shall do best to confess, and to obviate if we can. We have been occupied with the things that are seen all the week, most of us, and very deeply interested in them. And this coming week's experience will, in this respect, be for the most part a repetition of last week's, most likely. Things seem ordered in that way. There is a great deal that is material and palpable about life. Seen things appear to compose necessarily a large share of the objects of our regard, and the aims of our pursuit. The senses are acute, and are made so because life in so considerable a degree depends upon them for its success. Now I do not want to appear to arraign the existing order of things. We never grow up into a better estate by having fomented discontent with the estate we are in now. "I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content." Contentment with to-day's lot makes candidacy for a better lot to-morrow. Disparaging the earth does not qualify us to enjoy heaven. I do not want to seem to preach an impracticable religion, to preach a finer order of things on Sunday than it is going to be suitable or possible for us to live on Monday.

In contemplating a verse like that before us, we must not leap to too high conclusions in regard to its scope. I do not understand that Paul would have

the Corinthians break with the solid and palpable environment in which by birth and Providence they had been placed. We do well always to let ascertained facts work correctively against all lawlessness and flightiness of interpretation. Paul was writing here to men that worked; he preached to people whose life, nine-tenths of it, was made up of seeing and handling, and rendering service that was a good deal of it quite ordinary and coarse. In some instances his hearers had allowed Christian doctrine to produce in them morbid indifference to common affairs and occupations, and the apostle took instant occasion to rebuke them, to put them upon going back to work, laboring with their own hands, and getting a living by earning it fairly and manually.

Our text, then, let me assure you, has not been selected as teaching any lesson that is not easily and perfectly reconcilable with the sensuous constitution of the world in which we are domiciled, or the urgency of the times in which with busy eyes, attentive ears, and laboring hands we are set to perform our part. I understand it to be the supreme object of preaching to show us how we can at the same time be both righteous and busy, and how we can live heavenly lives while standing down upon the ground, among things that are earthly.

“The things which are not seen.” It is to our advantage even to think it over distinctly to ourselves

sometimes that there are things besides those that we can see; that the universe does not stop with our horizon; that a thing may exist and be very real, and perhaps be very near too, without our having seen it, without any one's having seen it. Our common everyday duties do rather naturally draw our thoughts away from such reflections and queries. Our thoughts are like tired birds that perch on the tree that is next, and the branch that bends nearest to the ground. We can broaden ourselves by our occupation, or we can narrow ourselves to it; the latter is the easier. It is for the comfort of the man with a lowly calling, though, that Hugh Miller became a geologist through first having been a stone-mason. Still, as a rule, we grow far or near sighted according to the distance of the objects we survey. We determine our employments, but our employments do a good deal to determine us. Men in the dark not only do not see, but forget how to see. Besides this, it is not so much the *habit* just at present to make as great account of unseen things. There is an element of style about our thinking as there is about our dress and furniture. The general drift and fashion of thought to-day is in the direction of things that are reducible to lines and can be treated arithmetically. It is all expressed by saying that "science" this year means "physical science."

Still we do sometimes in our leisure moments, all

of us, think it out quite distinctly to ourselves, that a thing may exist, and be very real, and perhaps be very near too, without our having seen it, without any one's having seen it. That is a small beginning, but it is a prolific seed, and will yield a good deal if it be well taken care of and affectionately nourished. And these unseen things do some of them get so built into the structure of the world, and so entered into the composition of our minds that we never can succeed in quite denying or ignoring them. We do not see them, and yet, shall I say, we somehow have a sense of their presence. I do not know how better to say it.

Let us consider two or three instances of this. We have the word "truth." I do not know what the word means. The term is as luminous in itself as it could be made to be by any amount of light thrown upon it. I can not define it; neither can you, if you will allow me to say so. And yet it answers to an unseen something which I have a sense of whenever I see the word or hear it spoken. And, judging from appearances, it answers to something which we have all of us about the same sense of. And it is no mere subjective affair; it is not a bare conceit of ours. We none of us suppose that. A thing is not true because a few men a long time ago came together and voted to have it true. Truth is something that was in the universe when we entered

it, before we entered it, before any man entered it. It shone down upon an empty world, as the sun beamed upon an untenanted world on the fourth day. It was a silent luminary away back there in the old ages when the morning stars sang together. We are born into its régime. We find the truth and feel it, but do not make it. It is an unseen thing, but it is a factor in every day's thinking and feeling. Everything gets tested by it. You may think how much it is, by trying to conceive what the remainder would be if it were subtracted. It is one of the things which are not seen, and is like the true vertical in architecture, which no one has seen, and yet every wall along all these streets has its posture determined by it, and every beam and stud set plumb with its requirements.

Another such unseen reality is "the right." The right is some like the truth, and yet very unlike it. All our languages have the word in them. It is a necessity of speech, because it is a prior necessity of thought and of feeling. We can talk a good deal about it, and yet can not say much about it. It is not a thing to be stated, the right is not; it is made less by being formulated. It exists independently of all opinion concerning it, as the heavens suffused the earth with stellar splendor before ever there were eyes to pasture upon that splendor. One thinks this to be right, another that, but the criterion to which

all is brought to be tested antedates thinking. All language and law implies as much. The right is something whose mysteriousness expands itself before us the more thought strives to steal the secret of its quality or of its dimension. The right is not a conventional matter. It is not a product of any legislation, but is the postulate underlying all legislation. The Ten Commandments did not make right. Right was hoary when the granite was young upon which the Lord wrote the Ten Commandments. The right is not a matter of expediency; thought climbs, not stoops, when it wrestles with the problem. It is expedient to do what is right, but it is not in the same sense right to do what is expedient. The right is not a thing that you can teach a child. He will learn from you that it is right to do this, and right to do that; but by some discipline we can not relate, there becomes in him a sense of the right itself. The mystic judge is upon the bench before ever behaviors are summoned before him for arbitrament. The right maintains its noiseless and invisible existence, though no man were on earth to do right or to think it. It is in the universe and of it, as when you pluck the vegetation from the ground and remove the upper soil, you still find the uncovered loam at once dressing itself with verdure again, whose germs were only sleeping somewhere till the moment of their opportunity. Crowd your inquiry as hard and

far as you will, you still find the fact receding before you, and retreating further into mystery the more closely you pursue it. It was this, I suppose, that made Kant say, that the right was one of the two things in all the universe that overwhelmed him with awe as he thought upon them.

Still like this is another unseen reality, which keeps intruding into our thoughts and working inside our lives, which we call the divine. I prefer to keep to that word here, the divine; it is broader; it is not embarrassed by certain associations with which we might just now find the word "God" inconveniently fraught. And here language is more beggarly, and description more impotent than ever. No man hath seen it at any time; another of the "unseen things," then. It would be hard estimating the work being done among the philosophies, moralities, and worship of men to-day by the presence and pressure of this unseen thing, this "divine." I believe that it is tremulously active in almost all the thinking that men do, and that it works as a quiet agent deep down at the hidden spring of almost all interior event. This is not a matter to be disposed of in sharp lines and acute angles. I mean by "divine" here only that unseen something which instantly becomes to you real when any word that symbolizes it is seen or heard by you. You are familiar, I presume, with the oft-quoted stanzas of Tennyson :

“ If e’er when faith has fall’n asleep,
 I heard a voice, ‘ Believe no more ’;
 And heard an ever-breaking shore
 That tumbled in the godless deep ;

“ A warmth within the heart would melt
 The freezing reason’s colder part,
 And, like a man in wrath, the heart
 Stood up and answered, ‘ *I have felt !* ’ ”

That is as precise as will be to our advantage. This unseen thing may be variously named, and still be constant and identical in its denotement. Difference of phrase and nomenclature must not betray us into hastily indicting our neighbor for atheism. My neighbor’s atheism may prove on examination to be only my theism arrayed in a different garb, and colored with a different complexion from mine ; and if I get close to the real inwardness of my neighbor’s life, I shall, *perhaps*, surprisedly discover that he is living just as much as I, under the sway of that unseen thing that I, with a little flippancy, possibly, call “ God.” Some agnosticism is atheism substantially ; some of it is moral irresolution ; some of it is piety that is languid and tired. Some of it is better than either of these—devotion that is diffident. Paul said something on Mars Hill that may serve us as model. He called Athenian agnostics not atheists, but blind worshippers, ignorant worshippers. A man may be a diffident devotee, and still the power of the Great Unseen tell upon him with intense effect.

Much is to be said in his behalf. It is vastly better to stand modestly at the gate of the outer court than to crowd into the holy of holies, and play with the Shekinah and eat off of the mercy-seat. There are men, too, whose sense of the divine seems never to get beyond loyalty to the demands of duty. It is a fair question whether duty—the right—is anything less than one form under which God gets apprehended by us, and whether loyalty to the claims of duty is not in effect loyalty to God that has not yet quite gotten to the point of understanding itself. That I put in the form of a question only; but there is no question about this, that it is better to be dominated by the right, and to do right, and call it morality simply, than to pray to God, take in our hands the symbols of the body and blood of the Crucified One, call it religion, and then go out and lead lives that are selfish, knavish, or profligate. It is better to get no further than morality, than to get to religion by dint of skipping morality.

These, then, are instances of the things which are not seen. Others will readily occur to you. There are two or three things that we will take the time to say about this class of facts.

It is the unseen things that really give their meaning to the things which are seen. A man who studies the universe without his thought outrunning his eye, and his heart distancing his thought, is like a child

who fumbles over the letters in his primer without drawing an idea from the word in which the letters meet or an inspiration from the sentence in which the words combine. Even science has to forget itself and read between the lines and irrigate a Sahara of visible details at the fountains of the unseen, before the furrows are juicy enough to plant or prolific enough to harvest. The body takes its beauty from the invisible spirit that is sheathed in its features of expression and organs of action. The single life gains meaning and becomes worth living because of the subtile threads by which it is bound into the general life and the silken meshes that make it part and piece of the fabric universal. This earth of ours is interesting because inaudible messages flash between it and the farthest star, and because it moves in rhythmic tread with all the flashing host that throng the ethereal plain. History first draws to itself our interested regard, because it bends upon an invisible axis, and because its events are spelling out in forever lengthening lines the wisdom, power, and tenderness of God. Each smallest thing everywhere and always wins character and grace from the ties that relate it to the distant and unsounded, as the bay is tremulous with the tide that throbs out in the bosom of the sea.

These unseen things which so enter in and gird up the body of nature, history, and event, are not mat-

ters upon which we can discourse easily and fluently. A part of the power and charm of them is in their very reticence. The mind is held only by that which it can not itself hold. It is what we can not analyze that fascinates us. Right reduced to lines would have little power to sway us. God understood would be God no longer. Immortality that could be put in a sentence would be drained of its inspiration. Men who have creeds that they can think to the end of may have a form of godliness, but with a denial of the power thereof. No truths stimulate and uplift like those which throng the borders of vision, as the sun never seems so large as when it hangs upon the edge of the horizon. It is a strange and deep sense that puts us in relation with the unseen. It is not needful that we name it, but it *is* a sense. What we do not discern, but only feel, plays upon the soul with a power of effect to which definite knowledge is a stranger. When in the still night a meteor flashes into our sky, it is not the meteor, but the sudden contact in which we are held with the vast unknown of time and space that overwhelms us with awe. The most impressive part of truth, of holiness, of God, of life, is where it leaves the lower air and begins to spire up invisibly into the upper.

And it is arranged that the unseen things should be continually giving to us hints of themselves. Things have been so shaped and placed as to set us

continually upon looking off from the ground. Everything takes the form of a finger pointing wonderingly toward the unknown. Hints are continually falling. The imagination is a seer; the conscience is a prophet. The universe is as large and full as the heart, and the courage we have to open ourselves to it and be filled by it. The world grows larger as the eye grows larger; the world grows warmer as the heart grows warmer. Mind, heart, conscience, spirit are all strung to be played upon by the airs that come from afar. All great advance has been made by standing on the outermost rim. A little way up from the ground the currents are always moving. The light that has been flying for a thousand years will flash into your eyes to-night if you will stand out under the stars.

Nor is there need of great striving and straining in the matter. All this is as easy as for the sweet-singer of Israel to lie out among the sheepfolds and draw the messages of God from out the night-sky over Bethlehem. These things may be reticent, and yet will come into a very pleasant intimacy with the man who wants them and leaves himself open to them. It will always come readily enough without our stepping off the line of our vocation. You remember that it was when the disciples were fishing that they found their Lord. It was when Saul was out looking after his father's asses that he gained a kingdom and received from the prophet the oil of

anointing. Elisha was plowing when Elijah passed by him and cast his mantle upon him. Jacob was journeying when he encountered the angels; and Saul of Tarsus, too, was on his journey when he obtained the revelation of Jesus Christ. And we want the unseen things of God to come into the same easy working relation with our lives. We do not feel required to disown or discard the things that are seen, but to use them rather as we use field-glasses, that the things which are not seen may be made near and visible to us. We must look at these visible things, but in such a way as that in looking at them we shall at the same time be looking through them. You know how we can so regard the tender flower at our feet, as at the same time to be learning deep lessons of the sun by whose delicate pencils of light its petals have been painted. The sky and the ground have been in that way placed near to one another, and the echoes keep passing to and fro between them. The smallest drop shows the tidal play of the moon upon it; the minutest atom is pulled upon by the gravitation of all the stars.

And just in this we find a clue to the safe and just regard in which are to be held the seen things which surround us and occupy us. The material comfort that drops into our life, we can look at it, feed only upon it, and surfeit ourselves with it, or we can use it as a telescope through which the beneficence of

God will become a near fact to us, and produce in our hearts stirrings of gratitude toward the kindly heavenly Giver; not losing the things that are seen, but gaining by their help a sense and holy experience of Him that is the unseen. When a deed comes to us to be done, we can chafe at its pressure and be thrown by its burden, or we can look through the deed, detect the divine pleasure of God by means of it, feel upon us the gentle compulsion of holy duty, and so, without taking ourselves out of the sphere of lowly secular tasks, be at the same time impressed afresh with a sense of the nearness of God's will to us, and the abundance of His strength in us. Such is the secret of living heavenly lives while standing down upon the ground among things that are earthly. In this way we can seek and acquire secular wisdom, and not have the acquisition obstruct, but promote rather God's revelation of Himself to our mind and heart. We can seek and acquire wealth, and our life not be drained of its juices by the pursuit, but our heart be made more mellow and luscious every day in devout gratitude toward the Great Unseen, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. We can look *at* the window-pane or we can look *through* it; we can look *at* the telescope or we can look *through* it; we can stoop and examine the flower and see only the flower's own beauty, or we can feel the presence of the sun in its graceful pencillings, and so be re-

minded of the solar fountain of earthly beauty. We can look *at* the sea, and discern only the waves that ruffle its surface, or we can look *into* the sea, and in its thoughtful depths see glistening the star-studded firmament by which we are overarched.

XVI.

THE LIFE THERE CONTINUOUS WITH THE LIFE HERE.

"I go to prepare a place for you."—JOHN xiv. 2.

THERE is almost no week that passes, but some member or household of our congregation is brought, by the dispensations of life, to feel its especial need of the consolations of God and the comforts of His heavenly word. Upon a mind in such posture, an exhibit of the exactions of God falls always as a chill and a blight. Not that we would step aside from the path of God's requirements, but there are moods of mind in which requirement is not the thing which really touches the soul's deepest and tenderest need. Our Lord found very many things in His disciples that merited rebuke, and that on suitable occasion received rebuke; and yet He that needed not to be told what was in man, and who knew that there are in the heart bruises that need to be healed, as well as stains that need to be cleansed, was continually saying to those disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled."

My friends, I never realized until coming to you,

a congregation composed of so many households, how frequent a visitant upon the earth death is; how much of uncertainty, and of painful possibility, all our days and nights are freighted with; with what frequency the tenderest expectations falter, the dearest plans break, and the fondest hopes droop into disappointment.

These vacancies, that quietly and stealthily, week after week, are being created in our pews,—others can come in and sit in their places, but that does not destroy the vacancies. There are niches that only one figure can fill. A vacancy indeed is sometimes so intense as to be almost personal—the empty place at table, the vacant room, the empty chair at the hearthstone. And so these vacancies in our church, that are so real, and, as it were, so personal, and that week by week add their little increment of dearness and holiness to the sanctuary itself that we pray and worship together in—all these tell us a story, are a continual presence, and voiceless reminder. And so our resort at this time is to the Scriptures as a volume of comfort.

There is in general literature and in current speech so much in recognition of a better life, and a more restful and holy one, that we forget sometimes that the fertile ground of all such expectation, and the fruitful fountain of all such consolation is the Gospel. We know of no one else but Christ that has brought

life and immortality to light ; so that any just discourse of consolation must needs begin with Christ ; “*I go to prepare a place for you.*”

The Christian doctrine of immortality is not a surmise ; it is not an inference from certain facts and appearances in nature that happen to look in that direction ; it is not a wish pushed to the point of becoming an opinion. The doctrine of immortality was first a fact in the life of our divine Lord, and we are entered into participation in that fact because of our participation in the divine Lord. We are not *going to be* immortal because Christ decides that He will make us so ; we are not *going to be* immortal, we *are* immortal, and that because there is something in us that can not die, something that is not amenable to the administration of death.

It was not a strange thing—there was no miracle in it—that Christ escaped the confinement of the grave. As Peter said in his address at Pentecost, “It was not *possible* that He should be holden of it” ; and after the outward tokens of decease Christ continued to live, not because God made Him live, but because it was not in His being to do anything but live. So that the meaning of Christ’s emergence from the grave is less that Christ then and there fought out a victory over death—that is not so much the meaning of it as that there was nothing in the grave that made any struggle on Christ’s part necessary. “It was not

possible for Him to be holden of it." Said Christ, "No man taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

You rise from your couch after a half-hour's nap; the couch and the sleep of it were powerless to harm you. Christ's bed of hollowed rock, hard by the cross, was in just the like way impotent to harm Him. That is what the resurrection of Christ demonstrates,—that there is a kind of life that death and the grave can not do anything with, can not handle it, nor do its pleasure upon it, nor in any way obstruct or embarrass it. So our own immortality as Christians accrues to us not because in each several instance Christ robs the grave of its power, but because of our acquirement of that divine nature and divine life that moves along in imperturbed indifference to the death-power and at a sublime remove from its low contact. We are not immortal because Christ exercises over death an arbitrary veto, but because death works at one level, and you and I, as sons of God in Christ, live at another level. "Because I live, ye shall live also." The one fact draws the other fact in its train. My immortality is the immortal Christ in me. That is the Christian doctrine of immortality, so that death means no more to me, if Christ lives in me, than it meant to Christ himself. That is the point in Christ's address to Martha, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

Now there is a volume of comfort in that, and each chapter in the volume has its own special caption of consolation. It shows us in the first instance how we are to get rid of the fear of death; it shows what it is that is "to deliver us who through fear of death are all our lifetime subject to bondage."

It needs not to be said with what constancy this dread does insinuate itself into our thinking, and how it lies as a dark thread in the strand of all our anticipating and forecasting. I think it was part of Christ's plan and purpose that all this shadow of foreboding should be taken off from us, and that we should live and walk out under the light with no fleck of apprehension to intercept the clear shining of our heavenly hope. If we will stand in imagination on the other side of Christ's tomb, and observe the facility with which His spirit moved through the frowning portal, and then, in addition to that, can only have the actual sense that that same Christ is an abiding presence and life in us, why, then, because He *is* undying we *must be* undying. Our souls by being the tenement of Christ become seasoned with the power of the living endlessness of Christ. As Christ said in His own prayer to the Father, "This is life eternal" (not is going to be), "this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." "Christ in you the hope of glory," said Paul, writing to the Colossians.

Of course the body is interfered with by death; so was Christ's body; but that, as we learn from Scripture, worked no interruption in His being, in His living, or in His acting. And, after all, it is not the mere shuffling off of the mortal coil that disturbs you and me. We are accustomed to dying, in that sense of the term; we die a little every day. But our apprehension is of death as something which brings *us* to a pause.

Now that apprehension no argument, no analogy of nature, ever relieves us from. There is no escape from the foreboding except as we have a consciousness of something within us that has about it the very property of deathlessness. And just that consciousness, my hearer, in our hour of high access to God, we sometimes do have, and there is in us a deep, full sense that we *can not* die, because there is in us, and of us, something to which death has no relevance. My friend, it is only by having within us something which is immortal, and having it in such fulness that it lies a great wealthy fact in our consciousness that we are delivered from the bondage of fear, and are set in the pleasant prospect of the things that are coming.

And then with that fear gone, the present and the future become at once married to one another in pleasant alliance. This doctrine, that the soul is immortal because bound in the bundle of life with the

Lord its God, of course repeals all that harsh and sombre notion that the life here is islanded from the life there by an interval of years, through which the human spirit sleeps, dumb, blind, and meaningless.

It is true, Scripture does not pronounce itself upon the matter with great fulness; and yet we all remember what passed between Christ and the penitent upon Calvary; we know with what alacrity of anticipation St. Paul regarded the change that awaited him, and with what clearness in his own apprehension of the matter, heavenly fruitions and earthly anticipations lay to one another. And I have thought that perhaps one reason why the Gospel pronounces itself so sparingly upon the question is that it was Christ's ambition so to have the immanence of God a substantial fact of consciousness, that all need of detailed comment would be quite obviated. It is a finer revelation to have an eye given for the truth, than to have the truth given for the eye.

This brings the future into quite a different and more familiar relation to us. If we are climbing a high mountain path that is a little perplexed and intricate, and that winds in and out among stunted shrubbery, and confused and precipitous rocks; if, now, in casting your eye away forward you see here and there a patch of path yonder lying out clear and level upon the trodden granite, you know how it relieves the anxieties of the climb; and how much

easier it is to thread some ravine that lies across your way, if in descending into it you see upon the opposite slope the worn foot-marks upon which pretty soon you are going to find yourself stepping.

So, as at the stimulus of this Gospel conception of immortality, we feel the continuity of life, and almost see the path dropping down a little way, at one time, under the cover of the foliage, but emerging into the light a little further on, one path through it all, dropping down into age and infirmity perhaps, and the death-room, but winding steadily onward and upward from the death-chamber back into the clear and the light again, and lying out there on the slopes all bright and sparkling with the light of God—all this, I say (which is but the corollary of Gospel immortality), all this makes the future easy to think of and pleasant to muse upon.

And then there is vast comfort in it, too, when we stand, as we are so often standing, by the side of those who are just going on before. Perhaps you have stood upon the wharf when a steamer that carries a friend of yours puts out to sea. You watch the receding figure of your friend, and the fading outlines of the vessel till all becomes blurred, and the veil of distance which enwraps the vessel answers back perhaps to the mist that gathers in your own eye. And you turn and thoughtfully wend your way back home; your thoughts go out after him and his

come back to you ; they meet and pass, but do not salute. No means of interchange. And through the still evening you think ; and through the still night you think. There is one thing that comforts you. You can not quite picture where he is, you can not tell how he is ; but there is one thing that your heart fastens to ; you know that he is ; *he is*. It is not much, but, when it is *all*, it is a *good deal*. *He is*. He has a mind, and he has a heart. And just this instant when you are thinking, he is thinking—somewhere : just this moment when you are loving, loving him, he is loving, perhaps he is loving you.

But your sainted friend, my mourning hearer, has gone on a longer voyage ; you have no chart from which to infer the course upon which he sails—she sails. You watched her retreating spirit, and her fading presence till all became blurred, and the mist of obscurity gathered about her, answering back to the mist in your own eye. Back from the casket, from the mound in the church-yard, you turned and wended your way home. Your thoughts go out after her. If hers come back to you, they meet and pass, but do not salute. No means of interchange. And through the still evening you think, and through the still night you think. There is one thing, my friends, that comforts you, may comfort you. You can not picture *where* she is ; you can not imagine *how* she is ; but there is one thing that your heart may well

fasten to; you know that *she is*. I am not extemporizing; I am just simply treading on the line of the Lord's word: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." *She is* somewhere. It is not much, but when it is all, it is a great deal. She has a mind and a heart; and just this moment when you are thinking, she is thinking—somewhere. Just this moment when you are loving, loving her, she is loving. She lives because Christ lives. She lives because Christ lives in her. I said that all just discourse of consolation must begin with Christ; and it is almost ended with Christ. "I go to prepare a place for you."

I want to add a sentence or two about that word "place." I like the word; I like the realism of it. Paul with all his intense spirituality had to intersperse his references to the heavenly future with local allusions; so John, the apocalyptic. We can not afford to engraft upon Scripture coarse interpretations, nor, on the contrary, may we handle it too daintily. "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." The practical effect of putting too fine a meaning upon a verse is to empty it of all meaning. A musical string strained beyond a certain tension becomes unmusical.

And so I feel it safer, as well as more satisfying, to take this realism, for example, just this place-idea of

heaven, exactly as it stands, as our Lord uttered it, and meant His disciples to understand it. Common things, indeed, are quite excellent if no blemish or taint attaches to them. Why, this earth we live upon would make a very comfortable heaven, it seems to me, if there were no sin and no sorrow here. "I go to prepare a place for you." A city, John calls it, walled and gated. The *where* of the place it would, of course, be very idle for us to talk about.

"I know not *where* that city lifts
Its jasper walls in air,
I know not where the glory beams,
So marvellously fair.

"I can not see the waving hands
Upon that farther shore ;
I can not hear the rapturous song
Of dear ones gone before ;

"But dimmed and blinded earthly eyes,
Washed clear by contrite tears,
Sometimes catch glimpses of the light
From the eternal years."

I can hardly think of any finer, or sweeter, or more helpful accomplishment that a child of God can attain to in these earthly years, than to be able to think easily of heaven as a country into which we step easily when we die, and to think of death as the gateway through which we enter easily into heaven.

There occurs in the biography of a recently sainted

servant of God (one whose whole life had been full of sweet communing and holy trust) this paragraph: "Two or three years before his death, when inquiry was made of him in regard to his health, he answered, 'Almost through.' 'But how do you feel about it?' 'I can hardly tell' (was his reply); 'but as for this dying, about which we have always been so much exercised, I have come to think there isn't much to it.' And when, later on, the hour came for him to die, and his wife, in the quiet watches of the night asked him how death looked to him, 'Very much like going into another room,' was the answer."

In the fabled story from the Persian, the sainted Abdallah caused these lines to be addressed to the friends who bewailed his death, and prepared his body for burial:

"Faithful friends, it lies, I know,
Pale, and white, and cold as snow;
And ye say—'Abdallah's dead'—
Weeping at the feet and head.
I can see your falling tears;
I can hear your sighs and prayers,
Yet I smile and whisper this:
I am not the thing you kiss!
Cease your tears and let it lie,
It was mine, it is not I.

"Sweet friends, what the women lave
For the last sleep of the grave,
Is a hut which I am quitting,
Is a garment no more fitting,

Is a cage from which at last,
Like a bird my soul has passed.
Love the inmate, not the room :
The wearer, not the garb—the plume
Of the eagle, not the bars
That keep him from the splendid stars !

“ Loving friends, oh rise and dry
Straightway every weeping eye ;
What ye lift upon the bier
Is not worth a single tear.
'Tis an empty sea-shell—one
Out of which the pearl is gone.
The shell is broken, it lies there :
The pearl, the all, the soul is here.
'Tis an earthen jar whose lid
Allah sealed the while it hid
That treasure of his treasury,
A mind that loved him : let it lie.
Let the shards be earth once more,
Since the gold is in his store.

“ Farewell ! friends—yet not farewell.
Where I go, you, too, shall dwell,
I am gone before your face—
A moment's worth, a little space.
When you come where I have stopt,
Ye will wonder why ye wept ;
Ye will know, by true love taught,
That here is all, and there is naught.”

XVII.

THE PERFECT PEACE.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."—ISAIAH xxvi. 3.

WHEN David celebrates the goodness of his divine Shepherd, he says, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want; He maketh me to *lie down* in green pastures." Pasturage we think of as a place of feeding for the flock. David thinks of it also as the flock's place of resting: "He maketh me to *lie down* in green pastures." "We are the sheep of His pasture." David had tended the flocks among the green of Bethlehem. In this quaint way, and by this easy symbolism, he tells us that his own spirit is tired and longs for quiet. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." The picture draws itself in a few quiet strokes before our own eye, or at least before our own heart.

This impulse that puts us upon *cradling* ourselves in the gentleness of God, and letting ourselves be stayed upon His upholding arms of strength, is something to be thought about and indulged. There is a

passive side in all deep and earnest living that deserves our regard. The John who has told us the deepest story of Christ, and given us the longest glimpses into the future, is the John who leaned upon the bosom of his Lord. It may be that the rapid respiration and quick pulse of our times hide from us in part the rich meaning and wealthy possibilities of mere resting in the Lord ; mere quiet waiting on the Lord, not attempting anything, not even trying to hold fast to the Lord, but only letting ourselves be taken hold of and stayed upon Him, being carried and tended and nurtured by the ministering Spirit of God, as a tired child yields itself trustingly to its mother's embrace.

There are wants that are unmet by preaching that is urgent or by preaching that is nutrient. We want also that the Lord's house should be to us a place where our spirits win repose. Our need is as well of ministrations that are sedative. You come in, a good many of you, from another week of distraction and burden-carrying. Here on the Lord's day and in His courts, at least, you have no desire to work. You do not care much to think, which is well-nigh the hardest of work. It may be that working the mind is as foreign to the purposes of consecrated time as working the body. At any rate, there are numbers among you that are in no mood to hear anything that is cogent and stimulating, and who would like nothing so

well as to enjoy for a little the sense of just simply resting in the hollow of God's great fatherly hand, and feeling nothing else so much as that you are being taken care of.

One of our pleasantest recollections of childhood is that it was a time when we were confident of being taken care of. We took no thought for food but to eat it when it was put before us; no thought for raiment but to wear it when it was provided. We went to sleep without anxiety; no distraction came into our dreams; we did not spend our dream-hours in carrying impossible burdens up interminable hills. It was but a moment from "good-night" to "good-morning," and the new day always blossomed out in original freshness and sparkle. And that really makes out a good deal of the heavenliness of childhood. And "heavenliness" is not a word that in this connection has been used by us unadvisedly. A good deal of the heaven-idea really lies in precisely that sense of being abundantly cared for. We call it peace, comfort, quiet, rest, satisfaction; but with all this variety of names, about all that any of them denotes is just this sense of being taken care of; stayed upon Him, along with the quietness of mind that flows off from it. I have no ambition for our service this morning other than that it should meet this want so widely felt and so infrequently recognized and answered in the ministrations of the sanctuary. Quite

likely we shall not go away nerved to any great or new exertion, except as rest is always a well-spring of energy and prelude to effort. It was from sleep that the Lord himself awoke to work the majestic miracle of the staying of the storm and the stilling of the sea.

It is as probable we shall go away without having learned anything new. But there are other things of moment in the world beside lessons and ideas. Some of the passages from the Holy Word that we treasure most highly are those that we can read without intellect feeling itself called upon to bear much of any share in the reading; what we might call quiet retreats and gentle nooks of Scripture, where the spirit simply lets itself be played upon as the wind listeth; like this twenty-third psalm, where David lets us see the sheep simply couching themselves among the luxuriance of green that was given also to be their nourishment. So it is my trust that the moments we spend together over God's Word this morning may be a season in which we shall let ourselves be lifted into the quiet enjoyment of holy time and holy place, and in which we shall be able to feel ourselves supported and stayed upon the gracious strength of God's fatherly arm reached forth beneath. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

Our conceptions of heaven are moulded largely

from present experience, so that by observing the colors in which we severally paint the life to come, we can argue down with ease and surety to what are our most deeply and sacredly cherished desires here and now. We take our present unsatisfied desires, conceive of them as satisfied, postpone that satisfaction to the future, and name it heaven; and it is because there is in us such a sense of disquiet and unrest that the words rest and sleep play so large a part in the hymnology, the Scripture, and the profane anticipations of the great future. The poor man expects to be rich, the tired man expects to be at rest, the anxious man expects at last to be "kept in perfect peace." The reasoning is good, the instinct is trustworthy; the special criticism to be passed upon it is that it overworks the element of postponement, that it conjugates heaven only in the future tense, that it makes no provision for heaven here.

There is nothing in the Scripture that warrants our finding heaven the other side of the grave, unless we get at the secret of heaven on this side. Heaven is not a place till after it is a temper. The ground for any expectation we may have of entering into heaven is the present sense of heaven's entrance into us, which lends large meaning to the words of our text: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." To you, tired and distressed ones, that brings heaven close by; heaven

considered as a temper, I mean; heaven considered as quietness, composure, undistractedness of mind. It is not that we do not love to work; we would want to put off going to heaven as long as we could, if we did not expect to be busy as soon as we reached there. It is not work as work, but work as something which grinds and wrenches us, pressure that distracts us, responsibility that bends us down, a galling sense of inadequacy. We do not any of us mind the work, that is not what hurts or kills, and we could all of us live and thrive under it, if along with it we can only have the feeling of a divine staying power come down upon us, and lying as a kind of atmosphere around among the business, griefs, and perplexities of every day—an atmosphere that our cares and anxieties can float in and be buoyed up by.

To sum it all up in a word, we want to feel that we are being taken care of. It is a simple way of putting it, but it appears to go to the end of the matter. There is no man of us so strong, active, or competent but he would like to feel that there is some one upon whom he can lay his cares, and so leave off being strained and troubled. We know we can carry all the load that may be piled upon us, if only we can depend upon somebody to carry us, for in carrying us it will be he really that will carry our load.

However old we may be, there are certain respects in which we never leave off feeling just as the children feel. We read these gentle words of our Lord in the sixth of Matthew, and it is the gentlenesses of the Lord, that like quiet strains in music and the peaceful aspects of nature touch us most closely and deeply. We read, I say, the Saviour's words in the sixth of Matthew: "Behold the fowls of the air; consider the lilies of the field; do not be anxious, saying what shall we eat, what shall we put on? Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." However impracticable all of that may seem to a man who spends ten hours of hard work every day in pursuit of food, clothes, and shelter, yet the chapter always fulfils to us its intended mission when we read it, and reminds us again of the desire all men have to be ministered to by some one that is competent, and cared for by some one who holds us in the embrace of his affectionate interest.

The idea of a fatherly providence chimes in with our desires to the degree that we have learned to know what our desires are. There is no spirit so strong or so sufficient but finds very appealing the invitation of the Saviour, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." I have noticed that auditors always listen with very intent ears to all such gracious overtures from the Lord. They touch the heart in that secret closet

where its deepest longings are treasured and silently thought over.

And this letting of ourselves down upon the support of God, with all of peace that belongs and goes with it, is facilitated by thinking of God in His fatherliness and motherliness. The quietude of our young years was due, more than we thought of then, to the fact that we had a father and a mother to go to when we were in trouble. They used always to help us out of our little difficulties. When the child comes in from outside, the first question he is likely to ask is, "Where's mother?" He may not want her for anything particular, but he wants to know she is there. Having father and mother under the same roof makes the child's sleep more quiet at night. And so among the larger difficulties that throng and swarm around us as we move along into older years, there is nothing we need so much as to feel that there is some one that stands to us in just the same relation now as father and mother used to stand to us years ago. That is the first idea of God we want to have formed in us when we are little, and the last idea we want to have of Him as we move out and up into the place prepared for us in the Father's house on high. The first recorded sentence that Jesus spoke called God His Father, and His last recorded sentence on the Cross called God His Father.

I have wondered sometimes whether perhaps this

relation that exists here between father and child is not for the sake of helping us all to understand how God is affected toward us, and in what wise and tender strength His arms are stretched out toward us in guidance and protection. It may be that there is no relation existent between God and man that is not quietly hinted at in the relation between a father and his boy. Christianity as an idea, begins with thinking of God in the same way that a true son thinks of his father; Christianity as a life, begins with feeling and acting toward God as a true son feels and acts toward his father. The prayer that we pray more than any other, and that Christ taught us to pray, begins with "Our Father." Christ's prayers were regularly addressed to God as His Father. That chapter in Matthew that encourages us not to be anxious, and not to overwork ourselves for food and clothes, bases itself in the same relation: "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." "Your heavenly Father feedeth the fowls of the air; are ye not much better than they?" And the sustaining power of this Father-idea, is that it sets us down upon the same side of things where God is. We are not alone any longer; as the Lord himself says, "I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me." Where there is the filial sentiment, father and son almost blend into identity: "I and the Father are one," said the Lord. Perhaps that

disputed passage means more in heavenly things than in human ones. I do not know. I know that a little fly creeping across the window-pane, looks to be a monstrous bird as soon as our mistaken eyes locate it in the air instead of upon the glass. However that may be, we have gotten into a great broad place as soon as we really feel with a deep, strong thought that God's fatherliness reaches clear around us, that the loving-kindness of our heavenly Father never falls out of parallelism with the line of the best human fatherliness prolonged.

We will remember that father is father whether written with a little "f" or a capital. Heathenism thinks of God as a natural enemy. Christianity thinks of God as a natural friend, and has been trying for eighteen centuries to erase the heathen idea, and has not succeeded in rubbing it all out yet even amid men that say "Our Father who art in heaven." We can read across from finite to infinite without altering our alphabet. Safe thinking here is like the plant which begins in a lowly way at the ground and works up. Home love is the first step in Christian love. Home interprets heaven. Home is heaven for beginners. I wish that all the little people here, when they try to think about God, would begin by thinking of their own father, and then remember that what your father is to you in a man's way, God is to you in a great and heavenly way. That is the first

and best lesson you can learn either at home or in the Sunday-school or the church.

Nor would I have the children in any way afraid of God. Although your father is so much older and stronger than you, that by no means makes you afraid of him. He stoops down and with his strong arms picks you up, the wee thing that you are, and it is exactly because he is so strong and has a great hand that will wrap itself clear around your little fist, that you are not afraid in the least when he gathers you up and tosses you in the air. Nor any more would you be afraid of God if you could see Him. And indeed once He did let Himself be seen, and made Himself in the form of a man, and was called Jesus, and the little children were not afraid of Him, and they let themselves be taken up in His arms, and He put His hands upon them and blessed them.

Now I want that you children should think of your Father in heaven in just that way. So far as His love and care and gentleness are concerned, He is so much like your father here that the one name "father" answers for them both. And then of course if God is your Father, and you are true and loving and obedient to Him, you are God's little son or God's little daughter, as the case may be. From that you see how you can come to Him in prayer and tell Him all your little wants, very much as you

snuggle up to your father here and tell him of this thing, that, and the other that you would like. And then if you get the things that you ask God for, I am sure that as loving children of His you will not forget to thank Him for them. And if you do not get them, you will easily understand that it is on the whole better for you not to have them; otherwise, of course, He would have given them to you. And then if you should die one of these days (and little children do die sometimes), you will not need to be in the least disturbed or put out by it, for it will only be going away for a little while from the one father you have here to the other Father you have there. You will never be left alone; you will always be taken care of.

And now, my older hearers, this is only a very simple way of telling the whole matter. Our entire life in all its experience becomes simplified, eased, quieted, when with all our weight we let ourselves rest down upon God's fatherliness, understanding by His fatherliness the combination in one of love that never proves neglectful, of wisdom that is never at fault, and of power that never falls short of its purpose.

If now we can keep ourselves in this way stayed upon God, it will serve to cushion the disappointments of life, so that we shall not get so badly bruised against them. It will put us upon feeling that not

so much depends upon our plans, and therefore that it is neither so harmful to others, nor so fatal to us, if they are thwarted. A good deal of ultimate success is built out of preliminary failures. We sail at a good many different angles on the voyage, but on reaching the haven, I expect we shall find it the shortest course really upon which we could have run. A straight line is not always the quickest path in life, any more than it is upon the sea. The pendulum swings backward as well as forward, but either beat carries the pointer on the dial quietly and steadily toward the hour.

Keeping ourselves in this way stayed upon God, will help us not to be anxious about the effects needing to be accomplished in the world, or about the meagre share we are individually permitted to have in procuring those effects. We become worn and distressed by our responsibilities. The world appears to progress very slowly. There is not much to show for the effort we severally expend. There is a half-concealed despair even in the very way we try to comfort ourselves. It is our habit to say that all we can do is to do the best we can, and then leave the rest with the Lord. We begin with ourselves, and end with the Lord. How much more in accord with the spirit of our text it would be to reverse the order; leave it all with the Lord, and then do the best we can. We are working for Him, not He for us. To be anxious is a modified and concealed form of athe-

ism. We shall never do so much, nor be so cheery and confident about it, as when we feel that it is a little of it our work in the second instance, because it is all of it God's work in the first instance.

This is the only means by which we can move with any degree of serenity and comfort through the distresses and bitternesses of life. The religion of our Scriptures is the only expedient ever discovered for getting along with sorrow, without either being hardened or consumed by it. The bird will endure any violence of storm, if only the wing of the mother bird be extended over it and gathered about it. "I will cry unto Thee," said David, "when my heart is overwhelmed ; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in Thy tabernacle forever ; I will trust in the covert of Thy wings." We know God, and therefore we believe Him. "I *know* whom I have *believed*," said Paul. The *faith* we have in His *dealings*, rests upon the *knowledge* we have of *Him*. Comfort, therefore, widens as knowledge deepens. In our sorrow we shall as children of God be quieted by remembering that if we could see things exactly as He sees them, we should want events ordered precisely as He has ordered them.

And if we are true sons and daughters of God, then we can trust Him for all the future. We shall never be orphaned. He will always be to us both father

and mother. His fatherhood extends everywhere. His love never wears out. God is in His entirety in every minimum of time and of space. Though the child were to wake up in China or in the star Alcyone, he would know no fear nor think of being lost, if on waking he found his little hand clasped in the great palm of his father. So David sings in the shepherd psalm, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

Dear Father, make us all to be Thy children. We *are* Thy children; make us to *feel* that we are Thy children. Help us to realize the wealth and fulness of Thy fatherhood and motherhood, that we may be quieted in every disappointment, have Thy comfort ministered to us in all our distress, feel Thy sympathy folding itself around us when we are burdened, and the sweet sense of Thy fatherly nearness fulfilled in us when our tired eye at nightfall looks its last love-look upon the faces bent over us, and we feel the tightening, lingering clasp of the hands that are vanishing.