













# SERMON BRIEFS

BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER

Transcribed from the Author's Manuscript Notes of Unpublished  
Discourses, and Edited, by

JOHN R. HOWARD *and* TRUMAN J. ELLINWOOD

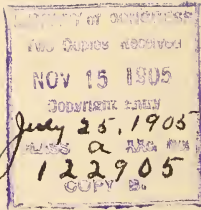


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## PREFACE

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THESE "Sermon Briefs" are transcriptions of Mr. Beecher's own manuscript notes for discourses preached mostly during the years 1864-65. Full stenographic reports of these were made at the time by Mr. Ellinwood in the course of his regular duties at Plymouth Church. Mr. Beecher turned his notes over to Mr. Ellinwood for reference in completing his reports, which, however, were never written out, and have remained unpublished.

So notable a master of pulpit discourse as Phillips Brooks, in speaking of the Plymouth pastor just after his death, characterized him as "the great preacher, the greatest preacher in America, — and the greatest preacher means the greatest power in the land."

It has seemed worth while, in view of the peculiar freshness and aptness of Mr. Beecher's methods of presenting truth, to transcribe and publish some of these frameworks of discourse which he used for his preaching. "Freshness" they will always have, and timeliness, for they deal with the things that abide, — the nature of man, the nature of God as manifested through Jesus Christ, and the mutual relations between the Father and his children. To quote Bishop Brooks again: "Great services did he render to theology. It is not that we are discovering new truths, but that what lay dead and dry in men's souls has awakened. The Spirit of the Lord has been poured into humanity, and no one more than Mr. Beecher has helped to this, pouring his great insight and sympathy and courage out upon the truths which God gave him to deliver. A great leader in the theological world, believing in the Divine Christ and in eternal hope for mankind."

The Briefs here published are selected from a large number in hand. They are fuller than the notes of Mr. Beecher's sermons in later life; more fragmentary than his earlier ones. No set of notes, however, would represent the sermon actually preached, because often the speaker would become interested in elaborating some thought that stimulated him afresh as he unfolded it, and he would have consumed his time without completing his plan. This troubled him little, since he aimed not at sermons, but at men; his peroration or final appeal, ready in his mind, would conclude his discourse as effectively as if his original sketch had been adhered to. Sometimes he wrote quite fully, — usually in introduction; sometimes he discoursed with lowered eyes as if reading, when little or nothing was written. This was especially the case when themes of deep emotion were dealt with — notably on the occasion of his grand discourse in Plymouth Church on the Sunday after the death of Lincoln. He did not trust himself to look at his audience; the swollen stream of thought and feeling must flow to its appointed end without breaking its banks; he seemingly read the whole — from a manuscript of a few sentences.

Mr. Beecher's way of letting his sermon "simmer" in his mind, not daring to commit it to paper until early on Sunday morning, when he rapidly dashed off his preaching notes for almost immediate use in the pulpit, resulted in considerable irregularity of form, many abbreviations, hints, and significant but incomplete phrases. The preparation of these notes for other eyes than his own, therefore, has demanded not only careful transcription, but in many places studious interpretation, and now and then final omission of undecipherable chirography.

Despite such imperfections, however, it is believed by the Editors that these outlines will serve to show how and why such preaching laid hold on men, and will bring inspiration to many.

*Brooklyn, N. Y., September, 1905.*

response

David 4: 27.

Hinton - Advice - the admirable nature  
of it - How it worked in Nineveh Jonah

I Men are not able to go on in this -  
in this - unchecked

1. Their moral sense is offended
2. Their friends, & the influences  
of Christian society

3. Providence, the Word, and  
Alarms -  
4. Special influences of Divine  
spirits -

II. Man's Method of Reformation

1. Some hope to reform sinful lives  
by letting their sins run out; outgrown  
them. - (1) Like putting out fire by letting down  
(2) True sins belong to the soul  
up - but, the spirit of sinning is left behind

2. The method of covering up - of underlining  
evil - the palliating - pleasurable style -  
All - This is like burying pestiles in a  
infected room - covers odor, - but does  
not kill the poison -

3 - By waiting for some good influence  
a freshet of spirit, wh. shall do it for  
them.  
All - Lumbermen, roll logs in winter

into. Storms - & dry water way - Effecting  
multis, snow - & Spring rains; will  
save amount we need ~~of~~ ~~of~~  
them all out -

But, sometimes no fresh comers

When What

4. ~~Reform of law,~~  
By Resolutions. -

1. A Resolution is simply a purpose  
- a determination -  
Its efficiency depends  
on the moral quality of the faculties  
to which it issues -

Generally - frequent - "never clear"  
Lines are like <sup>Indians</sup> ~~General~~ - Resolutions are

like infancy - on plain

- (1.) You work & capture - sometimes
- (2.) If strong - many men, - hides:  
scallions - gone! - Part held back  
again!
- (3.) Must stay - or take for ever

## 5. Reformation in Emergency

When their sins take hold on them  
Lost place of Trust - Dishonesty,  
Bribe taking - Indulgences, <sup>leads to</sup> hypocrisy -

- (1.) That it is only Fear that works  
& not Moral Sense -  
It makes no diff if Fear is fine matter  
if only it only cross up the Conscience  
But - if stop fear - then mission will

bring back -

(2) This was Pharoah's repentance

The Word of God uses emphatic language to describe such cases.

(2. Pet. 2: 22-)

\* Sorry that re also 21

6. By breaking off work - but  
filling its place with nothing  
good -
1. Bad company - but - nothing  
in place of it.
  2. Very active + exciting hobbies  
+ taking on no corresponding actual  
food - ~~There is a man who has been better off~~  
There is a vacuum - or void -

II  
Now turn to God's word & see its  
method. -

↳ Break off your sin by Righting  
Right life, is the cure of Wicked life -  
Positive life - a good cure Evil -

1. Faults, vices, - of disposition  
not caused by direct attack - but  
as by counterpoise of  
good qualities  
Impure -  
Cruelty -  
Selfishness Envy -



2. Vices - especially - are seldom  
and of Negative Treatment

Require deep movement of whole  
body in the other direction

3. The worse a man has been  
the better sh<sup>d</sup> he become

He sh<sup>d</sup> love most who has  
been forgiven most!

see Luke 7:41

4. Turn to God

Time is ready - Work is great

Alone you cannot do it -

5. Make a whole work of  
it - Be born again!

Be humble, prompt - a earnest  
& hustler!

Run as for fire in haste -  
Strive as in day of battle -

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I

THE SUMMONS



# I

## The LOWER and the HIGHER LIFE

---

*When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. — Psalm 8: 3-5.*

ONE class of minds habitually see what is weak and sinful in human life, and speak of man in terms almost contemptuous. Others are never done celebrating the power and dignity of human nature. Sometimes these two classes of persons suppose themselves antagonistic. They are only partialists. Both views are true. Each looks upon one class of facts only. Scripture harmonizes them. Man is grand, and insignificant. He is full of waste and corrupt elements, and full of divine and eternal values. Eulogy or depreciation alone will not measure or describe a creature of two worlds, of a complex nature, of comprehensive alliances, and of eternal duration.

All the way through, from beginning to end, the parallel and contrast exist, of *sublime greatness* and of *pitiably insignificance*.

The contemplation of this double and contrasted nature is profitable not merely for sentiment. It may be made to have the most important practical bearings, and

to quicken the life and actions of each day. For which purpose, let us consider some elements of human life.

I. Of all the animal kingdom none begins so weak and remains feeble so long as **the human race**. Many of the animal creatures are born perfect; others have but a few days of infancy, etc. Man is in infancy for years. On the other hand, nothing else in its maturity reaches so far up toward strength in all its various kinds. Man is the weakest of all creatures at first, and the most potent at last.

II. In **single physical endowments** man is surpassed by many animals: in leaping, by insects; in flying, by birds; in power, by the lion; in patient strength, by the ox; in speed, by the horse; in mere instinct, by many animals. And yet, so soon as man comes to the *exertion of mind*, he finds easily more than an equivalent for all these inferiorities, and rises in comprehensive supremacy, without a thought, to the head of the kingdom.

III. **Man in conflict with the physical laws** of the globe is insignificant indeed. He can neither call nor remand light; retard nor hasten the seasons; invoke rain nor stay the unmerciful clouds; he cannot shut up the wind in its palaces, nor unlock and bring forth. Fire, water, air, light, electricity, are by nature his *masters*. But *by his obedience* to their laws, they all change to servants. He controls the wind to his purposes. He teaches the lightning with finest foot to tread his wires, and with its finger of flame to write his messages. He conforms to the seasons, and they pay their revenues like vassals.

If he be proud, then let him reflect that he is crushed before the worm. Any single one, and how complete his



control; but by multitude they defy him. They consume his grain; eat up his flowers; pierce his roots; strip bare of leaves his trees; puncture his fruits, making them nurseries for young enemies.

How manageable a drop of water! but how formidable a body of water in the form of mist or steam!

IV. The **feebleness of man as an individual**, compared with men in society and as a race. Grandeur of human enterprise. Look at the wonderful management of commerce, by which latitudes interchange their fruits, and all the earth serves each separate spot; whereby summer feeds winter, and the tropics make love to cooler zones, and are themselves in turn cheered and refreshed. Any single man stepping out of line is very poor, as in an army. Society is strong, but the individual man in it is insignificant.

V. Let us approach **higher relations**. Man, as a creature of *this* world, runs through a rapid series of steps, beginning and ending in weakness; subject to disease, pain, thwartings, overthrow, poverty, and death. The other man, related to the *spiritual* world, is one whom nothing can touch. No eye can see his thoughts; no tyrant imprison his soul; no disease lay low his spiritual body. He is supreme.

As a creature of *years*, how feeble, afflicted, pitiable! As a creature *without end*, immortal, how strong, unpierceable, and sublime! As a *son of man*, full of inconsistencies, ideals and failures, aspirations and vulgarities, happiness and woe. As a *son of God*, steadfast and immovable, a king in disguise, rich though poor, making squalor splendid and filling life full of glorious contradictions.

“As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” — 2 Cor. 6: 10.

Man contrasted with himself has dark hours and weakness, luminous hours and victory. Friendless and deserted, he is one whom angels tend. A suppliant and pauper, he is protected of God. Having nothing, he is heir to everything. Dying deaths daily, he shall never die.

Look a little further. Consider the double truth of dying:

“It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.” — 1 Cor. 15: 44.

Here there is a seeming end, which, beyond, is the glorious dawn and beginning. Hence the grandeur of our text. (*Read.*)

Turning from description of these elements, may we not derive some profit from them?

**I. On which shall men build,** the insignificant or the eternal? For which part of his endowment shall he live?

*Illn.* The rich fool in the parable. Luke 12: 16-20.

**II. Which shall men value?** Which shall they seek first and most? Which, when in conflict, shall yield? Which shall be insured against risks?

**III.** We are prone to expend pride, approbateness, and desire on that which is **transient**.

*Illn.* Man spending his money in New York.

**IV.** How much of the lower may be *added* to men without augmenting manhood! and how much may be *taken away* from them without diminishing it!

V. Too apt are we, in the turmoil and conflict of life, in incessant temptation, in private and in public, to follow the transient because it is *visible*, and to reject the permanent and potential because it is *invisible*, and subject only to Faith, which few have.

VI. What is the remedy for a sense of the shortness of human life, the weakness of men, and premature death?

*Illn.* Thanksgiving Day: family coming back home. God has a great house; this world only one room, etc. Vision of future to glorify the present.

## II

# MAN and BEAST

---

*For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preëminence above a beast: for all is vanity. — Eccl. 3: 19.*

THIS remarkable book presents the course of philosophical speculation in ancient days. It shows that the problems of our day are not new.

The origin of things;

The nature of evil;

The place of man in the universe;

Whether there is any other government than nature;

The contrasts, conditions, and catastrophes which fall out under mere natural law — are all discussed.

The passage in hand arises from a consideration of the condition of man without hope of another life.

1. At that day the discussion must have been empirical; material slender; knowledge small.

2. It has arisen in our day with an unexpected force. It is the question whether man is anything more than the extension, the full unfolding, or blossom, of the animal kingdom below.

I propose to consider this question: **What preëminence has man over the beast?**

**I. Man has great preëminence in physical organization.**

1. Superiority in *single qualities*, such as quickness, flying, strength, special instincts, do not amount, on the whole, to any particular advantage.

2. No other creature has such *combination* and harmony of physical forces as man. Range of industry and adaptation to all work, climates, conditions, show wonderful adaptability. Usableness of man transcends everything in the kingdom below him. Each animal can do single things, but man is a creator.

a. Changed the *condition of the globe* and almost of climates.

b. Covered the earth with *cities* and made *dwellings* so common that they might seem a part of the crust of the earth shoved up into form and crystallized.

c. Organized *beauty* into all the processes of life; and besides, the kingdom of art has garnished all functions and materials with beauty.

d. *Inventions*, tools, machines. What has a fish compared to man's steamship? What has a bird compared to man's locomotive railway?

e. One may put man's single organ, the *hand*, against all the peculiar elements in the animal kingdom.

f. Amount of *vital force*. No other animal endures so much and labors so long.

*Illn.* Cavalry inferior to infantry.

This is the difference of *nerve*, which is the best element; the amount, quality, and distribution of *cerebral and nervous system*. It is this that gives vitality, force, endurance, aside from its mental developments. It is the magnetic battery of life.

II. Man's interior superiority to the animal kingdom:

1. In thinking power.
2. In refinement and sweetness of affection.
3. In social relationships, purity, civil society.
4. In moral sentiment, right and wrong, worship, subordination, hope, mirth, joy. Animals have exhilaration while young; only men have joy.

5. To all this is to be added the *prolongation of life* in higher conditions, in another stage of being and world, by which *faith*, a new light, falls upon the whole of this life:

God's existence and government;

Christ such a presentation as man can take hold of;

All consolations, foregleams, joys of Christian life.

Surely, the question need not be put, In what hath man preëminence over a beast?

**III.** The real question, not one of organization and capacity, but of **practical results.**

1. Do the great mass of mankind make any use of their advantages so as to be, in fact, much better than the beasts?

The Indians.

The African hordes.

The Asiatics.

The effeminate Orientals.

Such enormous machinery; little product!

2. In Christian lands are there not on every hand and in great numbers those who, with all their opportunities, rise but little above the average productiveness of the animal kingdom?

a. Consider how many spend the whole force of life simply to maintain life, not to maintain *and use* it as a creative force.

b. How many derive all *flavor* of life from pure *animalism!*

c. How many are wasters, *moths!* Society is full of hangers-on:

All the men that are lazy and that others support;

All that filch from others' industry;

All that steal and swindle;

All that live by knavery and tax all moral men.

d. Destroyers of men. As animals feed on animals, so men on men. Destroying them by violence; by inciting and feeding the passions. New York City is controlled by millions of capital which is invested in liquor and lust.

e. Turn to the other extreme — to butterflies instead of beasts. Turn to the frivolous who have no use for any part of themselves but *tattle*, and who live and die in insipid ease.

f. How many live mainly upon the lower and animal faculties, without greatly unfolding, or productively employing the faculties which separate them from the lower kingdom!

### SOME QUESTIONS

I. Am I contributing only to the animal side of life? Anything to the intellectual? Anything to the social and refining? Anything to the moral?

II. Am I living without an aim? or, if I have an ambition, what relation does it bear to manliness?

III. Is the ordinary way of estimating the guilt of a vulgar and dissipated life at all adequate?

1. Not simply against law.

2. It is a degradation of the superior to the inferior.

3. It is a perversion of being.

IV. What is the reality of an easy, good-natured use of life?

*Illn.* Estate running out — wants care. Ignorant heir. Books molding. Pictures, priceless — Titians, Correggios, Murillos, Raphaels — to him nothing. Walls crumbling. All going to decay.

How far out was the Preacher of this ancient book when he cried: "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" Who among us in this day of greater light may escape his declaration of despair — "All is vanity"?



### III

## NATURE, CHARACTER, and CONDUCT

---

*Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? — 1 Cor. 4: 7.*

MEN assume two pleas in regard to the facts of their natural constitution: First, that **they deserve all the credit for the good** that is in them; second, that **they deserve none of the blame for the evil, which results from a constitutional faculty.** The former we considered this morning. We propose this evening to remark upon the efforts of men to release themselves from a sense of responsibility for *conduct and character* by pleading the *force of their nature.*

This species of fatality is partly a result of feeling, and partly a reflection upon facts. Men of impetuous and powerful tendencies are borne on so violently by their feelings that they pronounce them irresistible. Ancients called it being *impelled by Fate.* In modern times it has often been called *a temptation of the devil,* which is supposed to overcome all resistance; later it was called *necessity;* and still more recently, since the prevalence of a mental philosophy distinct enough to be comprehended by common people, it is regarded as a *necessity of faculty.*

It is argued, first, that all human action is derived from combinations of a man's faculties; second, that

these are a part of his organization, their power being fixed and determined without human volition; and, third, that where the good faculties are predominantly strong a man is easily virtuous, but that where the evil faculties are by nature intense and overbearing, men are, as it were, *fated* to do evil.

Thus, it is said that if a man have a largely developed animal nature, without balance of moral faculty, he cannot help himself; that if he have large destructiveness and combativeness, quarreling and cruelty are necessary; that if he have large caution and secretiveness, he will lie and deceive by the necessity of his organization; and that if he is acquisitive and secretive, without conscience, he will rob and steal.

This view is charged by some to phrenology and to the whole school of physical mental philosophy, who make mental acts depend upon physical organization; but it is as old as human nature, as shown by the following passage from the seventh chapter of Jeremiah, the ninth and tenth verses:

“ Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, *We are delivered to do all these abominations?* ”

1. Men plead that a *strong propensity* in their constitution either necessitates many feelings and actions, or so nearly invalidates restraint as to make one *relatively* guiltless.

2. When any faculty or power is possessed in but a feeble condition, men hold themselves exonerated from blame if deficient in the virtues resulting from such faculty.

3. Men plead that when they are placed in *circumstances* where temptation is strong, and where the resisting power in themselves is weak, they are not to be held accountable for their acts.

A proper view of this subject cannot be had without some **classification of our forces**. Of these there are four kinds, aside from the intellect, — appetites, passions, emotions, and sentiments.

1. The **appetites** are ordained for the nourishing and continuance of the human body. They are the quartermasters and commissaries.

2. The **passions** are motive forces, or those faculties which tend to energize and propel men; as, for instance, self-esteem, love of praise, fear, anger, and destructiveness. They tend to self-defence, to the control of external forces, and to *propulsion against difficulties*. They are to men what steam is to an engine.

3. The **emotions** include social loves and domestic affections, as they exist in those that find their motives and objects in their fellow-beings.

4. The **sentiments** are those emotions which express moral feeling — right, truth, faith, affection, hope, trust, worship, aspiration, religious love, etc.

None of all these is evil in itself. Each one is good, thoroughly and intrinsically. The evil must be found in such degrees of activity, or in activity at such times, as violate some law: (a) of *the mind* itself; or (b) of *human society*; or (c) of *moral government*. Hence, it is *not the feeling or faculty* that is ever wrong, but the *use* to which it is put.

The question then is: **Do a man's faculties run away with him?** Do they control and compel him?

I. The existence of a strong faculty no more compels wickedness than the existence of strong muscles implies evil force and violence. *Secretiveness* does not mean falsehood. *Destructiveness* does not mean murder. *Acquisitiveness* does not mean theft.

*Illn.* (1) A man arrested in my house at night pleads the fact that he has feet and hands; but it was not necessary that his hands should undo my fastenings nor that his feet should walk into my house. (2) Inventiveness is pleaded by a counterfeiter and forger as a reason for passing off a false bank bill or note on which he has written another's name; but it was not needful that inventiveness or imitativeness in him should manifest itself in that way. (3) Destructiveness, turned against the physical world, becomes engineer, and there is no need of its turning against men.

## II. But have men power of restraint and direction?

(1) If not, they are maniacs and with loss of responsibility should lose liberty. (2) If it is very difficult, that only implies a need of more care and exertion. (3) In fact, men are unwilling to adopt the education by which all may be regulated.

*Illn.* As if children, brought up without learning a trade, should in manhood plead inability to earn their livelihood by work!

III. The facts of human society prove that **men can govern themselves**. In anarchy they do not; in good government they do.

## INFERENCES

It is the duty of society, in one way or another, to supply motive or stimulus to those who are not strong

in themselves. This is the Christian idea of society, — an interchange of gifts so that each has the benefit of all.

We are yet very rude in our ideas of penalty, which are derived mostly from barbaric monarchy. Penalties are often merely *defensory* of society. Otherwise, they are twofold: *stimulants* and *dissuasives*. So, in either case, they are remedial.

In the progress of Christian society reformatory institutions will be indispensable to the correction of evils, *e. g.*, *intemperance*, etc.

While in extreme cases men may be pardoned for mistaking, there can be **no excuse** for one in ten thousand who choose to do evil and to neglect good.

Folly of attempting to deceive ourselves, since we cannot deceive God.

## IV

### EVIL and GOOD

---

*And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them. — Joshua 8: 33-35.*


IN rearing a people from the degradation into which slavery had sunk them, Moses was obliged to avoid a wide range of artificial and natural religious symbols which abounded in Egypt, and had many ideas associated with them.

But though he originated another religion, yet it should not be lost sight of that the grand Lawgiver of the Desert fell back upon the forms and phenomena of the natural world for symbolism.


I. There is in modern times a **reaction, from ecclesiastical inventions for worship, to Nature.** This is not *away* from Holy Scripture but *toward* it. The example looms up four thousand years ago, from the desert of

Arabia, — Sinai and the flowing Rock, from Jordan and Jerusalem, from Ebal and Gerizim. The temple and altar have gone; but the sublime imagery lives on, which called the heavens God's temple, the mountains his altar, the light his garment, and dark clouds his rolling chariots.

**II. The singular adaptedness of this scene to impress the imagination and root the conscience on the side of good.**

1. The plain, the valley, inclining east and west, Ebal on the north and Gerizim on the south.  Impressiveness of hills and mountains, and equally upon the uncultivated as upon the educated.


2. The vast mass of people camped down between — gathered for so grand a purpose. Levites divided and placed on opposite sides.

 *a.* The two mountains singularly adapted. Ebal, for cursing evil, was rugged, rifted, precipitous; Gerizim rounder, more fruitful, and beautiful — blessing!

*b.* Notice that the tribes that stood for blessing were really the best ones — Judah, Benjamin, etc., in whom was the promise of the Saviour.

3. The process of reading and responding was a sublime liturgy.


4. No record of the effect; no record of a repetition of this act; but there is evidence that the moral significance of it soon wore away.


 The passions of men can be trained into obedience, yet not by a surprise of the imagination nor by the mere whip of fear, but only by the continual presence of education, — and that not of schools and churches alone, but the education which comes from the whole process of society, life.

III. Ebal and Gerizim did not create moral distinctions, and moral distinctions did not cease when Ebal and Gerizim were forgotten!

1. Long before — as long as the life of God — everything was as true as on the day of this magnificent ritual.

2. When the ten tribes had gone, melted, and Judah was a captive in Babylon, Ebal and Gerizim, unseen and forgotten, still bore witness. There was the curse against evil and the blessing upon virtue, for they were fixed in nature.


3.  So, too, the Bible did not create moral distinctions. It only pointed to and ratified, interpreted; and if every Bible on earth were to perish, its truths would not perish. They inhere in nature. They existed before the Bible was composed, and would still stand after it was burned.

4.  The Church — it creates nothing. It interprets and enforces great moral laws. To destroy it would not destroy elementary truths. They would spring up again. They are a part of the structure of society. They are elementary to man.

#### APPLICATION

I. As, when Ebal and Gerizim were forgotten, the *principles* which they represented went on in supreme power, and good was good, and evil was evil, and the curse was on the one, and the blessing on the other, though the Levite lips had long ceased to promise or denounce; so is it in every individual soul.


a. Every soul has in itself an Ebal, witnessing against evil, and a Gerizim, speaking for good.


 Paul declares (Rom. 2: 14, 15):



“ For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.”

b. This witness is organic. Hence it does not depend on the Bible nor on the Church.

 *Illn.* What if there were an insurrection of the sick in a hospital, declaring that their woes come from doctors and medical books! But neither books nor doctors make diseases nor cures. Both of these are in nature.

 The great question with every man is not respecting religious instruments exterior to himself, but respecting his own soul's salvation. Good is eternally good; wrong is eternally wrong; evil is everlastingly evil, etc.

**II. Social life** has its silent and invisible Ebal and Gerizim For witness against evil:

All its sicknesses;  
 All its jails and penitentiaries;  
 All its poorhouses and asylums;  
 All its crowds of wasted men;  
 The great under-army of stragglers,  
 And, on the other hand, to witness for the good:  
 The joy that goes with economic virtues;  
 Social purity and fidelity;  
 Love and religion;  
 Patriotism.

*Illn.* The Tombs [New York City prison].

Woman in the police court. Cursed. And I heard it in spirit saying, “ Cursed be strong drink, unchastity, stealing! ”

Felon in cell.

Murderer waiting for the gallows, bears his terrible witness.

1. Good and evil of society are deep as nature.
2. Neither the coming nor the going of its processes changes this.

3. Absurdity of modern notion that the Voice of the People can make anything right or wrong, good or bad.

*Illn.* Had the Levite said, "Blessed be he that steal-eth," and had all the people said, "Amen," would that have changed God's law of society?

☞ Had the unanimous vote of thirty states pronounced slavery right, would it be right?

☞ Should the nation ordain repudiation of its public debt, would it be justified?

III. The great elements of civilization must pass between Ebal and Gerizim:

Intellect;

Wealth;

Material force;

Pleasure.

IV. Law of nations.

The struggle between animal and moral motives is yet feebleness in the life of nations.

## V

### The END and AIM of LIFE

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*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. — Gal. 5: 22, 23.*

THE term **fruit** gives the key of interpretation. We are referred by it to the processes in the physical world, by which plants produce the highest results of organization. Fruit is the final and highest development of plant life, which does nothing better or beyond. It reaches the maximum in its fruit. Every part of it, all its secret processes, conspire to this one end. Everything else is but instrument. This only is the reason why a plant lives. It is the interpretation of the plant's life.

If the analogy be taken, then the fruit of the Spirit is the full and final result of the power of man. Here is a being of diverse and complex forces. His relations stretch in every direction. He perceives the facts about him. He reflects and reasons. He has power over the physical world. He organizes, controls, plans, and accomplishes. He has power to act socially, to combine, to form states, to coöperate and accomplish tasks with an ease which transcends individual power. History is for the most part a record of the effects produced by man. The whole world has become a journal of his

activity. He has transformed the physical globe. By interchange, all climates are one. Everywhere distances are abridged by speed, and time itself has ceased to be what it once appeared to be. He has the power to originate mental states, and then to incarnate them. If men receive their impressions from the outward world, and largely their stimulation, on the other hand they have gone on filling the world with organizations which represent the mind of man.

Of such a being it is not a mere question of curiosity, **What is man's highest development?** When he is perfect, in which elements of his being will his strength be found? Will he be actor? philosopher? organizer? artist? ruler? Do any of these words suggest the end and aim, the *fruit* of a man's nature? In our text we have the inspired answer — "The fruit," etc.

### I. What are these fruits, then?

1. Expound separately.
2. They are wholly the superior moral states. Not negative morality, but positive.

### RESULTS

1. We see where the true emphasis of religion is to be placed. Not in
  - a. Organization;
  - b. Doctrinal purity;
  - c. Worshiping element.

But in the *product* of all these, in the human soul. These, without fruit, are useless. The fruit is more important than the instrument by which it is sought. The wisdom of administration is to be found, not in history or authority, but in *fruit*.

2. The *transformation wrought*, if this could be made practically clear, is, therefore, the point of emphasis.

II. Every man is to find himself within and not outside of himself. What you *are*, not what you have, nor where you stand among men, nor what you have done.

*Illn.* Take the inventory of *men*:

Their wealth, their houses, etc.;

Then themselves.

Hence, *last shall be first.*

III. Here are the **limitations and bounds** to all action. Such persons as limit themselves need no law. May not do all that the law of the land permits, nor all that custom allows, nor all that our own faculties render possible. Nothing is right to us which prevents fruit.

IV. How shall one gain these fruits of the Spirit?

1. The question is asked as if there were a simple and uncomplex way by which to seek, approach, grasp, and then go on rejoicing.

2. But the fruits of the Spirit are as complex as the soul. They are subject to the laws of development and education. See Mark 4: 28, 29 (The blade, the ear, the full corn).

3. The means are the whole of life:

a. All voluntary powers;

b. All occupations;

c. All religious education;

d. All providences.

e. In this view many of the anomalies of experience and paradoxes of life may be explained.

All that comes *as good* is not good to us; even evil may prove beneficial.

## VI

### ETHICS, or LOVE and FAITH?

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*Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. — Rom. 6: 14, 15.*

1. THIS argument was in form **national and historic**. It referred to difficulties and struggles which, in their outward form, for us never existed: the relinquishment of life under Mosaic conditions, and its continuance under new motives, — Christ.

2. To us the same truth comes up under a **doctrinal form**, which is not acceptable to all.

*Obj.:* The idea of justification by faith in Christ must lead to an undervaluing of good morals, of practical rectitude, etc.

Unitarian feelings.

There *may* be a view of justification by faith in Christ which shall be mischievous; but it is not a true view:

a. As, where the Antinomian declares that sin is impossible because nothing is sinful: faith nullifies the moral law.

b. Where it leads to fanaticism, viz., that, once in Christ, men are safe by virtue of his covenant, not of their own conduct.

c. Arising from these in part, but in part, also, from an imperfect way of teaching which seems to

put morality in antagonism with spiritual experience, and leads men to say that we make more of feeling than of right conduct.

3. The doctrine of justification by faith is not one of external government, but of psychology; *i. e.*, it is a question of mental philosophy.

It is a question of the relative importance of motives; *i. e.*, of faculties, in developing right conduct and high character.

Let it be illustrated within the limits of your own knowledge, — *e. g.*, motives to industry and fidelity in business.

*a.* Slave motive — *fear*;

*b.* Emancipation and wages — *conscience*;

*c.* Partners — self-respect and *own interest*;

*d.* Becomes a son — *love*.

#### Consider some facts:

1. That the end to be gained is in all cases the same; and the only question is, Which is the easiest way, — by fear or by love?

2. That lower motives do not include the higher, but higher motives do include the lower. Privates, lieutenants, etc., in army.

3. That while it is easier to live a low life by low motives than it is to live a high life by high motives, yet when it is a right life, by low *or* by high motives, there can be no comparison.

4. Now, the question of piety is not as between:

*a.* Morality, signifying good *conduct*, and spirituality, supposed to signify good *feeling*;

*b.* But as to whether right conduct *and* right feeling can be best secured by motives of social and self-interest, or by love and devotion to Christ Jesus.

## APPLICATION

I. The controversy between morality and spirituality is simply a question between a rude and imperfect instrument and a high and perfect one.

- a. Savage modes of husbandry;
- b. Modern scientific modes.

II. True **spirituality** invariably **includes morality**, and carries it higher and further than morality without piety could go.

1. The world has a right to expect the highest and finest forms. We look for high art in Sèvres china.

2. The Bible recognizes the combination: "Created in Christ unto good works," etc. — Eph. 2: 10.

3. When the double motive does not exist there will be self-deception.

III. *Question:* Why may I not go to heaven by my own efforts?

You may. *Try it!*



## VII

### SELF-HARM

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*He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death. — Prov. 8: 36.*

THE analogies of divine truth drawn from human governments were indispensable and beneficial, but there was this imperfection in the very nature of all illustrations drawn from human affairs, that they would transfer to divine things the weakness and imperfection of human things.

Still further, as human society is a thing of growth, the forms and ideas of one age would be outgrown in another, and might become even repulsive to it.

This is signally so with illustrations drawn from kingly government. Once, the idea of a king was the highest human conception of earthly being. Around it men threw their pride, their patriotism, their imagination, and their love. That word thrilled the very deepest chords of the soul and the best. And *then* it was to some purpose that God was called *King in Zion*.

The word to us in America, however, is quite devoid of any but repugnant associations. It is abhorrent to our ideas of government. It is associated with a use of power which we believe to be wrong. The long history of kings has not been such as to kindle enthusiasm at the name. All that made it appropriate

once, to us makes it inappropriate. Only a historic and poetical use of it can now be made.

I. The government of God necessarily **must be illustrated by analogies of human government**, but human governments have been rude, and are yet clumsy and by their very nature are full of injury as well as benefit.

For example: 1. It is a common maxim that men must give up a part of their individual good for the benefit of the whole. But the true doctrine is that *each man must seek his own good*, that is, his personal development, and that that development demands a high condition of society; so that we give up to society less, by far, than we get back, and whatever powers of the individual are yielded to society are investment, and not fines or taxes.

This is a true theory. It may be defeated in fact. But in any future that is perfect it will be practically correct; and it is always so in divine government.

2. The experience of men in governing is such as to engender a sense not only of antagonism between the governing and governed, but of *oppression* on the one side and enmity and *resistance* on the other.

This is founded in facts of bad administration, partly from the lowness and fractiousness of the ignorant governed and partly from the corruption and ignorance of the governing, who do not understand their business.

The result is that the associations of law and government are such in human life that when we speak of divine law and government, men too often experience anything but pleasing thoughts.

Let us follow **some of the false impressions** arising from this source. One is the feeling **that God is an enemy**; that, for his own sake, for his own glory, by

virtue of his supremacy, he demands of us much which is not needful for *our* advantage, though perhaps it may be good for *him*. And still farther, that our delinquency in some respects has brought upon us the divine anger and wrath, so that God is the one from whom the most danger is to be expected.

Then, there is the false impression **that our punishment for sin is an infliction** laid upon us by the divine hand in satisfaction of some sense of injury or anger. To a certain degree this may be true, but not in that low sense in which it is ordinarily taken. God is our antagonist only as (*a*) an earthly father is antagonistic to the evil doing of his son; or, (*b*) as a physician is antagonistic to one whose passions are undermining his health; or, (*c*) as a nurse who watchfully restrains the vagaries and imprudences of a patient, is antagonistic to that patient.

In all these cases, the *motive* is love; the *end* is the good of the inferior, and the *means* is the law of his organization.

**II.** The method of preaching the Law and of expounding the Atonement has led many to feel that under the divine government, as under the human, much of real good must be given up for the sake of others. But, under the perfect government of God, nothing is demanded that has not **its root and reason in your own nature.**

The fundamental ideas of religion involve the development of man **according to the law of his being**, insuring the full education of every power and faculty, the harmonization of the faculties with each other or with relative authority in mind, and the harmonization of man with his circumstances, that is, with his relations

to the physical world and to his fellow men in society.

Such are the very conditions of man's own being, without which he could not be the man that he is or exercise the powers which he now employs.

There is likewise the highest development of all, — the harmonization of man with his spiritual relations, — the future, the divine, the eternal.

#### APPLICATION

1. Every step in sin that you commit is a wrong **against your own soul**, as is also every neglect of duty and every negligence of growth; while every call to repentance has its reason in **your own good**. Others may be concerned, but no one else so deeply as you.

2. Right living and wrong living are concerns of *your own* more than of *ministers and churches*. It is a false notion, or feeling, rather, that ministers have the care of the souls of their flocks; that men must be followed up by the minister because it is his duty rather than their interest. If I pursue you with urgency, it is a labor of love for your advantage.

3. In the last resort no one can be safe except by **his own personal care of his own life**. If a man is lost by his own carelessness or neglect or willful incurring of known danger, it is his own act; he is a suicide.

4. Earnest appeal for religion in daily life — *now!*

## VIII

### A BAD MAN

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*But when Herod heard thereof [of Jesus and his works], he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead. . . . And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb. — Mark 6: 16; 29.*

HERE is both a drama and a study of human nature.

**I. Herod Antipas**, son of Herod the Great, tetrarch of Galilee and Petræa on the east of the Jordan. A very bad man, with many good dispositions.

What the tenor of his life, an Oriental king, must have been, to be inferred from the actions which stand out. Being already married to the daughter of King Aretas (of Arabia Petræa) he visited his brother Philip on his way to Rome. Result: intrigued with Herodias, Philip's wife. She eloped. Herod married her. Sent home his former wife. Heinousness of this sin. How it followed him! Aretas made war and defeated him. Died in banishment in Spain, his proud ambitious wife going to him, — a touch of light on a dark picture.

One might think such a man inaccessible to all preaching. No; every man has some spot in his heart where truth may smite.

**II. Who was John?** His preaching Herod was profoundly affected by it.

The contrast: King in purple, Baptist in camel's hair. One on a throne, having at command his armies; but John had more power over men. In fact, John was the king, Herod the caitiff.

"Heard him gladly." John's power, even on Herod! *John's fidelity.* Had John lived in our day he would have been roundly set down for meddling with pretty much everything. A word for soldiers, for citizens, for Pharisees, and for the king on his throne.

a. *Specified* the crime, which was most ungodly and unpopular.

b. And Herod's wickedness generally. So did it that it *stung*.

### III. Herod arrests John.

1. Some political jealousy.
2. This offense.
3. Herod was content to hold him prisoner. Not cruel, though capable of cruelty.
4. Now comes the hatred of Herodias and her revenge for John's chastisement of Herod's crime with her.

### IV. The catastrophe, and how brought about.

#### APPLICATION


I. A man may have in him at the same time strong impulses of good and of evil.

1. Neither has subdued the other.
2. One rules, and then the other. Alternations of good and bad. Good is good; bad is bad; but in all such cases the good counts for little, for

II. It is the governing principle that determines character.

1. If that is good, much incidental imperfection may exist.

2. If that is selfish, or even self-indulgent, all the incidental good is of little value as to character.

 It is the **secret person** in us all that determines our character, not the alternative and incidental things.

### III. Bad men respect and fear bold good men.

Conscience has its voice. May pursue them, persecute, slay, but they revere it. Wickedness rules, but thousands of bad men look up to virtue.

IV. Bad men often **come very near to becoming good**, yet are they bad.

1. They see excellence of goodness.

2. They take some steps. When Herod heard John, he "did many things and heard him gladly." It would be curious to know in the history of bad men what the "did many things" meant. Perhaps, in our day, some meditation and moralizing; going to church occasionally; giving money; sending alms.

V. Herod slew John but **John still lived**, in Herod's fear, or remorse. When he heard of Jesus he shook. "It is John whom I beheaded," he cried; "he is risen from the dead."

Men's evil does not sleep quietly. Men's passions blind them. They will not see that in flagrant evil they start a series of courses which go on acting after they have forgotten all about it.

*Illn.* Men's good and evil working out to-day was *put into the loom* years ago; the pattern is just appearing.

VI. Looking back on these two, not only which is holier, but which is *happier*? Would you not rather have been John than Herod, even in his hour of triumph? Still more, as viewed in historic completeness?

Yet the same scenes are acted over to-day. Ambition and evil desire still rule men's hearts.

1. The scramble for power;
2. The terrible greed of riches;
3. The lurid light of passion and guilty pleasure.

Shall men go on unwarned and uninstructed by all the examples of history?



## IX

### HEARING and DOING

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*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. — James 1: 22.*

**I. CONTRAST** between ancient and modern society, as respects **means of instruction**:

The disposition;

The knowledge;

The means of teaching — schools, newspapers, books.

**II.** The most that was done anciently was in the direction of **religion**.

The Hebrew system surprising if considered in the light of its own age. The *Sacred Writings* were to them just what our Constitution and Laws are to us, with this added, that literature and history, and medicine and art were also included.

*Illn. Egyptian; Grecian; Roman.*

**III.** Great evils of ignorance not to be doubted. There are, however, not a few incidental evils arising from fullness of instruction.

What are the *ends* in view, of public religious instruction?

1. Moral counsel;

2. The renewing and reviewing of impressions of truth;

3. Strengthening of moral faculty by training, and, as it were, saturating with truth by repetition.

4. And all converging to "thoroughly furnish" the man of God to every good work.

We may now point out incidental evils to be guarded against in the employment of religious truth:

1. As a **mere instrument of intellectual pleasure**. To experience this high form of pleasure is not wrong, but to seek that solely is perversion.

2. A variety of this is a **purely argumentative or controversial method**. As to this, consider:

The effect on the mind;

The perversion of Scripture.

3. The state of mind that **seeks the excitement of novelty**. Some words about "sensational preaching."

The phrase used to designate unworthy excitement or unworthy causes employed to produce it. This may exist, but ought its opposite, dead and legendary preaching, to be respectable?

4. **The preaching for taste**, when men seek and cull that which gratifies only fancy — the graces of style, its mere decorations.

5. **The preaching of sentiment, even moral sentiment**, without practical point.

6. **Perfunctory, routine preaching**.

7. **The preaching of superstitions**, empty forms, like telling beads, laying hand on Bible, etc.

In view of this:

(1.) A *moral purpose* in hearing;

(2.) Regularity of *place* and constancy of listening;

(3.) The endeavor to find a response, every day, in *conduct*, to the truth heard.

8. The philosophy of **action** unfolded:

(1.) Mere meditation will not produce Christian manhood.

(2.) Nor will sensibility.

(3.) Still less will conventionalism and cant.

(4.) It is to be found in *essential disposition*, as outwardly manifested.

It is *doing* that puts these forward.

a. One deliberate self-denial for sake of the Right. — Effect.

b. One valiant fight and victory against temptation.

c. One vigorous performance of a disagreeable duty, because it *is* a duty.

d. The sense of reality, of truth, nowhere so powerful as when we seek to use it in practical life.

For close, see context: "If any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is," etc. Also, end of *Sermon on Mount* (Matt. 7: 20, etc.). "By their fruits," — "Lord, Lord," — "Every one that heareth and doeth not," — "house on sand," etc.

## X

### The DECEITFULNESS of RICHES

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*He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. — Matt. 13: 22.*

THE Scriptures do not condemn riches, but only the evils to which they render men liable. Riches were made a part of divine promises to Old Testament disciples; they are declared to be the legitimate result of wisdom, or moral conduct: and in the New Testament it is commanded to administer wealth wisely — not to disown it. At the same time, the dangers which beset the paths of those who seek and of others who own great possessions are plainly and solemnly pointed out.

The methods of instruction vary. Sometimes they are general, at others, specific. In the text it is *striking* and *peculiar*.

Riches are represented as a personality, endowed with a malign temper. They are *deceitful*. We know that riches are in various ways demoralizing; that they cause men to grow arrogant; that they make men selfish; that they induce luxury, self-indulgence, and animalism. But here it is *deceit*. Riches are *deceitful*. Men are misled by them — juggled, bewildered, utterly deceived.

Nothing is truer. No man conversant with the world but knows it. Men see it in their fellow men if not in themselves. Riches deceive those who are *seeking* them and those who have *gained*.

### RICHES SOUGHT

I. Once embarked in seeking riches, men make no doubt that they will yet be rich. Dreams and reveries. Hope is good. But do even *half* of all that begin to seek wealth attain it? Better moral effect if at first men admitted that they would reach only moderate competence, and so felt that they must make happiness depend on something besides riches.

II. Men deceive themselves as to **motives and conduct** employed in urging themselves forward, believing that *laxity of honor* in their plans is *consistent with integrity* of character.

III. Men seeking wealth answer their conscience when it protests against exhausting and absorbing addiction to business by declaring how much **rest and time for public utilities** they will have **when they get rich!** But very few of them find such rest and time. Most die in the harness; for care, like tobacco, becomes a need.

IV. Where there is rigorous economy, and even stinginess, riches deceive, sometimes **by maligning motives of the generous**, sometimes **by promises of future benevolence**. But are generosity and benevolence qualities that can be extemporized? Do they naturally belong to age rather than to youth?

V. Riches deceive as to **anticipated piety**, when, having achieved, men think they will no longer need worldly instruments. But what is *late piety*? A mere insurance. It is like late peas, from a second blossoming, — meager.

VI. Riches deceive as to **happiness** which they promise.

1. Men deny themselves of it now, relying on that promise.

2. Suffer all the springs of happiness to be perverted on the promise of the future.

*Illn.* A dray horse promising himself a colt's nimbleness when he gets old!

VII. Riches deceive men's heads who seek it, respecting the **reason of things**. They do not find themselves respected, and say, "It is because we are not rich." Then they resort to slander and censoriousness of the community and of the wealthy.

VIII. Yet more are those deceived who *are* gaining riches:

1. As to their real worth;

2. As to their losses, and all that they do *not* make;

3. With respect to what will *content* them.

In all these particulars, and many more, are men deceived in *seeking* to be rich.

#### RICHES POSSESSED

I. Tend to increase ambition and to undervalue liberality. Fact, that few men — *very few* — grow benevolent in the ratio of their wealth. Very solemn, in view of all their promises.

**II.** Riches tend to substitute **money** power for **moral** power, *i. e.*, pervert moral sense. Equally true of men as individuals and as a class. Riches especially deceive respecting right and wrong in public affairs.

**III.** They multiply **cares** and **temptations**. They are adverse to spirituality. ("How hardly," — Matt. 19: 23; Mark 10: 23.) Men find it hard to rise above custom — their own or that of others.

**IV.** Look at the question from the standpoint of a **dying bed**, with the mind clear and the conscience quick. Consider in the light of *the other world*.

**In view of all this,**

**I.** Riches, then, are **not to be sought inadvisedly**, or without caution.

*Illn.* Going through an infected district; army entering an enemy's country.

**II.** Especially is **sudden** wealth not to be sought. The discipline of economy essential.

**III.** Moral and **domestic life**, as safeguards, should go *along with* a man's daily struggle for competence.

**IV.** He who is *truly Christian* while seeking and earning riches is more a saint than the closet can make any man. When one is in unbounded enterprise, and in the whirl and delirium of business, ought he not to take heed?

"What shall it profit a man," etc.

## XI

# EQUITY, The LAW of WEALTH

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*A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent. . . . He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him. — Prov. 28: 20-22.*

OF what has New York been more full during the last week than of all other things? Of the fluctuations in values, the revolutions of fortune, the bankruptcy of some men and the vast reduction of others' fortunes. Not even a civil war just on the eve of sublime consummation could maintain its interest in Wall and William streets.

Such summary dealings of commercial law with transgressors are not infrequent. Several times in my life have I witnessed it, at periods of not far from ten years. Young men entering on business life ought not to suffer such history to pass unwatched, and without reaping great benefits, both moral and commercial.

Note such facts as these:

1. The first step is a **desire of riches**, not only sudden, but out of all proportion to any equivalents rendered.

2. Next, the abandonment of regular **industry** in the hope of fortune by *luck*.

3. Then, the growth of **the excitement** until a rational and sensible man gives himself up to extravagant ex-



pectations and inordinate wishes. The desire of wealth, in moderate degrees, and under moral control, not only is not wrong, but is a means of moral influence; not so with the artificial access of greed.

4. Now comes in the substitution of **diseased hope** for sober calculation. This is the root of gambling. At this point begins the "evil eye," — a greedy and unscrupulous eye.

5. The augmentation of fortune, not by the augmentation of value, but by **fictitious value** attributed. Here men think they are rich. At their *own count* they are so.

6. The consent to use and help put upon the market **commercial bubbles**, *i. e.*, fraudulent mines, companies upon companies, etc. The most ingenious appeal to the credulity and avarice of people.

7. The stepping aside of knowing ones, leaving the gullible to bear the loss of stocks which turn to dust — and not gold dust, either.

8. The whole disgusting game of **sharp practice**, combinations and cliques, deceit and dishonesty — every keen, prying, dishonorable act that shall help one by hindering another.

9. **Spurious fortunes.** Men are fairly confounded with the number and size of fortunes. You scarcely meet a man who cannot point out some lucky one. The inexperienced come to believe that, alone of all things on earth, riches are not subject to law, but to luck. This man was worth a few hundreds, and in six months he was worth hundreds of thousands. That man has made money on stocks. He went in with a thousand and came out with a hundred thousand. That other man has made his incalculable riches in oil. The income of that last year's poor man is a thousand a day. One says, envyingly, "I would be willing to

retire on that man's income for a single year as a sufficient fortune." Young men scarcely bearded, with ineffable satisfaction, deem themselves "fixed for life."

10. Now men begin to live as if they were rich. Some go to extravagant hotels and rush into wasteful expenditure through ostentatious and vulgar luxuries. Others buy and furnish palatial houses. Others expend upon horses and equipage lavish sums. New riches, like new wine, ferment, and both are apt to burst their bottles.

11. In the July meadows, rank grow the grasses. The red-top nods to the herd's grass, the herd's grass patronizes the red-topped clover, the daisy and dock bow in compliment, and all is cheerful, — till the steady tread of the old farmer approaches, with stroke on stroke of the hidden scythe, when, in one moment, dock, daisy, grass, and weed all go down and roll over to wilt in one swath together.

**All flesh is grass.** In the morning it groweth up and flourisheth; in the evening it is cut down and withereth.

Last week was an "oven." The **disappearing of fortunes** is even more rapid than their mushroom growth. Men worth half a million yesterday are not worth a cent to-day. Properties called at 250 last week are rated at a humble 50 this week.

☞ You will find men bankrupt, ready to demonstrate that their calculations were all sound and that **if** — ah, yes, *if* is a great supplanter! It vexes human wisdom and mars a thousand plans. Oh, what a dropping of rich men! The whole ground is covered with them, like plums stung with curculio.

**In view of this picture:**

Young men, first misled as to the laws of economy, do not believe that **there is a law**. They regard revulsions

as earthquakes, against which no man can take precaution, whirlwinds, etc. It is desirable that men should know that the earning of property is regulated by laws as definite, comprehensible, and irreversible as any other natural laws, and supplemented with pains and penalties, so that transgression and retribution are invariably joined.

**I. Wealth** is the product of **skill** and **equity**. There is a fundamental equity that rules commerce. It is the law of equivalents. Earnings are in proportion to the value impressed upon objects of commerce. The two sources of value are *Production* and *Distribution*.

1. *Production* consists either in bringing into being natural products, or by knowledge and skill working these products into conditions in which they minister to higher wants. Value in general is measured by the quantity and quality of the mind force employed in production.

*Illns.* Digger of ditch; builder of fort. The rearing of a crop of potatoes; the bringing this crop three weeks earlier to market.

This is the law which makes a difference between skilled and rude labor; between the artist and the artisan; between those who work with the head and those who work with the hands only, or between professional men and laborers. Thus,

a. The law follows the quantity and quality of labor bestowed.

b. It conforms to equity; the *equivalent* in earnings for what you put into a service is just and right — it is earnings.

2. *Distribution*. The same law here. The amount and quality of mind put into labor of distribution de-

termines, as a general thing, what equivalents you are entitled to. If you go to remote manufactories and to many markets, bring home various goods, study their fitness to the convenience of customers at all seasons of the year, you have earned profits by a just and fair equivalent of service rendered. It is equity. <sup>1</sup> The finer the want you supply, and the finer the skill you employ, the higher your wage should be.

*Illn.* Prices of art. "Fancy prices" are a simulation of the same, based perhaps on desirability of goods as influenced by fashion, etc.

Here, then, is the foundation law on which wealth is to be built:

1. Those who believe and follow it are sure of results.
2. Those who rush over and across it will, at regular periods, be brought up by the penalty of violated law.
3. This is the *test* of that "haste to be rich," etc.

## II. Speculation.

1. What is speculation? It is a venture based on calculations of a future market. Except in magnitude, all business is speculative.

2. What is right and what is wrong speculation?
  - a. Speculations based on real calculations are right.
  - b. Those left to mere chance or luck are wrong.
  - c. The perilousness of speculation lies in the inability of most men to deal with a problem so large, by reason of *ignorance* of the elements which go into the problem; the extreme *uncertainty* of them; the *magnitude* of operations.

Finally, then, note that:

1. Luck and chance have little to do with the average accumulation of wealth. Will you venture on them?

2. The homely virtues are the best yet, even for the gathering of riches.

3. No business is prosperous in which the man himself is not built up as much as his fortune.

4. While laying up wisely here, what are you doing for the other world? Its life is larger; its interests are greater, etc.

## XII

### IMAGINARY HINDRANCES

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*The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets. — Prov. 22: 13.*

REPETITIONS of ideas and phrases show that several collections of these proverbs were brought together. See 20: 28 and 28: 10, 11.

1. **A lazy man's reason** for not working for the world: A lion in the way; that is, some insuperable difficulty or danger. And you shall find this to be true to life to-day. Says Franklin, "A man that is good at making excuses is good for nothing else."

The lion in winter is *Cold*; in summer, *Heat*. It is lion, be it hill or valley. The lazy man **will have his lion**. He does not thank you to get it out of the way.

2. But though this is obviously true of lazy men, it is a truth of yet more comprehensive grasp.

*Hope* inspires men in things that are agreeable to their inclination; *fear* affects them in all things that are contrary to their wishes and feelings. Therefore there are a hundred inducements in life to self-indulgence, while there are many impediments to well-doing.

I. Few start out with a **bold and high ambition** in life. Men go along as water finds its way down hill — the next thing, and the next *easy* thing.

They dread the difficult.

They incline to the easy.

They do not put forth half their power nor use half their time.

*Illn.* Gold ores not half exhausted in mining operations because chemistry does not know how to extract. Life is even worse. The tailings, or refuse, still containing much unextracted precious metal, sometimes make up the most of life. Men will say they have good reasons for not being skilled: "Nobody to help; nobody to tell how." As if rousing up and finding out for yourself was not the very thing needed!

II. All attempts to rise from a lower plane of living to a higher have **imaginary difficulties** — *lions*.

1. A young man who has been careless, prodigal, shiftless, when moved by some new impulse to method, care, industry, hesitates and balks because of the lions in the way.

2. One who has become mixed up in company that, even if not really bad, is not good, wastes his time, fritters away his life, helps him to nothing but frivolity. Aroused, he is determined to leave these associations; yet there is the inevitable lion.

3. When one has come into difficulty by his own misdeeds, there are two ways that present themselves: the way of frank reparation, the way of concealment and falsehood. Few men have faith in truth and honesty.

4. In religious matters there seems to arise the Lion of **Belief**. Can a man believe what he pleases? Amidst the clashing of endless differences, can a man select, determine, and be sure of truth?

**Men mistake the point:**

Not called to all knowledge about religion. Called to a new, a Christian life. All that is needful for that *is* within reach, and controllable by laws of volition in belief.

Degradation of sin — need of elevation;

Divine favor to help up;

Jesus Christ the most perfect manifestation of that.

You are called to **immediate personal religious elevation**. To brood over difficulties not the wise way to attain.

5. Lion of **Uncertainty**. Shall I hold out?

Imagine a sick man reasoning as you do. "Is there any use of trying? Shall I keep well? If I remain well, what? Who can tell what he may eat or drink at the unguarded hour?" etc., etc. Some men refuse or delay to take the *means* of holding out, for fear they shall not continue.

**III.** Your being balked of good thus far must end if you are to go on to what you hope for. **Are you willing to make a strife** for a better life? If you are, What shall the effort be? When? How long? How hard?

God's Spirit and all means of help are on your side; take them! If you perish, you throw *yourself* away.



## XIII

### USE and WORTH of RESOLUTIONS

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*I am resolved what to do. — Luke 16: 4.*

THE steward was about to lose his place. It was necessary that he should form plans accordingly. He did so. I have selected this passage for that phrase, — **I am resolved.**

Frequency of the common use of the word **resolution**, — exhortations to good resolutions and confessions of broken ones.

Many are discouraged at forming any.

It is worth while to examine the nature and uses of resolutions; reasons why men break, etc.

**I.** The simplest form of a resolution is a **choice**. It is a purpose of the mind to do or not to do.

1. The very *method* by which the mind works.

2. The incalculable *number* of choices, elective or rejective, in every-day life.

3. We can scarcely conceive of rational action *except* through this power.

4. The simplest choices: *a.* Those which respect *single acts* and relate to the present time; *b.* when they respect things which are *easy*, and in accordance with our own wish, nature, and habits.

5. More complex: *a.* When they include a *period of time* and a series of events; *b.* when they relate to

*difficult* achievements which are carried out, not by volition, but by education and training.

Hence, honest persons should consider:

1. That a resolution is efficient or not according to the things which it includes.

2. That resolutions are not the less to be made by reason of this uncertainty, but are to be made with greater care and preparation, as will more fully appear from

## II. The causes of failure of resolutions.

1. *Constitutional differences* between men as to permanence of *willing*. Some have judicial and some obstinate minds, and a decree or purpose stands. Others are changeable, mercurial, run from mood to mood, and *will* is as the mood.

*Illn.* Vari-colored lights on water: Fulton Ferry. Such follow the emotion of the hour.

2. The *causes* which operated to produce conviction and resolution *cease to act*.

*Illn.* Resolution to retrace extravagance at the point of sober calculation. Difficulty amid a gay circle.

3. Resolutions made without consulting all the faculties. Often only *a part of the mind* is interested when the purpose is formed.

*Illn.* Legislature. Half the members absent. Vote taken. By and by reconsidered and reversed.

4. Resolutions fail because the *objects sought are too many*, too remote, and too dependent on uncalculated elements to be controlled by a mere resolution.

*Illn.* A man enters public life, goes to Washington with a general resolution of integrity, etc. Requires a continuity of purpose, which is lacking.

5. Resolutions fail because they respect the **final** thing, without due regard to intermediate steps or processes.

*Illn.* A man addicted to drink resolves to reform. Very well. Fails. Another ditto, but adds to it other and special resolutions as to method: abandons haunts and companions; watches and guards times and hours when temptation comes upon him; surrounds himself with helps in good company; commits himself by open declaration, etc.

A wise and efficient resolution should include all the *necessary means*, as well as the *right ends*.

6. Resolutions fail because men try to make them *substitutes for education*, training, habits. Change of disposition is possible; should be attempted. Resolution is in order; but the thing is never done by mere resolution, only by assiduous training.

*Illn.* Hasty speech, hot temper, etc.

## APPLICATION

I. There are weak and strong resolutions, — those of sentiment, those of moods, those of sympathy, etc. Bad ones do not invalidate good ones.

*Illn.* Iron balls may not pierce iron-clad when steel-pointed will.

II. Resolutions are often masks and blinds to deceive one's self, as if one were trying to do better, while in reality he is not. Such to be avoided.

III. Resolutions once made, like engineer's plans on paper, good for nothing until you begin to carry them out.

IV. The first step after resolving should be a consideration of practical means, or working steps.

**Four Queries:** Whether you do not need to form resolutions for growth, improvement?

Whether broken resolutions, instead of breeding discouragement, should not lead to the formation of better ones with better means to carry them out?

Whether men involved deeply in wickedness are beyond reformation, and consequently resolutions of amendment; or

Whether manhood and eternal life are not worth perpetual and unwearied strife?

## XIV

### WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

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*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. — Eph. 4: 11-15.*

IN this passage explicit distinction is made between the great moral ends sought by Christianity and the instrumentalities by which they are sought; and love, as usual, is the supreme test.

**I. The production of moral traits in personal character** is the end and aim of Christianity.

1. Christianity not a system of belief. Has its facts and trains of reasoning, but as mere instruments.

2. Not any ordination of a round of religious observances and duties, as if there was a benefit in them, mystic and inexplicable, as if God had surcharged any rites or powers with latent grace, which is imparted to those who handle, etc.

3. It is an educating force.

It presents the model and ideal in God.

It presents the traits and qualities which make men noble.

All of these are *universal*, and conform to reason and moral consciousness.

Let us see:

1. Reverence based on divine excellence.

2. Love based on the essential loveliness of God in Christ. Even deism admits the transcendent merit of Christ, and in making him a hero instead of divinity, bestows honor upon him.

3. Toward man, faith, equity, love. See Phil. 4:8, "Whatsoever things," etc.; 1 Cor. 13, last verses, etc.

In regard to these:

*a.* They are essential elements of true manhood.

*b.* Always have been and are still approved by the consciousness of all men, without regard to age, nation, or religion.

*c.* Churches, ordinances, ministries, may all perish and yet these will remain. Nay, though you burn the Bible itself, you do not touch the ends which it seeks to accomplish.

II. For the sake of educating men in these traits, God has inspired them to **employ various instrumentalities**.

*a.* The social principle and mutual help, *i. e.*, the Church.

*b.* Teachers of various kinds, for the sake of continuity and intelligence.

*c.* Impressive acts or ordinances. All these are instruments to an end.

1. Before Christ, these instruments were obligatory on the Hebrews.

2. It is a grand peculiarity of Christianity that it leaves men free to select their own instruments of moral culture. Nothing can be clearer than Paul's teaching in this regard, except Christ's.

3. This is not equivalent to setting all instruments aside.

*Illn.* Difference between the voluntary school system of America and the compulsory system of Prussia.

4. A wanton neglect, or disuse, is wrong for the same reason that neglect of means of health is wrong.

But whenever any one soberly, honestly, and for a good purpose would change, set aside, or alter any of the mere educating institutions of religion, he has a clear right to do it, nor does he violate command or God's spirit.

☞ The horror of some upon hearing what I said about baptism, — that men had a right to follow their own notions.

*a.* They not only may, but *must*, or else turn Roman Catholic.

*b.* Even if they follow "the Scripture command," it is their judgment of what is commanded.

But mark:

1. The **great ends** of the gospel — purity, truth, love, active zeal, devoutness, obedience — are **not changeable**. They are constant.

2. The **methods of cultivating** these are **changeable**.

*a.* Not rashly, not for the sake of change, not in negligence, nor to get rid of religious obligation, nor in contempt of the light of experience.

*b.* But when new wants arise, or new light comes with the ages, or men differ through national varieties of customs, or for any other good and sober reason, men are free from all mere institutions.

*Illn.* In civil affairs men must keep justice constant, but ways of enforcing it vary, etc.

### III. Men are laid under **obligation to religious life**,

1. Not by church authority.
2. Not from the consent of the community, nor from any degree of custom,
3. But simply and wholly because
  - a. It has a direct relation to God's authority.
  - b. The things commanded are of universal obligation on grounds of the nature of man and moral law, and the relation of man to truth and virtue.
4. In this respect there is the same obligation resting upon all men, whether "professors" of religion or not.
  - a. You are bound to obey God.
  - b. To fulfill all positive duties to God and men.
  - c. To avoid selfishness, pride, sin.
  - d. If every church on earth were corrupt, it would not remove a single obligation from you. Obligations do not spring from the authority of churches, nor do they fail when churches are unworthy.
5. If every Christian were bad and insincere, the call of God to every individual remains, — to **grow up into a perfect man**, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.



## XV

### EXCUSES for EVIL-DOING

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*A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant. . . . None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper. — Luke 14: 16-21, 24.*

1. THIS entertainer offered a thing most agreeable to men's dispositions, most friendly: his house, a banquet, good company.

2. It is evident that for some secret reason the man was not liked.

They did not wish to be his guests.

They did not care to offend.

3. If they had pursued the frank way, which would have been a declaration of enmity, it would have been inconvenient.

4. But the pretenses they offered, their ways of excusing themselves, were very poor. Had they said, "I am sick," or "I am held in prison for debt," or "I

am a soldier under orders," or "My child is dying," — but they gave *frivolous* excuses.

This parable meant to cover men's conduct towards God.

1. The Jews and the Christ are the first obvious intent.

2. But their conduct again is but a type of men's universal rejection of God's offers to them, and of their flimsy excuses. And it may fairly be said that men make frivolous excuses for the evil which they *commit*, and foolish excuses for the good which they *omit*. In general, **men's reasons for moral delinquencies are poor**, and unworthy of their judgment or of their hearts.

I. In regard to *evil habits*. How men little by little fall into them. What the honest way would be — admit, not justify or excuse.

1. Men's commonest faults are those of *language*:
  - a. Railing, and bitter tongue;
  - b. Swearing;
  - c. Obscenity;
  - d. Backbiting, slander under name of criticism.
2. *Evil company*:
  - a. That which leads to idleness, even if good-natured;
  - b. That which leads to neglect of moral nature;
  - c. That which would break up good habits;
  - d. That which teaches and seduces to evil indulgences.

*Excuses*:

- (1.) "It is agreeable." — So are many poisons.
- (2.) "They are good friends." — No one is that harms.
- (3.) "Must have *some* company." — Bad, worse than none.

(4.) "Cannot break away." — Could, if worldly honor or fortune were offered as a recompense. But you secretly like your evil company, even though your conscience, your judgment, may be against it. There is *something in you* that is pleased by it — pride, vanity, lust, — something!

3. *Minor evils:*

a. Bad temper, irritableness. "Nerves." Should be controlled.

b. Stinginess. "Economy." There is a duty of economy, but this is not inconsistent with generosity.

*Illn.* What if men should plead for freckles, warts, limping rheumatism, catarrhs, etc., by trying to make them seem artistic adornments!

4. Doing evil things, though within pale of the law.

a. Adulterations: — "The customer is well enough pleased."

b. False weights. — "The intrinsic value of the article gives fair enough equivalent."

c. Liquor distilling and selling. — "Others will if I don't, so I may as well take the profit." Would you lie and steal on such grounds?

d. Tippling. — "It harms only me." Is not that enough? But *does* it harm only you?

*Illn.* One thread in linen fabric rots; whole piece is weakened.

*Illn.* One strand in cable gives out; weakens the whole; in storm, snaps; ship is lost.

II. Excuses given for using the selfish instincts all life long, and not the moral.

**Two styles of manhood:** Which will you choose? For the lower, self-indulgence is the only reason, and that is no valid excuse.

III. What excuses can any man reasonably give for

1. Rejection of Christ?
2. Perversion of all moral sentiments?
3. Subverting all grand ends of human life, which should constantly tend away from animal grossness and toward God?
4. Venturing into the darkness of death unprepared, without compass or pilot?

See the coming storm — no captain.

Hear the thunders — no security.

## XVI

### HOW to BREAK OFF SINS

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[Read *Jonah*.]

Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity. — *Daniel 4 : 27.*

THE HISTORY. — Advice; the admirable nature of it. How it worked in Nineveh. *Jonah.*

#### I. Men are not able to go on in sins unchecked.

1. Their own moral sense is offended.
2. Their friends, and the influences of Christian society.
3. Providences which startle and alarm.
4. Special influences of the divine Spirit.

#### II. Man's method of reformation.

1. Some hope to reform sinful lives by *letting* their sins run out — expect to outgrow them.

a. Like putting out fire by letting it alone.

b. True, some sins belong to a special age in life, but the *spirit* of sinning is left behind.

2. The method of *covering up*, of undervaluing power of evil; the palliating, excusatory style.

*Illn.* This is like burning pastilles in an infected room. It covers the odor, but does not kill the poison.

3. By waiting for some grand *influence*, a power of the Spirit, which shall do it *for* them.

*Illn.* Lumbermen roll logs in winter into streams and dry waterways, expecting that melting snow and spring rains will form a current which will sweep them all out.

But sometimes no freshet comes. Then what?

4. By *resolutions*. A resolution is simply a purpose, a determination.

☞ Its efficiency depends on the moral quality of the faculties from which it issues. Generally fugitive — “morning cloud.”

*Illn.* Sins are like Indians; resolutions, like infantry on the plains.

a. Too weak, and captured sometimes.

b. If strong, enemy runs, hides, scatters, gone; but he'll come back again!

c. Must slay, or take prisoner.

5. *Reformation in emergency*, when men's sins take hold on them. Lost place by drink. Dishonesty brings shame. Indulgence leads to exposure.

a. Now it is only fear that works, and not moral sense. It makes no difference if fear is *first* motive, if only it really rouses up the soul; but if it *stays* fear, then remission of the emergency will bring hope of impunity.

b. This was Pharaoh's repentance. The word of God uses emphatic language to describe such cases:

(2 Pet. 2 : 21, 22) “Sow that was washed, returned to her wallowing in the mire,” etc.

6. By *breaking off evil, but filling its place with nothing good*.

a. Bad company, but nothing instead of it.

b. Very active and exciting wickedness, but taking on no corresponding activity in good. There is a vacuum, or void.

III. Now turn to God's Word, and see **the Divine method**. Break off your sins *by righteousness*. Right life is the cure of a wicked life. *Positiveness in good cures evil*.

1. *Faults*, even of disposition, are not cured by direct attack so much as by counterpoise of good qualities.

Temper;

Cruelty;

Selfishness;

Envy.

2. *Vices*, especially, are seldom cured by negative treatment. They require a deep movement of the whole soul in the other direction.

3. The worse a man has been, the *better* should he become. He should love most who has been forgiven most. See Luke 7:41.

4. *Turn to God*. Sin is deadly. The work is great. Alone you cannot do it.

5. Make a *whole work* of it. Be born again! Be resolute, prompt, in earnest, and instant.

Run, as from fire in a house!

Strive, as in the day of battle!

## XVII

### PERSONAL REFORMATION

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*When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation. — Matt. 12: 43-45.*

THIS parable had a primary reference to the Jewish nation. It has certainly a clear application to individuals. The Jews had cast out idolatry. They had received back Pharisaism, which was sevenfold more destructive to sweet-heartedness than idolatry had been. They had become confirmed in evil.

But there is another than the historical and national application. There is a personal application for us that is more important.

1. Evil is personified. It is as if all a man's sins, vices, and guilt formed the essential attributes of an evil spirit.

2. That spirit has by some divine power been cast out.

3. Then, by a figure, he is represented as wandering in desolate places, disconsolate, hankering for old home.

4. What he finds when coming back:



No tenants;

Clean;

Adorned, *i. e.*, all ready for the old spirit again!

5. "Then goeth he and taketh seven other spirits." Why seven? It is the symbol of a full and complete thing. The Hebrews used *seven* to signify a perfect thing; *forty* as signifying great numbers, as we do *a hundred*.

"Take possession," *not to be easily dispossessed*.

**I. Men who are living in the practice of great sins of disposition and of action frequently have a remission:**

Sickness;

Great calamities;

Observation of others' overthrow; or

Clear light of truth upon the conscience.

**II. Men tend to fall upon a specious, but most dangerous, course: viz., a mere abstinence from evil.**

1. When men are harnessed to some business which will fill up time and employ all their energy, this kind of negative reformation may last, yet only in such cases.

2. But the scriptural doctrine is the true and safe one: "Cease to do evil; learn to *do well*." To stop short of this is not safe. A house "empty, swept, and garnished" — a mere beautifying and cleansing of the heart is not enough. It must be *occupied*.

**III. The remission and reformation of men who have been free from sins of passions, but have fallen through pride, selfishness, ambition, worldly-mindedness, things all intensely secular, must go on to active piety, or they will stop upon mere pharisaism, — a *face* enameled with propriety, but having no depth, moral power, goodness, likeness to God.**

Such men often become:

- a. Contented and self-conceited;
- b. Bitterly censorious of others. No man, into whose soul the iron of self-condemnation has really entered, can other than pity evil in men.
- c. Boastful and ambitious in the artificial virtues; *i. e.*, church observances, days, and ordinances.

☞ Last estate worse than the first. "Publicans and harlots shall enter the kingdom before you."

IV. But if one who has been **sinful in passion** has a remission, other considerations come in.

Under these are classed:

- a. All sins of dissipation; energy of pleasure-seeking. Whole force moving that way. Two elements, vanity and appetite, the keynote.
  - b. Sins of indulgence, lust, intemperance, gluttony, and the like.
  - c. Those who have lived by the excitement of avarice, craft, dishonesty, knavery, swindling plans, etc.
1. Sin of passions works physical degeneration, which makes craving for stimulation excessive.
  2. With remission, the current of life slacks. Men addicted to intense excitement fall into listless hours of *ennui* by reaction.
  3. Nothing so discouraging and so unbearable as *nothing to do* to a strong, impetuous nature.
  4. Sudden breaking up of evil destroys familiar roads on which *habit* travels.
- Illn.* All old companionships. Social element is like fire on the hearth. Reformation puts it out. Sense of solitariness.

5. The *sense of uselessness*. No place in the world. Conscience turning against a man, he has terrible hours of self-condemnation — *humiliation without humility*.

6. Men who have done evil and intermit find themselves under the *suspicion of society*.

☞ Law, like an armed rampart, defends all *inside*; sweeps with destructive fire all *outside*.

Society measures men by different standards. Is lenient to those who make no pretensions to good; but severe when men assume to stand on virtue.

All these reasons act to make **negative reformation imperfect and short-lived**.

Now behold the practical wisdom of **Christ's command**:

1. Repent;
2. Confess;
3. Openly go over by baptism from one side to the other;

4. Do works meet for repentance.

*This is founded in nature.*

1. That is true of each sin which is true of a course.
2. We may believe that few who follow evil greedily have not had intermissions, made efforts to reform. We see why so few have succeeded.

3. To break off successfully from an evil course a man must *organize a new life*. Aims, motives, occupations, must be open, avowed, so as to involve all restraints and assume all responsibilities. The Church does not want *stowaways*, but an avowed company.

4. A man who reforms and does not go on into piety is like a fruit-tree with all the top cut back for grafting, but whose grafts do not take. Old wood shoots out again, or else the shock kills it.

## SPECIAL DIRECTIONS

1. Immediate and thorough renunciation of evil.  
*Clear out the whole!*

2. Let it be *known*, *i. e.*, if your evil has been known, and as far as it has been known.

3. Set out for change of *heart*. Take God's kingdom by violence. God's help is more than all others.

4. Go to your physician; *i. e.*, friend, parent, minister, *while you are wicked* and are thinking to change, not after waiting to see how it will turn.

## XVIII

### To the **UTTERMOST**

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*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. — Heb. 7: 25.*

**I.** A DECLARATION concerning Christ placed as the avenue and door to God.

**II.** The declaration of **willingness to save**. This is final salvation, and all going before that is necessary to it, — pardon; inspiration; guidance.

**III.** The reason given: “He ever liveth to intercede.” Different persons put emphasis at different places in Christ’s career:

1. In his earthly life;
2. In his death;
3. In his living person now.

But Christ is a *One*, and each period is separate only in our contemplation. His life carried within it the sanative element of death. His death took hold of the future; his ever-living state of glory includes both life and death.

#### **IV. What is intercession ?**

1. Cannot specialize without destroying the figure.
2. But the general thing which mind conceives is correct. It is an idea received through the imagination.

V. The declaration that he can save to the uttermost.

It may be *universality* that is here signified; it may be *thoroughness*. But whether the one or the other is here meant, the truth is that both are included in Christ's administration of mercy.

I. **Universality.**

(1.) To *all periods of time*, down to the end of the world. When all science shall be perfected and all temperaments understood, men will need salvation just as much as now.

(2.) To *all classes of men*:

a. No excluding "election";

b. No decrees of "reprobation," except those which men themselves execute;

c. *No limitation as to power*, etc. "Limited atonement"!

d. Belongs to all conditions and classes; young and old; those that are rich and those that are poor. Men cannot be so circumstanced as not to sin, to need pardon, etc.

2. **Thoroughness.**

But *uttermost* may include a further individual idea, viz.,

(1.) An ability to save in each case by rectification to the uttermost of the *whole nature*.

(2.) To the uttermost, as being able to cope with the *worst* and strongest cases.

I. Let us **imagine examples**:

The Saviour upon earth, visible. Opens an infirmary. Receives applications.

1. One, very young. Must be armed against all vicissitudes and changes in life.

2. One aged, and habits fixed; hard to change.

3. One extremely ignorant. Religion all a maze.  
Are you conscious of sin?  
Do you wish to be free?

4. "I am a very great sinner in many ways. Should be ashamed to tell all. Very bad externally, but worse within. Oh, my life has been terribly abused. Is Christ able to save me?"

Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

5. Liar and thief: no one will trust.

6. Adulterer and harlot: groveler in vice.

7. Gambler: what sins against men!

8. Drunkard. Alternations of hope and despair.

9. A gospel-hardened sinner. This is worst of all.

a. What I have gone through!

b. Yes, even you *can*; but you must say "*will*."

II. On the one hand, think of the wonderful glory of such a Saviour, and on the other the strange illusion of men, sin and suffering rolling on, this divine remedy right above, and men dying without it!

1. How many are longing to break their chains to-night, and do not!

2. How many suffering torments already, enough every week to make a hundred deaths, with no Saviour!

3. How many sick and dying turn to stoicism, despairing, dying, without mercy!

III. Christians do not enough believe that Christ can save *to the uttermost*. It would nerve them to nobler exertion for men.

## XIX

### NEAR, yet AFAR OFF

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*And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question. — Mark 12: 34.*

1. THE scene and occasion.
2. His question and Christ's answer.
3. Responsive moral consciousness of the young scribe: the knowledge and honest admission.
4. While the charm was on him he was near, but he belonged to a class. His habits, which like a tide flowed out, set back again. The exciting cause was Christ. That removed, and care and pleasure, pride and occupation, took the place of this moral mood.

No further account. The silences of Scripture have in them something impressive.

*Illn.* Dropping a stone in dark pit of Mammoth Cave — no sound; sense of unfathomable depth.

**I.** In a Christian community there are **few who do not know enough** to save them and **who have not moral sensibility.**

1. Great doctrinal knowledge not essential.
2. Specialties of choice among antagonistic sects not necessary. No man called upon to choose a church but a *Saviour*.



3. The amount of knowledge for a ripe Christian is great; but one can "set up" in a Christian life with but very little.

4. Men know —

That they are not living right;

That they are not prepared to die;

That they are not worshiping or obeying God;

That a Saviour has died;

That they have not accepted his service;

That they have power to do it;

That it would be better for themselves if they did.

**II.** Men have tasted experimentally enough of every moral experience or quality required of them to show that it is in their power to become Christians.

1. Sense of sin.

2. Repentance in all variations, and change of purpose and life; *i. e.*, *conversion*.

3. Faith — living for the invisible.

4. Subordination to another will — obedience, submission.

5. Continuity of life and organized purpose — the very trait of business life.

**III.** Men perform many of the hardest functions, experience many Christianlike feelings, and yet **do not consummate** them.

Take some analogous cases:

1. First, the practical one of a business man who never succeeds. He is smart, does many very shrewd things, often works very hard and faithfully; yet does not know how to organize these things into steady and symmetrical life. He comes near, and yet fails of wealth.

2. As an intellectual illustration, take the professional student who is genuinely interested here and there, but who never concentrates his efforts and so never accomplishes the thorough equipment for his life-work that he thinks he is seeking.

3. So, too, in the moral realm. There are often men of exceeding good single qualities who fail to establish a good character. They enjoy prayers, have bursts of worship, show even at times active joy in Christian truth, and in the disclosure of Christian experience; but they do not coördinate these means of grace nor take them home to practical influence upon their own characters.

IV. Sometimes social influences, sometimes an infectious state of public feeling, will drift men right toward religion almost in spite of themselves. They are even obliged to resist. And yet they do not come in.

*Now let us estimate:*

I. That it would be **easy for some** to be Christians, and even easier than to maintain a discordant state.

II. That all the **good elements** are of **no final use**, if they are not brought to a **definite end**.

*Illn.* Captured soldiers in prison — South — Richmond — mining — almost out, but not quite. *Must complete*, and make the dash.

III. An assembly of good qualities may be invalidated, made useless, **for want of very little**.

Structure of watch: useless without some single pivot.

Staple to chain, lacking, invalidates all the chain's strength.

IV. There are many men engaged in **business which they know to be wicked** — liquor, etc., or in the use of wicked practices in a right business, who lock up their moral nature on purpose. Not ready to yield to it.

V. There are many men living in **open or secret sins**, whose conscience condemns and who, under all excuses for themselves and faultfinding with Christians, know that they are wrong. These men have an energy of moral feeling enough if developed to break their bonds as Samson did his.

VI. **Almost saved and yet lost** is the most pitiable of all deaths. The difference between *almost* and *wholly* is so little that if men would consider it they would consummate, etc.

The most piteous failure is that by an *almost!*

## XX

### GOD in MAN

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*But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. — John 4: 14.*

*Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. — John 7: 28.*

#### **Religion is designed :**

1. To establish the power or life of man in his higher faculties in the ascendancy and activity of his moral nature.

2. To make this life spontaneous, dominant, and perpetual.

I. It is *no part of the Christian ideal to fashion in man a negative excellence, i. e., a goodness which represents absence of evil.* This is the range of animal life, the ox, the horse, the dog, the bird. Man is distinguished from these, not solely by the variety of his endowments, but by the peculiar fruitfulness and activity of his nature.

It is man's distinctive character to *grow*, and he is endowed with all those tendencies of force belonging to the faculties which provide for that.

But these being unregulated and acting ignorantly fill human life with excessive disproportions and various evils. In attempting to set one's self free from them,

men resist and avoid evil, as if that were the whole need of human character — not to be evil.

It inverts the divine order. *To be positively good, active, and fruitful, is the creative design.* Man perverts it and regards it enough to be not bad. As if *not to hate* were equivalent to loving!

Not to be selfish, greedy, gluttonous, or a drunkard, not to speak falsehoods, to be cruel, to be supplanting, etc., — what are these? A vine without disease — or grapes! A field without weeds — or harvests!

## II. But there is a sublimer ideal in Scripture.

1. **Man is to be a creator**, of positive forces, energetic and effect-producing. He is to think, plan, achieve. He is to be the author of continuous effects — a **cause**, full, multifarious.

2. This activity is to **begin within**. It is to reside in the moral nature. In other words, Christ meant to give to the part of the human soul nearest to God and furthest from matter the greatest degree of activity and power. *True religion is the ascendancy in the soul of the educated moral sensibilities*, self-generated, spontaneous, “springing up,” and needing no supply.

**III. This controls the ordinary external motives** of goodness derived from external pressure.

1. Man is affected by physical conditions. They do not develop moral force. Something else must.

2. Man is affected by the civil conditions into which he is born.

3. By the manners and customs of social life.

4. By the intentional pressure of schools, philosophies, religions, churches, and the public sentiment which they bring.

a. All of these are useful, indispensable.

b. Yet all together fail to touch that which is the very criterion — the higher moral nature. That is developed, not from without inward, but from within outward.

c. This, *moral manhood*, comes from the direct touch of the divine nature on ours.

Brooding is one figure;

Generation is another;

Grafting is another; also

Emancipation, as if the moral sense were shut up in the flesh.

And all these mean one and the same thing, viz., the *power of God to develop the human soul* to new life.

But we are not left in general knowledge. The specific effect of God's Spirit is given.

**It is Love.** The royalty of love is God.

The increased knowledge of this as the race ripens toward it.

#### APPLICATION

1. All *mere philanthropy* is but salving man's trouble. It is seeking happiness, not goodness.

2. All *social reformations* can be only precursors or auxiliaries. Society will not generate moral forces, but will be developed by them.

3. While the most popular forces are those which relieve and reform men's external state, *the highest forces* are those which *are secretly and directly working at the seat of moral power*: the mother and the father (and in that order); the schoolmaster and the preacher (and in that order, if the teacher knows his calling).

4. It does not follow that all other means should be slighted, and technical teaching and preaching be ex-

clusively used. Reading itself, although voluntarily sought, becomes powerless, except men have spheres in which this *new force* is developed and incarnated.

Cant about "preaching the gospel." The gospel is Christ, *the power of God unto salvation*.

5. Solemn meaning of our Lord, "*Ye must be born again.*"

## XXI

### LOST OPPORTUNITIES

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*For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. — Heb. 12: 17.*

1. THE history of Esau and Jacob.
2. Covenant blessings. Gen. 27: 28, 29.
  - a. Prosperity; b. superiority or rulership.

I. The history of both sides of this episode cannot bear the measurement of the moral sense of our day. It furnishes us a test and gauge of *growth*, from the best men of that early day, when the cunning of the animal entered into the policy of the best men, to the present higher moral intelligence.

II. The fact, at the bottom, stripped of all feeling and its color, was that the birthright carried by law a train of benefits which a man by his volition might alienate, but could not by volition repair.

The same thing in our own experience. A man may resign a governorship, he may give up the presidency of an institute, he may sell valuable franchises, etc.

III. None of those pleas which may extenuate the act or create a favorable opinion of Esau would remedy the matter.



1. That he dropped the blessing from hands faint with hunger and fatigue. *But he dropped it!*

2. That he meant by craft to regain. *Took risks,* and lost.

3. That he did not understand its value.

*Illn.* A man sells his farm with a gold mine on it; or, better yet, oil.

4. That Jacob was mean, wicked, deceitful — a supplanter. That touches Jacob, but does not relieve Esau.

5. In short, it was one of those cases in which an **irreparable act was done**, one, moreover, that did not show its full result till long after, and that went on multiplying its fruit of evil more and more to Esau's dying day.

Now the **same law of conduct yet prevails**. The birth-right of man is health, prosperity as a reward of industry, social happiness, civil power, and priesthood each in his own family.

*a.* Men cannot void these by a word-act, but they may by a course of action.

*b.* When they have done this, it is irreparable. No enlightenment, no repentance will essentially change it.

That you may know beforehand, that you may avoid and avert what cannot be repaired, let me point out some cases:

**I. Youth** is the natural **period of education** in all its range. The whole condition is adapted to it. Perceptiveness and curiosity abound; the youth is imitative, compliant; but all advantages which nature gives to that period end with it.

*a.* Education to *industry and skill*. Seems hard at the time; it is golden. Neglected.

*b.* Education in *ideas and facility of thought*. No man overtakes a certain something which comes from early and thoroughbred training, etc. Education is not a mere accumulation; it is development of power of faculty.

*c.* The education of the *affections*. Stores of memory, the very colors of life come from it.

*d.* Moral sentiment, deep, religious feeling in youth, hangs the soul full of influences, life-long — unattainable afterwards. There is to every period of life a stage of growth and power of education that one may measurably gain by subsequent struggle, but it does not reach back, nor have the power of early attainment.

*Illn.* Delay of train; four hours late; has got only to New Haven; ought now to be in New York, etc. Goes on. Gets there, but the four hours are lost and can never be overtaken.

## II. Youth is the period of delicacy and purity.

Once sold, never regained. May be sinned against without being entirely forfeited. By repentance deterioration may be checked and go no farther, but the danger is that vice and crime may so affect the soul that nothing can ever in this life restore it.

*Illn.* Gash on face heals, but scar remains.

III. But not youth alone is reckless and wasteful of birthrights. A man may sell his *health* by

1. Ignorant over-taxation of the brain;
2. Ignorant exposure;
3. Ignorant indulgence in diet;
4. Indulgence in illicit pleasures.

*Illn.* Plum-trees. Worm at root. Canker on branch.


**IV. Reputation.** Cause and effect.

1. When a man has it, no idea of its benefits; like air.
2. When it is gone, it cannot be regained; if injured and broken, difficulty of mending; and if it be mended, it is a doubtful piece of reparation.

Such instances might easily be multiplied, but you can do that as well as I.

**V.** As a general truth, **each period of life prepares for the next** — childhood for youth, youth for manhood, manhood for meridian, mid-life for age; **nor can any man make up** in a later period the radical losses of a former, and yet reap all of the later period too.

**VI.** The **fearful warning** which this raises.

 Human life stands as a witness pointing to the future. Redeem the time *now!* Lost time is *lost!*

1. No hope for those who are crippled? *Better enter halt and maimed than be cast into hell-fire.*
2. To those whose life is before them.

## XXII

### COUNTING the COST

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*Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? — Luke 14: 28.*

NEITHER was our Saviour, nor were his apostles, deemed safe moral teachers by the church of their own day. He did not take enough heed to usages. He introduced unusual subjects of discourse. He took a latitude of remark not warranted by approved example. And above all, he was an exciting preacher. Had there been newspapers in his day, I presume he would have been called a sensational preacher, for his sermons did produce profound excitement. Men went to hear him that went to no other teacher. Men who never dreamed of the beauty of religion in the synagogue saw it in Him. Where he came crowds gathered. Though his manner was simple, and his discourse was winnowed to the very wheat, yet he inflamed the people with such ardor that both their safety and his own required him to withdraw from too much publicity.

Among so many, great differences of understanding would be found. Some would come from curiosity; some from sympathy; some from superstition; some from ambition; some, a few, from hopes of a higher life.

It was not to dissuade men from a religious life that he employed the parable of our text, but to induce men

to sift their motives, and to be earnestly engaged. Those who came for miracles, for bread, for mere sympathy in a fashion, needed a deeper foundation than these to build upon.

The figure, **house-building**. It would seem as if then, as now, this was a deceiving enterprise! Before beginning, **how should the owner reckon?**

1. What use he would build for, shed, home, or palace.
2. Of what magnitude and cost.
3. Whether he has the means in proportion, and whether it is a whim likely to wear out, or an earnest purpose.

Let us consider **what must enter into a truly Christian life.**

1. It is *not enough that you join company with religious societies* and observe their rules.

*Illn.* Churches are schools. A man may go to college with other ends in view than study, etc.

2. It must begin in *repentance of sin*.
  - a. This, of course, requires reformation of morals where men indulge in known sins.
  - b. But it requires, also, a full consciousness of the liability of every single faculty to evil — a conviction of *sinfulness* as well as of specific sins.

3. It must include *faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*.
  - a. The need of Divine help to inspire strength and sustain to the end.

b. The conscious presence and sympathy of the Saviour.

c. The purpose and aim to live for the life to come, and not for that which now is.

I propose that you should make figures on this subject to-night.

The willingness to sit down, to take time, to bring your whole life under a moral calculation, will be of aid

and benefit. *Not* thinking destroys thousands, — leaving everything to society, habit, daily current.

You should calculate not merely one side, and that of the difficulties. Take into view the obstructions and the helps.

1. Think carefully whether you really wish to *live an easy and neuter life*, drifting with the current of society, without positive habits, without real spiritual life, aiming only to please and be pleased, to secure notice, applause, social gayety — without the highest manliness. How will this serve you:

In youth?

Middle age; trials?

Old age; decay, and death?

2. Whether the *ambitions and remunerations* of business, political and professional, life are *enough*.

a. Variable elements of success. Sustainment in adversity.

b. The end of life — its memories and its hopes.

3. Those who have *bad habits* — desirability of help to control these destroyers.

a. Conviviality.

b. Vices and lapses.

4. Those who *despond*, and who need stimulus of encouragement and right inspiration under:

a. Difficulty of leaving associates;

b. Difficulty of correcting settled evils;

c. Difficulty of changing selfishness, pride, etc., to the higher and finer grade of life-motives.

☞ **Count the cost** — not only of building a Christian character and life, but also of **not building!**

## XXIII

### WHAT IS RELIGION?

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*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. — Phil. 4: 8.*

I AM impressed, in reading this passage, with the scope of religion. It is not merely a kind of excellence, but *all* kinds. It is not only a degree of excellence, but *all* degrees, whatsoever. The church may develop in its members certain excellences; and these are religious. So are all real excellences that arise in the household, and in schools of literature. **Religion is the universal,** and *whatever thing is good* in any degree or in any sphere on the whole earth belongs to it. It claims whatever manhood develops — all manhood!

It may be possible to institute a comparison between the peculiar *sorts* and *degrees* of excellence produced by religious institutions and secular institutions, but not between the *excellences* produced by art, or culture, or social influence, and those developed by religion. *All true excellence is religious* just as far as it is genuine, and *every right thing* that men tend to do or feel anywhere is *obligatory* upon those who are by profession Christians.

Important consequences depend on this very simple statement and demand more illustration.

I. **Religion** is some form of the **life of the soul**. It is a state, or an activity. In either case, whether it is a disposition or an experience, it is a mental state, and cannot exist except in a living form.

1. It cannot be contained in a book,
2. Nor in a system of ideas,
3. Nor in an institution.
4. Nor can there be such a thing as conferring it, except by developing it. It cannot come as treasure is bequeathed, as honors are conferred, or as authorities of the government are bestowed. Where it is said that God creates it, it means that he does so just as he creates harvests, by inspiring men to raise, and not clouds to rain, wheat and maize.

II. The state of righteousness, the quality of the character called *religion* being fairly placed where it belongs, *next* in importance come the **instruments** by which men cultivate it. In this regard, we complain of the essential narrowness of prevalent opinions.

1. The natural world is one, first, though lowest.
2. The conditions of men in society: implying excitement; good offices; obedience; necessity for industry and remunerations of skill, etc. All are under Divine influence.

☞ Some men think God has no footing in the world except in churches!

3. All educational tendencies which bring men to the fullness of their power, and refine them.
4. All strictly moral educations. Under this head come:

The churches,  
 Their ordinances,  
 Their theologies,



Their discipline and round of duties.

I am not to be understood as undervaluing, but as defining and ranking them. They are indispensable, they are of transcendent value; yet they are but instruments by which men are helped to develop a religious state of life. The religion is in men — not in institutions.

*Illn.* I declare that grapes contain in their own selves the qualities which give all their value to that fruit.

☞ And there is no *grape* in the hothouse or cold grapery itself. Neither vine, nor fruit, nor flower can be found as an element of the houses by which they are raised, nor in the gardener who educates the vine.

So of churches and ministers. Let us review them.

1. **The Church:** What it is, and what it is not. Association of men for moral and spiritual education. This education by teaching either ideas or emotions. For this education's sake, days, services, ordinances, are to moral culture what in secular education are schools, school-rules, books and blackboards.

The Church is not "holy" in any sense of possessing moral quality, which cannot belong to any but the individual.

2. **Bible, sacraments, ordinances.**

Their true sphere: instrumental.

The superstitious notions.

### APPLICATION

**I. Religion** should not be allowed to consist in a kind of **professionalism**, — as if it were an artificial state belonging to a class, and not a development of universal human existence.

Religion would be real if every church on earth were apostate. It would be obligatory if every ordinance, book, system, were corrupted or destroyed. It springs

from the nature given to the soul, its relations to God, and its own immortality and infinity.

**II.** The **dissensions and controversies** which have filled the world, divided Christians, and brought scepticism to many natures, **have regarded, not religion, but the methods of producing it.**

1. There has been no controversy as to the beauty, superiority, or divinity of those *heart-qualities* — truth, justice, benevolence, courage, patience, love, faith, hope.

☞ The world has made up its heroes very much of the same material as its saints — the difference being in relative knowledge and skill in the use of material.

*Illn.* Just as Egyptian and Greek art came, — at the bottom.

☞ I do not remember a controversy as between a lower and a higher quality; as between one virtue and another; as between more being or less.

2. The *controversies* have raged, and do still, around the *implements* and instruments.

3. The superlative folly of seeking unity of churches, and the needlessness of seeking unity of Christians.

**III.** The growth of religion and its spread among men, are connected with the spread of its means of education; but the **spiritual life** produced is the **real test.**

*Illn.* Exporting tools to Africa is not spreading agriculture. What is *accomplished* with them?

**IV.** The **religious condition of a nation** may depend upon its abundant religious institutions; but it cannot be measured by that. Cathedrals, churches, may lie like parks of artillery in peace. It is

1. The living state of its *whole* population — not its favored ones. Would to God as in a household — not one left out!


2. The state and power of *ideas* of justice, truth, purity, benevolence.

3. Its government and laws must be judged by the same test as its religion.

**V.** The danger of the **extinction of religion from the rise of science**, etc., is not to be considered.

1. Religion stands in human nature. It *is* man, in his supreme development, and won't perish till he perishes.

2. Whatever changes may come will be in the instruments.

 New modes of education, processes of art, musical refinement, mechanical methods, scientific culture, all will have their bearing upon spiritual development, but *religion is man's best estate*, links him to God, and will live while man lives.

## XXIV

### CHRIST'S FAITH in MAN

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*And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. — Luke 24: 46, 47.*

AMONG all the renderings of the Lord's last words, this of Luke is in many respects the most remarkable. The others are a command to preach his Gospel with an assurance of his presence and blessing.

But this is an injunction to preach:—

**I. Repentance, and remission of sins;** or the doctrine that men are capable of immediate change, and of spiritual development by *release from sin*.

**II. That this susceptibility** to religious education and development **is universal**. It did not belong solely to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles.

(See Rom. 3, etc., "Is he God of the Jews only? Nay, but of the Gentiles also.")

1. The declaration of human sinfulness not a peculiarity of the Gospel.

Universal experience and recognition.

2 The grand peculiarity was the disclosure of a *remedy*.

This idea involves two elements:

- a. Divine clemency, and influence;
- b. Human capability of change, and education.

God is willing to forgive and restore;

Man is universally capable of spiritual development.

**III. All other religions are local, national. The Christian religion is universal.**

1. God is Father of the race — of all, without regard to condition or character.

2. Christ, as Saviour and educator, contemplates all time and all races.

3. And this is with hopeful and confident *faith in manhood*.

This may be further unfolded:

a. In the Gospel is found an even more solemn recognition of human wickedness.

b. But never contempt or hatred. These qualities are almost universally shown among men, but never in the words of Christ.

c. Never an undervaluing of this capacity for change, education, elevation.

☞ This confidence in men, this boldness in working for them, and this exhilarating hopefulness of human amelioration, are grand characteristics of Christianity, and are found in no other religion of the world.

**IV. Let me give special applications to this spirit of the Gospel.**

1. The **capability of each man** for reformation of morals, for the beginning of a religious life, and for growth in it. No matter how slender the moral endowments, nor how massive the passional nature, nor how

terrible the structure of habits, the most desperate sinner may become a Christian.

☞ Oh, read that wonderful narrative:

Mark 5: 1-8, 15 (Man possessed with the legion of devils, "sitting and clothed and in his right mind").

You cannot labor aright for the reformation of ignorant and vicious men till you have *faith in their restorability*. If you are discouraged

By depth of depravity,

By force of pernicious habits,

By circumstances that, like bulwarks, defend them from your approach, you will not win.

It may require time, and repetition, and all means may seem to fail; and yet, the inherent capacity of new life *is there*.

2. We recognize certain great facts:

a. That some men have but little spiritual capacity, and are children;

b. And that others are by their fixed dispositions, and by their surroundings, difficult of approach, and harder than others to be changed.

Yet it is not Christlike to separate a community into classes, and to cherish the feeling that there are *any* for whom it is not worth while to employ the means of grace.

3. Commerce is bringing the question of races before the Christian world in striking and important aspects.

a. The avarice and enterprise of the great industrial world seize the weak as instruments of toil and commerce on the plea that they are fit for nothing else.

b. Christian civilization has not saved men from arrogance of superiority. Nations play aristocrat just as individuals do, among their inferiors. We

disdain weak races. Even civilized nations treat each other with immense arrogance and conceit — France, England, America — but how much more really inferior and undeveloped peoples!

4. The *Christianity of a nation* is to be learned not from its creeds, nor from select specimens, but from its *essential spirit toward the poor and ignorant*:

Faith in their improvement;

Labor for education;

Development to Christian manhood;

Self-sacrifice for their sakes;

Security to them in laws, usages and public sentiment.

But if the poor and ignorant are given up to injustice, without pity; if their wrongs inflame no zeal; if to justify our inhumanity we plead the degradation and worthlessness of the weak, we are guilty of infidelity.

We have been brought face to face with this question in that Providence which put four million freedmen on our hands.

a. Some report one thing and some another.

b. Arguing capacity and educability. It is an insult to God and the Gospel to assume that they are not worth education and full manhood.

5. The infidelity of our day is of the letter or of the spirit.

a. Some doubt the Scriptures, but believe in the spirit of human religion.

b. Others believe in Scripture and in the Church, every iota, but do not believe in *man*.

Christ, again, says: "These things ye should have done, and not left the others undone."

6. The guilt of mistreating man.

a. *Indifference* is a neglect of the law of love. This, in its effect, *is equivalent to Hatred*.

b. Since God is the God of all, *wrong to man is wrong to Christ*, "Inasmuch as ye did it," etc.

It is by ignoring the great truth of immortality, of future development, that man is made to seem vile, ignoble, etc. A man is *more than here he seems to be*. The best part of him may be asleep yet. We are to *believe in men!* Christ's own faith in manhood is the ground of hope, for all — even degraded individuals, even weak and undeveloped peoples.



II

THE WARFARE



## XXV

### MAN'S HEART-HOUSE


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*Set thine house in order. — 1 Kings 20 : 1.*

THROUGHOUT the Bible a man's heart is spoken of as a dwelling, or a temple, or a house of some kind; and with good reason. It is quite in the spirit of Scripture to employ this analogy, and to urge upon you the duty of heart-cleaning and ordering, by the figure of a house and its surroundings.

**I.** One of the **first things** required for a good and orderly house is a **careful attention to its immediate grounds**. It is impossible to have a cleanly house when every man must wade through dirt to enter it.

In Europe you shall find offal heaps right under the windows, and paths to the door muddy. Even when not so evil, yet often great disorder and slatternliness. Gates unhinged, fence sways and leans, trees ragged, all manner of detritus collected, and too often on the side hidden most is all the wreck and remnant of crockery, of ware, utensil, rags, paper, etc.

 1. No man could persuade you that such surroundings would not have great influence within. *They would.*

2. The first step in setting a house in order is to cleanse its surroundings.

The application of this is obvious:

Men's lives too often are neglected in the same way. Whatever may be the condition of their heart, it is surrounded outside by all sorts of evil things, evil men, careless habits, moral unthrift, and scores of things which, though not perhaps evil, sinful, yet indicate a want of moral order, moral taste, sense of beauty.

All these outward things it behooves a man resolutely to clear up.

II. Consider the **structure** itself.

*A dwelling forever tends to decay.* There is gradual waste long before there comes rot. The roof grows leaky in places out of sight and forgotten. Water drops through. There is decay in the timbers. The troughs and gutters suffer in nooks and angles. The flues gather soot and grow foul. Windows are broken. Doors are shrunk or sagged. Stairs are creaky. Keys are lost and locks are useless. Though the house is in the main substantial it is out of order; and in spots it is actually decaying.

*Just so with the heart-house.* Men grow careless. Neglect and easiness take the place of vigilant watching. One duty is wholly neglected, another is slightly done. Some things are covered up, and some are positively running into sins and vices.

What would be the first step towards putting a house in order, etc?

Every minute thing and place is to be *searched* and inquired into.

III. The order of a house depends in a great degree upon its **furnishing**.

There should be symmetry and proportion of things among themselves. So of qualities. Sometimes

there is one great virtue — the rest squalid. There may be exceeding activity for the poor, and yet uncharitableness to equals and censoriousness of superiors.

The hall is in order; the parlor is in order; the rooms in which the family commonly live are carefully attended to; but the out-of-the-way rooms are full of gross negligence.

1. Thus, in things that are for the eye of others there is care, but in things that are for ourselves there is carelessness.

2. You will find it to be even more so if you examine the trunks, the drawers, and the cupboards.

Just so is it in the heart-house. And what does setting *that* house in order require?

IV. There is the **parasitic life** of a house — vermin of the heart. What if God should give it visible form! etc.

V. The **ways** in which men set their house in order:

1. They let things run for a long time, and then have a *grand clearing up*, preparatory to another season of heedlessness. So men have periods of recklessness and of reform.

2. Some put their house in order only or chiefly by *hiding*: — a rug put over threadbare carpet; chintz over soiled brocade; paint and putty where there should have been new wood; curtains and trickery of concealment.

3. Some men are always *going to*, but never quite ready to begin. Men vexed with evil habits, and neglects innumerable: — always about to, but never do.

4. A thorough housekeeper,  
A *daily* broom, cobwebs — dust — dirt;  
Water, soap, and cleansing;

Incessant arranging;  
And then *besides*, grand periodic overhauls.

VI. Thus far the house has been regarded in relation to its occupants. But certain seasons of the year, as Thanksgiving and Christmas, remind us of putting our house in order for the **reception of the loved and honored**.

1. The disinterestedness and generosity of hospitality.

2. The joy of having the house stored with all that can please — food, conveniences, games, books, good company, the parents ready, the children gathered.

But how, when the heart is expecting its very Lord and Saviour, who promises to come, and abide?

The Christian has many things to cast out.

How many things to bring in!

Would you have a house for a friend as cheerless as your heart is for Christ?

VII. Putting house in order, to **leave** it.

Solemn thoughts of dying. Text.

Appeal to men. Uncertainty of life: condition of living: heart.

*God draws near*, either in life or in death.

## XXVI

### RELIGION DEMANDS EARNESTNESS

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*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth [is gotten by] violence, and the violent take it by force. — Matt. 11: 12.*

THE figure is military. It is a campaign, a siege, a victory. The truth hidden, or expressed rather, is the **necessity of energy and power in a religious life**, and the certainty that skillful energy will succeed.

**I. Men do not and cannot come to the divine life by any natural unfolding.**

*Illn.* As their body comes to completeness. It is a result far beyond this conception of naturalism.

**II. The whole scheme of personal religion is, in another sense, a part of nature.**

1. There is nothing superfluous in a man's constitution, to be cut off.

2. Nothing supernatural in faculty and function, to be added. This is contrary to the Latin theology, by which it is held that there must be

a. A self-denial which really vacates nature;

b. Attainments which really do not belong to the human mind, but are specially created in the man of religion.

*On the contrary*, the seed-form exists at birth, and requires only

Divine stimulus.

Real earnestness in men.

III. Take notice that (1) the material world and (2) human society tend to develop the lower half of man's nature without much dependence on his conscious effort; that for the *rest* there must be found a **principle of will**. The higher range must be an education or development — not casual and incidental, but by *conscience, reason* and *purpose*.


IV. Where these are put forth there is **nothing that need hinder any one**.

1. God is open to all — belongs to all.
2. No divine plans and purposes which require any to be sacrificed.
3. No insufficiency of influence, or limitation of atoning power.

*General* amnesty offered.

Remedy, medicine for *all*.

4. But is it not true that there is a special influence exerted upon some and left unexerted upon others?
  - a. The summer is universal. Men specialize it.
  - b. For special work there may be special call, but other than this all are called alike.

5. But it is not true that *organization varies in efficiency and sensibility*, to such a degree that the same influence becomes a very different thing to different persons? Yes;  but this only says that in moral things as in intellectual, *gifts differ*.

*Illn.* Free republic. Laws and government for all — *citizenship*. Yet some are rich, and some are poor;



some come to office and honor, and some do not; some are educated and influential, etc.

So in the Commonwealth of Israel. Citizenship is open to all. The condition varies infinitely.

**V. Reasons of difficulty:**

Not nature;

Not God;

But *your contentment* with lower things will lower the forces of human life. Your conceit of morality. Your satisfaction with the world.

To go higher demands *activity, stern purpose, unto the end.*

**APPLICATION**


1. To live on as you have lived will not change you.
2. To leave to some better day has not availed you.
3. Waiting, in the sense of indolence, has not done more in religion than it would do in commerce.
4. No miraculous dispensation is to care for you.

**Is it not time to awake to exertion?**

To leave off evil? What if you *have* failed before?

To couple that with higher efforts?

To change company; call on God, in resolute earnestness?

 *Is not this the very time?*

## XXVII

### A FORECAST

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*And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. — Ex. 33: 15.*

ESCAPE of Israelites from Egypt.

Sinai. The future all before them.

Moses was to organize an entire society anew — to provide religious forms, civil processes, officers, and to superintend administration.

The sense of greatness of his work. One of those solemn forelookings. He cast himself utterly upon God.

We, too, have come to a new year. We have begun its march. A great orb of experience lies before us.

I. It would seem as if the boldest spirit would hesitate, and even quail, could he survey all the **possibilities of the year before us**, in the light of our own wisdom and strength.

a. It may be a year of unplanned wandering, or of sickness, and consequent *helplessness*. Knowledge and foresight do much, but ignorance of law, and liabilities through others, make life wholly uncertain.

*Strong men*, doing just what they always did with impunity, suddenly break down.

*Epidemics*: whole air a poisonous garment.  
Shirt of Nessus.

The entire complexion of life may be changed. The supreme blessing of God in sound reason. *Reason* may totter.

b. No one can foresee whether it will not be a year of separations and *bereavements*.

Sorrows there surely are for somebody. It is like going into battle, etc.

*Illn.* Death of children, like frosts on flower garden.

*Illn.* Death of dear and intimate friends, like drying up of waters — channel bare. Or loss of mountaineer's staff.

c. No one can foresee the results of his *ventures* — whether care, rather than comfort; disorder; embarrassment.

*Illn.* You wander forth as one in a vast forest, hunting food, etc. You can do much. No man can be sure.

d. Besides these, every one has tastes, ambitions, purposes, on which largely his life-comfort depends, and which may be thwarted or turned awry.

e. The *seductions* of the year may have unforeseen results on character:

Demoralizing effects of secular success;

New and fascinating companionships.

f. Clouds of lies, slanders, evil stories, may rise like venomous insects from a morass.

g. The *uncertainties of religious experience*.

The removal from means of grace.

The being thrown among worldly and godless men.

Starvation of soul, etc.

All these reasonings may well inspire feelings like those of Moses in looking forth upon the unknown future — a sense of man's dependence upon God.

**II. How God will go with us.**

1. By his Providence. Sweet and gracious assurance: "All things shall work together for good," etc.

2. By his Grace, or those personal and experimental communications to the human soul.

3. Through these, inspiring Faith in truth, rectitude, and trust.

4. "Thy will be done."

5. Seeing Him who is invisible.

Have you in prospect any plan or pleasure, on which you dare not ask God's blessing?

Are your purposes worthy of you and your privileges?  
Are you self-seeking, or do you work for God?

## XXVIII


### WORKING OUT SALVATION

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*Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. — Phil. 2: 12, 13.*

A PASSAGE very deep and full.

**I. Some respects in which no man can work out his own salvation.**

 The revelation to himself of the *truths* under which he must ripen.

1. God's nature, character and government.
2. No man can prepare the way of reconciliation, nor of the manifestation of God in Christ.
3. Nor atone for sins, nor change the action of those laws which by sins are set against the sinner.

*Illn.* A parable in husbandry: may work out food and raiment; but cannot create the earth, the heavens, and their phenomena; he can only use them.

**II. The conception of working out is to be understood in the sense of carrying forward to completion a certain work begun.**

*Illn.* It is as if a loom were set, the warp stretched, the threads reeled and wound and all ready, the pattern

determined and drawn, and the order. *Now work out that pattern!*

Several important implications.

a. This conception strikes a blow at a mischievous popular idea, that conversion does up the principal part of the work; that Divine power transforms a man.

*Illn.* Distinction between this and a clock which is finished, and needs only to be kept in running order:

Education, which unfolds, grows, develops. Instantaneousness of beginning; gradualism of progress.

b. It establishes a substantial identity between *salvation* and *character*: *i. e.*, salyableness is possible only to right moral conditions.

Spiritual elevation and purity.

*Illn.* Some think of conversion as a free ticket to a music academy; to an art gallery: yet no man can have conferred upon him taste, knowledge, etc. These *grow*: so also right character.

c. It brings moral education into harmony with other mental culture, in so far as man alone is concerned. There is spiritual aid; but that which *man* does conforms to well-known laws and usages of education.

III. This working out, or carrying forward, is to be with **fear and trembling.**

Fear has a long scale.

1. It may be a mere pain or terror.
2. It may be relaxing, and a cause of weakness.
3. It may be a substitute for hope, inspiration and joy. All these kinds of fear are foreign to Christianity.
4. Fear may belong to generous enthusiasm, like that with which one works out a delicate experiment in art.

Fear of *taste* — garden flowers.

☞ That peculiar affection which gives vividness to an operation in chemical experiments before an audience, or an operation in surgery.

☞ Still higher, the *solicitude of love*.

Christian life, indeed, —

1. Is not such a certainty of success as allows relaxation of vigilance.

2. It is not a thing ordained, as are the seasons and climates.

3. It is so vital and critical in its issues that no man can afford to neglect it.

4. Utter rebuke is conveyed, of  
Indifferentism,  
Church-security,  
Morality in a low sense.

#### IV. The working of God's Spirit.

1. The unseen and unknown things, innumerable.

*Illn.* The unrecognized provision by work — food, raiment, watching, care, aim, and ambition — around a child, by the parent, gives a germ of the conception of God's invisible fidelities.

2. The direct power of the world upon the senses demands a continual and powerful inspiration of the moral sense and spiritual nature, *from God*.

3. God's help —

a. Is not arbitrary and intrusive;

b. Is not a substitute for our own effort.

c. Is not a jealous condition;

d. When one has done all, and yet there remain vast unreached elements and influences, *God comes in* with inspiration and counsel.

## XXIX

### AS A LITTLE CHILD

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*Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. — Mark 10: 15.*

As our Saviour gave no explanation of his meaning further than these words, we must gather it from his general instructions.

The case was this:

1. His bearing was so impressive, his manner was so winning, and his sympathy with all about him was so attractive, that parents felt that their children would be blessed if only he would notice them. The more affectionate and simple-minded of them began to gather them together, and to press with the little children around the Saviour. It was the very parental instinct, natural and beautiful.

2. But his disciples interfered. The word *rebuked* is emphatic. The disciples were officious, and probably rude. They thrust them back. They scolded them. Their manner was offensive, as well as their spirit, or the Saviour would not have been so moved as he was. "He was much displeased," is not a light phrase. It is not fit that we should consider it as a mere transient vexation — a sharp and transient spirit of annoyance. There must have been to his mind something deeper and more important than simple ill-manners or needless officious-



ness to save their Master from inconvenient importunity. It was not, we may suppose, the mere act which he rebuked, but that whole state of mind out of which the action proceeded.

The disciples, we suspect, regarded little children as having place and value in the family, but otherwise as not worth considering, simply because they had no immediate productive relation to civil society. They could earn nothing. They could perform nothing. They had no experience, no wisdom, no wit. The little brood might be precious to the overweening love of parents; but that allowable and amicable illusion of love aside, what was a child worth?

There were two elements of error:

1. An **egotism respecting adult life.**
2. An **utter ignorance of deeper elements** of value than those which society evolves.

*a.* Their idea of the importance of men was derived exclusively from their secular value. It was not a question of character but of producing; not nature, but use. He only is valuable in this visible, physical world who can produce effects. Then, next, he who can produce them most abundantly.

He who can talk efficiently,

He who can legislate, or administer,

He who can manufacture, or exchange,

He who can plant, or reap,

He who can amass wealth, conduct armies, make poems, or do some eminent thing — he is a man indeed.

*b.* Now, there is an element of truth in one way of looking at this. As members of worldly society, men must be ranked by the quality and quantity of their productive force.

But the vice of this view is, that it ignores any other human relations, and assumes that man's relations to society furnish the true and proper measure by which to estimate and value him. For, is there not a God? a future world? Is man's value to be judged by his relation to a pin's point on that vast sphere, or to the whole orb of his being?

The spiritual being was wholly unfelt. The disciples regarded children as of little account among men. It was a judgment which assumed that men were material beings.

c. Our Saviour reversed this. He substantially declared that all the development which took place in ordinary life was away from true spiritual manhood. *Men in their prime were not so near God's ideal of manhood after forty years as when they started in life!*

Let us consider it a little:

1. Admit that a child has an aim that is better than one which falsifies the whole spiritual truth of a man's being.
2. Adult man has developed into superior force and controlling energy, the passions, and not sentiments.
3. Adult men have shaped for themselves habits which are totally incompatible with spirituality.
4. Adult men have formed deep within a character which is not holy — which is selfish, vain, worldly, disobedient, and proud.
5. The elements of these are in childhood, but may be trained the other way.

#### APPLICATION

I. It is a very serious consideration for adult men, that they have spent the best part of their life in **unfitting themselves for true manhood.**

Further from goodness than when you began!  
Men's consciousness of the fact.

**II.** Before men can enter the kingdom of God they must **come back to childhood.**

Lay aside pride and vanity, and all their fancied knowledge.

Their secular power will do no good.

☞ *Illn.* What if men should go to a physician on the ground of accomplishment, great wealth, social position? What has that to do with illness? Beggars and they stand on the same ground.

Consider, then, how apt Christians in our day are to fall into:

1. *Neglect of children* in the work of the church.
2. *Overvaluing of men* by reason of secular elements, Social standing, Wealth-power, Learning and influence.
3. The *undervaluing* of those who are devoid of extrinsic qualities.
4. The same on a large scale, in which society and governments attempt to settle questions *for the strong, and not for the despised* — the non-constituent element.

**III.** Every man has in his own family a **Gospel of Children**, saying to him ever more

“As a little child!”

## XXX

### CHRIST IN YOU

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*My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you. — Gal. 4: 19.*

THE solicitude of a Christian teacher and friend was never more strikingly expressed than by this figure of maternity. The Apostle carried his disciples in his soul, as it were, protecting and gradually nourishing them with his own life and love until such time as they should be spiritually organized, and able to supply themselves with soul-nutrimment.

Observe that he is not speaking of those who were not Christians, and whom he sought to win: he is speaking of converts, whose Christian life had really begun, but who were so feeble, so deficient, that in his strong language he *travailed in birth* with them again. It was not a vague desire for their welfare. It was a definite end that he sought; viz., the formation of Christ in their souls.

That term *formed* harmonizes with the word *travail*. Christ was in their souls, but as an unborn babe. A principle of life was planted in them, and was forming itself in them to the likeness of Christ. There is, therefore, a single and a compound figure, that these feeble Galatian converts spiritually bore in their bosoms an unborn, undeveloped Jesus; and that while they were

thus feeble and almost helpless the Apostle enwrapped his own being around them, and carried them in his soul, as a mother does her unborn babe.

The two striking points which I wish to use, are,

1. That the end and ideal of Christian life is **the formation of the soul to the likeness of Christ.**

2. That a Christian nature **comes by gradual formation.** As Christ was born into the world a babe, and grew to manhood by the ordinary ministration of natural law, so Christ is born in the soul a babe, and grows to a full stature by the ordinary laws of spiritual education.

However helpful this view may practically seem, there will be some who will regard it as dangerous, by the introduction of naturalism, in place of the Divine Spirit. It will seem as if we taught that religion was not the product in the soul of efficient divine power, but the mere creation of the human will and of natural forces.

But I teach no such doctrine. *Spiritual life in the soul has its origin in the personal influence of God upon the human heart.* Without such Divine quickening no man would awake into spiritual life. And at every stage of development, whatever natural laws are employed, and whatever ordinary instruments are applied, the efficient and vital element is that Divine Spirit. "It is God that works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure."

But it is of the utmost importance that we should know whether, in the exertion of divine force, it pleases God to set aside ordinary laws and rational instruments, and to substitute for them a pure spiritual efficiency of his own, or whether it pleases him to *exert his life-giving power through the natural faculties of man* and in the use of ordinary instruments guiding them,

giving to them a power and fruitfulness which mere human will could never impart.

This last is the Scriptural view. Men are not spiritually born of their own mere will and power. A truly religious nature has been quickened and born again by the power of God's Holy Spirit. But in this gracious work God does not create at once and fully a soul in full power, equipped and perfected; for every soul is born into God's kingdom as a babe. This is God's plan, to develop such souls in his grace and by his grace, according to natural laws, by the mind's evolution, and not by some other plan which shall by a bolt of light shoot the whole soul far up above all ordinary conditions.

No bird is born with full feathers and a song in its mouth.

The first inflection of this truth is one which naturally grows out of the profoundly interesting scene of this morning in this house — the union with Christ's visible church of so many persons, both young and old. Some of this number have for years sought a Christian disposition. Others — and the greatest number — have but recently begun the Christian career; and it is to them that I say:


**I. Your Christian career is not consummated and crowned, but only begun.** You have yielded to the Divine influence, and have been persuaded in the day of God's power to educate your souls into a likeness of Christ.

1. Your struggles hereafter are not chiefly to keep what you have had imparted to you — God's grace; but by its use you are to attain what you do not now possess.

*Illn.* Shall the young collegian, examined, entered, imagine his business to be only not to forget what he knew? His motto should be, *Go on unto perfection.*

2. Look at the work before you.


a. *The Christianizing of each faculty*, but particularly of those master-forces which inspire human conduct.

 *Illn.* As you have been separated from the world, and brought into the fellowship of a Christian community, so each of the faculties of your nature — pride, approbateness, force, fear, conscience — is to be introduced into the court of Divine love, and to receive its laws and spirit there.

b. Out of this, collectively, is to spring *disposition*, which is the general result of all the faculties. The soul's atmosphere is like the planet's atmosphere. Disposition is to men what the perfumes of a garden are — the sum of the odor of a hundred kinds of flowers.

c. Then comes *the carriage of this nature into society*, and the development of the practical law of love, in your jostlings and rivalries, strifes and struggles, among your disguised brethren.

d. And to all this is to be added your *Christian engineering*, or the management of business, the administration of all trusts, in a spirit of true integrity, honor, and benevolence.

 Hence, *a Christian life means business*. You are builders, and have just begun on the foundation. You are soldiers, and have just enlisted. You are pupils, and have just entered school. You are children, and all your life lies before you. The church is your home, God is your Father, and the world is your practicing ground.

**II. As children begin life** with very different aptitudes, and under conditions that make a vast difference in the

ease of acquirement, and certainly of well-doing, in some cases over others, so is it in spiritual birth.

*Illn.* Start off a hundred ships. How soon they separate, and scatter along a line of leagues!

So in commerce;

So in industrial pursuits; and

Just so in religious elevation and attainment.


Some have inherited a disposition far easier to educate; and others are slow, dull, intractable.

1. Some begin with flush, glow, and a certainty which helps all life from an experience of ideality, or earnestness, or both.

*Illn.* Kindling a fire of piety in the soul may be like kindling a fire in a house that is sheltered, with prepared fuel, or it may be in wet woods with green material.

2. Some are imaginative, and have great facility in originating vision — invisible things easily realized. Others are practical, wise in *things*, rather than in thoughts. What then? Both have entered upon an education.

*Illn.* The slowest and dullest is still being educated even though at the bottom of the class.

 *As to brilliant experiences.*

a. Are those men in ordinary life the more solid, reliable, estimable, that have fancy, mobility, etc.?

Law of compensation.

The slow and solid gain, hold, and in the end are superior. One reaps early and the other late, that's all.

**III.** You must be prepared for the *mutations of early experience*, the glow of love, the fire of enthusiasm.

1. It may burn to embers.

2. But it may change its form, only.



Mutation of love, from an emotion to a practice — broadens, grows in power and fruitfulness, though less obvious as a feeling. A feeling put to uses is no longer a mere feeling. It is more. It is *motive power*.

*Illn.* A stream seems so wild and free, but only carries itself in whirls and sparkling eddies. Drive it into a mill-race, lay it on a wheel, and it seems lost; yet all the machinery that is within attests its power; and though it has lost something of beauty, it has gained in power and uses.

**IV.** The **mistake** of many who seek to **put on** the Lord Jesus, instead of having him **formed** within.

One figure is of a garment.

The other is of an education.

If you do not readily find your advancement in prayer, the Bible, and your meditation, then accept the indication, and *form* Christ in your life in gentleness, in magnanimity, in generosity of honor, in noble humility, in royal patience, in self-sacrifice, in suffering for others. A temper and character formed on Christ's example cannot fail to bring you to the vision of Christ.

**V.** In this life of growth, the **Church, the Bible, and all means of grace**, ordinances and all, are **mere servants**. Nothing is sacred or holy but a *living thing* — no stone, no paper.

Yet text-books are useful.

 Charts are indispensable to navigators.

Maps show roads to the traveler.

**VI.** Lastly: **Christ carries us all in his bosom**. It is not an unwatched process. We are not wandering

among snows and glaciers without a guide, far from home. Signals from time to time tell us where we are.

*Illn.* As a flagman on a road waves a white signal, to say that the road is clear and that the train is coming, so the white hair upon your head will, etc.

## XXXI

### BESETTING SINS

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*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. — Heb. 12 : 1, 2.*

AMONG the elements of separate personality, is sin. A man's faults constitute a large part of his character. Seen from the fact, that faults are faculties or forces unskillfully managed. Constituent elements awry.

**I. Sins are of different kinds:** as to heinousness, detriment, danger.

**II. Graver sins** are less likely to be committed, though more injurious if committed.

**III. Minor sins** are called *faults*.

**IV.** It is especially in regard to these that we may speak of their being "*easily besetting*."

1. Sins of the flesh.
2. Sins of nerve.
3. Sins of over-action.

4. Sins of under-action.

5. Bias of custom. Sympathetic or social sins, drawn out by the influence of others on us.

6. *Solitary sins*, or those which befall us by reason of loneliness, separation.

#### V. The **quality and effect** of minor sins.

1. Their individual insignificance made up by their multitude.

*Illn.* Dust; Aphides; seventeen-year locust in park.

2. They are frequent because they are so minute. By repetition they make up want of force.

*Illn.* How paths are made by footfall, across a lawn.

3. Great temptations and sins are but rare, and, though damaging, not so much so as the infinite number of petty sins.

*Illn.* Weeds are worse than robbers in a flower garden.

*Illn.* Moths are more dangerous to a wardrobe than thieves.

Little sins tarnish if they do not scratch.

*Illn.* Degrees of harm to a mirror: broken to pieces; cracked; scratched; tarnished; mist, dust, covering from all usefulness. Difference among these evils, as to *endurance* of mirror, but not as to its *function*.

#### VI. Easily besetting.

How nimble, restless, multifarious; how deceitful, sly, changeable of face; how incessant, unwearied!

VII. Such sins, instead of being laid aside, are, generally,

1. Overlooked, not noticed;
2. Indulged and justified;
3. Palliated, pitied, excused;

4. Disguised, covered up by soft names;

5. Now and then they are put down for a while by paroxysmal assault. Like thriftless housekeeper's periodic cleaning up.

☞ Hence it is

1. That men make so little progress;

2. That, on the whole, life wears poorer, not richer.

*Illn.* Not like the weather on rocks and stone castles, but like paint on wooden houses.

**VIII.** But they must be **laid aside**, as one does a hindering garment when about to exert one's self. To do this:

1. Impossible, if by *mere* purpose, watch, self-inspired might, fussy, pragmatism effort.

2. But under the *inspiration of love* it is natural and easy. For love transforms, utilizes life, and makes all things facile.

Hence, "*looking unto Jesus.*" Here is the inspiration; here the power.


## XXXII

### The GOSPEL of LABOR

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*For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. — 2 Thess. 3 : 7-12.*

CONSIDER the text.

It was to a church in a Grecian city that Paul taught this Hebrew morality.  *Jewish custom.* Paul's feeling was that of the rabbis. It used to be their boast, not dependent on fees of disciples. They took titles ostentatiously from their manual trades. Rabbi Judah, ben Ilai, called the Wise, the orator, had a trade, and used to say, "**Labor honors the laborer.**"

Rabbi Ismael, a needle-maker.

Rabbi Jose, ben Chalafta, a tanner.

Rabbi Jochanan, a shoemaker.

Rabbi Simon, a weaver.

Rabbi Joseph, a carpenter.

The Apostle Paul, a tent-maker.

a. We must recollect that this was the sentiment of the scholars, the real politicians of Israel.

b. State of society different now, and many cannot literally live by a trade or manual calling, but the *spirit of the exhortation remains*.

Consider:

1. Text, and reasons.

2. 1 Thess. 4:11, 12. (Do your own business, and work with your hands.)

3. 1 Cor. 4:12. (We toil, working with our own hands.) Eph. 4:28. (Let him that stole steal no more: rather let him labour, working with his hands.)

4. Acts 20:33, 34. (Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me.)

These passages show how important Paul thought actual manual labor to be, and that mainly on moral grounds.

But the following are some of the reasons for us to consider as to working with one's own hands.

1. A sense of *personal independence*.

2. That one may *take care of himself*, and not be a hanger-on upon other people's bounty.

3. *Honesty to others*. Keep selves honest. Not tempted by necessities to steal or gain by indirection.


4. Ability to *help others*. That beautiful saying of Christ: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

These are Christian grounds. There is special need of urging them now. The influences at work in towns and cities require sharp correction.

**I.** Vast numbers of the young crowd the cities, where they are seeking to escape from farms, shops, and mechanical pursuits.

1. They clog all the professions.
2. They choke the ways of commercial life.
3. They swarm the doors of office. It is an honorable thing to hold honorably a public position of trust; but that is not the spirit of the office-seekers of to-day. I would speak kindly, for sore distress goads many of them.

II. Aside from this migration and its consequences, there are many **causes** at work **which prevent young men from gaining a livelihood by work** who ought to do it.

1. I recognize the law that one has a right to use his powers to the best advantage, and may leave a trade or farm for merchant's office, studio, pulpit, or forum. But  the *reverse* is also true: men who, by social connections and lesser intellectual gifts are better fitted for lower positions, should go to manual labor.

2. But often they meet a strong *repugnance among friends*. False ambitions; shame of manual callings — the foundry, the machine-shop, the printing office, the garden. Hence, many men all their life are doing poorly what they do not like, and are not suffered to do what befits their nature, and what they could do well.

3. The *slowness of gain* in the lower grades of work, another influence. Men think the city and its vocations lead to quick prosperity. Making haste to be rich the vice of our times.

4. The *smallness of gain* compared with their ambition leads many to rush into commerce and trade, into speculation and other arenas for which they are not fit, and in which they find only disaster and disappointment.

5. False notions of manhood *incompatible with culture* and refinement. Excessive work is indeed drudgery;



but moderate labor gives time for culture if there is the wish.

6. A fatal spirit of *self-indulgence*; a desire of ease; an unwillingness to exert one's self -- unfortunate accompaniment of civilization.

In view of these facts, especially prevalent in our day:

1. It should be a part of every Christian household to *bring up the children to work*; develop ingenuity to know how to turn their hand to anything. Must revive old-fashioned ways.

2. It would be well, particularly in such times as ours, to develop in the household as many *productive industries* as possible.

3. Parents should encourage their children to *habits of honorable independence*; to let them learn trades or husbandry even if they are not forced to depend upon it.

4. God's lesson of to-day: *Work more; spend less*. Study thrift; practice and learn to love industry; be less extravagant.

## XXXIII

### GODLIKENESS

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*But we all, with open [unveiled] face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord. — 2 Cor. 3: 18.*

I. THIS is a subtle truth, the terms of which we find it difficult to state, but the meaning of which is clear.

We look into a mirror and see the beauty of God. That image of divine glory, glowing on the face of him that looks upon it, leaves its impress there, so that at length the divine picture is really our portrait. By beholding, we have been changed into the image, and we see ourselves when we see our God.

It is poetic and beautiful as an illustration; but the truth is even more important, viz., **the power which inheres in superior being to reproduce itself in others.**

We will gather up the traces of this action among men.

1. It is *intellectually* true. A man of strong endowments involuntarily, and by his native dynamism, brings out the thinking power of men about him; and that in proportion to the natural strength and susceptibility of the corresponding element *in them*.

2. It is so, *morally and esthetically*. A person of natural and powerful equity keys up the conscience. One may leaven a town — a generation.

A person of refinement, if of a commanding nature, appeals to the same feeling (whatever there is of it) in

every crowd. That appeal is sometimes shown in their anger and resistance, but that is because this rising feeling is in conflict with other dominant passions, and introduces antagonism.

3. It is so *dispositionally*. A good-natured man carries a cheerful and hopeful atmosphere.

A real benevolent and good man.

A generous and sympathizing man.

### APPLICATION TO MEN

I may make this practical application before going on.

*a.* In selecting company, watch what elements are strongest when a friend leaves you.

*b.* The indispensable condition of doing good is to have in great power in yourself the feeling which you wish to inspire.

*c.* The blessedness of that state in which one unconsciously sheds forth good!

### APPLY TO GOD

But now consider that this element of power works in its lowest sphere among men; and that a truth of striking importance, even inhumanity, must **rise to superlative grandeur in the sphere of divine life.**

Consider what full, infinite power resides in each attribute of God.

The best things in the best men are on earth mere rills. Our faculties are nascent. "It doth not yet appear." But in God, being is, in degree and potency, beyond analogy or illustration.

Apply infinity and omnipotence, not physically, but morally, to love, pity, justice, truth, etc., and see that the influence of the universe is personal.

II. *Obj.* But it will be replied that **no adequate results appear** answering to this force.

1. *Illn.* Hold up to the sun an unpolished plate of glass. No reflection. Then rub a spot. The sun's image begins to appear. Enlarge it till it covers the whole surface, and the polished surface will reflect all of the sun that it can receive.

2. Now, men as a race are simply emergent. The effect is slow — hardly seen for ages. Still there is a change for the better.

3. But consider that all this betterment of the race in its long development and pilgrimage is the fruit of direct inspiration.

☞ Consider that (man receiving little by little all he could) God made natural laws, as it were, receptacles of his wisdom, and filled society gradually with laws and institutions whose slowly developing justice, kindness, truth, etc., were a part of the Divine Spirit. This, then, is the *stimulating nature* of God. Men take it by slow degrees, but they do receive, and grow by it.

We may believe, then, that at last **this change of humanity to godliness shall be effected.**

1. The pure in heart shall see God.

2. The reason why hours of communion, prayer, meditation, are so powerful on Christian character.

3. The nature of the heavenly society as we look forward to it.

4. The presence of God *when we shall see him as he is.*

Now we see through a glass — in a mirror — dimly, but *then* face to face.

## XXXIV

### SOUND-MINDEDNESS

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*Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. — Titus 2:6.*

I. THE terms sober, sobriety, sober-minded, have in the English New Testament use a different range of meaning from that which popular use now gives them.

1. Now, *sober* and *sobriety* are the antithesis of *gayety*, *exhilaration*, *mirth*.

2. It is supposed that religion is sober in a sense that excludes wit, the overflow of joyous spirits.

3. But no such meaning went with the terms translated *sober*, *sobriety*. They are in other places translated *sound*, *sound-mindedness*; signifying a mind not over-excited — by drink, by passions, by frivolities and pleasures — but maintaining its equipoise, its power of right judgment and earnestness.

You will better understand the *thing* than a *definition* of it.

You know a man roused up and thoroughly in earnest, so that his judgment has something to do, has the advantage of an inspiration of all the feelings. There is a directness, a purpose, and so a weightiness and sobriety, in a man bound upon an important purpose that all men feel and acknowledge.

It is this deep purpose, this earnestness of mind, **arising** from a worthy aim and endeavor, that enters

the apostle's "*sober-mindedness.*" It is such an earnest and manly state of mind that I proceed to inculcate.

If Paul spoke thus to those of his age, under such governments, with such a restricted field of enterprise as they experienced, how much more is the exhortation needed in our age, in our land, and by our young men!

*Consider.*

I. Every one is charged with the **unfolding of his powers**, and the full education of himself. The ideal is higher than ever. The means are more nearly within reach of all. The motives are more searching and imperative.

II. Every young man is to **prepare himself for that department of life** in which he is to find means of livelihood and a full exercise of his powers.

1. Fortunately, most men are born poor, and make their own way in life.

2. Even if not so, engrossing occupation is an indispensable condition of happiness and goodness.

☞ The earlier the aim of life is settled, the better.

Then, every one should maintain the feeling constantly that he has a purpose which quickens, engages, and tasks him.

3. With some it is:

a. Manual skill. Not to allow this to seem a drudgery; ☞ still less a menial or degrading necessity. Nothing of labor is unworthy when the mind inspires with it a worthy motive.

☞ It is not work, but ignorance in the workman that makes it inferior.

☞ The relative respectability of work depends upon the amount of mind-power men are supposed to require, and exhibit in it, etc.

b. With others it is a *professional* life, *i. e.*, vocations which require thought more than does manual craft. In the beginning, tedious; end remote; time of preparation longer: but noble and remunerating.

### III. The preparation for common citizenship.

1. Never before such a sphere of intelligence, power and dignity, given to each citizen.

2. To fitly use this requires an education, both in ideas and moral sense, greater than we at all adequately conceive.

Nature of government to be carried on;

Nature of questions to adjudicate;

Nature of policies to be maintained.

☞ Our relation to human kind.

3. Bearing of this on *universal suffrage*.

4. Our subject in hand, *sober-minded preparation*.

IV. The sphere of benevolent activity to **each range of faculty**, from material up through social and artistic to moral, was never on so large a field; so much need of laborers, or such evident need of preparation.

V. Never before so clearly seen, the meaning of **Ye are workers together with God**. The mind-power of the world is intense, speeding.

All nature works;


All holy spirits work;

All malign spirits work;

“ Why stand ye here all the day idle! ”

1. There must be place in this conspectus for **gayety and amusement**. They are as definitely profitable as sleep or food. They are duties. They have a moral relation and result.

2. **A life of activity** and earnestness is a *duty* only on the ground of relation to success; but it is a **condition of happiness** according to the law of the mind.

No retiring till age wears out;  nor ought men, even when old, to give way easily; for nothing wears out life faster than having nothing to do; and nothing keeps up strength better than moderate engagements.

3. The **ignominiousness of a life without an aim** or purpose — living for nothing — a weed — a cumberer of the ground. Its ignobleness argued from insensibility to the highest motives and noblest opportunities.

4. Unutterable **baseness** and wickedness of a life, not only without purpose, but **given over to self-indulgence**, to fleshly lusts, to degradation.

5. The **indispensable need** of every young man is God's Spirit:

To clear his vision;

To inspire in him a high and holy ambition;

To restrain his appetites;

To keep up his courage and patience;

To awaken true benevolence in him;

To sustain him in his course to the end.



## XXXV

# FIDELITY to CONVICTION: ABRAHAM'S CALL to SACRIFICE

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I. THE history: Gen. 22.

II. A consideration of several topics. An Arabian sheik, or prince, living on the very borders of Palestine, and along the edge of deserts. Beersheba.

1. **The command.** However it came:—whether by dream or by vision or by vivid impression of thought, we do not know: but Abraham accepted it as a Divine ordering. There is not a word about the effect produced on the patriarch's mind; yet we know well enough that it must have been terrible. Cannot conceive of a shock more dreadful.

*a.* It was a command of human sacrifice. It is reputed that human sacrifice was customary in nations round about, and that may have suggested unconsciously to him this test of his faith.

*b.* It was his only son, his every parental hope, — for he was an old man. The pride of father, and prince.

*c.* All God's promises of his future bound up in Isaac. The thing commanded combined an imitation of the worst elements of the heathen, a crime against natural feelings, and the overthrow of God's promises to Abraham.


2. **Prompt obedience.** "Early in the morning."

a. Might have hesitated long; not whether to obey a divine command, but whether any evidence could make such a command divine.

In that early period: no Bible, no priest but himself, no church but his family, no public sentiment, no laws but the customs of the desert, no long recorded histories. There was nothing but himself and these occasional teachings of God.

3. **The place, Moriah.**

Three days' journey from Beersheba. May have been Mount Moriah, on which Jerusalem afterwards was built, and many have so loved to think it, and even supposed it to be the very spot on which two thousand years afterwards Christ was offered — the Lamb of God.

4.  The simplicity, dramatic grandeur, of **Isaac and his father** alone; their conversation. The delicacy with which the father avoids disclosing.

The unresisting element in Isaac, such was the supremacy of father in the patriarchal day.

*In view of this history, as it stands:*

**I. Was Abraham right** in doing a thing against the light of nature, by any authority?

1. It is not a question of what would be right in us now, after four thousand years of experience, but then, with the only light he had.

2. *Was it against the light of nature?* The nations which had no other light but nature, at one or another period of their history, fell into human sacrifice, testifying supreme devotion.

3. He received the command according to the method by which he had received all his instruction in divine things.

II. Is it a myth, a parable, or was it real? Of no consequence! What does it teach?

- Real!

III. Why should God try, or prove, or tempt? Did he not know just as well before what his servant would do?

1. It was not for himself;
2. For Abraham;
3. For the whole world, that was to need nothing more than *fidelity to convictions*.

The story did that work. Two thousand years, and Paul tells the story. Two thousand more, and that heroic devotion breathes courage and faith in a thousand troubled souls to-day.

IV. Should we be justified in doing the same thing on a like impression? Why not?

1. Because that which we might justify in a child would be disallowed in a man.
2. The appointed methods of knowing the Divine will determine.
  - a. Then, by visions and communings of the seer;
  - b. Now, by reason acting on experience.

V. Fidelity to convictions is the true significance of this history.

## XXXVI

### GROWTH in GRACES

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*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. — 2 Pet. 1: 5-8.*

I. THERE seems to have been in the apostle's mind the image of that **eager acquisitiveness** which men manifest in worldly things. These Christian traits may be regarded as so many precious stones; or so much property; or so many dignities; or so many curiosities and rarities of art, adorning a mansion.

1. Every one conversant with education has watched the rise and progress of scholars' enthusiasms for collections, — it may be in natural histories, minerals, botanic collections, entomology, or what not.

The largeness, the growth of zeal; the pleasure of each new acquisition; the sense of incompleteness of the collection while more remains to be gathered. Exchanges set on foot; eagerness and joyfulness at rare prizes.

As the scholar grows in knowledge and breadth of interests, he gathers other things. Sometimes it is a collection of books. Traits and peculiarities.

Sometimes etchings, engravings, and pictures.

Sometimes coins, medals, etc.

Sometimes jewels and precious stones. Not alone pearls and diamonds, but opals, emeralds, rubies, amethysts, topaz, etc. Some peculiarities.

a. The fervor and diligence of pursuit.

b. The pleasure of the new is even greater than of that already gained.

So here in Christian virtues, the apostle exhorts us to *add* — ADD — ADD!

2. The same illustration might be drawn from men's zeal for property.

a. Land is always hungry for land.

b. Money always is lonesome.

c. Men almost never have enough.

*Illn.* Hang up two bells in Wall Street, one named "More," and the other "Enough." 1. Thousands throng around one; its ringing is incessant. 2. The other is stiff for want of ringing. Moss would grow on its very tongue and rust on its hinges.

This is so in all varieties of property:

Gold and silver, to some;

Ships to others;

Bonds, mortgages and stocks to others.

"Add — add — add!" says wealth.

And so the apostle says, Seek Christian wealth. And having gained some, add more, and more.

II. But some will say, Is there any ground but fancy for such analysis? *Is not the human mind already framed*, its faculties established, and can any skill or diligence multiply or diminish the number? And, since Christian graces are only the human faculties acting upon Divine patterns and under Divine influence, **how can there be multiplication of graces?**

In two ways, — by the education of primary faculties, and by the production of complex and secondary states.

1. Every one needs to have an education that shall harmoniously *develop each of the primary powers* of the mind and soul. Some need more caution; some need to restrain it. Intellect, too predominant or too weak. Some are over hopeful. There is need of restraint on some and stimulus to others. There are those who need the whip here and the rein there.

2. Yet it is not chiefly here that acquisition takes place, but secondarily, in the *combination and habits of the primary faculties*.

*Illn.* a. The primary colors are few, but color has infinite range and gradation.

b. In organic chemistry the elements which constitute vegetation are few; but how vast are the forms, varieties and qualities of the vegetable kingdom!

c. The power of each of the ten primary numbers is fixed; but in combination — infinity!

d. The letters of the alphabet are the sources of all written literature, the springs being few, but the rivers endless. All English books in the world spring from an alphabet of twenty-six letters.

e. The musical scale is limited, but the variations of musical effects are limitless — insects in the field, birds in the trees, men chanting on earth, and angels sounding forth their loves in heaven, endless! Thus it is in the inflections of Christian feeling.

### III. Let us turn from illustration to the positive.

1. **Single graces**, or good qualities, are not to be despised, but they are not either to be deemed substitutes or equivalents for many that we should have.

Men set off a single possession against eminent lack. One is irritable, fickle, talkative, yet benevolent. Men keep a grace as an apology for other graces which are wanting.

2. In general, the **strength of each** Christian grace will be **in proportion to the fullness of the circle** of graces. There may be special exceptions when the whole force of life exaggerates and even deforms some single faculties; but the fullness of the whole mind, its culture, vigor and composite richness, give power to each individual trait. And the force of each grace depends upon the general power of the soul that lies behind.

*Illn.* In a music-box, the separate tongues of metal represent single notes; but their power of vibration is derived from the barrel that revolves, and lifts, and lets spring again each metallic finger.

3. **Christian graces** were designed to be **collective**. They tend to grow in clusters.

a. The end aimed at in Christian culture requires all, not some; not acts of goodness; not isolated values, but *character*.

The most solemn annunciation of this is in the verse preceding the text — “that ye might be partakers of the Divine nature.”

*Illn.* Building a house. Every part dependent on the others — roof, foundation, floor, stairs, windows, all needed.

b. That Divine influence, which generates *each one*, is the proper condition for the outgrowth of *all*. It is that quickening spirit that suffuses the soul with Divine love, and then —

*Illn.* As heat in summer quickens everything, so in the soul, and in that condition the most opposite traits are stimulated.

*c.* The occasions of life demand and require the full complement of Christian traits, and not single or partial ones.


*Gentleness* implies forgiveness, love, forbearance, patience and strength.

*Sympathy* implies knowledge, tenderness, justice, compassion, self-sacrificing helpfulness.

4. Hence, there are **many Christian experiences that no man can hope for without full and harmonious development.**

*a.* There are melodies, but if on a harp every third string is gone, how can it express them?

*b.* There are harmonies requiring concordant and contemporaneous sounds, but if the bass or tenor be absent, the whole effect is lost, as if silence had prevailed. It is another thing that is produced.

 *c.* Young and uneducated Christians must not expect a full choir.

*d.* Joys of Christians should not be less, but more, as they progress in the divine life.

5. **Christian graces must be permanent.**

*a.* It is a law of moral excellences, as of any other kind, that we do well only those things which we do unconsciously. The things which we do by volition and inspection are always done stiffly and imperfectly.

We never do well when we *try*,

To walk;

To write our name;

To make an admirable thing;

To be polite, graceful, natural.

The moment you direct a man to self-consciousness you spoil his beauty of conduct.



It is so with Christian traits. If you would have them in power and loveliness, you must be used to them — wear them as a familiar garment. “*Clothed with humility.*” “*Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.*” — Rom. 13: 14.

*b.* The exigencies which demand Christian graces will not allow us to prepare them when needed.

*Illn.* Men who are violently sick: must not wait for medicines to be compounded.

In battle. Surgeon cannot wait for instruments to be made.

In attack, the armor, sword, must be ready — yea, *on*. See Eph. 6: 10-18.

6. This will throw light on the **imperfections of Christian life.**

*a.* The ascetic attempt to throw away the body, like throwing away a knife-handle. May have chief deficiency in physical conditions; all powers needed.

*b.* The imperfections of merely ethical principles; they lack spiritual and inspirational elements.

*c.* The extremists in spiritual life are given to contemplation, to fervor, to ecstasy, to the invisible. They cheat the opposite needs.

*d.* Those who make too much, and those who make too little, of the social element.

In fine, **harmonious development of all** Christian graces. “These ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone.”

## XXXVII

### CARE

---

*Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. — Phil. 4: 4-7.*

1. THE duty of joy or happiness.

2. The implication that this springs from moderation of desires.

3. The positive and direct command to restrain care; and the exhortation, by prayer and thanksgiving, to meet care in its very origin, and overcome it.

The result of such religious philosophy is peace.

The passage is rich, not simply in secular wisdom, and economic training, but in the divinest philosophy. Joy being the starting point, its enemies — *cares* — are to be destroyed, and joy is to terminate in its highest condition — *peace*.

When single parts of the mind are pleasurable excited they produce joy; but when a high and noble excitement carries up alike all parts of the mind, one part modifying another, the result is peace. A mind partly happy produces joy. A mind wholly happy comes to peace, or the equalization of joy.

As yet, very little is known of the laws of happiness. Our pursuit of it is empirical, and to a great extent is checked and flawed by care, which is a fatal mildew. Our instruction in this matter is usually very general; as, that we should moderate our desires; should live for another world; should put a truer estimate on earthly things. Wise and good as this is, it yet fails, in many cases, to reach the secret causes of anxiety.

*Illn.* It is as if one should exhort to neatness in house-keeping, to good taste and economy, but should say nothing of vermin, and set no traps for rats, and prescribe no means of ridding seams and partitions of mice or roaches.

**Care** may be defined as **such a mode of employing our faculties upon every-day business as shall produce pain rather than happiness, in the minute and common duties of life.** It is distinguished from sorrow, from anguish, by minuteness and degree, rather than by kind, just as a smart is distinguished from an ache; the sting of a nettle from the piercing of a thorn; the bite of an insect from the bite of a dog.

A spirit of care is the result of immoderation of desires; of evil or disproportioned dispositions; or of an unregulated spirit of duty. Some seem to run into it from innate tendencies; but it cannot be doubted that to a great extent men are deliberately educated into it. The example of parents; the general tenor of rebuke and criticism in the family; the spirit of economic life; and an impression that cheerfulness is related to levity, and anxious care a symptom of conscience and manliness.

But let us with more particularity point out the sources of that painful way of carrying the mind in common duties that is styled **Care.**

1. An excessive particularity about little things soon draws away the mind from the general course of events, and both shortens and narrows it. Particularity is important; children should be taught carefulness of details; there should be a conscience formed about trifles and unseen duties; men should be educated to thoroughness for its own sake: but in striving for this just and true end, parents, teachers and overseers fall into the error of nervous care — into such a keen sense of the evil of carelessness that they commit the other error of care. Thus the pinning of a dress, the points of personal cleanliness, the details of order in a room, school or shop; the arrangement of furniture or table furnishings, are zealously watched, criticised, and at length blamed, not in proportion to their importance. This is a danger of household life. It is a special danger of enterprise and neatness in domestic economy. It runs into a mania with some to whom regularity and neatness are supreme moral conditions, and small faults, inaccuracies, and inattentions are judged and condemned with a severity which is proper only for grave moral offenses.

The mischief is great in those who become domestic policemen of little faults; but it does not limit itself to them. It produces in the young an inaccurate moral judgment. There can be no largeness of conscience in men who are brought up to think that tangled hair or a torn coat are offenses nearly as reprehensible as theft or intoxication. And such disproportion of emphasis either disgusts children into indifference of little things or sharpens them into idolatry of them, so that all their life long they become moral microscopists.

It seems to have been this that our Saviour remarked in Martha. It was not her fidelity to the household

duty, but a troublesome addiction. "*Martha, Martha, thou art troubled about many things*"; *i. e.*, little things, a thousand petty details that hide the general whole which they compose.

2. **Care is the illegitimate child of conscience.** Most men have little enough conscience. Those who feel the pressure of this faculty are not infrequently ill-taught in its management and application. Conscience has been supposed to be a voice of God — an inspiration of right — a moral and intellectual discerning of right and wrong by its inherent power; but conscience is a moral sentiment differing in law in nothing from any other sentiment. Like benevolence, or hope, or veneration, or self-respect, it is a mere emotion, blind and undirected in itself, and wholly dependent for right direction and application upon the intellect. It is therefore the subject of education and discipline. It needs to be trained to form right habits, and to be limited by the existence and action of other sentiments.

There may be a common-sense conscience, a superstitious conscience, an ignorant conscience, a pragmatistical conscience, a nervous and trivial conscience. It may be sensible or foolish. It may act broadly or narrowly. It may regard general results with philosophical wisdom, or see only details. It may work for the minutes and seconds, but not for days and years.

Conscience may be generous or suspicious. It may be magnanimous or grudging and unforgetting. It may inspire justice, or it may organize cruelty. **Just as conscience is educated, it will be a supreme blessing or a multifarious curse.**

The mere fact, then, that men act conscientiously is not a proof that they are either good or wise. It is a good conscience *well directed* that avails. It is from

a morbid conscience, from narrow and superstitious consciences, that spring cares in endless numbers, sharp pertinacity, and skillfulness to destroy happiness.

If to a nervous conscience be joined the inspirations of ideality so that the ideal of life and character is high, and the sense of fitness and congruity acute, a case is prepared for almost boundless care and suffering. The want of practical trust in God, an ignorance of the laws and conditions of human attainment, the want of faith in the love and pardon of Christ, the dull and drudging sense of imperfection, the acute sense of actual sin, fill the soul with trouble which may burst into storms, but at least fill the heaven with clouds and dreary chill.

3. We pass to a more frequent and less curable, though not so painful, a cause of care—**love of approbation**. God has framed the mind to receive a large and various influence from the supposed opinions of other minds. It is this element, more than any other, that mingles men in society harmoniously. Limited by conscience, and educated, it is permanently civilizing, and the source of pleasure, the vigilant sentinel against dangers; but no sooner do we suffer it to become the leading feeling than we experience an intolerable despotism. We survey ourselves in the light of others' uncertain opinions. We have bred within us innumerable frets and anxieties lest we shall fall from grace. We put ourselves to tasks of sobriety and antics of frivolity to win favor or conciliate criticism. We subject our persons, clothes, manners, and pleasures to this capricious tribunal. We aspire, through this medium, to position, to influence, to authority. We are tempted to invade the enchanted land of appearances and pretenses; and then, when once we attempt what we are not, or more than we are, we enter upon a part of which

the result will never be known. In fashion, in pleasure, in the rounds of pretentious society, in the unwholesome ambitions of mere wealth without culture, or other sense than money sense, men are to be seen innumerable, fretted with little feverish fears, with festering desires, with hopes that blossom inodorously, and cares that bear as many spines as the cactus or the nettle.

4. The sensitiveness of **Temper** is another fruitful source of care; *i. e.*, of a painful carriage of our faculties in common things.

This is chiefly a question of nerve, in the conduct of faculty; largely affected by health, condition, prosperity.

But a man of low temperament, of sensibility of nerve, of fastidiousness of taste, of self-sufficiency, of pride, is set down in the decrees for unhappiness. Nothing suits him. The world does not consult his exquisite convenience. Men and women were fashioned without consulting his fine tastes. They are too rough or too fine. They are too strict or too careless. They are too masculine or too feminine. Something is thrown into every mixture that offends his taste. Some color blends in every combination that offends his eye. It never occurs to him that the world is right and he is wrong. He is always right: it is this wicked world that is wrong. And from men, he falls to abusing communities, and history, and Providence, and finally, since life has nothing in it good enough for his godship, he doubts whether there is much God, and he is sure there is no religion.

This is but a single specimen of a great multitude of men whom pride and temper make irritable, and to whom life gives daily an unlimited opportunity to fret and complain.

5. A less blamable but very potent cause of care springs from the misdirecting action of **Fear**. In timid natures, unless sheltered like tender plants by garden walls, this is a source of perpetual chill and suffering; but with more robust natures there is a great waste of strength and happiness from unconsidered and latent influences of fear, in the shape of anxiety. A low and apprehensive mood which sees all manner of risks and dangers in the future — that deals with imaginary forces, weaves fanciful possibilities, etc.

This belongs not only to the realm of avarice, but to the realm of love as much. It belongs to poverty, but it grows with prosperity, and makes the strong and rich miserable.

#### APPLICATIONS

I. A fair examination and ascertainment of quality of your mental action is worth your making.

Are you happy?

Are you unhappy? and causes?

II. The false notions of a duty of sadness.

Pain is remedial, and penal.

Joy is normal. It is duty. You are to command it, to make provision for it.

III. Distinction between *seeking pleasure* as the end of life, and such carriage of the mind that the *action of the faculties* shall be pleasurable.

IV. Religion a corrective of care.

1. *Moderation* of desire.

2. *Activity*, for others' good rather than own.

3. The *larger life*, which disarms the ills of this one.

4. The views of *Father God* in providence.



## XXXVIII

### CHRISTIAN PATIENCE

---

*Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord. — Psalm 27 : 14.*

NOTHING is harder to the natural impatience of a strong will and an impetuous disposition, than to be obliged, in the presence of objects of vehement desire, to stand still, and wait patiently, uncomplainingly, and courageously. Therefore one has attained to an eminent degree of Christian grace who knows how to wait.

**Right waiting for God** implies:

1. Strong lawful *desire unaccomplished*.
2. *Confidence in God*, in his love, wisdom, and power, and that the blessing is withheld or refused for all-sufficient reasons.
3. Such a *submission of one's self* and one's whole life to God's better will that, if God please, we will forego the dearest objects, and that cheerfully and lovingly.

To understand the matter more thoroughly, let us premise one or two considerations.

1. **Human activity**, the desire of lawful objects, and striving for them with earnest hopefulness, **is a part of the divine scheme of nature**. It is the method of education and training. It is not wrong to desire — to be stirred up to the utmost exertion.

2. But this human necessity acts within a narrow circuit, and is met and restrained by great opposite tendencies.

a. That there is a limitation in the human power of achieving.

b. That special and personal ends must be sought in harmony with the general course of nature.

c. That our desire cannot hasten anything that needs time for ripening, or that is so complex that one part must wait upon another.

3. Hence, waiting and courage are joined together.

4. The two classes that must need this are:

a. Those who are of an impetuous and domineering temper; of a despotic will, and who refuse to be thwarted.

b. Those of aspiration and enthusiasm of enterprise, who live to accomplish.

Let us now consider some of the circumstances in which Christian men are called to wait upon God.

### I. In the whole work of sanctification as an individual experience.

1. The ardor of the soul for full and complete holiness — times of intense desire — the longing for it *now*, and *fully*.

2. The kingdom of heaven is a growth; and that implies periods of delay. We are to gain some things by

a. Direct effort and volition;

b. Some, by sorrow and pain;

*Illn.* Rolling iron castings in a drum — attrition.

c. Some, by the social influence of others upon us;

d. Some, by the physical changes of nature;

e. Some, by successive labors. *No man can become suddenly holy.*

Our aspirations, then, are occasions of waiting. It runs through the whole strife of Christian life. Like the woman of Samaria, we don't want to draw water.

**II. The same law of labor and waiting applies to our exertions in behalf of others.**

1. We have a limited power of producing moral changes in others. This becomes a strong desire in Christians. Nobler is it than architecture, statuary, painting.

2. There is a variety of reasons why the wisest efforts will be long in producing fruit.

- a. You may work imperfectly;
- b. There are other workers who hinder;
- c. Much must come from time.

**III. Impatience with the existence of evil in society unfruitful.**

**IV. Applied to our own relations with external circumstances.**

1. Sickness and sorrow;
2. Cares and burdens;
3. Poverty and straitness;
4. Perplexities and exigencies in life.

(James 5: 7, 10, 11.)

## XXXIX

### GOD'S WILL

---

*And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done. — Acts 21 : 14.*

THIS is the artless record of one of Paul's experiences. It is full of instruction and comfort,— although one would not think it great to look on it, and although when it was penned it is not likely that its reach and importance were suspected.

There is an analogy in geology: many a fern or more highly organized plant that laid its cheek to the clay and died, offered the most insignificant event apparently conceivable; yet, after thousands and thousands of years, comes the geologist, and when the engineer or miner lays bare the plant's figure stamped on the stone, the philosopher reads in it the proof of the conditions of things ages ago. It is just the fact, it may be, needed to establish certain great theories; and this poor vegetable, unnoticed when alive and not heeded when dead, finds itself after many ages summoned as a witness into the schools where men are learning by what steps and in what order God built the earth.

So, many an event or record of event in Scripture, that had little significance at the time of its happening, becomes very important in later ages.

The case in hand was this:

Paul, on his way toward Jerusalem, had reached Cæsarea. Here came in a prophet — Agabus — who took Paul's girdle, went through the form, on himself, of binding a prisoner, and said: "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews of Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."

1. *The company*, Paul himself included, believed the prophet. When he predicted Paul's fate, they all accepted it as true.

2. Why, then, did they set themselves against it, trying to persuade Paul not to go to Jerusalem? *Is it lawful to strive against things which are ordained?*

*It is.* Things that are evils, or so to us, that lie before us and seem inevitable, may be resisted with all our power, in lawful ways. They took the natural and direct method: If Jerusalem will imprison Paul, then let Paul keep away from Jerusalem.

3. *Effect of their entreaty on Paul's mind.* He and they thinking of different things.

They, of his safety and their joy in him;

He, of preaching Christ's name and being a witness for his truth.

The same foreseen event that alarmed them, stimulated him to heroism — kindled his soul!

4. *Effect of his attitude upon them.* They had done all they could: when an event foreseen could not be changed by any power in their hands, they accepted the fact as an indication that it was the Lord's will. Having striven to the limit, they yielded, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

In the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done on earth" seems generic, having respect to the spirit of nations, laws, customs, and policies: but here, in our text, we

see a personal use of this sentiment. It is the heart saying in regard to practical things in individual life, "Thy will be done."

A man may earnestly desire the will of God to prevail in the matter of national justice, in the purification of the morals of society, in civilization and the elevation of all men to better conditions, in growing humanity, in refinement and knowledge, in the general improvement of conditions of human life at large — and yet, with all this aspiration for God's will, he may be quite unwilling that the will of the Lord should prevail in his private affairs. When it humbles his pride, disappoints his ambition, probes his selfishness, resists his cherished schemes, and overwhelms him with embarrassment — how is it then?

It is the view of submission to God's will, that I shall enlarge upon.

### **I. God reveals his will by his providence, through the administration of events.**

1. God's will has been revealed in regard to great moral truths as affecting human conduct and character: (1) In his Word, and (2) in human experiences — which follow natural laws just as much as do the facts of digestion or any department of bodily health. *Soul is nature*, more emphatically than body is!

But this revelation is of principles.


2. Under the light of such general principles men go forth and endeavor to organize a property, a family, a character, a life.

☞ Is there any such thing as the making known to man the will of God in that crowd of diverse elements through which every man must make his way? We know what is right and wrong morally; but of

right things not all can be ours. Can a man find any *practical guide* in life, respecting God's will in events?

a. Not any such knowledge of specific cases as of principles to be applied to cases.

b. Only a general and gradual indication, tentative, experimental, probable.

 *Why did not God make duty plain?* Why should men be left to find out, with pain and uncertainty, what way in life is best?

Because men are here to *work out divinity in themselves*. The power of thought, discrimination, judgment, and so *responsibility*, is rolled on them.

3. The great truth remains that the *events of life* contain in them the letters of God's will to individuals, as to their fate, power, joy, success, failure, etc., but *the reading of those letters is the art of life!*

**II.** There is, then, this peculiarity of our human position amid events, that we are **to test** them by the **full and patient activity of all our powers**.

1. To secure good that eludes us;
2. To avert evil that threatens.

When we have measured *our full resources*, we are *then* to accept present conditions as God's will, and be children — submissive.

**III.** The power of humanity to read God's will lies in the **disposition**.

1. No submission is valid until it follows our utmost endeavor. *Action* is father of true submission.
2. No energy is blessed which does not carry in it, latent, the spirit of final submissive resignation.

## INFERENCES

1. That *God's providence is a revelation of his will*, and that we must make it out.

2. That there is *no such thing as interpreting it, except in the spirit of sons — i. e., love and trust.*

Pride will not open it to us, nor anger, envy, jealousy, inordinate earthly affection: only the filial disposition towards the Father.

3. That, in regard to ends in themselves, we have a right to energy, diligence, enterprise, courage. When these open nothing to us — then *cheerful submission.*

## APPLICATIONS

1. Persons desiring to get an education.

2. Persons striving to get free from griefs and entanglements.

3. Our children not answering to our ambition.

4. Poverty, distress, etc.

IV. Dignity of life, as God's teaching medium; the literature of divine guidance — full of meaning, full of importance.

V. *Communion with God* goes on, during all the confusions of life.

*Illn.* Running "wild trains" on a railroad, by telegraph from station to station; so we run from day to day — pray — get wisdom, etc.

VI. This whole life but an apprenticeship for the *life to come.*



## XL

### ACTING, and WAITING

---

*For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. — Heb. 10: 36, 37.*

PATIENCE may be insensitiveness — the quietness of those who do not *feel*. Then, it is simply impassivity, greater in an ox than in a man, and more in a stone than in either.

But self-control, and contented waiting for that which we intensely desire, is another thing — a quality of disposition, a moral attribute, of no mean rank. To be patient under evils that do not afflict you, to bear sorrows which are not sorrowful, to endure burdens which do not oppress you, is not meritorious.

1. First in the order of development is the willingness to act for our *present wants*, and by means which require no important delay of forelooking. This is the habit of the languid tropics.

2. Next come *more remote wants* — the anticipated needs of to-morrow, next month, or next year; and the preparation for them is longer. Yet, the cause is so near the effect that one can keep both in sight.

3. Still higher would be the state which seeks *important ends* by means which do *not* produce *immediate* results. We wait for success patiently a year or more. This, in the business world.

4. Then come *moral results*, or invisible earthly realities, and moral causes whose existence and agency are believed, by faith. The result is gradual, not measurable by the senses yet perceptible — sure.

5. Finally, the highest reach is that in which *remote and invisible spiritual benefits* are sought, and though there is no manifest gaining of them, the soul is patient and assured, knowing that “in due time” — whenever that may be — it will reap what it sows.

All this may be illustrated:

a. One who angles for fish that he can see, etc.

b. Another longer line for deeper water — for fish not seen, yet quickly biting and soon taken.

c. Another line has to be set over night, and the fisher is patient till morning, etc.

Hence, patience is itself a varying quality, and of different values, according to the length through which it stretches, and the remoteness of its operation from the senses.

**I.** Life is full, overflowing, with instances where **the result speedily follows the effort**. It is not wrong, yet it is of the lowest sphere. Men in this sphere are acting by sense and sight, and not by faith.

**II.** Every Christian is called to an activity far higher.

To seek **ends that are not visible**, and to be patient and sure though the fruit be long delayed — this is the test of real Christian character.

This view of the Christian spirit is particularly applicable to the work of **preaching the gospel of Christ**; as distinguished from a philanthropic and scientific amelioration of physical conditions.

a. These classes of labor ought not to be separate and antagonistic. He that forgave sins also healed sickness. Should be complementary; yet they are too often in different hands.

b. Hence men say: "See what those charitable people do! Some reason in their work! Can see results. Common sense. But what is the use of preaching and praying? What can religion do? It is science that is to reform the world."

That is, material things are more powerful than spiritual! Yet the sanctification of the soul is higher than the regeneration of the body. It moves in a larger sphere; the results come not by observation, but are invisible. It is that which develops the need of faith and patience.

Men need not be discouraged because there is no immediate fruit, if only they are putting in real, constant, earnest labor. Such seed *will* come up.

**III.** All those — ministers, teachers, parents — who are **laboring for the inner uplifting of men**, are seeking ends, and in a sphere, to which our text is applicable. Be grateful for immediate results, but be sure of remote ones after you are gone, "Dead, yet speaketh!" To-day the best workers in the world are the spirits of men long departed. We have the example and see the moral power of the mighty dead.

**IV.** These views are **specially applicable** to men who work against morbid passions:

1. Bergh — Cruelty to animals;
2. Brace, etc. — Care for children;
3. Magdalen and midnight missions;
4. Reformation of drunkards;

5. Those who would stay the flood of bribery and political corruption.

6. Those who are easily discouraged, and throw up their hands, and say, "Oh, it is of no use," etc.

V. Encouragement for those whose hearts are deeply enlisted in the **elevation of the depressed and despised:**

1. The emigrant.
2. The negro.

VI. The whole work and hope of God among the **nations, etc.**

## XLI

### The LOVE of PRAISE

---

*For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. —  
John 12: 43.*

THE incident (chief rulers who believed on Jesus but dared not confess him).

The way in which love of praise operated. Their religious standing — rulers — would be periled by following Christ. Their love of human favor — of the good opinion of their neighbors — was stronger than their love of truth.

The love of praise was not rebuked by Jesus, but the love of *inferior* praise.

**I. The love of praise fundamental in human nature** — one of the earliest, deepest, most active and protean of all the mind's emotions — in all nations — in all ages.

**II. In the whole Scripture it is recognized, admitted, and abundantly employed, as a motive.** Because it is not the highest, it is not then unworthy. The ascetic notion of crucifying it has no countenance in Scripture. We are, on the other hand, "to be honest in the sight of all men"; to ponder "whatsoever things are of good report"; to seek "glory, honor, and immortality," etc., etc. It is reprobated when (1), it is the sole motive of

things which should spring from higher reasons: "Pray, to be seen of men"; (2), when it seeks undeserving objects; as in the text.

**III. Such a feeling**, capable of so much good and of so much evil, **ought to be studied and educated.**

1. Instead of education, men try suppression. The result is infinite provocation, self-deception, and labor vainly spent.

2. Education, must begin by yielding to it the *rights* and sanctities which belong to whatever God created.

3. Education, instead of suppression, should train love of praise to act in association with *pride*. Character is the partnership of faculties. By *pride* I mean, not the wicked, but the ennobling, self-elevating pride, which inspires men to a sense of what is becoming, noble, worthy of themselves.

a. Without this, men are apt to love praise without any regard to source, reasons, and character; almost as much pleased with the groveling and most unworthy as with the highest.

b. With this, men select, winnow, and discriminate.

4. Education should train love of praise to move in partnership with *conscience*. This lays a solid foundation. It gives moral quality; but chiefly in two respects:

a. That we should desire praise for *real* traits or deeds — not for imaginary ones;

b. That there should be equity in the proportions; *i. e.*, that praise should bear a *due proportion to desert*.

☞ Reprobate all attempts of men to gain by *seemings* — in personal conduct, in religion, in art, in literature, in public service, in housekeeping, and social position.

5. Education should combine love of praise with *taste* or *ideality*. This tendency redeems from grossness, animalism, and lifts one out of the slough of vulgarity, where we find:

- a. Love of praise for low and unworthy acts;
- b. Relish for praise which leads one to stoop to evil associates.

6. Love of praise should be educated with *spirituality*. It should feel the attraction of a higher Being, the reality of the future, of a new character, and of a higher destiny.

“Praise of God more than of men.” All other praise becomes harmless and allowable the moment the soul accepts God’s thoughts as supreme and regulative.

#### APPLICATION

1. The question of **glory**. Is it allowable?
  - a. Not all, or indiscriminate; *i. e.*, mere applause.
  - b. But a desire of praise for noble qualities and deeds is allowable.
  - c. **The want of such ambition is demoralizing.** Society needs more high-mindedness among its young men.
2. *Query*: How far may **love of praise** be mixed in **religious experience**?
  - a. It corrupts where it is the motive;
  - b. Or where it dwarfs or overgrows the love of right things for their own sake:
  - c. But where it is only an auxiliary, and is kept in subordination, it is not wrong. Cases of conscience arise chiefly because men find that love of praise entered into the problem of right and wrong.
3. The **duty of parents and educators** towards the love of praise:

*a.* To divide its sway by developing other feelings;

*b.* To elevate it by unfolding to the child the higher kinds of praise. How little does the child know of such!

4. **American society intensely stimulative to this feeling.**

*a.* The equality of men, and attempt to establish a superiority with the highest.

*b.* The political reference of questions to the people acts, in fact, to make men seek popular favor — praise. This to be guarded against.



## XLII

### SORDIDNESS REBUKING LOVE

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*But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? — Matt. 26: 8.*

AN outcry of wounded feeling. What was it? Let us go back and trace the circumstances.

1. Only two or three days before the passion of Jesus. Bethany. House of Simon the leper, whom he had healed. Present, Lazarus, Simon, the sisters of Lazarus, some of the disciples, and others, probably, not named.

2. Though on the eve of suffering, *Jesus yielded to social enjoyment*. There was nothing of the recluse or ascetic in the Saviour. He enjoyed happy social circles. Evidently he made himself attractive, as he was surrounded by many. His disciples were present on this occasion, as we learn from John.

3. *A contrast worthy of notice* is here set forth. Matthew speaks only of "a woman," not giving even a name; but John says it was Mary, sister of Lazarus, etc. John does not otherwise speak of Mary here, and Matthew does not refer to Martha; but taking them together the facts are:

That "they made him a supper there, and Martha served." (See John.) She was intensely practical, filled his glass if empty, served meat, watched to replace his bread; in short, her affection, real, zealous, seemed

to bestow itself on Christ's bodily wants. If he had been sick, if there had been real work, etc. Martha was a model of the practical housekeeper, alive to every physical propriety or want.

4. It was *probably at about the close of supper* that this striking scene took place. Mary seems to have had little interest in the supper scene, but to have been attracted to Christ by his higher moral nature.

a. She was an enthusiast, so filled with her own feelings as to forget time, place, and company.

b. She came, without a word, or warning, behind Christ as he lay on the table-couch, poured the most precious ointment on his head, then upon his feet, and then — strangely, but with exquisite feeling — wiped his feet with her hair.

**Notice her reserve and delicacy** in not mingling her hair with the Saviour's by wiping his head, and the humility in wiping his feet — least honorable to touch which, in the Orient; slaves' work, with that which is a woman's glory, her hair! But why was it needful at all? It was not to cleanse. I choose to believe it was that she might be, in a manner so delicate, united to him, bearing about upon her locks the same perfume which, rising from the Lord, filled the whole house.

**Notice the lavishness.** A pound. Its costliness was such as to amaze all the company at the act. There was no calculation. It was an attempt to satisfy, not any outward necessities, but her own heart's devotion. Contrast sense and enthusiasm — economical judgment and love's excess.

**Notice the two sisters' gifts:** the one honoring Christ's lower wants; the other honoring his higher nature — a tribute to his divinity.

5. **The effect produced on the company.**

On all the disciples.

On Judas. His point of view, economy — wise adaptation.

6. But its effect on Christ:

He gave it a beautiful sacredness, I suspect, to redeem it from sneers. It is not a flippant love-gift: "It is for my burial."

Then the promise, or declaration. There is no other such. The delicacy of sentiment commanded this praise. Of all values, Christ placed this subtle heart-fervor, and the uncalculating and enthusiastic expression of it, high above every other service.

☞ To us, now, *how low a plane was that on which the disciples stood!* "Why was this waste?" Everything was "wasted" which did not serve some bodily and physical want. There was no sense of a higher realm, of a life within, of spiritual needs, sentiments and affections, to be ministered unto.

Now let us see whether men do not fall into the same mistakes in our own time.

I. Each one, in making provision for himself, serves **bodily wants with lavish generosity**; but **spiritual needs and sentiments with economy**. *Why this waste?*

II. How many cry out, in their own families, when wives and daughters would enter on some larger sphere of **benevolence**, "Why not stay at home, and take care of your household?" etc. *Why this waste?* Ah! is not enriching the nobler elements of life of more value than serving its lower?

III. Criticism of spending so much time in **religious services** — meetings, hymns, etc. The culture and

manifestation of religious feeling, joyous excitement.  
*Why this waste?*

IV. In laboring for the poor. Why carry Bibles? Why pray and sing? Why not take bread and meat? It is indeed a great mistake not to take nourishment for physical wants to those who lack, but greater yet to leave out the appeal to finer and higher sentiments.

V. Money raised for missions objected to.

VI. Beautifying God's house — organ, etc. Why not build other churches?

1. The final results of attempting to serve God cheaply.

2. The glory of the divine command, Love with *all* your mind, etc., etc.

## XLIII

# A WHOLE MAN

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*For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.* — I Cor. 11: 30.

PAUL uses the word "weak," sometimes, to signify the want of worldly power in men who live spiritually. "When I am weak, then am I strong." Sometimes it signifies simply a low tone of Christian feeling. It does here. The figure is obvious. The soul is spoken of as if it were the body, and both were feeble and sickly.

1. There are multitudes of so-called Christians who live an exceedingly imperfect and often grossly low and inconsistent life, from causes that are known and felt to be sinful and inexcusable. And all, even the best, feel that they have much to confess and lament and amend in that regard. But it would not be right to suppose that there are no other reasons for feebleness in Christian life.

*Illn.* A large part of bodily sickness, doubtless, may be traced to wrong courses. But are none sick except through gluttony, intemperance and inordinate lusts? So **feeble health in the soul may arise from obscure causes.**

2. Indeed, it may be said that multitudes of persons are seeking to live a Christian life who have in it little peace, or joy, or hope, and who are "weak and sickly"

in it, though they really put forth more exertions toward right living than others who excel in living rightly.

*Illn.* It is certainly true that people in sound health do not take half so much pains to be healthy as invalids do, who yet are always feeble.

*Illn.* In commercial life some struggle and labor a hundred times harder to be barely supported than others do to amass wealth.

Not that in any of these cases there is an element of chance or luck. Not that the law does not stand firm, of proportion between wise industry and its results. But because **men's constitutions** of body and mind, their education, their **circumstances, determine their power** of judging and acting wisely in the use of means to ends.

Besides those professors of religion who care but little for piety, and those who habitually and keenly act from selfish motives, and those who make religion an insurance against danger rather than a motive to godliness, there are great numbers who are sincere, willing, earnest, but yet feeble.

I propose to consider some classes of cases, — all of which may be simplified to two *genera*: a misconception of ends to be sought, and a misapplication of means to the end.

### I. *Misconception of sins.*

1. There are **certain views of God and government** in which many are educated, out of which there never can be developed either harmony, beauty, or health.

*a.* All views that make God selfish, arbitrary, capricious, unsympathetic.

*b.* High Calvinism brings men back under the law of fear and bondage, and carries them away from the summer which Christ brought into the

world. A merciful and helpful God is the indispensable condition of growth in Christian life.

2. The attempt to exalt a certain class of feelings, to the neglect of all others, into exclusive predominance, and to educe from them continuous experience — this is a mistake of noble and aspiring natures.

a. It is desired to have peace, joy, rapture, all the time; but this is subtle selfishness.

b. It is putting contempt upon parts of the mind that God deemed necessary.

c. It is laying out not only a life of difficult conditions, but one oppugnant to inevitable conditions of human life, and of the nature of the mind itself. It is wasting effort upon a false ideal.

How it results practically: It runs the idealistic into fanaticism. It generates in others despair and stupor. In some it reacts into unbelief. In cold and proud natures, not subject to passion, it produces a hard surface without, and intense pietetic selfishness within wrapped up in one's inner life.

## II. *Misapplication of means.*

1. The attempt to live a religious life upon the basis of a suppression of the natural faculties.

a. The life-forces are *wasted in attempting to destroy* self-esteem, love of approbation, and the appetites and passions. In this life these are indispensable and lawful. *They are to be guided by* and subject to reason and moral sense, and then their action is not to be disallowed.

*Illn.* This attempt to suppress, acts as to suppress swift-running waters. *They will move*, and if no channel is provided will mine for one. The stream may secrete its outlet, but flow it will. Why not love ap-

plause? But take care of what kind! Of things noble! See how this is provided for in Scripture: Phil. 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, well spoken of — think on these things," etc.

Hence this mistaken idea of suppression introduces confusion and self-deception, discouragement and cessation of effort; for, after years of vain trial, men cease to try.


2. An analogous cause of weakness is the **attempt to dissect the life, and live it in two unrelated spheres** — or even antagonistic ones.

*a.* The impression that religion is feeling, devotion, prayer and praise, meditation, rapture, and that for this, as for music, there must be special conditions and silences.

*Illn.* Farm, and flower-garden.

*b.* But what then, is the meaning of "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"?

*Illn.* Look at varied elements of an army, — baggage-wagons, ambulances, parks of artillery, infantry, horse, officers and privates, scouts, skirmishers, heavy soldiers, etc., but all to coöperate towards one given end.

 *The domestic life and its connections with secular affairs* furnishes a just analogy to the *spiritual life and its connections* with the world-life. It inspires business with noble powers. Men issue from it prepared, return to it for rest, and find in it the very noblest motives of business activity. Do not think that all or most men are sordid, who act along commercial ways. Some are moved by love of enterprise; some by love of wife and children; some by tender care of parents and younger brothers and sisters, — they pluck from their



own breasts feathers to make soft nests for those they love.

Away, then, with the idea that men must live two lives, which do not agree — the secular and the spiritual! A higher view unites the two, each strengthening the other. All the powers, both of body and of spirit, must work together for good, — the God-given means to the God-inspired aim of manly *integrity* — *wholeness* — *health*. No “ weak and sickly among you ”!

## XLIV

### MODERN APOSTASY

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*Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace. — Heb. 10: 23-29.*

THIS passage strikes fear into thousands of tender consciences. Let me begin by saying that it is leveled not against any sinning after we have entered the Lord's service — not even every willful or intentional sin; but the one specific sin here set forth; viz., **Apostasy**.

He exhorts them not to **forsake assembling themselves**.

a. To assemble, in that day, was almost the life and badge of faith.

Jewish associations on the one side;  
Heathen world on the other.

The little disciple-band, obscure, feeble. To hold on to them was a fidelity which was significant.

To abandon them was a sign of going over to one of the other classes.

*b.* In our day, lines are not so drawn. Christianity is dominant. Absence from the congregation of worship does not mean in the eyes of others an abandonment of Christ; then, it was likely to be so interpreted.

If, therefore, having left Judaism or paganism and embraced Christianity, if then — knowingly and willfully — one abandoned it for Moses or the world, what followed?

There could be no other sacrifice — that is, no new one; no stronger influences in the one already disclosed.

The *guilt* would be that of deliberately denying Christ as the Saviour of the world.

1. Joining those who derided and trod underfoot; *i. e.*, despised.

2. Counting his sufferings and death of no moral meaning, but “unholy”; *i. e.*, unconsecrated, common, ordinary.

In fine, a *deliberate and final renunciation of Christ by one who had felt the real influence of Christ's truth* upon his conscience and heart, would leave the apostate to all the perils and dreads of the future.

### I. What is apostasy?

1. It is the abandonment of a side vountarily taken.

2. As applied to sects — Greek; Catholic; Protestant.

3. As applied to Christ it is a final abandonment of him, and his teachings, by one who has known and felt them.

*a.* It may be going back to heathenism or Judaism.

b. It may be by retreat to mere philosophy.

c. It may be by setting up a new religious system — a something, claimed to be better and truer than Christianity.

d. It may be through relapse into worldliness — moral insensibility.

*Illn.* Like Jordan running into the Dead Sea.

But in all, the essence is the same — willful extinction in the soul of faith in Christ.

## II. Why it is fatal.

1. It presupposes that one has seen and felt the full truth. For such, no stronger disclosures.

2. It implies a moral disintegration — a violence to the nature, that ordinary influences cannot repair.

3. It does *not* imply: inexorable divine anger; exhaustion of mercy; but impossibility of the victim's coming to the condition in which such benefits are applicable.

*Illn.* As if a shipwrecked crew and passengers, taken from a raft, should cling by their rescuers for a while; and, after being washed, clothed, and fed, should steal away, and get back to the sea. The ship goes on, and they are left to their fate. Not that the ship and captain are unwilling, but that the suicide himself has put himself out of reach.

## III. In our day is there danger of apostasy?

1. All forms of *backsliding* point toward, tend toward, apostasy. In this category, reckon the relinquishment of Christian duties, means of grace, etc. Are these little neglects?

*Illn.* Like hoeing, like trimming of grape-vines: not much — yet how much depends!

2. All smoothing down of religious life by *worldliness*, that utterly shuts out Christ, and makes the supreme end of life to be worldly good.

*Illn.* Weeding constantly needed to protect valuable growths from being overgrown by worthless ones.

3. All such tendencies as *substitute Nature for Christ*.

☞ I do not say but that one may construct a theism which shall hold in it so many elements of Christ as to be salvable, etc.

☞ But a theism which is *built as a substitute and antagonist* of the Saviour *must lead to apostasy*.

Hence:

1. They have reason to fear, whose former earnest Christian experience has all gone to ashes.

2. Hundreds who fill towns and cities, running between churches, seeking

a. Not a higher life, but new views;

Or,

b. Scarcely animated, even by curiosity.

The number of those dropped on the march — the stragglers of Christ's army — would surprise any one.

1. If you fear, signs of sensibility left.

2. If heedless, unfavorable.

3. Remedy, *active Christian life*.

## XLV

# BELIEF and TOLERATION


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*Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. — Rom. 14: 13.*

THE question of toleration came up to the Apostles in two forms:

1. Whether any but Jews should be tolerated in believing in Christ. "Shall outsiders be encouraged to believe as we do?"

2. "Shall Christians be tolerated who differ from us in point of belief?"

 We can hardly understand the *first*. But we may find an analogy to it in inheritance of property. To the Jew, religious truth was a possession, a property, a national secret.

*Illn.* Long held monopoly in trade; various processes in mechanical arts, chemistry, etc.

Observe the result in the *second* case, under Paul's instructions. All the discrepancies, variations, etc., which arose, or doctrinal and ethical cases, were patiently to be borne with, if not positively immoral; and in heathen converts even incest and drunkenness were to be borne with until they could be better taught.

Observe the ground:

1. Variations of belief are not to be considered matters for discredit where the parties give evidence in *life and disposition of true godliness* (Acts 11:17).

2. This view, however, struck deeper. In the context the Apostle recognized the *right* of men to form and adopt religious opinions, subject only to God's judgment (vs. 4, etc.: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant," etc.; vs. 12, 13: "Every one of us shall give account of *himself* to God," etc.).

**Character-making** is the object of the Christian religion, **not system-making**. We are to labor for things which promote godly fellowship — community in things wherein we agree, rather than persistence in things wherein we disagree.

### I. What is toleration?

1. Not charity to those who agree with you.

2. Not simply forbearance or indifference toward those who disagree.

3. It is accepting men for the Christ that is in their life and disposition, without scrutinizing the beliefs which they hold.

In other words, a good man is taken as a good belief (see Acts 10:34, 35).

### II. The grounds of toleration.

1. Not a compliment—a favor, which in your kindness you bestow. Not a sign of your goodness and piety, nor of pity and mercy.

2. It is simply a *duty*—a solemn obligation—derived from the *right* of men to *use their own conscience and reason* in matters between themselves and God. "To their own Master," etc.

3. It is to be regarded, then, as a Christian attainment, like any other grace — requiring humility, self-denial of pride, lively sense of others' rights, faith that God will guide men into saving faith, if need be, by very poor paths.

### OBJECTIONS

*Obj. 1.* Does not toleration, so explained, invalidate the importance of right belief? Does it not in effect mean that it matters not *what* a man believes?

*a.* If a man has a distinct belief, it will undoubtedly work for good or ill, according as it is true or false.

*b.* Men, in fact, however, hold to many opinions that produce little effect on life. This is true of  
 Good creeds;  
 Bad creeds.

*c.* A man's belief is only one of many elements that shape his disposition, — birth, education, family influence, affections, imagination, church associations, etc.

*Obj. 2.* But, if we tolerate error, do we not endorse it?

*a.* You do not tolerate the *belief*, but the *man*.

*b.* You bear witness, simply, that true *godliness* is more important than the instruments used to produce it.

*c.* In short, your testimony is this: that every man has a *duty to God*, and that you have *no right to meddle with it*.

III. Toleration is not possible to men who care nothing for truth — who think all doctrines alike — who believe in nothing. That is, men without convictions cannot in any just sense be said to be tolerant.



But when a man does believe, values it, and then, by his own sense of the sacredness of it, judges how sacred also to his brother is *his* belief, he bears a testimony which powerfully enforces the obligations of belief.

**True toleration tends to honor truth and firm convictions!**

## XLVI

### ABIDING in CHRIST

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*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. — John 15: 4, 5.*

THERE is a desire in noble Christian natures for far more than final reward of well being, viz., “salvation” and “happiness.” Men desire to be holy. They desire to be like Christ, and to have his presence made real and conscious. My purpose this morning is to show **how men may have the consciousness of Christ’s presence with them.**

#### I. The end sought.

1. The conscious presence of Christ, not in the administration and unfolding of nature (though this is auxiliary), but as a *personal* presence, answering to the love-relation between friends and companions — to such as the disciples had, and Paul had.

2. The object is not to have this every hour and moment, which would be to transform the very nature of the faculties, which would not be in analogy with the most intimate experiences; which would be inconsistent with the duties of our being and station: and yet many have this impossible aim.

The thing is to have an ever-accessible Saviour, who may be found whenever sought. To be able to run in and out, as a child in the father's house.

**II. Whether this state may be reached by all?** Whether it is a gift conferred by Divine power — a higher order of nobility, or whether a certain course of action will help us to it; *i. e.*, is it a *subject of education?*

1. The common direction, "Read and pray, and wait for the sovereign influence of God's spirit," misleads. The motive is to keep down presumption; but it leads to the impression that we have no work to do — no duty.

2. It is true that God acts graciously, efficiently, gloriously, in such a sense that but for that action we could not do anything; yet it is made our duty to seek this gift by certain efforts and education on our own part.

**III. Some elements of the methods to be followed.**

1. *Removal of obstacles.* The repression of evil feelings. The rising out from feelings selfish, passionate, and animal.

☞ Could you persuade a refined and gentle nature to visit you, companionably, if your room were full of base men, drinking, gluttonizing, carousing?

So in the soul are animal passions in excess. In their company it is vain to beseech; and yet Christ willingly comes even to God's enemies.

2. *Positive auxiliaries.* The indwelling of those feelings which are in sympathy with Christ's.

*Illn.* Wit begets understanding of wit. We understand men by something in ourselves like them. Not necessary that there should be likeness in character and fullness, but in the quality of feeling. Dramatist, etc.

☞ Common phrase of daily life: "He does not understand me," etc., etc., or *vice versa*.

Mention, among these Christlike feelings:

a. A general *upward* and spiritual *tendency*, as distinguished from worldliness. Cannot wear religion as beads, or an amulet. It is *being*, or nothing.

b. Genial and flaming *benevolence*.

c. Activity and *vitality*.

d. *Sympathy* with suffering. Helpfulness of nurse. Readiness to mediate in distress, etc.

3. Dynamics; or, the relation of intensity of feeling — the power of exaltation.

"Then shall ye seek me, and ye shall find me, when ye seek for me with *all your heart*." "Thou shalt love with *all thy heart, and soul, and mind and strength*." It is that which it requires the whole force of one's nature to master.

*Illn.* Even an ordinary man, who unfolds a business plan, requires from his co-workers their full attention, vitality, etc. How much more, whole soul demanded in pursuit of this, etc.

4. Now we may better understand the *habit of daily finding Christ in devotion*.

a. The office of prayer and meditation. It is coming into avowed *presence of God*.

b. The habit of *recourse in all affairs of life*. Not reserving this as a special exercise of piety — rare, occasional, but hourly habit of counseling, communing, seeking, finding, etc., etc., *i. e.*, *living with the invisible Saviour as you would with a visible and present one; or as you do at home with your parents*.

**IV. The Benefits.**

1. The ease of self-government by presence of Christ, enhancing the self-will power;
2. The courage and strength given in trouble, danger, sorrow;
3. The wonderful peace, joy, and soul-rest;
4. The presage, earnest, and token of coming blessedness.

## XLVII

# TRUE GLORYING

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*Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord. — Jer. 9: 23,24.*

### I. THE PROVISION MADE IN THE HUMAN SOUL FOR GLORYING.

To glory is the elation of pride or self-esteem. It is a sense of personal superiority — the consciousness of being excellent. It is a joy springing from some high conception of one's being.

a. It is congenital.

b. It can be educated, but not eradicated.

c. If rightly directed it is noble and stimulating.

Some err from over-estimation and ambition: more, from the want of enough.

II. There are three grand directions in which this spirit is accustomed to disclose itself.

1. Pride of intellect — philosopher.

2. Pride of prowess — warrior.

3. Pride of possessions — the wealthy.

(1.) *Pride of intellect*, or knowledge.

a. It is only relatively to our fellow-men that we are superior. Our absolute knowledge is small.

It is full of mistakes and errors. In no one department can a man suppose himself to be well informed. A great deal of dross with his gold.

Consider the fields: of languages, of civil law, of general history, of physiology, of natural history, of sociology, of physical science. If choose but one, and that the last, — astronomy, geology, mineralogy, chemistry, botany, etc.

If select botany, — Dr. Lindley. It is now agreed that human life is not long enough to make a man an authority in all the departments of botany. One must select still further, — as grasses, or mosses, or algæ, etc.

Thus, but a mere thread can be held of the mighty garment!

*b.* Consider what remains of the wisdom of the men in all ages most renowned. A mere handful; a dozen Greeks; half as many Hebrews; one or two from other civilized nations.

In modern times, how many from mediæval? How many philosophers, whose philosophy is of any worth except to construct a history of vagaries?

The schools, the admiring pupils, the vain-glorious teacher. He dies. His theories are overthrown. His books retreat to libraries as curiosities. *Plowed under!*

This is not an argument against knowledge, but a plea for humility in it.

(2.) *Pride of prowess.* Mighty man glories in his might. This includes the men of controlling influence.

*a.* The men of violence, warriors, — Alexander, Cæsar, Hannibal, — very unfruitful as a class, not constructors.

b. The men of schemes and administration — Cavour, Bismarck, Napoleon, Talleyrand, Metternich, Richelieu, Wolsey.

☞ c. The *want of the moral element* in all made their influence transient — their life a castle-building in the air.

(3.) *Pride of possessions.* The rich man glories in his riches.

a. Riches may afford a limited source of pride — not in their power, but in the evidence which they afford that you have noble executive qualities.

b. The folly of vanity — of having the *name* of riches.

They do not ennoble the heart. They ward off some evils, but the worst evils they are powerless to prevent.

**III.** Now consider the **true glorying — the soul's relation to God.**

1. Note this *view of God* given in our text.

2. Strive for and glory in the *same moral traits in ourselves* — elements of true value.

a. A man who sets his heart on moral qualities has that which is *indestructible*.

b. This *connects men with all God's work* in human life and society. Man becomes great by his identification with great things.

c. It brings him into *sympathy with the Infinite*, the Eternal, the true source of dignity and grandeur.



## XLVIII

### UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE

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*Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. — Luke 23:47.*

1. It may be supposed the portents and natural phenomena, darkness, etc., moved the centurion who was guarding the crucifixion to superstitious reverence for the man around whom were such sublime conclusions. Doubtless they produced some effect — prepared his mind.

2. But it is not rational to omit from this state of mind other causes:

*a.* He was a judge of bravery.

*b.* He was used to every form of death, and observed how men bore themselves.

*c.* He heard the words of Jesus upon the cross, and saw his end.

In short, he recognized in the words, bearing, suffering, and death of Christ, the evidences of nobility.

This history is full of interest in every way; but there is one point of view which may escape, and is yet important. It was the *involuntary* influence of the Saviour which reached this man's heart.

1. It is not probable that the direct teachings and commands of Christ would have been fruitful upon him. When the Saviour sought the wise men, how few!

2. But now he was not a teacher by direct speech. Only his example was here. His unconscious nobility — unpretending dignity. Not when he astonished men by his doctrine was he so powerful as now; not when he wrought miracles; not when the sea was hushed; not when the dead came back to life; not when the loaf sprouted like a seed and grew a hundredfold.

This is the sublimest instance of unconscious influence, and as compared with his life-success stands in singular contrast to his special and intentional influence.

**I. What is the source and method of an involuntary power?** (We speak only of human beings.)

a. The fullness and force of native organization of personal faculty.

b. The facility which comes by training.

The law seems to be that we work from volition toward the spontaneous.

1. Mind, as employed in the use of the body. Walking; athletics; manners, etc.

2. Mind, as employed in mastering science and general learning.

3. Mind, developed in the affections, generous dispositions, etc. — from dole to generosity.

4. Mind, developing moral sentiments.

5. The state in which we are obliged to *act on purpose* is *lowest*. The state in which we *act with impetus and spontaneity* is *highest*.

6. The reason is plain why men are to give themselves *wholly* to religion, press forward, and be filled with it.

7. When men are thoroughly trained in either good or evil, they are more useful or more mischievous than they know.

Consider how by use men are unconsciously powerful in evil.

1. Men are unconscious of their levity, their evil conversation, its extent, pregnancy, and mischievousness.

2. Men grow into habits of evasion, concealment and disguised statements, along the whole development of deceit.

3. Men give way to irritableness, to moroseness, fault-finding, impatience.

4. Profanity grows to be an unconscious habit.

5. Men thus are far more proficient in folly or evil than they imagine. Their accountability will be greater. Bad men are apt to deem themselves better than they are; but they are worse.

On the other hand:

1. Men who are heartily in earnest for good are doing far more for the cause of God than appears in their intentional labors. Often it is not what you *do*, but what you *are* that measures power.

The ostentatious.

The silent and modest.

☞ Thus, vacations, recreations, hours of leisure, are not thrown away. Summer time is not waste time.

Encouragement to those who find beginnings of religious life operose and difficult. Reformation has its worst time at first.

The mistake of those who deem whole of life as burdensome, in religion, as the first steps sometimes are.

Growth in grace, as in any other line of development, brings facility and power of spontaneity. Out of this arises the strength of *being*, and the unconscious radiation of influence from character.

## XLIX

### EXALTATION BOUND to SERVICE

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*And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. . . . And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. — Matt. 17: 1, 7.*

1. THE three noted spirits of the band — Peter, James, John.

2. Mountain — apart. Mountain-top, silence and exhilaration most marked. Eminent fitness of place.

3. What occurred; and effect.

a. Exaltation; and at this point the experience of our text.

b. Afterwards, Cloud and Voice produced, and fear.

4. Let us enter a little more into Peter's feeling.

a. The wonder and exhilaration, such that for pleasure's sake would fix and maintain the conditions.

b. The silence of all earthly feeling and the unobstructed play of moral feeling. No doubts, but radiant certainties, and that calm rapture which the soul feels when it stands face to face with infinite and eternal things.

c. For a *worthy joy, then; and as a means of purity, perfectness, Peter would stay,*

## 5. The exposure of his mistake.

a. That such moments of ecstasy cannot be protracted. They are possible only as flashes. If Peter had stayed, the vision and ecstasy would have flown.

b. He would have gained in holiness, not by excluding the world, but by overcoming it. It is **action that cleanses, not hiding.**

c. **Duty to others** did not enter Peter's mind.

At the foot of the mountain, even then, demonic possession; an emblem of the whole world.

His Lord was to go to Gethsemane — Calvary.

The disciples were to go through the suffering of the Master's death, their own persecution, and labors in all the world.

☞ How natural this wish to Peter! How mean it would seem to us now as a substitute of that real life which he did live!

☞ How glorious do these men *now* appear in suffering and hardihood! Their sorrows heaped up are like clouds with the sun lighting them gorgeously!

This scene is full of instruction to us.

a. Men are seeking the highest ecstasy of joy in each faculty, and longing to make the experience permanent.

b. But the mind could not endure such tension. Such experience would become utterly selfish, in such a world, with such natures, and such duties.

☞ Toil, care, suffering, too, are ruggedly wholesome.

**All qualities have their hour of elevation and brightness: but no effort can prolong; and no one should try.**

I. *Hope* has its mountain-top radiant scenes. May not prolong. Hope has other work, in other fields, than this prophetic rapture of joy. Go down to cheer men!

II. *Knowledge* has its hour of transfiguration. There is a joy of discovery, a triumph in the opening of truth, a pure and exquisite sense of the divinity of truth, which at times lifts the thinker to the very heights. Alas! the opening heavens shut again. Then come patient investigation, judicial impartiality, resolution, and labor. The duties of life lie in a dusty road where men march; not on the mountain-top.

III. *The imagination*. How divine a gift is this creative faculty, that, over against stern, literal, and hard reality, can transport the soul, with brighter colors, with forms and pictures, changing for the moment dull fact to glowing transfiguration!

An easy flight from trouble.

A sense of something in life besides our poor share.

These single hours are magnificent. Not the starry heavens are brighter than is the cope of imagination. It may not glow for mere self-indulgence. It is the light for dark paths; the cheer of the unfriended; the grace of life thrown on rudeness. *It must go down to its work.*

IV. *Wit and hilarity*. — But the sufferer, the weary, the dull, need you.

V. *Love*, and its noble rapture. But love is the universal servant, and must be about its work.

VI. *Praise*. The glory of full praise, for life and achievement.

*Illn.* But praise cannot be like the sun; it must be as tapers, to light myriad cottages, hearth-fires, etc.

☞ From prayer men must go back to work; from praise to being *praiseworthy*.

VII. *Religious raptures*. Prayer; Faith; Divine Love. Same rule of *service* applicable to all; and the higher the joy, the lower lie its duties.





III

THE GREAT COMMANDER



## L

### A VIEW of GOD

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*Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus. — Rom. 15: 5.*

THIS is a title applied to God. The collocation of the two terms is not accidental. In the sequel you will see that **patience and consolation are the two elements that of all others must stand together.**

This is not a solitary expression. In John's gospel Christ speaks of the Holy Spirit, by express title, as the Comforter. That particular function of divine life is celebrated in the Old Testament even more than in the New. The Psalms and prophets abound in testimonies to God's comforts and consolations. The unsettled and wasteful times in which the lot of those holy men was cast made it necessary and natural that they should turn to that side of the Divine Soul.

Consider this as a title. Men are wont to think of God as *power*. He creates, he controls, he governs, he punishes, he destroys. All nature is full of elements of power that furnish symbols, and the Scriptures use them. God is a strong wind, a lightning, an earthquake, a storm. He is a lion, an eagle. Or, in the composite figures of the prophets, the ox, the lion, the warrior-man, are blended. But, just as you find the utmost variety of contrast in nature, doves and sparrows

nestling just below the winged circle that the eagle cuts; flowers and mosses nestling and blooming by the side of the ruined tree, lightning-struck; lichens and tender plants hastening to cover with beauty rocks and soil which earthquakes have piled up; so is it in the progressive descriptions of God. For no one thing in life or nature can frame a title; nor can all nature. But the whole of Nature, striving together, affirms its greatness, power, brightness, scope, duration; its peace, gentleness, growth, renewal; its flowers, fruits, clusters and garner; its love, joy, peace, domesticity, as well as its laws, magistrates, and crowns, — that out of all of them we might gather some faint sense of the universality, the transcendent variety, and potency of God.

And yet, when in our happiest mood we have royally conceived of the noblest ideal of God, gathering from every side the choicest treasures, — love from the mother, authority from the father, pity from philanthropists, grandeur from empire, scope and continuity from nature, — yet God is more than all, better, sweeter, more entrancing. It is only when we describe the Divine heart that exaggeration becomes impossible. The reality dwarfs the conception of priest, prophet, apostle, and saint.

And the Holy Scripture, at the end, as it were, institutes a heavenly tableau to illustrate how little all titles and conceptions have disclosed God's nature in heaven; for there, in the island vision of John, we find this: (Rev. 5: 9-end).

**I. An inspection of nature and of history at first would seem to reveal nothing of this divine nature.**

1. The *constitution of the world is one of conflicts and antagonisms* — both in the inorganic and in the animal and vegetable kingdoms.

2. *The nature of man is organized liability to suffering.*  
It inheres in his:

a. Nature of faculties, double-acting.

b. Relation to laws that were not revealed to him, but yet are potent for good and evil.

c. Relations to his fellow-men; to parental example and teaching; to average morality and national customs; to his age, and its degree of enlightenment.

3. The unfolding history of the race shows that the whole creation groans and travails in pain.

☞ Must not judge the race by the personal experience of one housed and fashioned in the cradle of piety and wealth. This judgment of men uncharitably by the law of your own prosperity, is making God's mercy to you a law of condemnation to others.

In view of this some suggestions may be made.

1. At present, there is no explanation of God that can clear up to us all difficulties. They imply a circle of influence and design which we have not yet explored, but if we can gain hints, and solve some master-difficulties, then we may hope for the rest.

2. What if, instead of a perfect race intruded on this world, the Divine history has really been the development of a race from the animal line, up through all gradation to the present; and the Divine design a still further enlargement, sloughing more and more the animal, and rising more and more toward the spiritual and moral?

If suffering has, in its largest exposition, been a discoverer of law, an interpretation of hidden truth; if the waste of one generation has been the preparation of soil for a better growth in the next; if the race is unfolding, and but just begun; if there lies before us a future filled with beings as much beyond us as we are

beyond our heathen ancestors, — is there no alternative as to the *value of suffering*?

Suppose that in our Revolutionary struggle, one had taken gauge of the sufferings of barefooted soldiers, etc., to measure the wisdom of resistance? The Tory cried out, "Peace, peace," for to him degradation was no trouble; but think of Adams, Franklin, Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Hancock, Randolph, Gouverneur Morris, Hamilton, and such-like noble names that arose out of that troubled time; and *we*, do we count the suffering now as unworth the result?

*Illn.* The clearing up of a storm repays all black drops, and horrid thunders, and obscurations.

3. If we can establish in the nature of society and in Providence the fact that **suffering has a use**, and is not blind and purposeless — that it is only a way of working final happiness, — the question is, if not solved, yet relieved. Is Paul's formula for the individual true in a larger way for the race? "Now no suffering is for the present joyous, but grievous; but afterward it worketh the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

The individual proves that in that *afterwards* years are contained; as applied to the world, ages move within it!

4. But out of this very mixture and seething sorrow of the world **there has been a steady movement toward comfort**. There has been a current, at first small and hidden, coming to the surface here, and sinking again yonder, yet holding its way, and right toward civilization, morality, and love.

*Illn.* The Gulf Stream, beginning in tropical waters, moves a mighty current of warmth. Angry seas invade its sides, but cannot deflect and destroy. Storms hardly ever abandon its atmosphere; yet right up

through the Atlantic to northern seas, and right across them, it bears its warmth, and moving, upon the shores of Great Britain and the Continent, carries mildness to winter and fruitfulness to what without it would be a frozen zone.

So is the stream in history, guided by an invisible Hand, moving through ages, and augmenting the world's happiness. This is that movement which dim prophecy indistinctly saw. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of our God."

But read the psalm — the forty-sixth.

### CONCLUSION

I. 1. The superficial aspect is care, sorrow, wretchedness.

2. The interior truth is a growing and invisible tendency toward human power, purity, and happiness.

II. Rising from a divine Providence which includes the whole of human history, consider the grandeur of this conception of God, sitting amidst universal empire, to console men, while needful evolutions and growths were going on.

1. *The subjects of consolation.*

a. The poor and ignorant. b. Those who suffer from others' fault, by social liability. c. Those whom the intolerant spirit of society casts out. d. Those whom the world does not know how to comfort. e. Those who do not know how to utter their own griefs.

The greatness of God illustrated by this: Imagine all orphans; all mothers; all wives and husbands; all prisoners; all captives; all strangers and helpless; all that suffer cold, and hunger, and shame, and remorse —

imagine their petitions as having form, and rising up to God. What an army which no man can number! God's *patience* and *consolation*, how joined together!

2. *The nature of consolation.*

a. Compensations, final.

b. *Time* has commenced to work God's comfort on grief.

c. But the *human heart* has this office: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those that weep."

d. *God's Spirit* greatest, best; and cause of all others.

It flows through all channels; and then, not content, rising above, and by direct influx, descends upon the human soul.



# LI

## FINDING GOD

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*As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. — Psalm 42 : 1.*

*All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. — Matt. 11 : 27.*

1. THIS was individual experience. David's strong affectional nature.

2. Many persons strive for it, — vainly, — and are discouraged because no experience in them ever orbs so full as to fill this expression.

3. Many others are conscious of but very little knowledge, even — still less realization — of God.

*a.* Some suppose it to be a supernatural revelation in each.

*b.* Some perhaps doubting any God.

*c.* Some, seeking to fill the void with an impersonal, pantheistic God.

4. Even more dangerous to real nobleness of soul is a dull indifference — an acceptance of conventional statements without attention, etc.

Some considerations, therefore, designed to enable each one to find his God, and to draw near to him, will be of benefit.

It is the testimony of Scripture that no view of God can to us be more than a fragment.

“None by searching,” etc.

“Now abideth,” etc. 1 Cor. 13.

The more permanent and perfect the conception seems to us, the less likely to be true.

**I. The fundamental condition is a personal Being.**

a. The tendencies of modern thought are not new, but have more power than anciently.

b. All our experiences in this world fit us expressly for conceiving a person, and unfit us for anything else; every exercise of mind implying love, obedience, homage, etc., affords strong presumption, etc.

c. Certainly, no one can meet the requisitions of God’s Word — love God with all heart, etc. — except there be definite personality.

d. That the coming of Christ is the interpretation of God — not the whole, but a personal Being, worthy to represent — falls in with every analogy and every need of the human soul.

All other conceptions tend to dreams — mysteries.

**II. But a multitude of witnesses will testify that the traditional and theological statements of divine character do not suffice.**

1. They meet a certain definable intellectual want, important as a *basis of education*, but beyond that are barren, powerless. It would be a melancholy task could we see how really unfruitful the name of God is among thousands — how exceedingly vague.

2. Men find,

a. Either that they have nothing,

b. Or that they must depend upon their own thoughts and imaginations.

☞ And this alarms, as if God were the fiction which each man creates for himself and as he pleases.

III. But it may be said that ☞ any view of God which fills, fires, or comforts the soul is a special work of God in that soul; or, that every man works out in his own experience the idea of a God of consolation and wisdom. **The God that comes home to us is born out of our own thoughts, or, rather, into them.**

As this is a working idea, important to be well understood, consider that:

1. It is impossible to understand that for which we have no faculty.

2. All our ideas of justice, truth, duty, love, etc., and converse evils, are worked out of our own experiences of these qualities.

3. Having gained, in the family and school of life, primary moral ideas, we frame out of these a conception of Deity, as the sum of them.

☞ But this is God of the outer court.

4. God *brought home*, "Emmanuel," is the result, usually, of unconscious experience.

To some he is a God of beauty — taste;

To some, God of power and wisdom;

To some, God of love and consolation;

To some, God of conscience, justice, purity, truth.

Hence we are correct only in quality — not in quantity nor combination.

Christ touched that: "If ye, being evil," etc., "how much more," etc.

Take this figure again, and conceive the disparity between a babe and its mother; and yet we *see* that case! Now, from this rise to higher.

IV. The next question, then, will be: How to come near to a God of such unimaginable transcendence? Is he not altogether beyond our reach?

“*With the heart* man believeth unto righteousness.” David thirsted for God because he divined his goodness and tender mercy: and we may not only thirst but take of the water of life freely, for the Son hath revealed to us the heart of the Father.

“I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”

*Even so, Come, Lord Jesus!*

## LII

# MAN'S SOUL and GOD'S SPIRIT

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*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*  
— Rom. 8: 26, etc.

THERE are other parts of Scripture that reach higher than the seventh and eighth of Romans in particular elements of religious experience. The thirteenth of First Corinthians is a discourse of love, unapproached by anything else in human thought. There are in still other parts of Scripture voices of awe, of worship, rising with greater volume and majesty. But nowhere else, within or without the Scriptures, is the grand conflict of the spiritual kingdom and the fleshly in the soul of man so minutely, profoundly, and gloriously set forth as in these two chapters of the Epistle to the Romans.

The just man is imagined: his endeavors to live a holy life, first by a system of moral rules, applying to external life; then the disclosure of the law of God, invisible, spiritual and holy, whose primary sphere is in man's heart and soul; the horror and prostration of hope and courage which this disclosure makes; the discrepancy between the ideal and the real of conduct; the conflict between appetites, passions and ambitions on the one hand and the higher principle of purity and love on the

other; the wretchedness and despair of victory; the disclosure of Christ as divine, and as the soul's love-master, loving and accepting sinners, sympathizing in their infirmities, pardoning their sins, sustaining them and inspiring them for his own sake as well as for theirs, loving the unlovely, patient with the indocile, helping the weak, nursing the inferior, pouring light upon the ignorant, inspiring the soul to exertion, leading the conflict unto victory.

Such is the story of this epic of the seventh and eighth of Romans, which sounds depths of experience more profound than in any other Scripture, and which traces the process of spiritual life from its embryo to its manhood, — not in the cold language of philosophy, but in the vernacular of experience.

And then the symphonious close! Have you never marked the progress of thought in some of the symphonies of von Weber, and especially of Beethoven — the calm opening, the sweetness and hopefulness of youth, as if, like Paul, he had said, "I was alive once without the law"? Then comes the startling introduction of some wail, the effort seemingly of all the other parts to cast it out, to silence it, to overpower it; the steady growth in power, one and another sweet strain dying down, and its voice of conflict rising steadily higher and hoarser, until the wild plaint has taken full possession of the strain, and sounds out as harsh and dreadful as a winter storm in a desolate castle. Then you shall notice, amid the wails and stridulous complaints, some sweet note, as if a voice of hope, sounding and ceasing, but coming again and again, and dwelling longer, still gathering volume, until after sonorous conflict it exorcises the demon of despair, and pours with full orchestra a strain of victory, which rises to a

grand choral triumph in which it seems as if the heavens and the earth were filled with gladness, and all voices above and below joined in the solemn cadence.

Now, with this image in your mind, read the seventh of Romans, and the mixed joy and struggle of the eighth, until you draw near the close; and then bare your head, and put off the shoes from your feet, while the rapt apostle sounds out the grand rapture and *finale*.


(Read vs. 31-39.)

Out of this wonderful discourse we bring our text. It is but one bough cut from a forest of spice trees. Let us analyze and dwell upon its particular elements.

**I. It is taught that God's spirit is divinely active in the teaching and helping of sinful men.**

1. This idea, as distinguished from a *remote* God, placed high and alone, toward whom we are to struggle up, and who will receive only such as attain to holiness.

But here, God's spirit is abroad on a mission of mercy. It *comes to* men. It wakes them to new life. It teaches them a higher aim. It stands by while they struggle. It helps wherever they are weak.

 *God makes weakness his home.* (Read Isaiah 57: 15.)

2. The grandeur of such a view, and the divinity of it. The great material work of life is not the only. It goes grinding and thundering on; but another, nobler process is in action. God's soul is enwrapping the race. His prolific mind lets down its spirit upon the souls of men; and in the silent and invisible realm there is going on a merciful work, which, when it shall be disclosed in another sphere, will eclipse by its very brightness all the things most glorious in the earthly kingdom of sense and sight.

II. The recognition of our spiritual and temporal ignorance. "We know not what to pray for as we ought."

1. The utter truth of this. Our perplexity: In temporal things; in rearing children; in emergencies of fortune; in struggles with ourselves for what is right.

☞ How easily we could learn and do, if only the way of piety was clear! Two struggles:

a. To perform duty when known.

b. But, as we rise by victory, even harder to know what duty is: to ourselves; to others; to the church; to society. New cases, mixed, obscure.

Different degrees of interpreting power in different persons. Sometimes amounts to anguish. Good men have been under a cloud here.

c. Now, here is the relief — *God's supervision* takes in this very field; and one of the most surprising and blessed truths is developed to meet this want; viz.,

III. God's children are under a dispensation of inspiration, or of *immediate* teaching from God's spirit.

1. Exegesis. Now the best commentators agree.

2. Distinction between inspiration for communities and general administration, and inspiration for an individual's own personal guidance.

3. The method indicated, viz., God stimulates our feelings, develops our thoughts. He *does not set aside nature*, but uses it. Yet, as men can inspire you to good or evil, God much more!

#### APPLICATION

I. The interpretation to be given to all **luminous hours**, states of exaltation, that lift us away from a sense of self, and time, higher.



*Illn.* You do know certainly, in spring, if a root sprouts, that great thermal conditions did it.

☞ Nobody saw or heard — neither sound nor form — all invisible, intangible; and yet that result is unmistakable evidence of *heat*, in air.

So, development of distinct moral impulses shows God at work:

1. In sinners;
2. In good men.

**II. The necessity of preparation** for these favoring conditions.

1. Maintenance of moral susceptibility, and all modes by which preserved.

*Illn.* How men preserve thermometers from side influences.

*Illn.* Astronomer's care to prevent any jar or cause of error in sight. Shall we not guard the soul?

2. Faith in, and habit of following, these higher moods. Else, like an unheeded clock, tick and strike in vain.

**III. Obj.** Liability of deception? Yes, but only in common with every other element of human life.

**IV.** Interpretation of, "Grieve not the Spirit." Eph. 4:30.

## LIII

### DIVINE POWER of SYMPATHY

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*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. — Matt. 28 : 18.*

“ *All power.* ”

1. We are not to emphasize the word *given* as if it implied delegated power. When it pleased the Son to appear on earth, we can imagine no other way but change of condition of being. He assumed a body. This itself implies limitation. We see both elements of weakness through the flesh, and intervals of power flashing out.

A body is a method of developing a seminal nature. But that which is school to a beginner is prison to a Supreme Being.

*Illn.* A ripe and graduated scholar shut up in a primary school, and using only so much of himself and of his stores as are wanted there, must lay aside his power and glory. So the Saviour.

2. When his earthly mission is ended, and he resumes his original state, it is given him to take again the feelings of his nature, and the richness, variety and grandeur of his power.

He had power to lay down his life;

He had power to take it up.

3. This power belonged to his very nature. This is

so important as to require a moment's separate consideration.

1. We are accustomed to associate power with external conditions:

*a.* Power of body; of wealth; power which they have who administer laws, governments, social influence; — all external to the human spirit.

*Illn.* Engineer's power is not in him but in the steam.

*Illn.* Miller's power is in the water, which he causes to exert itself for his uses.

These are all real, but the person holding or directing them may be very feeble in power of personality.

*b.* But we meet men who have **no external adjuncts, yet who have great personal sway:**

One by his native sense and shrewdness in facts;  
Another by power of reasoning;

Another by effectiveness springing from a high moral organization. Men feel his presence. They perceive a higher measure of good when he appears.

Another by art power, in music, poetry, painting, etc.

☞ These are inherent. They do not spring from the use of power invested in external things, but from power invested in faculty. Men are sensible of this distinction in common life.

We say that men having this personal power are happily organized; or that they are highly endowed; or that they are eminently gifted, etc. And when this power includes moral excellence, benevolence, purity, truth, self-abnegation, we call them, in poetic figure, noblemen, princes, heroes, etc. — godlike.

So we see, in these cases of interior personal power, that men are on the road toward a conception of God. Not as an earthly potentate holding all governments and machineries of influence, but as a Being of such intrinsic power that *all is in Him*, and is a part of his nature. It is his very being, to be of infinite and various power.

Christ's power is in the intensity and vastness of his attributes. It is *Himself*. It is the relation of such and so much being to others. It is the grandeur and royalty of intrinsic nature and disposition.

2. **All power is Christ's.**

a. The kinds known among men as derived from human potentates.

b. The question whether there are not other grades and higher conditions, not only, but other kinds unknown to this state of being.

1. Analogy of opening up head-forces in the progress of the race.

2. The unlikeliness that the whole of being is compressed into this world, which seems much more like a propagating ground than the full garden.

3. **Christ's power** is not confined to heaven. It is power on earth:

Behind laws of matter;

Behind laws of the human mind and soul;

Behind governments and world-currents;

A Providence — a Guiding Grace — an educating and inspiring Force:

Eph. 1: 20;

Phil. 2: 9;

Col. 2: 10;

1 Pet. 3: 22.

## APPLICATION

I. God is not an ecclesiastic nor a professional God. Artist, scholar, legislator, merchant, mechanic, poet, musician, philosopher — every legitimate tendency in the human mind is toward its *type* and perfectness, *in God*.

He cares for these things from an innate relish. He is not a Sunday God, a Church God, but every day and everywhere — “*all* power in heaven and on earth.”

II. Christ declares all this not of Jehovah but of himself. We must remember that his earthly career was just finished, he was about to ascend, and that that nature and manifestation which had filled the hearts of his friends here was to clothe itself with infinite and universal power. To understand what the beauty and glory of it is in heaven, we must revert for a moment to the moral character and disclosures of Christ on earth.

Coming to his enemies: “to seek and save lost”; “to the *poor* the Gospel is preached.” His sympathy going out to ignorance, to penitent and desponding evil, to the weak and tempted, to suffering and sorrow. Utter using and emptying of self of all power, that others might be built up.

Compare with monarchs, statesmen, the rich, scholars, and philosophers: — universal self-exaltation. But Christ, “though rich, became poor.”

It is *that tendency* which is translated to infinitude. It is to such a disposition that all power is given.

III. There is not a sorrow, a want, a temptation, which has not its refuge and natural sympathizing center in the bosom of this Saviour. “We have not a high-priest who cannot be moved,” etc.

**IV.** See what we are living toward:

1. The path into the future, as it seems to nature, is age, infirmity, thinning friends, losses, bitter knowledge, human weakness, poverty, neglect, death;

2. But what are *we* living toward, who have faith in Jesus!

## LIV

### CHRIST, the IDEAL

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*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. — Col. 2 : 6, 10.*

THE particular thought to which I invite your attention in this passage, is that **Christ is presented to men as the hero** for admiration, inspiration, and imitation.

I. The tendency in human nature to seek and follow a leader is universal. The selection may be unfortunate, but the impulse is noble. It implies an ideal excellence, aspiration for something higher and better than one finds in himself. It is the distinguishing mark as between the downward tendency and the upward tendency of men's natures.

1. *Without it men live merely for sense*, and for present gratification. They are content, no matter how little worthy of contentment their natures may be. There is no principle of growth. Take away external props, and there is nothing to save them from degeneracy.

2. *No man proposes to himself another person for imitation without taking the first step of rising.* It is the going out of self. It is a confession of insufficiency of self. This is a grand step. Thousands of men do not dream but that they are well enough off inwardly.

*Illn.* In externals they are satisfied that they might be better — riches, pleasures, influence; but as to their character they do not feel the want of anything; yet all is tame, sordid, selfish, vulgar. Self-content is ruin. "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit," etc.

To awaken and see in others an element that rebukes you is salutary. It is a rude and imperfect aiming at character, or at a spiritual and not a material result.

3. Then again, *men need to have great or good qualities reduced to action or example* before their faces. A transcendent act of a heroic man is in the moral realm what a great discovery is in the economic and mechanical world.

*Illn.* The first steam-engine revolutionized human industry, and indirectly touched civilization at the core. The first sewing machine reached out an influence that touched every household in the land. Before, the hand planted stitches slowly and singly, — now broadcast. Before, sewing was like drawing water with a bucket, — now it is a rain.

So in the moral realm, *a great moral act is a discovery, an invention*, in character. Before, men did not dream that there was any achievement beyond the beaten track of experience; but let some man lift up an example, and all men see that there is something higher.

☞ The great ignorant mass need to have possible virtue condensed into actual — the abstract made concrete. Hence it is that the stronger are made leaders through spontaneous imitation by weaker men. Great men are not elected chiefs by men, but by the higher election of God in their creation. They are "called of God."

*Illn.* Thus men of mark show their fellows the way. They cut steps in the sides of the mountains which they



climb for their own feet, and these remain for others to use. If a ship sail across the sea in fourteen days, it is good. Reduce it to twelve, and others will. The knowledge that a thing can be done is the force that will move scores to do it.

The boy has his little hero in the crowds of boys. The workman has his ideal craftsman. The professional man has his enthusiasm. The speaker, the musician, the politician, all set up some shining example before them. A man will have some hero.

## II. The secular models.

1. They are often only men of mere success — the Girards, the Astors, the finished lawyer, the eloquent speaker. It is a model for a single element, and leaves the great part of men uninfluenced.

2. The higher heroes are usually the heroes of force — not of excellence.

3. Even where moral excellence is recognized, it is usually special, and not universal; *i. e.*, it is excellence belonging to a species and not a genus; and to imitate is to attempt to conform not to a type, but to a modification or variety not reproducible.

☞ Hence, the biographies of good men, capable of benefit, are made mischievous.

## III. The man Christ Jesus is the universal Man.

a. He has been the hero of all ages.

b. Of every class and condition of men, high and low.

c. Of every stage of culture — the highest, the least developed. Of the untutored heathen and of the philosopher.

*Is Christ universal? Are all the elements which men need, in him? What can the orator find? What the artist, the statesman, the warrior, the mechanic?*

I reply, *He is universal* not by specific adaptation, but by *those underlying universal qualities* which govern all special departments.

1. The law is that the highest intellectual and spiritual develop and enrich all below them.

Hence, "Seek ye first," etc., "Godliness is profitable," etc.

2. Therefore, aiming at character in its highest type, the artist, the orator, whoever aspires, finds in this moral largeness the very influence he needs; and he is orator or artist because he is more than that — because he is a *man*. Manhood first; special tendencies next.

#### **IV. Consider how transcendent are the elements of Christ.**

1. First, recall great men of the world, — rulers, greater statesmen, Herod, Pilate, king, emperor, rich men and warriors, artists and scholars. Great indeed they may have been among their fellows, yet now they have gone down, and only one Name is "above every name that is named." Why?

The notable superiorities of Christ were not physical; not worldly-minded; not those of geniuses in art or eloquence:

They stood in moral goodness, purity and nobility, self-possession, disinterestedness and magnanimity, labor for others, heroic self-sacrifice. These are immortal.

**V. Consider what an influence upon a whole life would be exerted by such a passionate admiration of Christ as men feel for human models and heroes.**

This is what "studying" the Word of God should mean.

1. Precepts and truths;
2. History of God's dealings with men;
3. Wings for devotion;
4. But, rising above all else, intimate knowledge of *the ideal Man*, the *incarnate God*.

What sweeping away of customs! What dignity to life!

## LV

### WORTH and GROUNDS of HOPE

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*For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? — Rom. 8: 24.*

“FOR we are saved by Hope.”

Not exclusively. It is one of the factors. Its existence implies other things which work out salvation. The question of man's salvation is spoken of differently according to the point of view taken. If we are regarding it from the Divine side, and in its relations to government, we are saved by the grace of God. If we consider the instruments which wrought out and now apply the influences by which our salvation is effected, we are saved by the love of Christ. But if we consider the subject from the human side, other causes will be alleged as securing salvation.

If men are spoken of as saved by Christ, then that element in the mind which takes hold of Christ will be singled out, and men are said to be saved by Faith. If we look at the long continuance of worldly trials, stretching sometimes across the whole breadth of life, and consider how likely men are to be weary, and to give up, then it is said that we are saved by Patience, or endurance to the end. But if we are considering the troubles and trials of the career of a Christian life, and the discouragements which they bring, we know that the

spirit which rises up and overcomes them is that which saves us, and that is Hope, which usually carries along with it Courage.

All of these causes act alternately or together, and we are saved by them each and all — by Divine love; by Divine grace; by human activity; by patience; by faith, and by hope unto the end.

**Hope is an original feeling**, and exists in every mind as a constitutional element, varying in degree, like any other gift, in different persons; but in all subject to development, regulation and discipline. In short, it is susceptible of education. This and all Christian feelings whatever are natural. *Religion is not a creative but a regulative influence.*

A hopeful disposition, under mere secular and earthly training, carries with it cheer, happiness and courage, in social and temporal affairs. It may exist and act simply from the fullness of the feeling in any case; or it may call to its aid the reason, and hope may be based on experience, conviction, knowledge.

It becomes *Christian* hopefulness when it is stimulated by Christian truth, when it recognizes Christ, and feels the force of his words, promises, and truths.

As hope, strong, ardent, not only in prosperity but in darkest trouble, is a Christian's duty; as hopefulness is one of the evidences of piety, and one of the great instruments of education and salvation, it will be wise in us to consider the ends or aims which it includes, and the grounds on which it stands.

1. The ultimate and grand object of hope is the salvation of the soul, and its eternal blessedness in the heavenly state. But as that is the remote and final result of a long course of earthly education and discipline, **hope takes cognizance of the whole career of man**, from

his entrance into battle to his crowning with laurels and victory. It casts its light and cheer over every step, deed, and experience of life. It is to the soul what light is to the stars. It is soul-radiance, and shines on, day and night, over rough and smooth, behind stones or upon columns. It gives confidence, comfort, happiness. It renews strength and inspires courage even against sight and against ordinary reason. The soul travels by appointed paths as far as they will carry it; and then faith and hope are wings for the trackless air.

*Illn.* In my yard, hens, most domestic, go where feet can go. So do my doves; but then, they spread their wings and swing in glorious circles through the air, up and against the wind; or, swaying, they dart swift as light, and flashing in it, with the wind, over plain and tree, rock and fence, in that pathless air which is all path.

2. This seems to some a blind enthusiasm. Nay, hopefulness, in the degrees to which it attains in Christian experience, seems a sort of fanaticism. Men doubt the wisdom of feelings that have no base laid for them in experience and fact. But **there is a foundation for hopefulness** laid in that which is better than mere human experience; viz., in **God's provisions** — in the structure of the world, society, and his own government.

Note, then, these grounds for Hope: —

1. That **the earth is the Lord's**, made on purpose to accomplish the very things for which Christians strive.

In one way men are called exiles; but in another way they are at home on earth. It is their Father's house.

*Illn.* Child on a visit, or boarding, and when it comes home.

The whole world was made and is governed for their sakes.

*Illn.* Every child has a sense of property in his father's possessions. See 1 Cor. 3:21: "All things are yours," etc.

Now then, go out, with living faith, and say "All things are mine" — the sun, the seasons, the trees, the flowers, human life.

*Illn.* I sit by my window. That sea is mine. Those ships are mine. All the galleries of pictures in sky and on land are mine. Mine are the gardens, and orchards, and grounds. Mine are the wilderness, the streams and the mountains.

It is a great deal to gain an abiding conviction that the earth is the Lord's, and that you are his own.

2. That **God supervises** the course of nature, the flow of society, and the tendencies of individual life, so as to lay the foundation of hope to every one who would live aright.

In one important sense we do "wrestle against principalities and powers" (Eph. 6:12); but in a sense yet higher the course of empire is for us. The human tendencies may be adverse; but there is a Divine decree that works over, under and through all things.

3. That as soon as the soul embraces Christ it avails itself of a **love that is personal**, as the utmost love of man to man, and ten thousand times **more fruitful**.

Now, note the consequences. The royalty of the love-law is this — that you are more to God than to yourself:

a. This is familiar to us on a small scale — family, children, etc.

b. Render it infinite, and call it Divine. Provisions of grace.

4. That from this springs a loving **special providence** that includes every detail and specialty of daily and

secular life; — a love, watch and care that never change. Perseverance of God; not of saints.

5. This is corroborated by the experience of good men. Summon them to testimony.

**I.** Mark now the contrast between resting on mutable moods, which depend on a thousand evanescent courses, and on a well-considered ground of **hope in God**.

**II.** Contrast the disposition to see all dark, to acutely feel **all the evil**, and the disposition that searches and **rests in the good** and hopeful.

**III. Objection**, that hopefulness leads to presumption; disinclines to labor. Yet

Want of it, — apathy.

It is inspiration.

#### **IV. Applications.**

1. Hopefulness applied to *success in Christian life*. It is a very great undertaking. Scope, importance, and hindrances. To that very point God promises his own Son. "Shall he not *with* him freely give us all things?"

☞ Consider that God sees ineffable and eternal glories of salvation; and shall he not be more disposed than we to bring his children to it? (Isa. 40: 27 to the end.)

2. Christian hope in *rearing a family*.

a. Temporal. With wise and right direction, gives incitement and efficiency.

b. Spiritual. Apply to early conversion, and to holding out of children in the Christian life. *Hope and expectation* on your part will largely secure the result.



## LVI

# REGULATING POWER of the DIVINE LIFE

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*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer heed. — Phil. 4 : 11, 12.*

**I. Paul's natural character.** This effect of exaltation and of reverses to be expected.

### II. What was the state he had reached?

In regard to:

1. *Honor and dishonor?* To love the one and to be indifferent to the other.

2. *Pleasure?* Relish for it when attainable; not beholden to it when it departs.

3. *Studies and delights* of refined life? Enjoyable without being indispensable.

4. *Money and its conveniences?* To exist in poverty without suffering.

5. *Health; sickness?* With equability.

6. *Vigor, power, activity; prison, in chains; i. e., working, or standing still?* Ready for the event.

The peculiarity is:

a. In Paul's healthful relish for everything. No cynic, no anchorite, no solemn growler.

b. In his facility of going cheerfully from one condition to another. Affairs were to him like a tent — spread to-night, struck in the morning, and both pleasant. He still found hope, conscience, love and peace, wherever he was.

### III. The method by which:

1. It was such an estimate of *inward qualities* of manhood, as gave him *control of the external*.

a. The distinction between organic life and inorganic is that the latter is wholly acted upon by forces through laws, and the former *is itself a force*, and acts upon its surroundings.

b. In the vegetable kingdom least, and without consciousness.

c. In the animal kingdom more, and with a purpose. This purpose and this consciousness augment as you ascend the scale, till man is reached, as distinguished from all other animals by variety, scope, and the nature of the effects which he can produce upon surrounding things.

d. Among men, differences based on the same scale; *he rises highest who asserts the superiority of the human will over circumstances*, and can be most independent of them.

e. Paul attained this control by a view of *Providence* which must always be consoling and inspiring. The Old Testament regarded God as acting in the phenomena of nature. The New Testament speaks, throughout, of God as acting through evolution of human affairs, or what we call *Providence*. To Paul, events and affairs were supremely guided. Christ still lived, and every day's experience was by its happenings a revelation to him of his dear Master's will.

f. But chiefly *the world to come*, the reality of its royalties, the vision right before him, — by that he measured the worth of joy and sorrow, praise and blame, riches and poverty, pleasures and misfortunes.

IV. Paul **learned** this. It was not born in him, but *earned*. It took time, suffering, experience. This should encourage those who are seeking for it.

#### APPLICATION

I. The Christianity of our age demands that men should **learn how to abound**; to have and to control all power, pleasure, etc., for good uses.

II. But, again, they must **learn how to be abased**. The nervous, enterprising, venturesome nature of our people fills the land with changes. Solidity and permanence are not common. Everything changes, and everybody changes. There are fluctuations in business, in public affairs, etc., and men need to know how to change base.

☞ What bravery, what heroism, does it require to *come down!* (It would be easier for pride to go to the stake.) To do it promptly and thoroughly; to do it honestly and frankly, without keeping up pretence; to do it bravely, not giving up the battle with misfortune; to do it and be happy, as a witness that “a man’s life consisteth not,” etc.!

☞ We have orders of nobility. If I were king, I would create an order for *men in adversity* living upon manhood!

III. The need of a great change toward **simplicity of taste**, in learning to derive happiness from simpler sources than we do.

1. The continental Europeans, in that respect, are happier on a smaller capital than we are. The Anglo-Saxons have force, scope, constructive power, with very little capacity of enjoying.

2. In our society arrangements, things tend to a high key. In parties, banquets, social entertainments, they become more and more laborious, expensive and dreary.

3. We almost disown the simple enjoyments of Nature.

4. Egotism in joy — *i. e.*, fastidiousness and exactingness — increasing. Not tendency to gather pleasure anyhow, but only on one's own terms. All this, unwholesome; should be checked.

IV. Demand for development of a **broader range of faculties**. We have too few alternatives. We invest happiness in one or two securities. If we fail in one we fail altogether.

No wide sympathies.

No union with Providence and God's work in the world.

V. Analysis of the *great company of grumblers*.

VI. The *power of great-heartedness*, and of faith, to overcome all these.

## LVII

### THE HELP in TROUBLE

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*But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. — Isa. 43 : 1-3.*

TROUBLES are frequently compared to waters; to storms which burst overhead; to the waves of the sea; to the descent of torrents, rending all barriers and sweeping away all obstacles; to the overflow of rivers, and the irresistible course of the streams.

These images are strikingly appropriate, not only for the suddenness, the completeness, and the awfulness of the rush of mighty waters, but as conveying to all who have had experience the despairing sense of the weakness of all human strength when opposed to the irresistible power of waves and currents of trouble.

On one occasion, early in my ministry, riding to an appointment, I waited a night for the subsidence of the White Water, too high for fording. At length it seemed practicable. I rode a young and timid horse. When in the midst of the stream the waters swirled about him, the foam came rushing past him, and the pressure on

his flanks became so alarming to him that, in the very worst part of the stream, he sprang upward, and plunged me, burdened with overclothes, into the roaring waters. I was whirled down like an eggshell. Water was around me, under me, above me. My arm had no more effect than if I had pushed at the side of a mountain. There was a devouring energy in the flood. I remember to this day, vividly, how the water seemed to rejoice, to laugh, to triumph, over me, and whirled me about, and rushed over me, and that I was like a babe in its turbulent hands. When I drifted a little out of the current, and gained a shallower place, a foothold, and finally the shore, all my strength was gone, and I lay panting on the ground, unable so much as to stand. Never since that day have I lacked a lively sense of the meaning of those precious words, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee!"

But this whole passage points to the *fear* of evil, as well as to the actual presence of it. Indeed, troubles not yet come are often more terrible than those which have reached us. They act upon the imagination, and multiply all the possibilities of evil, and run round and round in the same path of anxiety, wearing out the life with indefinite forms of mischief.

The figure of the text has to me a vivid meaning. In my frequent travels in the West I often dreaded, all day long, the fords which I knew that I must pass. Sometimes a whole day's ride had in it a latent anxiety, lest the water should be up, lest the ford had shifted, or lest darkness should overtake me before reaching it.

Thus men anticipate trouble, of ill-health, of bereavement, of losses, of bankruptcy, of unpopularity, of broken friendship, of failure of ambitions, and of nameless and numberless disappointments.

☞ These anticipations of trouble are often far harder to bear than the trouble itself, when it comes. The real presence dispels illusions, and brings definiteness instead of agonizing uncertainty.

1. **Consider the nature of God**, and the character given to him, as One who enters into the world's history, wants, sorrows and troubles, with a minute and extraordinary personal interest.

Contrast it with those views of God which are the only ones that material science affords us. Natural science has no place in its system for Divine sympathy and love. The time will come; but as yet the God of science is only an engineer, and not a very present help in time of trouble.

2. **Consider the comfort** arising from the grounds mentioned, on which God befriends all who trust him.

a. It is not a ground of our deserving.

b. Nor an act of our successful achievement in our own behalf.

c. It is the parental feeling — *i. e.*, it is the identification of God's heart with that of those who suffer.

“Thou art mine.”

“I have called thee by thy name.”

This is the evidence of intimate knowledge.

☞ *Illn.* There are times when to be called by name is one of the most exhilarating of experiences. Descending the far side of Wengern Alp, etc., heard my name called; friendly association in alien surroundings.

*In view of this: —*

I. **God says** to every one who will trust him, respecting all anticipated troubles, “**Fear not.**”

Men endeavor, by insurance, by various precautions, to make head against mischiefs; but while we should relax no wise activity, here is that which is best for all: *Fear not!*

*Illn.* Like soldiers that follow Sherman.

We shall ride down a great many sorrows and cares by this very confidence.

**II. God** does not promise to ward off all ills, but he **does promise to come with your troubles.**

1. They shall not be chances, fates, lucks.

2. He will not leave you to men's caprice and will.

3. He will not leave you to flood and fire — *i. e.*, to the force of natural laws, alone.

4. He will himself move about your path, as it were, and limit, apply, and administer your troubles to you, in love and wisdom.

**III. God** promises that our **affliction shall not destroy us.** Read verse 2. "Overflow"; "be burned."

Even if much perishes, *you* shall be saved. "Outward man perisheth," etc.

This assurance is itself half a cure.

#### APPLICATION

1. Many persons cherish such *false views of God* as make their trials harder to bear than they would be if left alone.

a. That he is punishing;

b. Or, that he has nothing to do but to say, "If you had known and kept the law there would have been no trouble."

2. Our troubles, and our fears of trouble, should *bring us to God.*



*Illn.* Disciples in ship.

☞ May seem selfish to go *then*, chiefly. Even so, it is better than to perish.

3. Times of trouble are good times in which to *come to God for the first time*, good for repentance, good for reformation, good for commencing a new life.

## LVIII

# TRUSTING GOD

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*Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid. —*  
*Isa. 12 : 2.*

THE ancients knew little of natural law. They saw God in nature, and what we call law they called will or power.

The progress of science does not exclude Divine government, but reveals it to be by certain methods and instruments. The time must come when we shall get back again to the earliest standpoint, but with augmented faith, and see God in nature, the great worker through all laws.

What if a child, hearing it said that a picture was made by Inness, should steal into the studio, and see the canvas, and see the artist work, with a palette full of colors, with brushes, with a knife, etc., and should say, "No, the brushes and the pigments made the picture"? But was not the painter behind them?

God is behind the manifestations which men see in nature.

**I. What is trusting in God?** It is such a *sense of the Divine presence and helpfulness* as shall strengthen, comfort and sustain man with his infirmities in the conflicts of life.

1. It may imply and include a wise reliance on God's natural laws, as the means of securing blessings.

*Illn.* Paths in a garden; streets in a city; roads through a country.

2. But it *rises* above a sense of mere law *to the personality of God*; not as an engineer, alone, managing machinery; rather as a personal friend, clothed with sympathies, affections and pities, such as befit strength and wisdom, dealing with weakness and ignorance.

3. It *does not need* to be precise in its conceptions, having a *knowledge of how* God helps. It is rather that confidence, that clinging and loving state, which in human life men experience in the presence of those who are greater than they are.

*Illn.* Sickness, in the presence of a tried, expert physician. The patients do not know his opinions nor his medicines, but they trust him, blindly, implicitly.

4. Trusting God would make even the strong stronger, the rich richer, and the glad more joyful; but it is the *peculiar need of the weak*, of the discouraged, of men in adversity.

II. It would seem as if a privilege so great would need no arguing. It might be supposed that men would at least try it; but many who need it prefer to push it from them with **various objections**.

*Obj.* 1. "I am getting along well enough. I have no need. Why should I trust God?"

*Illn.* A ship goes out of port well enough, under the care of the less experienced hands, but a storm comes on — stress of battle with the waves. Is there not need of a captain's direction? The time may come in the lives of any of us when we shall need the arm of the Almighty to lean upon.

*Obj. 2.* "Trusting God will not be a substitute for activity and a wise use of means; and if I use these I shall have no need of trust. It will not pay my bills, nor my notes at three o'clock, nor sustain my credit, nor support my family."

We advocate no such trust — a mean and selfish running to God, at a pinch, for economic reasons, as when a fire breaks out men run to an insurance office; nor a trust springing from indolence and thriftlessness: but a trust comprehensive, including one's own responsibility, wisdom and activity, and *causing these to act* in the sphere of reliance and trust on God.

For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. — Matt. 6: 32.

*Obj. 3.* "I cannot imagine that the God of the whole earth should *interest himself about affairs so small.*"

This involves a false sense of true greatness. The reasoning is based on principles of mere sensuous magnitude. Love knows no magnitudes.

*Illn.* Parent and babe. The actual government of the globe reveals the truth on this subject.

**III.** Men may be deterred from going to God by a **general sense of their own unworthiness.** This is perhaps a nobler frame of mind. But —

1. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame." He knows us better than we know ourselves.

2. The whole economy of moral government revealed in Scripture is *grace*, — succor for the undeserving.

3. The "great multitude that no man could number," whom the seer saw in his vision of heaven, were those

who "came out of great tribulation," and who, although soiled by sin, had trusted God's promises, and had "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. *Therefore* are they before the throne of God."

IV. Merely to go to God for relief when suffering from causes which we have foolishly induced by our vanity, our pride, our avarice, or our appetite, without any hearty repentance, involving purposes of amendment, is neither generous nor honorable. But **if we go to Him with a sincere intention to reform**, then we may pray, consistently, for help to avert the penalties of even our own wrongdoing. Then may we trust, and *shall not be confounded*.

## LIX

### PEACE in CONFLICT

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*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. — John 14 : 27.*

1. *Peace!* What a *strange gift* from One who stood on the edge of a storm, on the border of that shadow of death — that wrestling, anguish, outcry! Before him was Gethsemane, its night of griefs, its inward strife, its unexplained agony, its master-sorrow that triumphed over the body, and trod it down.

Yet, at his soul's center he had peace, — and to spare!

2. How strange a gift to *them!*

Consider their ignorance, their undevelopment, their helplessness, and all their self-conflicts and dashings upon external conditions. What had peace to do with them?

3. What a gift, when one looks out on *the world* upon which they had entered!

Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. They were to go forth with a torch, to rouse the broods of darkness and night insects by its light. They were to sound a defiance at the gates of every royal city, and before every kingdom. Before them were revolution, war, persecutions, torture and martyrdom. What a gift, before such a prospect!

4. But it was a *peculiar kind* of peace. He emphasized --- "my peace." What was that? Christ's peace was of a quality which existed amid excitement, suffering and anguish. Theirs was to be like it. "In the world ye have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Let us look at the scattered elements of truth in human life which depict this.

**I. There is an experience of a certain steadfastness and peace in conflict.**

Contending experiences of pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, rest and disturbance, at the same time, are common; but it is always when a *superior feeling dominates* and controls a lower one which is in conflict with it.

*Illns.* A man may suffer bereavement, and yet dwell high and sublime. Faith and Hope! "Sorrow not as those who are without hope."

A man may see his reputation wrecked, and yet look down as a nobleman from his castle.

One may see the storm of bankruptcy and financial ruin, and yet, by virtue of his higher moral nature, be protected and overshadowed by the world to come. Down at the bottom his common nature will yet fret, wrangle, and suffer; but at the top his better feelings will sing.

**II. This peculiar peace must be one which can be felt in conflict, storm, sorrow, or it is impossible; for peace as the result of a perfect condition is not feasible.**

1. Man built for growth by conflict; and yet
2. Not in harmony with laws of the world, or of the society in which he lives. Too ignorant to be, even if good enough.
3. Not in harmony with self, no relative proportions,

activities, subordinations of reason, conscience, affection, appetite, and variations from day to day.

**III.** It is a part of the revelation of Christ that there is a **special provision** in the Christian character for this very emergency.

1. If men had peace only on natural conditions, almost none ever could, etc.

2. But while the race is journeying to knowledge and harmony, God interferes, and inspires upon the soul noble incitement of the higher nature, which helps.

3. *Obj.* If any say, "No, God's administration over the world is one of law only," I reply:

a. Natural law is universal in the material globe.

b. In the lowest animal tribe appears a *voluntary principle*, or something that enables creatures to act, not against law, but with it, and so control it.

c. This power increases as you go up to man.

d. It increases in men as they rise to noble types.

e. Doubtless there are higher beings, yet above man: and this power must be perfect in God — who is not driven by fate, nor walks among laws as one between walls.

**Note, then:**

1. Power of God to lift the soul to its higher self.

2. In this state all troubles of the lowest kind — cares, disproportions, worldly wants — cured by counterbalancing of higher moods.

3. True sorrows, noble griefs, made sustainable, and even joyful, by what Faith sees. (*Instances.*)

4. To this the Christian soul should come by *preparation*. The citadel that shall withstand attack, not built while enemy is bombarding, but *beforehand*. Soul's refuge of peace to be erected before trouble comes.



## LX

### GOD, for US

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*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 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? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. — Rom. 8 : 31-39, omitting verse 36.*

THIS passage is the climax of all of Paul's descriptions of divine love. It is more. It leaves all descriptions before and since quite pale and colorless by its side.

*Illn.* As some gorgeous picture on a wall puts out all others by it, etc.

As an experience of a man's own hope and courage it is something sublime. Such language of confidence in the mouth of even an Alexander or a Cæsar would seem tumid; yet here was an exile, impoverished, unpopular everywhere, of no bodily presence and dignity, and as utterly bereft of every kind of power which

men make use of in accomplishing their ends as can be conceived; and where else is there such a pæan of victory? Where else such buoyancy of hope? such an overflowing enthusiasm of happiness? And **the whole of it derived from Paul's relations to an invisible Soul.**

I will, in the first place, trace the line of thought. He takes his start at a point where most wings would be glad to alight and rest.

“If God be for us,” etc.

This is the theme; and the specifications are to follow. With this brief text, he then surveys the whole of creation. But he no longer looks from a human standpoint. His point of vision is from God's bosom. He imagines himself lifted into the circle of God's arms, and looking forth thence, — as from a tower? a rock of refuge? a fortified citadel? Nay, rather, as a child would look from its mother's arms, knowing that she will never let it go to harm. Her power may be less than her love; but God's love and power are co-equal; and “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

Now, **is He for us?**

1. “He that spared not his own son,” etc. The whole transaction is an exhibition of love — not a provocative to it. Atonement did not make God love. He made atonement for the sake of love.

But, in same book (Rom. 5: 6-10), this very question — the priority of Divine love to human excellence — is abundantly argued.

2. Next, the Apostle alleges the *life of Christ* as evidence, as his death had been:

All his work upon earth;

All his inevitable sympathy, control, and influence, in the spirit-world, *for us.*

3. He then summons, as it were, to his imagination, every conceivable power, to question them as to whether a soul that is resting in the bosom of God's love can be taken away.

a. Specifications of the greater forms of evil by which men have suffered.

Verse 35. Tribulation or distress, etc. Then, Death and Life — as it were, the two great monarchs, ruling two great states; angels, principalities — spiritual dignitaries in heaven; things present; things to come — all the methods of time; height and depth — all variations of space; nor any other creature — whatever is left, after all these !


**I.** In this passage Paul opens to us the **eternal nature of God** as revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

a. The *availableness* of this divine love to us may depend on our use of it, on our attitude, etc.

b. But its *existence*, power, constancy, are not affected by anything.

*Illn.* The tropics, the Brazilian forests and fields, may avail according to the use made of them by the population; but the inexhaustibleness of their treasures is the same, whether used or neglected.

**II.** The **conception of such a nature**, brought home to each one of us by a realization of faith, with the resources of His infinite nature — **on our side.**

 1. Men first fail in conceiving of such a being as God thoroughly in *love with his creatures*, and organizing the universe and chording it to their feelings.

2. But then, when a glimmer breaks upon their mind, the next difficulty is, to bring home the truth that *they* are objects of such love.

Why, if such feelings exist, are men so unconscious of it?

*a. Illn.* The sunlight in a room depends on the size and condition of the windows. It may be wholly excluded, or partially, etc. So a man's moral sensibility will determine *his sense* of God's love.

*b.* In proportion as we grow we have glimpses. Every one has hours of high, solemn, intense certainty.

*c.* And with some these hours have ripened into an abiding state.

**III.** Then, next, if the world is so governed, why is there permitted so much cruelty, sin, confusion?

1. Must take a *large conception of time*. The whole of it is a moment only.

2. *A larger view of sin*; since much of it is only disciplining evil, at last sending out great good.

*Illn.* Chording instruments of a Philharmonic orchestra, preparatory to rendering Beethoven's "Fifth Symphony."

**IV.** Whether such a view of God

1. Does not make **sin a very different thing from mere law-breaking?**

2. Whether it does not lay a **ground of hope** for reformation?

**V.** Whether such a view does not bring peace, rest, composure in all the difficulties of life — enterprises, yearnings?

Alone, without God — how dreary, often, the path of life. With him how cheerful — even the darkness!

**VI. It is not a vain thing to trust our God.**

I summon all that by faith have had victory:

The obscure and neglected;

The sick and dying;

The captives and persecuted;

The martyrs;

The whole heavenly host.

Read Rev. 5.

END

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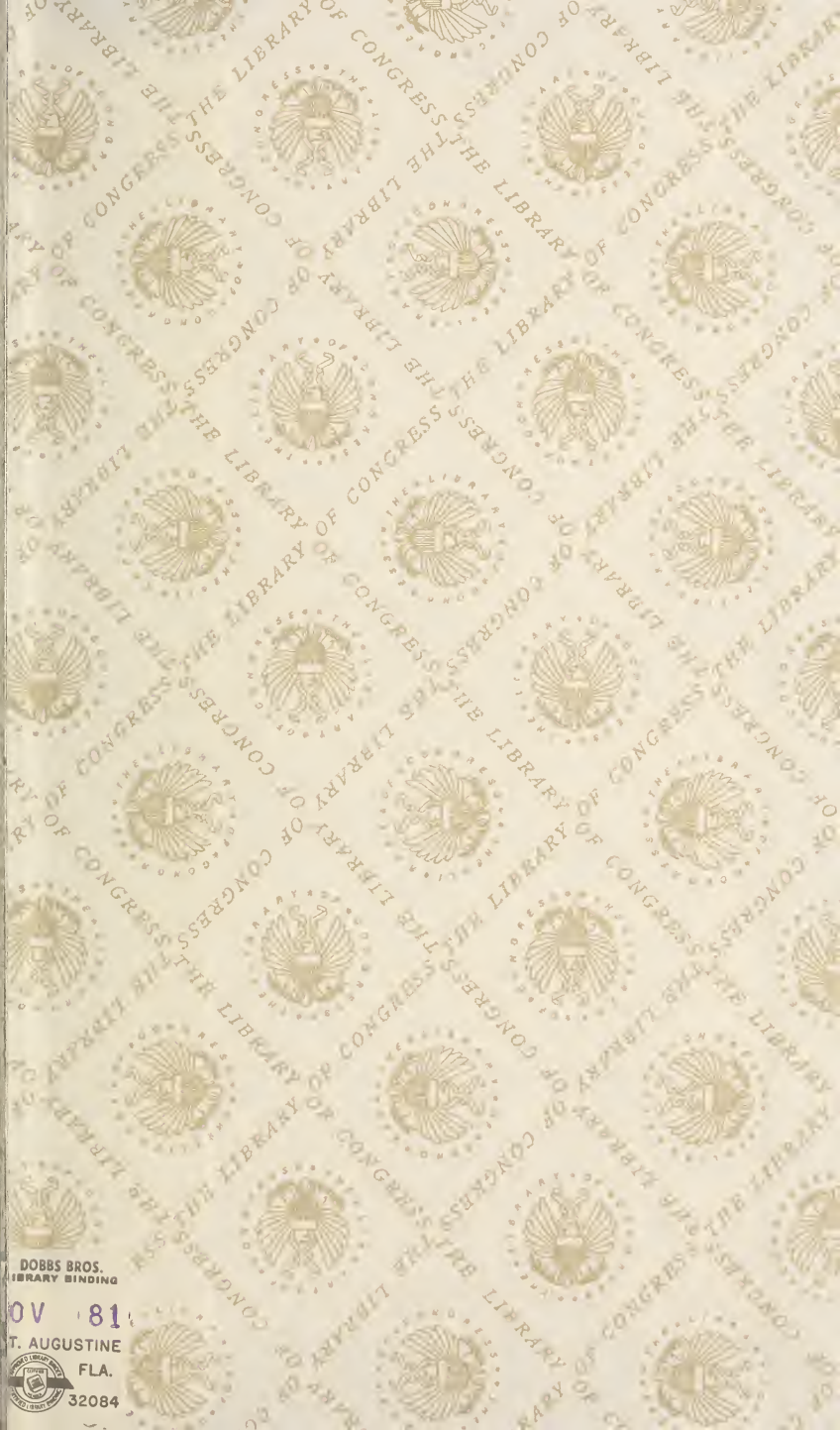


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