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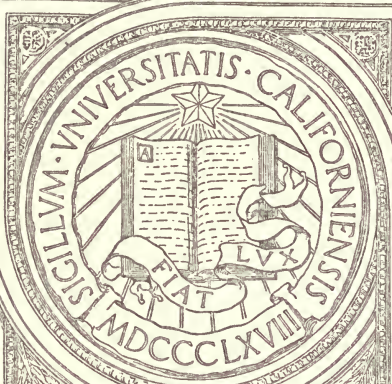


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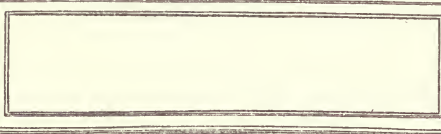
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The Railroad Jubilee :

TWO

DISCOURSES

DELIVERED IN

HOLLIS-STREET MEETING-HOUSE.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 21, 1851.

BY THOMAS STARR KING,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

Published by Request.

BOSTON :

BENJAMIN H. GREENE,

124, WASHINGTON STREET.

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TO THE
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DISCOURSE I.

PROV. xvi. 9:—“A MAN'S HEART DEVISETH HIS WAY; BUT THE LORD DIRECTETH HIS STEPS.”

It is true, not only that God sometimes overrules the evil which men create to some good result, but also that he always bends the good they achieve to some better offices than the agent could have conceived. Men are ever “working together with God.” Our action becomes implements for his providence; and, although we are free, so that every heart deviseth its own way, we often see clearly how our toil, instead of ending with the result before our own desire, plays, like the mechanic's cog-wheel, into a vaster wheel, whose roll carries a great and beneficent design of Heaven. Here, indeed, is a prominent element

in the glory of goodness, that we do not know, and cannot prophesy, where its blessed sequences will end. We fling out the tokens of our fidelity to become instruments of God, and he alone knows what purposes in his rule they are competent to serve; he alone can foresee what a family of benefits will be their lineage. And, ah! is it not one of the most eloquent warnings against unfaithfulness to right, that the consequences are not limited to ourselves, but that such agency undulates, we cannot know how far, and spreads the power of the prince of darkness in society, instead of starting, as it might, if obedient to the higher voice, a train of blessings, which God had laid near our will?

The old prophets, for instance, were not farsighted enough to see the effect of their words upon the intellect and heart of after-times. They supposed that the greatness and limit of their office were reached in announcing the approach of some judgment or mercy upon their Hebrew race. But it turns out, that their fidelity to a perilous summons, and the

sublime and tender language in which they clothed their messages of doom or love, remain long after the events they promised are forgotten, and kindle the religious sensibilities of generations whose advent was concealed from their eye. How could David imagine that the prayers for aid to which the forest-leaves of Hareth stirred, and the trustful hymns which filled the dim caves of Adullam, and the rapturous odes which he sent from his palace to be chanted in the tabernacle on Mount Zion, and the penitential breathings that brought back the divine presence to his breast, should be used as part of Christian worship in the cities of an unknown hemisphere, and furnish the souls of millions, of all latitudes and times and tongues, with a liturgy of devotion, gratitude, remorse, and hope? Had David been an irreligious man, had he never prayed, and sung, and wept for sin, what a sad blank would be left in the forces of civilization! how many thousands less would have known the peace of communion with God! how different might be your condition and mine! His heart

devised the utterance of aspiration and endeavor as a private necessity, and God directed their agency to the help of countless needy souls.

In secular affairs, also, it is so. Little did the men who went up to die at Thermopylæ conceive for what they were to die. It was not merely to prevent the Persian yoke from weighing upon their brethren: their swords were to open a path for the advent of the tragedies of Sophocles, the studio of Phidias, the Parthenon and Plato, from the ideal realm of possibilities into the domain of history: they went up to die for the classic culture of the world. Little did Columbus know of the importance of the hour when the western land broke the dim horizon through the morning twilight of October. The pilot of the "Mayflower" could not estimate the freight she bore. Feebly did Luther fancy the consequences of his defiance of the papal edict, and his tearing off the monkish cowl. And what a slight and incompetent idea did the wisest of our fathers entertain of the meaning and

promise of their heroism, when, less than a century ago, they kindled with their eloquence the flame of revolution upon this continent, and deliberately cut the last bond that knit them to a throne beyond the sea! Something very suggestive was there in the appearance of those two veterans of the Revolution in the pageant which, two days ago, moved through our streets; something to touch the secret springs of our wonder and gratitude. Their tremulous frames were the visible link of all the pomp of that spectacle to the most critical season of our history. I know not on what fields they fought, or what exploits in their country's service they can relate; but their presence was a thrilling admonition to fidelity to duty. Must it not have seemed strange to them, strange as the legends of enchantment, that they should live to see such fruitage from their labor! Is it improbable that they thought, as they might well have thought, while their carriage was threading our avenues, "This, then, is the echo of our valor; this, the offspring of the blood with which our

comrades stained the soil, as they fell, long years ago, at our side. We took our muskets to defend our rights, and show that we would not bear the shadow of oppression: we imagined we were pledging our toils for our own advantage, and THIS has come of it, — cities like this, crowded with plenty, and blessed with peace, — freedom and dignity for labor; the myriad-handed genius of industry ever busy, under the free sky, for the welfare of a nation; a citizen soldiery; rulers without decoration or titles conferred by birth; and for every child of the humblest and poorest, the privilege of education and the opportunity to rise to the highest influence and honor. Neither we nor our captains intended such grand results as these.” No; but Providence decreed that they should follow, if the men of the Revolution were faithful to their task. Alas! how poorly off should we be, if we depended on human foresight to project all even of our social blessings; if we could have nothing and expect nothing but what the wisdom of men can devise and consciously strive

after; if there were not a veiled wisdom, will, and mercy to superintend and compass all our ways, and bend our best efforts to purposes beyond the intention of our will! We cannot be grateful to our ancestors, without recognizing a higher Benefactor, and lifting our praises and thanksgiving to his throne. He has done for us, in addition to our fathers' labors, more than they could have conceived it possible to effect: he arranged a great plan of beneficence to which their heroism gave the impetus. Their hearts devised their way; but the Infinite Goodness directed their steps, and we now dwell and rejoice in the manifestations of that bounty.

The mention of the spectacle that recently adorned our streets leads us to some especially appropriate illustrations of our theme. We have entered into a period of society which will be characterized hereafter as the *Industrial Age*. It is plain that, about fifty years ago, a new direction was given to human affairs, a new force uprose in civilization, and different objects loomed ahead to draw the

energies of the world. The subjugation of nature; the increase of material conveniences and comfort; the binding of nations together by communion of traffic; the conquest of space, and compression of time, — these are what the civilized world is now beginning to be in earnest about. It is looking to labor, not to armies and diplomacy, for its resource in the accomplishment of its dearest ambition. Not Mars, nor Apollo, nor even Mammon, but Vulcan, stands pre-eminent in its regard in the pantheon of its deities.

It is often the case that the drift and worship of an epoch are revealed in some one enterprise, and condensed in one brilliant scene. Such a symbolic scene this year has numbered among its events. The CRYSTAL PALACE, on the bank of the Thames, is a magnificent temple, born out of the heart of this century, dedicated to its living God, and filled with the offerings of its worship.

“ Out of Thought’s interior sphere
Those wonders rose to upper air.”

Not more clearly do the sombre Pyramids, or

the battered face and sand-imbedded grotesqueness of the Sphinx, reveal to us the reverence of the old dwellers by the Nile; nor the massive aqueducts, the ruined Coliseum, and military roads, indicate the favorite ideas of the imperial Romans; nor the lovely ruins of the Parthenon, and fragments of immortal sculpture, tell, as it were, in sighs and sobs of music, of what Greece once delighted to do, than the various wonders beneath that vast roof, — the multitudinous triumphs of skill, industry, and genius, collected from myriad workshops that send their smoke into the sky of Europe and the new hemisphere, — proclaim our worship of the physical forces, which, under the guidance of cunning hands, will insure perfection of product and dominion over the world.

Worship is the only word that is deep enough to express the Anglo-Saxon relation to the mechanic powers and arts. We revere what they can produce more than any thing else. Take us as a race, we love speed and perfection in the necessary fabrics of life,

and skill in the combination of powers that give supremacy over nature, better than we love wealth, comfort, leisure, knowledge of God's world, a cultured manliness, and religious nobility and peace. It should seem that we must be lineal descendants of Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, "who," as we read in the book of Exodus, was selected from Moses' camp, and "filled with the spirit of God to devise cunning works, to work in gold and in silver and in brass, and in cutting of stones to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship." *Our* inspiration is of that nature, and for such ends. Human nature itself we estimate of less account than the material products it can create.

I have sometimes imagined another crystal palace placed near the great receptacle of the world's labor, and filled with typical selections from the *laborers* that produced those things. Ah! what a commentary would it furnish upon our religion and the love of our neighbor, to pass from the hall of the results to the

inclosure of the workers, — to see the squalor, the degradation, the miserable poverty, the unprotected disease, the carelessness of any refinement, the worn and distorted frames, half-fed and scantily clothed, the lack of glee in childhood, the absence of hope in maternal eyes, the feeble gleams of the noble traits of our humanity in the faces of all, men, women, and children; to whose steady toil from dawn till dark, — with scarce a respite through the years, till the drained and crippled body drops useless into the grave, — those triumphs of skill are due! And yet, with such a palace in open contrast to the great storehouse of industry, no doubt the verdict of our working race in Europe would be, “We will have the products at *that* price.” Practically, they do say that now. They know all those miseries; and they say, “We will pay the human faculty for the material product it may create; we love coal at five dollars a ton more than the miner’s manhood and domestic comfort, if they add another shilling to its price; we must have cheap garments, though the children of

the widow-seamstress cry for food ; pins must be perfect, though fifty thousand men be turned into mere pendants of the machine that makes them so ; fabrics must be woven at the lowest possible rate, even if the factory-bell summon feeble children from the school-room, and the continual roar of the mill drown every thought of duty and of heaven ; laces must not advance in price, nor lose in elegance, though the needle-woman be forced to stitch her honor and the peace of life into the tender mesh, to prolong her existence in a hostile and desolate world.

Selfishness, competition, rivalry, are, as yet, the springs of the industry of Christendom ; and yet, see how the doctrine of the proverb is supported even here ; see how a providential good rises out of the strife of human wit and trade. It is better for the poor workers, that there be such half-paid toil than war. It is better for their manhood and the hopes of their children, that they strain their sinews in mines, at forges, and by looms, and live in poorly warmed huts and with stinted fami-

lies, than be drilled to the murderous business of the battle-field, and pass their days in the camp, where there are no domestic influences at all. Despite the oppression that underlies our industry, "the World's Fair" strikes a great blow for international peace, teaching countries that there is a nobler arena of conflict and emulation than the field of blood; it awakens industrial ambition and pride; it convinces thousands that it is better to tear the earth with ploughs than with cannon, and to try which people can excel in swift steamships, flying yachts, locks that defy the burglar, and machines that make the reapers cheer for joy. Until now, the nations have striven to see how they could pile the largest holocaust to the demon of war, and keep a relative superiority by means of destruction and devastation: but the rivalry of commerce and industry is found to be more profitable and no less exciting than that of butchery; and out of the shrewd contest of the mercantile and industrial arena, and out of the miseries of the laborers, Providence draws the possibility of a

congress of nations, — “the United States of Europe,” — and leads statesmen to talk of the barbarity of battle, and use with hesitation the threat of war.

In the recent jubilee and the closing pageant within our city, an illustration is given how God draws the good of a higher sphere out of the benefits that lie in a lower order. That pageant was in honor of the completion of many years' endeavor to perfect the intercourse of the metropolis of New England and our own neighborhood with the North and West. The causal motive of the enterprise that has covered New England with nerves, of which our city is the brain, was not distinctly philanthropic. Perhaps it was chiefly selfish. Each line of road was schemed with direct reference to the return of interest on the investment, and the securing of a larger trade within our streets. Not till the prospect of profit was clear could one of these undertakings be carried through. It was not the direct intention of a single board of directors of a single railroad company to do a specially

Christian deed, in inviting to their scheme, — to bind states and communities together in holier ties, to diffuse a spirit of good-will, and strengthen civilization. The stockholders, as they subscribed and paid their instalments, had no such motive and purpose. The plans and the acceptance of them were for dividends and wealth.

But Providence had another and a higher use for those iron tracks and flying trains. After the mercantile heart had devised and secured them, God took them for his purposes: without paying any tax for the privilege, he uses them to quicken the activity of men; to send energy and vitality where before were silence and barrenness; to multiply cities and villages, studded with churches, dotted with schools, and filled with happy homes and budding souls; to increase wealth which shall partially be devoted to his service and kingdom, and all along their banks to make the wilderness blossom as the rose. Without any vote of permission from legislatures and officials, — even while the cars are loaded with profitable freight and paying

passengers, and the groaning engines are earning the necessary interest, — Providence sends, without charge, its cargoes of good sentiment and brotherly feeling; disburses the culture of the city to the simplicity of the hamlet, and brings back the strength and virtue of the village and mountain to the wasting faculties of the metropolis; and fastens to every steam-shuttle, that flies back and forth and hither and thither, an invisible thread of fraternal influence, which, entwining sea-shore and hill-country, mart and grain-field, forge and factory, wharf and mine, slowly prepares society to realize, one day, the Saviour's prayer, "that they all may be one." The beneficent genius of the age keeps his special and invisible express, laden with packages of providential blessings, upon every train that runs through our communities; and it seems, as the cars fly along the avenues which selfish traffic has created, that the villages, which are everywhere threaded like beads along the iron wires, are, to use the language of another, "counted off by the spirit of our age as so

many pater-nosters upon its rosary, in its swift worship of gratitude for the dawn of the age of peace."

Honest labor, of all kinds, although stimulated by private interest, does an unselfish good. "Labor is not a devil, even when encased in mammonism. Labor is ever an imprisoned god," and will contrive, over and above the narrow task for which it is paid in money, to do some gratuitous service for truth and heaven. It is good that mountains shall be graded, ledges blasted, fair roads built, deserts fertilized, mud swamps filled, marshes drained, and machinery invented; and, just as fast as they are accomplished, better results than thrifty enterprise had in view supervene. There is more intelligence, more generosity, more enjoyment, more advantages for securing the great ends of human life. "The unredeemed ugliness is that of a slothful people. Show me a people energetically busy, even when worldly motives are the only springs of it, heaving, struggling, all shoulders at the wheel; their heart pulsing, every muscle

swelling with man's energy and will; I will show you a people of whom great good may be prophesied, to whom all manner of good is yet certain, if their energy endure." The Christian religion never will flourish in purity and power among an unenterprising and unthrifty race.

I presume it is the simple truth, that the recent jubilee was called into being by the fact that Boston has made good its stand, as an independent force, against the commercial rivalry and absorbing centrality of New York; and that, by means of the recently finished lines of railroad, the trade of the Canadas will be attracted to our marts, and flour brought here a few cents cheaper on a barrel than before. Never were a few cents so splendidly honored; never did the prospect of so slight a profit do nobler service. Can any thing bear more brilliant testimony to the worship we pay to material forces, and the supreme estimate we put upon material triumphs, than that such a spring could stimulate such enthusiasm, and carry such a complex machinery of

show ? And yet, how the mercenary and commercial origin was dropped from the spectacle, and even banished from memory ! The titled ruler of the Canadas, with his retinue, comes to visit us ; and the talk is not of traffic, but of fellowship in blood. The official word of welcome and pledge of hospitality are responded to by the sincere compliment, the expression of astonishment at our prosperity and blessings, and the hope that the two kindred nations may dwell in perpetual peace. The streets are studded with generous mottoes, the speakers at the feast inspired with noblest sentiments, and the language of bargain and sale would jar the harmonies of the time. It is encouraging to the philanthropist to compare the procession of the trades with the spectacles that, in former ages, bore witness to popular joy. When a Roman general was honored and welcomed by the city, it was with grim ranks of paid soldiery, files of chariots, long lines of desolate captives, and the brutal excitements of the gladiatorial show. If a city would be merry in the middle ages, the

tournaments must be projected, and chivalrous duels delight the eyes of lordly and lady guests. *When* before, to honor eminent dignitaries, have the artisans been called from their tasks and toil as the right arm of strength, and the triumphs of their skill been selected as the noblest exhibitions of civil greatness and the chief reasons of pride? Can it be without important social consequences that so many intelligent Englishmen have been thus welcomed, and have gone back to the provinces of our mother-country with a deep impression of what, under the spur of our free suffrage, we are doing for the improvement of our soil, the wealth of our community, and the education of every child born into our protection? In striving for a wider field of traffic, we have built a ladder of iron, upon which our ideas and blessings shall yet climb into the Canadas. Such a three days will do far more for the progress of freedom than a three-days' revolution like that which France saw in 1830, and which intoxicated the world with a fallacious hope. Never was commer-

cial motive so dignified by unselfish fruit; never was the mercenary project of man more brilliantly enrobed with a providential meaning, office, and worth!

The visit of our own excellent Chief Magistrate and his Cabinet bore witness, by the speed with which they reached our city from the capital, to the effects of these material benefits in making our countrymen acquainted with each other, and in cementing their fellowship. Those who indulge fears for the stability of our nation on account of the extent of its domain, and who justify those fears by the recorded fortunes of ancient empires that were broken by the weight of their territories, do not appreciate the difference between our condition and theirs, in a representative government and provincial independence. And yet, admirably devised as our scheme of government is to promise central vigor and permanence, and to avoid the perils that spring from breadth of territory, diversity of climate, variety in habits, prejudices, and the scale of culture, and the conflict of material

and social interests, it is very doubtful whether its present extent would not prove too vast for the resources of our Constitution, if we had been left to the old means of communication and intercourse. The framers of our national charter would have considered the idea of bringing the shores of both oceans under its sway, and keeping their inhabitants in peaceful and fraternal communion, scarcely less than preposterous; and, with mail-coaches for the only conveyance to Utah, and barques doubling Cape Horn as the swiftest mediators between Washington and San Francisco, the attempt would be almost useless. But, when California may be brought within one week's distance, and the pioneers of Iowa and the planters by the Rio Grande may hear the debates that affect their interests in the capital before the speakers reach their perorations, a new principle is introduced which must modify all calculations of national security drawn from the infirmity of Athens and the decline of Rome. Steam and the magnetic wires compel the correction of our political philosophy; and,

if there be a pre-eminent value in the structure of our civil constitution; if it be a worthy subject for rejoicing that the breadth of a continent should be brought under its sway, and exhibit to the world the lasting triumph of the experiment of republican freedom, on a larger scale than any upon which imperial despotisms have yet displayed their transient strength, our gratitude is not more certainly due to Providence for the wisdom and patriotism of Washington, Hamilton, Franklin, and Adams, than it is for the genius of Watt, the ingenuity of Fulton, and the mercantile energy which has threaded our forests with rail-tracks, and disturbed our waters with steam-ships that conquer tides and storms.

Indications of the value of our neighborhood in time are already apparent. That eloquent and most noble speech from the Secretary of the Interior, in our State House, was to me the most important and suggestive event occasioned by the festival. By the good it will do, it will trebly repay all the money appropriated by the city. Its frank and generous conces-

sions of our thrift and prosperity cannot be without effect in restoring to New England, and especially to Massachusetts, its proper influence upon the sentiments and ideas of the nation. It is a solemn declaration to our Southern confederates, that we are in the proper path to strength and power; that we are in harmony with the American idea. Such a speech from the lips of a discriminating, unprejudiced resident of the South does more against slavery than all the infatuated disunionists can do in a century. The voice of friendly and unimpassioned wisdom, pointing to the social and industrial results of their institution, will impress them more effectually with its radical injustice than the boom of indignation borne to them from afar.

We have a country immense in extent, and ruled in its different parts, as yet, by different ideas. To be strongly and permanently united, we must have more than great statesmen in the Cabinet, and a loyal army and navy at command, to coerce South Carolina: we must come into some unity of political and social

life; we must not be separate nations, one part pledged by passion and fancied interest to the support and extension of bondage, and another part determined to resist that spread. Antagonistic sentiments and principles must not separate us. Titanic strength of intellect in our leaders cannot throw a bridge across that chasm. Iron rails cannot clamp the territory whose principles refuse fellowship, and struggle for despotic supremacy. Unity of ideas must be our bond and stay. The tendency to such unity is our only hope. The love of freedom, and the belief in its superior benefits, must be shed into our brethren of the South, not by our interference with their affairs, nor by indiscriminate denunciations of their sin, but by the silent, steady example of our New England. Character, national as well as private, must exert an influence according to the measure of its strength, so soon as you put it in vital communion with the world. And so every railroad that opens a path into the heart of our territory, and hastens the traveller on his way to our domain, is

an influence for freedom, a friendly force to the rights of the slave. We say, "Come, and see what freedom has done for us; how it has covered our grim rocks with fertile soil, filled our harbors with wealth, called up cities by our river-banks, wakened the roar of myriad looms, dropped a school-house in every district, and set a church as a beacon of heavenly light upon every hill. Come and see, by our peace, energy, plenty, and opulence, which is the path of power; and consider how your own rich soil would be loaded with fertility, your waste places become green cities, and your cities be filled with busy life, and every element of prosperity bless you abundantly, if, like us, you would banish from your communities that which, in every age, has proved itself the paralysis of energy and the canker of all civilization, and regain, through justice, the divine path to power." Henceforth, New England must preach for freedom and free soil by her example and her work, and her influence will travel on the lines of iron and the threads of wire, which private interest has laid, into the

most distant portions of our land, and, by reform of public sentiment, at last strike the fetters from the slave.

Reserving for a second discourse the more practical aspects of our subject, we should thus see, in closing, that God uses these material conquests of our land to impress upon us the value of union, and to make it more firm. If we would exert an influence in favor of the bondmen we desire to aid the most, we must be united. If we would not disturb the intentions and thwart the purposes of Providence, we must be a family of states; we must open anew the channels of brotherly affection, cherish fraternal sympathies, and feel that, as a people, upon this land which cannot be broken by the geographer or the surveyor, even if we are insane enough to seek division, we have all one call, one mission, one destiny.

DISCOURSE II.

LUKE, xii. 15 : — “ A MAN’S LIFE CONSISTETH NOT IN THE ABUNDANCE OF THE THINGS WHICH HE POSSESSETH.”

THERE is a radical discrepancy between the Catholic and the Protestant conceptions of civilization and social advancement. This difference of ideas makes discussion about the relative merits of the two churches, in respect of their influence on the progress of the race, almost useless. “ See,” says the Protestant, “ how, wherever the new spirit of the Reformation is welcomed and prevails, public energy is apparent, the work of improvement begins, wealth increases, genius is stimulated, labor is more cunning and constant, the railroad pierces the forest, and the shrill steam-whistle startles the old meditative silence of the hills. Our reli-

gion," the Protestant continues, "has been the parent or patron of freedom. Human rights are more sacred where the papal sway is denied, and privileges are steadily gaining ground against despotism. Better laws and order have sprung up wherever the influence of Luther has been felt; and it is plain that man is considered a nobler being. The Protestant faith was compelled to take the colder and wilder North countries of Europe and America, while the Catholic held dominion over the more sunny, cultivated, fertile South; and look now at the result of our stewardship. For three centuries we have had in charge the rugged North; for fifteen centuries you have held full sway in the lower climes, — and what is the verdict of fact upon the worth of the two systems? Rich, powerful, scientific, cultured England answers for our principles, against decrepit, superstitious, paralytic Spain for yours. Scotland appears as an offset to Ireland. Protestant Prussia, with its popular education, its orderly finances, its vigorous administration, and famous universities, faces

Catholic Austria, weak, impoverished, treacherous, and cruel, upheld in its despotic haughtiness by foreign ducats and the bayonets of the Czar. Snowy Sweden reveals the plenty, virtue, and thrift of her people, in contrast to the dissolute laziness of Naples, and the hopeless ignorance of Portugal. And New England stands out, the brightest spot upon the chart of civilization, — reclaimed from the savage, the wolf, and the deer, while Cuba has been sinking under a despotism that cripples its resources, and Mexico has been rotting into incurable decay. And where, too," continues the Protestant, "can you bring the names in your list of genius to mate Shakspeare and Schiller, Bacon and Lessing, Franklin and Fulton, Watt and Dalton, Newton, Goethe, and Guizot?"

It seems strange to us Protestants, that every intelligent Catholic is not overwhelmed with this argument against his faith. When he is pointed to the fact, that it is the ally of tyranny, the opponent of material prosperity, the foe of thrift, the enemy of the railroad, the caucus, and the school, we wonder that he does

not read in its results the condemnation of its principles, and abandon it for a more inspiring religion. But Catholics, able and learned, are not wanting who boldly take up the challenge, face the array of evidence, and, while they confess the general fairness of the statement, deny the inference. Protestantism, they tell us, is developing a type of civilization that is hostile to Christianity, and indeed to any religion. "You are plunging headlong into materialism and atheism. You are worshipping this world, laboring for the body, pampering the pride of the intellect, and, in your absorption of the body's needs, forgetting the soul and ignoring heaven. Your materialistic civilization is a tumor that has drawn to itself all the life that should be proportionally distributed in the brain, the lungs, and the heart. What advantage is it that you have railroads through every valley, and corn on a thousand hills; that you have charters of civil liberty, and all the means of worldly success and aggrandizement, if men are becoming enslaved to this world, and faithless as to a higher

one? ‘A man’s *life* consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth;’ our church makes another end supreme, and can be content to see a State without railways, merchant-princes, representative governments, and restless democracies, if the people are docile, obedient to spiritual authority, and ambitious of heaven; if they confess, and are baptized, and die in full communion. Protestantism is raising a spirit which it cannot master: in seeming to carry civilization onward, it is pushing towards an intellectual barbarism; while our church, content with slower social progress, gives the people more rest and happiness on earth, and fits them for the skies.” Accordingly, it has been seriously contended by an eminent Catholic, in a Review published in this city, that Ireland is in a far more satisfactory state than Massachusetts; and that Lisbon and Madrid are more truly civilized, more moral, and every way better off, than Boston and New York.

I have given these arguments at such length, because I believe they are worth con-

sidering fairly; and, if so considered, will teach us much valuable truth. The Catholic certainly slights the importance and worth of the material side of civilization. Man was put here to subdue nature. It is just as truly a part of God's call to men to lay rail-tracks as to build churches; to improve steam-engines and construct pulleys; to perfect levers, spinning jennies, forges and looms; to study chemistry and geology, optics and magnetism, as to erect pulpits and revere the characters of saints. It is as really contrary to the Divine intent, that stage-coaches should be the only means of conveyance where there is wealth and skill enough to put steam-cars in motion, or to have books multiplied by copyists where printing-presses can be invented, or to be governed by absolute kings and popes when constitutional charters may be had by discreet resistance, as it is contrary to His will that there should be sin when virtue is possible, or bodily suffering when it may be exchanged for health and pleasure. And if a church recoils from the advance of genius and triumphs of labor; if it feels un-

equal to the task of guiding such efforts, and refuses to sanction them; if it plainly prefers the shelter of despotism and the stagnation of ignorance; if it looks with greater affection upon the mediæval than the modern centuries, and has no other ambition for the people than that they should listen to the chanting of masses, obey minute directions about the counting of beads, and be prepared by priests for heaven, — *it is* sufficient evidence of its incompetency to rule the future, and of some vital falsity. Monasteries and monks were not intended to be the supreme products of society on earth, even as the shelter and the types of piety.

But there is much truth, and much that must be pondered, in what the Catholic retorts about the relative importance of machinery and men, material progress and inward culture. “A man’s life does *not* consist in the abundance of the things which he possesseth;” nor do the life and prosperity of society lie in its physical conquests, material conveniences, and trophies of skill. The tunnelling of moun-

tains, the erection of telegraphs, and the free supply of gas and water to cities, are all secondary to the development and vigor of men; and any system which sacrifices the last to the first, or subordinates it to the first, or postpones it in favor of the first, is as partial as the Catholic theory. It is a serious question, therefore, how far the material achievements of our age injure or help the development of our spiritual faculties, and assist or embarrass a realization of the highest aim of life.

Plainly there is danger, in a state of civilization like ours, that we may under-estimate the value of the individual spirit, and forget that it has a worth, separate from social fortunes and destiny, and far above the measure of physical comfort and prosperity. When we see how slightly the laborer is prized in comparison with his work, it is plain that we are all tempted, by the spirit of the time, to put a lower value upon ourselves, as private souls, than it is our duty to do. "How strange it is," said the wisest man of Germany, "that every

man estimates himself for more than he *is*, and prizes himself much less than he *is worth!*” He estimates what he has gained and gathered as something noble and precious, — the accidents that distinguished his lot from that of the majority of our race, such as wealth, houses, barns, power, and stocks: but the heritage of great spiritual forces, — intellect, will, and conscience, and the opportunity for unfolding these and pledging them to what is eternal, — he esteems as of little moment; to be acknowledged on Sunday, and sacredly forgotten Monday morning. Each one is greater than the highest material aims society has before it. God puts a higher price upon each laborer that finishes a screw for a boiler-plate, than upon the Royal or the Collins line of steamships, and all the wealth they will ever make. Great as are the uses of swift and cheap intercommunication, the Infinite Father would destroy for ever every railway in this land, rather than see the soul of the most degraded Irishman that has worked upon their embankments, and whose existence he has accepted, stricken finally from being.

Men would not give him another shilling a day, that he may have more opportunities of manly development in his almost brutal home ; but God would not sell him for all the acres of the West. He will keep him alive to be one day cultivated and ennobled in soul, to feel the embrace of Infinite Love, and to progress in goodness and the knowledge of him for ever. And if we lose the sense of our infinite worth in the general estimate of the value of society ; if we fail to revere our own nature more than all outward successes ; if we are led to think that we are of trifling consequence, as souls, before the gigantic enterprises of our day, and hold it sufficient that we are stockholders, bank-directors, voters, and legislators ; if we spare no energies and ambition from these interests to devote to the spiritual relations of our lives, — the culture of intellect, the purification of conscience, the devout study of God's works, and joy in his existence ; if, by reason of the swift progress of society, we are led to live as though our destiny is attainable and completed here, — we are the slaves of

matter, and have parted with the glory of our state.

We talk of “subduing nature;” and seemingly, by our vast enginery of science and labor, we are doing so. But it is not certain yet. Satan often foils us with our own weapons. Let us see to it, that, in our tug and swift contest hand to hand with the world, — as in the duel between Hamlet and Laertes in the play, — the deadly rapier do not pass over to the cunning world-spirit, and we be slain with the implement of our fancied triumph. The only possible way for us to subdue nature is to be men, and to maintain our position as higher than nature, and kindred with the Spirit that created it. It is yet an open question, whether we are subduing nature, or whether the world is subduing us. If we do not keep our virtue, our vigor, our manliness, our sense of infinite relations and responsibilities, every railway we construct, every science we perfect, every labor-saving machine we invent, every new comfort, whose dominion we extend, becomes our foe; and the chains we thought we

were flinging over the world are thrown back to bind us to the earth, and make us fellows with the beavers and bears, which nature creates that they may eat and sleep and die.

You, my friend, however obscure you are, are greater in capacity and in the Divine intention than the star you look at, far off in the night-heaven. But, if you do not look upon it in a higher spirit than that from which it shines; if its light does not fall upon some lens of reverence, faith, and devoutness in your soul; if it does not awaken that religious sense in you, which makes you a son of the Eternal love and wisdom which hung it out in space; — in its still light and unbroken obedience to heavenly law, it is greater than you, though you detect its secrets by your telescope, measure its bulk, weigh it, and calculate its path; for it realizes all the purposes of its creation, while you have not aspired nor awakened to yours.

Every vice or infirmity is evidence of subjection to nature. If a man needs wine to make him cheerful, or if he has an appetite

that clamors to be satiated with it; if he must have opium or tea to stimulate him to the pursuit of truth; if he requires luxury to make him content with life, and can see no inspiring privilege in an existence that never knows the comfort of a fine parlor and the amenities of cultured intercourse, — he is, to the extent of such weakness and craving, in bondage to the physical realm he was 'sent to subdue. Only that man who estimates the privileges of a mind and conscience as the supreme blessings of Providence, and who would prefer the knowledge of more truth and the attainment of more virtue, with bread for his sustenance, water for his drink, and the night-sky for his roof, to an easier lot at the cost of some abasement or blighting of his faculties, can be said to have "overcome the world."

Hence, where there is not a development of the higher energies of human nature, proportional to the great physical achievements of a people, "things get in the saddle, and ride mankind." Where the merchant has no thought higher than his ships and his ven-

tures, they rule him: he does not own them. When the capitalist bends the energies of his genius to increase the business and profits of his factory, without intercalating any nobler work, he is not the lord of the factory, but the prominent wheel of its mechanism: the steam-engine or the dam carries his brain, his heart, and will, as surely as it keeps any band or shuttle in motion. If the elegant woman lives for the gaieties of fashionable society, and finds the sweetest satisfaction in the admiration her beauty excites and the flattery it wins, her nature is subordinate to the bracelets and diamonds she has purchased, and is owned by the silks and laces by which so much interest is absorbed. Where the mechanic serves his trade; and the lawyer has no conception of a higher justice, and a supreme court, of whose laws he is not the expounder, but the subject; and the preacher thinks only of the structure of his sermons, his reputation or ease, and does not live, to the extent of his ability, for and in the truth which he unfolds, — they are all appendages to their occupation, not

masters of it ; bond-servants of nature, not its lords.

Babylon and Nineveh, Greece and Rome, supposed that, when they had risen from the savage necessities of their first estate, and were surrounded by the trophies and appliances of their constructive genius, they had conquered nature ; but, as their visible conveniences and glories rose, their manhood sank. They had spent their best days in piling a majestic and decorated sepulchre ; and, when its structure was complete, its art-stained walls and frescoed roof fell in upon the shrivelled manliness that was left to inhabit it, and smothered the little vitality that remained.

Our Pilgrim Fathers, who, landing from a little barque that had borne them away from the culture and civilization of Europe and the past, stepped upon an ice-ribbed and desolate shore, and there pitched their tent, and raised their log-huts, and sent their hymns and prayers up from reverent hearts, so that —

“ The stars heard and the sea !
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
To the anthem of the free,” —

they subdued nature. The comforts of their former estate, the shelter of laws, the fellowship of men, could not make them forget that truth, and the sense of God's approval, and the achievement of the spiritual ends of life, are the everlasting tasks of all true souls; and when they found that all which civilization had done in the old world did not offer to nourish, but threatened to crush, their manliness, they came to the wilderness, to show on a background of ice, granite, and famine, that the humble devotion to duty, the reverence for right, and the vigorous will, make men masters of the world, and compel the storm-winds, the bleak shore, and the unstained forests, to welcome and cherish their spirit and ideas.

Our life does not consist in the abundance of the implements and conveniences we have around us, but in the nobleness and virtue compressed in us; and we cannot now, with all our material triumphs, subjugate the world, unless we partake of the spirit of our ancestors, and feel and show our infinite superiority. Not in the ways by which they were compelled

to manifest it, are we called to exhibit it; but in a way as hard, — by resolute resistance to all the soft solicitations of our circumstances, that would make us live in their comfortable embrace for luxury, physical enjoyment, and the world's applause.

The Christian conception of life vaults far over the plane of our industrial tendencies and civilization. How much direct help does the progress of science give us to live nobly? What influence could emanate from those ponderous and ingenious machines, that were borne along, the other day, in honor of the triumph of our enterprise, to help us in the wrestle and race of moral life? If you are worth a thousand dollars, you are richer than old King Croesus was; for with your property you can circumnavigate the globe, which he could not do with his. If you have a hundred dollars, and will spend it wisely, you may purchase more priceless wealth than Lucullus could own; for you may make it bring you almost the whole of the permanent and eternal works of literary genius. And, if you desire to

expend it in other ways, you can have more people and more forces your obsequious slaves, while it lasts, than any Sultan can command. Every railroad offers to bear you; gorgeous steamboats compete for the honor of carrying you; splendid hotels, near the mountains and by the loveliest scenery of nature, send you their cards of invitation, and promise to obey your orders; merchants endeavor to serve you; stores vie with each other in splendor for the honor of your entrance; a whole city strives to do your bidding, till the last cent of it is drained.

And yet how much aid does all this convenience give you in your secret, unwhispered combat with your appetites, and the conscientious ordering of life? How much strength does the invention of a new lever infuse into your will? How will the double-cylinder printing-press give you the heavenly wisdom? By what means will the opening of a new road to Canada, though it binds two nations in closer amity, shed into your breast that charity without which "we are but sounding brass and a

tinkling cymbal"? In what way can the extract of gas from water kindle or intensify that inward light without which our souls are in a rayless world? How can the invention of the "fire-annihilator" assist you to quench the flame of the passions we are set to subdue? There never will be a railroad to heaven; and no engineering or science, but our vigorous toil, will level the cliffs and pierce the ledges that lie in that journey.

God helps society, as an organism, by the advance of science and art; they raise the plane and widen the arena of our public life; but that progress cannot add directly one per cent of spiritual faculty to us as individuals, nor remove or lighten a single problem that meets us and tries us as men. Above the region of physical civilization is the domain which the gospel rules; and within the circuit of our wealth and comforts is the sphere of spiritual trial which God and heaven survey, and where our victory must depend, not on our wealth and station, but on the clearness of our conscience and the stoutness of our will.

Ah! how true is it, how sadly true to many of us, that advance of wealth and comfort does not lift us out of our moral feebleness, or remove us from the siege of the besetting duties that grow out of our existence! Temptation and trial rise with the flood of prosperity that floats us into a more elegant abode; the call of duty is no more musical when our income is princely than when it was slight; the same passions gnaw us when we stand up on the pedestal of our ambition, as when we looked at it from below; the tongue is the same unruly member, whether we ride in a rail-car or in a wagon; and there is no more breadth of manhood in us, now that California is our province, and our country's flag is reflected in the Pacific waves, than there was when the Rocky Mountains were its western ramparts, and the Ohio flowed through a silent wilderness.

I speak these things, brethren, from the suggestions of my own deepest experience: are they not endorsed by yours? How much better are you, how much more vitality of will

and devotedness to duty have you, because of your advance in prosperity, and the influx of general comfort in our city the last few years? How much nobler men are you for those gas-pipes that bloom nightly in flame around our parlors, and the water that gushes from the generous lake into our chambers, and the furnaces that banish from our homes the knowledge of cold? We ought to be, somehow, nobler for these things. They are blessings of God's spreading mercy of civilization, and we ought to be grateful for them. They lift off layer after layer of the pressure of material necessities, and give us more leisure for the pursuit of higher ends. Think under what heavier conditions virtue is demanded of the poor than it is asked of us. Is it not right that God should expect nobler spiritual results from us, than if we had been appointed to rear Christian qualities amid the anxieties of constant physical toil, under the pressure and pinch of poverty, and with the consciousness of injustice from the world? Consider the immense distance between the lot of a wealthy

merchant and an ordinary laborer, and think whether the All-seeing Ruler may not justly call for something like a corresponding order of manly attainment; whether the apex of the social pyramid should not furnish better specimens of men than those at its base. I will not stop to consider if the fact corresponds to the call: I will only say, that, if we are not better with the extension of our material privileges, we are surely worse, — worse as individuals, because false to greater privileges; worse as communities, because we need a larger virtue to uphold the blessings of a complex civilization than that which would be sufficient for lower stages of social life. Amid this vast network of forces and comforts, man must be more truly and vigorously man, in order to escape being a portion of the surrounding mechanism, and to stand out distinct and eminent from the splendid social order our hands have raised.

And so the lesson of all our triumphs, pageants, and comforts is, that we need more reverence for duty, constancy of noble purpose,

steady strife against temptation, faith in God, and assurance of immortality. These alone can enable us to maintain our manhood, and be the lords of the world. These alone can keep off the perils which beset every high state of social advancement, and which, thus far in history, have laid every cultured and wealthy nation low. A nation, whose men are dwindling, may be prosperous for a long while; as the ship may sail swiftly on her course, headed towards her harbor, while the crew she bears are smitten with pestilence, and have begun to die. But when the storm comes, and stalwart arms are needed, the shrivelled mariners cannot do their work; and she will drift to wrong latitudes, become the prey of pirates, or founder in the sea.

And for *ourselves*, in our most comfortable conditions, we need these principles and hopes. We must have them, if we would be men, and feel kindred to something higher than our houses and doubloons; we must have them, if we would know how to use our means and privileges in the service of ennobling things; we

must have them, if, in dark and troublous times, we would have inward sustenance and medicine for the affections, which soft couches cannot solace, nor money drug to rest. We must have them, if, when houses and estates—the world in its beauty and cultivation—begin to fade from the dim sight, and the last great trial of our manliness and superiority to nature is at hand,—that trial before which the majority of men have failed,—we would see the gleaming shores of the spirit's everlasting country through the mists of death, and exclaim, “O grave! where is thy victory? O death! where is thy sting?”

The hope and resource of society and the individual,—the hope of stable prosperity, and the resource of personal nobleness,—lie in the gospel, and the influence of the Saviour's triumphant life. Men may ever, and properly, look to science, industry, and art, to conquer the material obstacles to social advancement, and give the key to material wealth and power; but when they feel the burdens and obligations of a heavenly origin,—and who of

us does not feel them often, and would not feel them more? — when they are conscious of the stern conditions of virtue and inward triumph; when they drag the heavy chain of degrading habit, and feel the pressure of the mystery of the grave; when, in the spasms of a holy shame or the agony of doubt, they exclaim, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” — the answer comes, not from the forges, the looms, the palaces, the art-halls of civilization: it comes to us — if we get the true and competent answer — as it did to poor, persecuted, triumphant Paul, who sent it to the believers in imperial Rome, and whence it is wafted to our souls, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

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