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EARNESTS OF THE COMING AGE

EARNESTS OF THE COMING AGE

AND OTHER
SERMONS

BY
1604-1871
REV. A. B. SIMPSON
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THE UPWARD CALLING

REV. A. B. SIMPSON.

A voice is calling me, a Hand has grasped me,
By cords unseen my soul is upward drawn;
My heart has answered to that upward calling,
I clasp the Hand that lifts and leads me on.

I'm turning from the past that lies behind me,
I'm reaching forth unto the things before;
I've caught the taste of life's eternal fountains,
And all my being longs and thirsts for more.

A brooding Presence hovers o'er my spirit,
The Heavenly Dove my heart doth softly woo;
I catch bright visions of my heavenly calling
And all there is for me to be and do.

A mystic glory lingers all around me,
And all the air breathes out the eternal spring;
I feel the pulses of the New Creation,
And all things whisper of the Coming King.

And in my heart I hear the Spirit's whisper,
"The Bridegroom cometh, hasten to prepare!"
And with my vessels filled and lamps all burning
I'm going out to meet Him in the air.

—*Songs of the Spirit.*

PREFACE

In response to many urgent requests this collection of sermons from the pen of Rev. A. B. Simpson is sent forth as the first of a series of volumes that will probably grow to considerable length. For more than fifty years this prophet-preacher prepared with utmost care one or two sermons each week. These were first preached before his own congregation or at conventions and then were published in the Alliance Weekly or some other religious journal. About two thousand of Dr. Simpson's sermons are now on file. One of these is being reproduced in each issue of the Alliance Weekly because the readers of that paper show an increasing hunger for this unsurpassed spiritual diet to which they have been so long accustomed. But it would require forty years to republish the entire number in this way. Occasionally we hear of some wise reader who has had the foresight to collect these masterpieces as they have appeared, and who would not part with the accumulated treasures at any price. But the majority of those who had like opportunity have probably allowed these gems to slip through their hands, and now greatly regret the fact that writings of such permanently helpful character were so lightly lost. The editor has set his hand to the grateful task of recovering for us some of Dr. Simpson's messages that are most widely loved. The selecting of the sermons most suitable for republication in this first volume has been a difficult task. So many favorites crowded for recognition in the editor's mind and the choice of others varied to

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such a degree that each of the sermons would seem to have been a special channel of blessing to some heart. For this reason future volumes will be eagerly anticipated. The principle followed in this book has been to choose those sermons that are most representative of the scriptural truths which Dr. Simpson emphasized.

The author was not only profound in his teachings but also marvellously versatile. The themes which he chose ranged over the entire field of revelation. Few could present the pure message of salvation in such simple, attractive form and yet disclose with reverent thoroughness the great foundational verities upon which the Gospel is based. Dr. Simpson was an old-fashioned preacher of repentance, justification and regeneration and yet no modern evangelist has ever surpassed him in adorning the Gospel by means of graceful language, vivid metaphor and apt illustration. His presentation of the believer's relation to Christ in the deeper life of the Spirit was infinitely tender, and crystal-clear, but also was marked by rare comprehensiveness and balance of treatment. He never distorted truth or exaggerated one phase of the Christian life at the expense of another. Although an ardent believer in the coming of the Lord, his sermons upon this theme stimulated prayerful watchfulness rather than curious speculation. His messages upon Divine healing presented the believer's privilege in moderate language and with a spirit of charity toward all who differed. Many would consider that he was at his best when pleading for the lost in the regions beyond. The sensational newspapers often caricatured his mis-

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sionary appeals because they could not understand how any man could be so successful without recourse to sensational methods. But those who heard him deliver one of his missionary sermons at Old Orchard or elsewhere will bear witness that these climactic utterances were characterized by simplicity of deliverance and produced only a solemn sense of responsibility coupled with the Heavenly joy of assisting the Great Shepherd Himself.

In the pulpit Dr. Simpson made real to others the vision of his own heart. Gifts flowed in abundance, not because of his eloquence which was unsurpassed, but because his words were winged by the Spirit and carried conviction into the souls of his hearers. His sermons were blessed to the salvation of thousands. God's children of every land and in every branch of the Church found in his messages the secret of an indwelling, conquering Christ. Millions of dollars were raised and hundreds of missionaries sent forth into pioneer fields through his missionary appeals. Others learned to watch and wait because he faithfully told of the blessed purifying Hope. A great throng of despairing sufferers found that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and the whole Church of Christ was in some measure fortified against the insidious attacks of false systems of healing because he fearlessly proclaimed that which was, in the beginning of his ministry, a doctrine greatly shunned.

All who have been blessed through his ministry will welcome this volume as the permanent embodiment of the messages that linger in memory and spirit. The written word will for them revive the kindling passion

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of the spoken message. They will again feel the influence of his commanding personality, the charm of his resonant voice, and the enfolding of the pervasive heavenly atmosphere that emanated from him on all occasions. Those who have never heard Dr. Simpson preach have now the opportunity of enjoying the rich content of his soul-satisfying messages. He was acknowledged by many competent judges to be the peer of all preachers of his day. The quality of the writings in this volume will give, to new friends, clear indication of the author's unique and far-reaching ministry. These messages are presented anew with the prayer that the blessing of the Lord may rest upon them in such measure that, even as in the fruitful past, so through all the days till Jesus come, there may follow healing for spirit, soul and body and an increased measure of consecration to our great privilege of evangelizing the world and bringing back the King.

WALTER M. TURNBULL.

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CHAPTER I

EARNESTS OF THE COMING AGE

"The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestations of the sons of God. We ourselves also which have the firstfruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:19, 23).

THIS striking picture represents all the animate universe in travail pains for the birth of the new creation, and the Holy Spirit in our own hearts bringing us into sympathy with this longing and prayer. It seems to suggest that even in the present age God is anticipating the age to come, and that He is bringing us into some sort of instinctive spiritual contact with things that are not yet visible and real to the eyes of the world. It is a remarkable fact that the beautiful leafage and bloom around us in the summer world all began before the frosts and snows of the departed winter. If you, with the eye of a naturalist, would go through the fields and woods in the autumn and look at the winter leaves as they are called, you would find wrapped up there all the promise of the coming summer; the bud, the blossom, the fruit are all there in the womb of nature, not yet born, but sheltered by that hard, almost metallic case from the temperature of the winter months. God has prepared the world in advance, and these are earnest of a spring that as yet is many months away.

The apostle uses this figure of the earnest, to illus-

trate the greater and the higher truth that God prepares His plans and works in advance, and He sometimes takes us into His confidence and shows to us some of the wondrous secrets of His will. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." God is not an opportunist, simply waiting for accidents to turn up and to make the best of them, but He has foreordained and foreknown all these things in the ages past. Long before an angel sang, "His delights were with the sons of men" and He was rejoicing "in the habitable part of the earth" and planning where every sanctuary should rise and every saint should be buried, and where He Himself should come back and establish His glorious millennial kingdom. The Lamb was slain in heaven in the purpose of God "before the foundation of the world." In the 139th Psalm we find the prophetic Psalmist saying of God's architectural plan of the body of Christ, "In thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Just as the architect draws every detail of the building and puts it away in his desk months before a contract is signed, an excavation made, or a stone laid, so God has His plan and is working it out in the fullest detail. Just as in the Patent Office in Washington, you may see a little model of every automobile, and every aeroplane, and every sewing machine, every printing press ever constructed, prepared long before they were given to the public, and now the finished products are constructed according to those models and plans, so God is planning and working out

all things according to His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus.

It was for this that the worlds were made. God made the light to be a picture of His Holy Spirit's illumination. God made the lambs that play in the field to be the foretypes of the Lamb of God. God made the bread you eat to speak of the Bread of Life. God made the flowers to be pictures of Him who is the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley. "All things were made" not only "by him," but "for him," and He is the ultimate objective for which all this wondrous process of creation was begun.

Again we find in the Word of God that all the spiritual developments of the ages had their foretypes and earnestings long before they were actually fulfilled. The first chapter of Genesis runs parallel with the story of the last chapter of Revelation. The Paradise that Adam lost was a picture of the Paradise the Lord Jesus has regained. The Babe of Bethlehem and the divine manifestations of His birth pointed forward to the Morning Star which shall bring Him back in His divine glory. The flood of Noah was but a faint picture of the flood of fire that some day is coming upon this doomed world. God points back to all these things as anticipations of something greater in the consummation of the age. Antichrist that is to head up the wickedness of man and the incarnate power of Satan had his ancient types in Antiochus, the oppressor, and Nero, the cruel and bloody tyrant of the days of Paul. All these were to be finally realized on a more terrific scale in the Superman, the last terror of the ages. The destruction of Jerusalem was a portent of the greater

catastrophe at the coming of the Lord and the final judgment upon not only Israel but upon all nations and men.

The Lord Jesus Christ in the opening chapter of Revelation gives Himself a sublime name, which seems to have wrapped up in it a symbolic mystery. He says, "I am Alpha and Omega." Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega is the last. And He thus sums it up—He is at the beginning and the ending of all things. "I am the first and I will be the last." I designed the plan and initiated the process, and I will consummate it. But it is a singular fact that this last word is not spelled out in the manuscripts. The first, Alpha, is spelled out in capital A, and l-p-h-a small letters. It is all written out in full. That stage of Christ's revelation is written out in actual story. His first coming has been recorded in the Gospels and the inspired Word. But the second word is only begun, a capital O, and is not written out in full. "I am Alpha and O—." The place of the smaller letters is blank. How suggestive! The beginning is all plain; the end is still mystery! The capital letter is there, but the line is not yet finished, at least it was not when God gave it to John on the Isle of Patmos, and the rest, mega, is blank. It is significant that "mega" means great, and the story of these centuries is great indeed. God has been writing in that blank during these centuries, and perhaps is writing faster today than ever before. But the fact is suggested that as in the past God was always overlapping the coming age, so is He today overlapping the next age, and can we not, with thoughtful, reverent study of His prophetic

Word and also of our own times, trace already the beginning of the end, the threads of fulfilled prophecy which tell us that the Lord is indeed at hand. Yes, God is giving us now the foretokenings of the things that He will give us fully in a little while in His glorious coming.

MODERN PROGRESS.

One of these wonderful earnestings is the marvelous progress of the human race, the development of culture, science, and human civilization. It is "man's day!" "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," was Daniel's prediction, and surely it has come to pass.

Man is getting dominion over nature. Not only is he able to defy the storm and ride upon the sea, but the most destructive implements of modern warfare are able to go beneath the sea and become the deadly submarine. Not only has he discarded animal locomotion for land transportation, but the powers of electricity and steam are sweeping our highways with the modern automobile and the whirling railway train. Nor is this all; the very air is thick with aeroplanes, and they are now talking of constructing 100,000 of them as America's contribution to the present war. Stupendous age! Stupendous progress! Man is evidently anticipating his dominance over nature. That is what God made man for, and He is letting us have a little sample today of what Christ will complete when He comes and with His people rules the forces of na-

ture. This is just a little glimpse of the possibilities of man's glorious state in the millennial age.

FAILURE OF CIVILIZATION.

But the most humiliating fact connected with human progress is the utter failure of civilization and the curse which it is bringing to the human race. Man is not ready for it. God is giving a little glimpse of what human nature is capable of under the power of Christ, and yet a darker vision of what it is capable of under the power of Satan. So we behold today all the forces and resources of modern civilization turned to the account of human destruction. They are not used to make the world happier. The wheels that are revolving in the factories are whirling to add to the means of taking human life and devastating the world. Man's civilization becomes a curse because he is not ready for civilization. He has not the moral conditions. He has not the spiritual preparation.

THE FAILURE OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT.

Samuel's heart was broken when Israel came to him and demanded independence and self-government. God said they had rebelled against Him, for *He* was their king. God never meant man to rule himself. God never instituted human government apart from divine control. But He conceded it because of the hardness of their hearts, and He allowed it to teach them its awful lesson.

To Daniel were given two visions of human governments down to the end of time. The first came to Nebuchadnezzar in the picture of a glorious image made of gold, with shoulders of silver, loins of brass,

and legs of iron, depreciating at last to feet of clay. But all the way it was down; it was disintegrating, until at last it was to fall to pieces by its own weight. Then He gave to Daniel another picture of human government corresponding to the first, but as God sees it. The first was a lion, the splendid symbol of Babylon. Next there was a bear, cruel and ferocious. The leopard which followed was still more cruel. The last was a monster half earthly and half hellish, the final form of human government, a monster of unspeakable cruelty. That was to be the last image as God saw it of earthly rulers. It was to wind up in ten heads and horns, and they were to have the spirit of this monster. God never expected human government to succeed. Alas, today, what is it doing for the world? Just bringing men to see that the only remedy for society is the coming epoch of God's own kingdom. The empire in Russia was a curse. Democracy would seem possibly to threaten a greater curse.

DEVELOPMENT OF EVIL.

Another earnest of the coming age is the progress of evil. The prophetic picture is a very dark one. "Evil men shall wax worse and worse." Daniel tells us that in these last days the world shall be terribly wicked as well as wondrously cultured and "the wicked shall do wickedly and none of the wicked shall understand." Paul tells us that "perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves" and all the evil passions of the carnal heart will develop and run wild. They shall be covenant and treaty breakers. "They shall be lovers of pleasures more

than lovers of God." Human society will be given up to Mammon worship and sensuous and sensual enjoyment. They will have still a form of godliness, but know nothing of the power thereof. What new and portentous forms of evil are taking place, and how our hearts shudder as we foresee the end!

POLITICAL CONDITIONS.

Prophecy has given us a horoscope of the world's political future from the rise of Babylon to the end of the age. Four great empires were successively to rise and fall and be followed in the last stage by ten broken kingdoms. The final picture, as we attempt to gather it from the mingled lights and shades of the Apocalypse, appears to culminate in several striking features. One of them is that the monarchies have become democracies, and the horns are in the last stage without their crowns. Can we not trace the fulfilment of this picture as already begun in the flood tide of democracy that is sweeping over the nations of Europe and has just swept away the mightiest of earthly thrones, Russia, while the doom of other despotisms seems to be already sounded.

Another feature of the final picture is the rising out of these democracies of two great leaders, one a political boss; the other a religious leader, called the wild beast and the false prophet. The former is the most familiar figure of the last times and seems to represent an actual incarnation of Satan in human form, a sort of superman and demigod, the Antichrist. Already we see these tendencies for strong leaders to arise out of the masses and become the dictators of

their time. There have been many types, and perhaps the last one is already born.

Further, the prophetic picture indicates a combination of all commercial, social, industrial, and religious life and work under the headship of these leaders. So rigid will be the censorship and supervision that no man shall be allowed to buy or sell without a license. Modern government is already foreshadowing these very conditions. It is not a little singular that at a time when the world is about to be involved in its most fearful war, men shall be crying "Peace, peace," and the last generation will be startled with an awful surprise, as sudden destruction shall burst upon them without remedy. Surely it was just at such a time that this dreadful conflict broke loose upon our slumbering age.

SATANIC FORCES.

These grow more and more vivid in the prophetic vision of the last times, until we can almost see the living impersonations of countless demons scourging the world in the form of locusts and scorpions and monsters of terror and destruction. Back of them all is the superhuman wisdom of Satan, the king of a mighty infernal empire of which the earthly powers of the last time are but a shadow. Finally, these malign powers become organized under three horrible leaders called "unclean spirits like frogs" who go forth at Satan's command to gather the rulers and the people of the world to the battle of Armageddon. Some of these Satanic agencies appear in physical form and perhaps the recent revelations of science, the microbes, and the myriad destroyers which the micro-

scope has unfolded are but forerunners of this coming army. Others are spirit forces that deceive the minds of men, control their spirits, operate through false teaching and seem to have already begun their fell work in the revelations and manifestations of modern demonism, fanaticism, spiritualism, theosophy, Christian Science, and countless kindred broods from the spawn of the pit. Already they have begun, and we may well take heed to the Master's warning, "Beware that no man deceive you."

ISRAEL, GOD'S SIGN.

More than any other historical fact the preservation of Israel is the special sign of God's faithfulness and the guarantee of all prophetic fulfilment. Israel is the fig tree whose putting forth of leaves is the divinely announced harbinger that summer is nigh. The first extraordinary fulfilment is Israel's preservation amid all the forces of destruction. The next is Israel's trouble. Surely that trouble is deepening and darkening in these days. The climax is Israel's restoration. Already the hope of that restoration has revolutionized modern Hebrew thought. Not only so, but its realization has already begun. Zionism, organized just twenty years ago, is one of the extraordinary providential miracles of our time. The present war is another miracle of providence, setting free from Russian despotism one-half the Hebrew population of the world. Still more extraordinary is the transference to the very land of Palestine of the eastern center of this great war and the fact that already two victorious British armies are encamped and advancing on either

side of the Holy City, and that it would not be outside of even human speculation that Jerusalem itself should be captured from the Turk within a little space.

MOHAMMEDANISM AND TURKEY.

Closely associated with Israel's destiny is that of her oppressor, the Turk. Christ Himself prophesied that Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. We have already noted that so far as we may presume to approximate prophetic time that great cycle seems already to be near its close. In the visions of the Apocalypse the Turkish power is represented by the waters of the Euphrates which are to be dried up that the way of the kings of the East, Israel, God's destined rulers of the East, may be prepared. How steadily and surely Turkish power has been withering, and how reasonable it would be to expect it to collapse with the present war. But there is a remarkable prophecy in the last chapter of Daniel that links Jerusalem and the Turk strangely together and brings the point of contact down to this very moment of time. The duration of Israel's calamity is specifically given as 1335 days (Dan. 12:12), and a blessing is pronounced upon him that "waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred and thirty-five days." Assuming a day for a year, according to prophetic time, we naturally ask, When did this cycle begin? Surely with the rise of Mohammed, 622 B. C., the date of the Hejira. Dating from that and measuring in Mohammedan calendar time, which is lunar time, the year 1917 is the 1335th year of the Mohammedan calendar; and as if to em-

phasize this startling point yet more, it has recently been announced that the Turkish government at Constantinople has just determined that from this year the Turkish calendar will cease to be calculated in lunar time, and shall be made uniform with the calendars of other nations according to solar time. This is probably due to the insistence of Germany, who now controls Turkey, but does it not seem a marvelous confirmation of God's more sure word of prophecy and a divine finger pointing to us today and at this very moment in the history of time and saying, "What I say unto you, I saw unto all, watch."

THE CHURCH.

In the epistles of the Lord to the seven churches in the Apocalypse, His last message to us, we have two types of modern Christianity, both of which continue until the end and seem to mark the last stage of ecclesiasticism. One is the Church in Philadelphia, true to His word and to His name, which just means Himself, and to which the promise is given, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth; behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Surely we see this Church already as the little flock of the pure ones and the true ones scattered through all the branches of modern ecclesiasticism. But there is another church, Laodicea, which represents that larger majority who have mingled with the modern world but who have been rejected by the Lord because of lukewarmness and declension. He does not even call it

His Church but it is "the church of the Laodiceans." Surely it does not need a magnifying lens to identify this worldly crowd of fashionable religionists today, and there is no more solemn harbinger of the near coming of our Lord than they.

SPECIAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SPIRIT.

The coming of the Lord is to bring the resurrection of these mortal bodies. Surely we may expect some earnest in the last days of that glorious manifestation. We are not surprised, therefore, to find the apostle Paul in the eighth chapter of Romans and the fifth chapter of Second Corinthians definitely teaching that the healing of the body is an actual earnest and first-fruit of the future resurrection. He says, we are groaning for "the redemption of the body," but we already have the firstfruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8:23). More definitely still in Second Corinthians 5:5, he teaches us emphatically that He that hath wrought us for the resurrection hath also given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. In the previous chapter, Second Corinthians 10:11, he tells us what this earnest is, "the life also of Jesus made manifest in our body." The healing of disease through the indwelling life of Christ is simply the beginning of the resurrection, and we that have tested its blessed sweetness have enjoyed the foretaste of that glorious hour of rapture when we shall mount up to meet Him in the air and be "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven."

EVANGELIZATION.

The vision of prophecy seems to intimate that just prior to the Lord's return there will be a great and wonderful revival of salvation and "whosoever shall

call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Surely today we are witnessing something like the realization of this glorious overflow of grace and salvation. It is also most distinctly predicted that world-wide evangelism will reach a sudden and wide expansion just before the end, and "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." It is scarcely necessary to be reminded that the last quarter of a century has been marked by a greater revival of foreign missions than all the centuries combined that preceded.

SPIRITUAL FORESHADOWINGS.

The Apocalyptic vision emphasizes this sign. "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7, 8). The past half century has been specially characterized in modern religious life by a revival of personal holiness and a new emphasis upon the baptism of the Holy Ghost. All this is the overlapping of the millennial day. How solemnly it summons us to understand our times and to prepare for the crisis that is at hand. Let us not foolishly dream that we can prepare at leisure and at our own convenience for that final hour. Surely we have been learning in this study that all God's plans are prepared beforehand; and if we would reap the fruit, we must plant the seed. The man of time is the immortal of eternity, and each of us must have within our own bosom the secret either of an infinite and eternal joy or a sudden and irreparable disappointment and despair. We shall find nothing awaiting us yonder that we have not begun to find in our experience here.

CHAPTER II

EVOLUTION OR REVOLUTION

"Therefore if any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creation: old things have passed away; behold all things have become new, and all things are of God" (II Cor. 5: 17, 18).

WHILE we are not graduates of scientific schools, yet we know that the doctrine of evolution is perhaps the most important and the most widely known theory of modern scientific philosophy. A distinguished writer upon the progress of the nineteenth century declares that evolution is the greatest discovery of the Christian era and that it has revolutionized all modern thought.

The effect of this teaching has been more far reaching than the realm of mere scientific discussion because it has entered into our whole religious system and has become a cleaving wedge, dividing the religious teachers of our time into two classes; one which tells us that all religious progress is an evolution, and the other which holds to the old-fashioned orthodox teaching that it is revolution.

This evolutionary teaching, this doctrine of development is the most powerful, most popular, and most dangerous tendency of our age. One is tempted to take the last two syllables out of "development," and by a slight change read it "devil," for he is at the root of the whole thing. Certainly it is Satan's lever by which he has tried his best to pry God out of His

universe, and Christ and the Holy Spirit out of the Gospel.

Many distinguished thinkers and teachers, however, even among modern scientists, do not believe in the doctrine of development and evolution, and at the very most only regard it as an unproved theory, a speculation that has something to be said in its favor but is by no means established even on scientific grounds.

Evolution does not wholly deny the original creation. It allows three or four germs of life away in the past, but it does not tell us how they came into being. Out of these germs everything that now exists has evolved, so that the zoophyte has developed into the higher organisms of the animal world, and they, in turn, have risen through "the survival of the fittest" until at last out of the monkey has come the scientist and the skeptic.

Yet some modern phases of evolution go further than that, and only a few years ago we read that an American, Dr. Littlefield, by salt and other crystals, had created life.

Our purpose at present is simply to trace this dangerous tendency on its spiritual side, and note how the same idea which has been accepted by modern science has got into the pulpit until it leaves no place for regeneration or sanctification or even such a crisis as the coming of the Lord but tells us everything has moved on comfortably from the beginning and is going to move on to the end by natural and spiritual processes.

When this idea gets into a human mind, it upsets everything in the nature of a divine revelation, and

excludes everything that recognizes a supernatural and personal God, and any experience that involves a revolution through the grace of God. In a word, the issue is evolution or revolution. Salvation is a revolution, turning things inside out; the Lord's Coming is to be a revolution when all things shall be made new.

THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION.

If this theory be true, there was no need for a Creator except perhaps for one or two little samples as starting points, for nature itself could do the rest. Now we are taught distinctly in the Scriptures that as an article of faith we must believe that God Himself made the world and that *it did not make itself*. "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made out of things which do appear." That is the clear statement of the apostle in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. The things we see were not made out of things which do appear, but made by the hand of the Creator directly through His Word. This is an article of faith. There our faith begins. We must start at creation. God has not retired from business. There is room for a Creator all along the way. That glorious text in Jeremiah that has set all the wheels in some of our lives going is all founded on the doctrine that He can make something where there is nothing to start with. "Thus saith the Lord, the Creator of it and he that made it, call unto me and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knewest not." This is our God forevermore, a God that can start at nothing and

make everything out of nothing. This is the God that saves, sanctifies, heals and helps you and is coming again to take charge of this broken-up world. The doctrine of divine creation, therefore, is essential to Christian faith.

THE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION.

This is the new creation, the creation of a soul. "Therefore if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is" not a development but "a new creation," Paul says. He is not the result of a process of the "fitness of things" and the "survival of the fittest," but he is a new creation. He came from heaven, and God made him not out of nothing but out of worse than nothing. God started with Adam at nothing but He started with us down in the deep depravity of sin. Therefore, regeneration is not a gradual process of culture, education, example, good resolutions, helpful influences, and mere human processes, but it is a miracle of divine grace. Modern journalism is tinctured with this theory of gradual progression, and the Sabbath paper is now taking the place of the sermon.

There are some who teach that in every human soul there is a germ of the divine Spirit. This is not Scriptural; it is not the Gospel. There is no germ in human nature that can develop into heaven. There is nothing but the fragments of a wreck that are not enough to reconstruct a true and holy man. Therefore God says, "The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint," and the whole man is "desperately wicked." There is no hope of reviving him. The only thing left to do is to bury him in the grave of Jesus Christ; and when he touches the Person of the risen

Lord, he will come to life, and it will be divine life coming right out of the heart of Jesus Christ. It is a new creation. Socialism and modern philosophy are teaching that culture, fine art, good reading, nice theaters, public libraries, better politics, higher wages, shorter hours are to regenerate society. Alas, we only find that the more our culture grows, the more divorce, crime, and insanity increase, and we only educate people with more capacity for wickedness. Apart from the Holy Ghost, there is no power in these things to help and save.

Down at 316 Water Street you could have found almost any day a modest, earnest, Spirit-filled man, who but a little while before was as lost as man could be. He was sitting one day on a whisky barrel in a saloon when it flashed over him that another drink would mean eternal fire. A text came to his mind that he had known in childhood, "Look unto me and be ye saved." He said to himself, "If I could only look, but I am not strong enough to look." At that moment he felt himself slipping down from the old barrel in a fit, and something within him said, "If I cannot come to Christ or look to Christ, I will at least *fall* to Christ," and down he fell into the arms of God, and somehow that night he went from the saloon saved. Since that day thousands of souls have been thanking God for the power of the new creation in that one life.

But it was a crisis. It was not a gradual drift. You

can never drift upward. The drift is all the other way. But you can come up to a crisis and come now.

SANCTIFICATION.

The same old doctrine of evolution has got into the teachers of the Gospel, and they are telling people that they do admit a miracle of regeneration, but that our subsequent experience is just a development. Yes, even the scientist admits a creation somewhere, but after that the world can take care of itself. So they tell us that when a soul is regenerated, the work is complete; you have everything in embryo and after that it is just a development. By a process of growth in grace you will become a saint; and if you do not, you will at least grow old, and in the course of nature the power of passion will decay; and if you do not become holy, you will at least become harmless. Besides, there is supposed to be some peculiar property in the dark waters of death that will wash away whatever still remains of the carnal heart, and you will find yourself meet for the holy atmosphere of heaven without any special experience of sanctification.

These teachers tell us that at conversion we receive the Holy Spirit, and that there is no such thing as a later baptism of the Holy Ghost, except for special service. Every believer, therefore, has the Spirit in exactly the same sense as the disciples after Pentecost, and in due time all this will come out in the life by gradual process. The trouble with most Christians appears to be that it does not come out, and we are very naturally tempted to question if it ever went in.

SANCTIFICATION A CRISIS.

The teaching of the New Testament is very differ-

ent from this vague, unsatisfactory theory. It tells us of a crisis as distinct as conversion, and a new experience as marked and radical as regeneration. There is a crisis up to which we must come and through which we must pass in death and resurrection, and exchange the human for the divine, and our poor, imperfect struggling for God's victorious life. We do not grow into sanctification. Christian progress really grows out of sanctification. There must be a definite and divine beginning before there can be a wholesome growth.

Here is a rough brier bush covered with thorns and rugged branches, fit only for the hedgerow, and bearing a few wild berries. The gardener carefully transplants it into his finest bed, and the brier bush wonders what has made it worthy of such unusual care. One day he cuts it down to the stump, and, inserting his pruning knife, he slips a bud from a damask rose into the cut and carefully ties it up and covers the bush to protect it from all disturbance. Day by day he waters the graft and nurtures it with the most assiduous care until the new graft becomes attached and sends out a wealth of buds and blossoms, and one day fair women stand around that once unsightly bramble and gather its exquisite blossoms for their adornment and delight. But the gardener says to the bramble, "Do not be vain over the admiration you are receiving. You really have nothing to do with it. It is not what came out of you but what was put into you that makes the difference."

And so the graces and gifts of the consecrated life are not the product of virtue and culture but the im-

parted gifts of the Holy Spirit. "Of His fulness have all we received, even grace for grace," and all the glory belongs to Him. That bramble never would have grown into a damask rose. It might have improved in the quality of its blackberries; it might possibly have even become a sweetbrier, but to pass into a damask rose was not an evolution but a revolution. Just as truly is the experience of victory over sin and the indwelling life of Christ a supernatural transition and a new creation. It is not the improvement of your old character and nature, but it is the cutting of it down to the root and the grafting in of Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost. It is a divine life, a something put into you which grows and multiplies till it fills the world with sweetness and fruit.

OLD TESTAMENT PROOF.

Now if we stop to think a moment, we shall realize how much reason and proof there is for all this. Go back to the types of the Old Testament, and we shall find that they are full of it. Go back to Israel when they left Egypt and passed through the Red Sea. This was their first stage. Forty years later they were baptized in the Jordan into a deeper experience and rose to a higher privilege. Or again, when the pillar of cloud and fire led them out of Egypt, it was at a distance. It was not in their midst. That was a type of the Holy Ghost that leads the soul when it first steps out from the world to follow Jesus. But on the first day of the second year a second crisis came. That pillar of cloud moved down from the sky and came into the very heart of Israel's camp, entered that little Tabernacle, resided in the Holy of Holies, and took

its place between the Cherubim as the Shekinah Light, and from that day God was dwelling in the midst of His people as He never had before.

So, beloved, when you start out in your Christian life, the blessed Holy Ghost leads you to Christ, but at a little distance. There comes a day when you wholly yield your life to Him and become passive in His hand and surrendered to His will and then He comes down and enters the secret chamber of your heart. From that time He is within you as He was in the midst of Israel and you are baptized with the Holy Ghost and led into a deeper place which is only for those who receive Him.

THE CRISIS IN THE LIFE OF THE MASTER.

Let us refer to the story of Jesus of Nazareth where we shall see how God illustrated the same principle. Jesus was born of the Spirit during the first thirty years of His life just as truly as you are when you are converted. But He was not baptized with the Spirit until His thirtieth year when another crisis came and He stepped down for baptism in the waters of Jordan and took upon Himself His death and resurrection and the burden of the world's sin and His Father's will in utter consecration to God. Then there came another transformation. The Holy Ghost came down from heaven and abode upon Him for the next three and a half years, and all that He did He did in the Holy Ghost.

As it was with the Master, so it must be with the servant. Do not rest content because the Holy Ghost has led you to the cross and given you the blessed sense

of pardon, but go on with Jesus Christ to willing self-surrender and the baptism in which you give up all that you may receive all. Then will come to you the presence of the Spirit in a sense in which you have never known Him, and your life, like Christ's, will not be one life but two lives. It will be a life married to Jesus Christ and with all the power and glory of His supernatural presence in you and with you until your life work is done.

If time and space permitted we should see how this was all fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in the lives of those who were already the disciples of Christ. The experience of Paul in the seventh of Romans is the personal testimony of his passing into the same deeper life. In his letter to the Galatians we find him addressing those who are already disciples and saying, "Little children, for whom I travail in birth until Christ be formed in you." You are children, but I want you to have more. I want the Holy Spirit to be born into your spirit and to become united in your life.

The promise of Jesus in the fourteenth chapter of John is to the same effect. He tells us that to him who will yield his heart to God something will come which is not the privilege of every disciple. "If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him."

The Old Testament examples of Jacob, Job, Isaiah and others show us that they passed through a deeper stage in their religious life and came through a crisis which made all their future new.

Were we to add to these the testimony of the Church

of God it would show that all those souls that are much used of God have known this experience. You will see this as you read the biographies of John Wesley issued in connection with the bi-centenary of his life, and find that all his usefulness dated from the time when he met a few Moravian brethren and learned the secret of the hidden life from them.

There is still living in Chicago a venerable old lady who was one of a company of Christians who met one day to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Dwight L. Moody. That very day in the City of New York as he passed along the street there came upon him such a sense of the divine presence that he had to retire into a private room, and there upon his knees he received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and went forth to astonish the world with the power of a consecrated life.

Dr. A. J. Gordon used to say that the greatest epoch in his spiritual life was not his conversion but the day he yielded himself to God unreservedly and received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and he recognized this as worth a score of souls in the case of every Christian that received Him.

An appeal to the experiences of our readers would doubtless bring many similar responses. Obedient sometimes, victorious sometimes, but so unsatisfied—there came to you a day when the battle was too hard for you. You went down in utter defeat and helplessness and cried out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" And then Christ was revealed, and since that blessed day it has not been you, but Him.

Once it was my working,
 His it hence shall be;
 Once I tried to use Him,
 Now He uses me.

He is not strengthening you now. You are very weak. You will never be strong. But He is upholding you "with the right hand of His righteousness." He is carrying you bodily and you are letting Him. It was a crisis. You did not glide into it. The drift does not lead that way, but the other way. It was not an Evolution, but A REVOLUTION.

DIVINE HEALING.

The Scriptural doctrine of physical redemption is not the doctrine of evolution. The teaching of Christian Science is. It is simply the development of a mental force acting on the body, and by purely psychical processes eradicating disease without needing the interposition of a personal God. Medical science is on the principle of the doctrine of development. It is simply seizing upon a principle which they call *vis medicatrix naturae*, and helping it to work out a cure. Divine healing is making something out of nothing and sometimes worse than nothing. It is just God imparting the personal life of the risen Christ to the body of a trusting believer, and it is not an evolution, but a revolution.

THE LORD'S COMING.

Here again infidel science and philosophy ask, "Where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning." That is evolution, a system of things in which natural forces go on forever devel-

oping new forms and conditions but all on the plane of nature, so that both a creation and a crisis are impossible. This is not the teaching of the New Testament, for "when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them as travail on a woman with child, and they shall not escape."

On a higher plane pre-millennialism is just evolution. Certain spiritual forces are to gradually operate until they bring about a transformation of this ruined age into paradise restored. Not so does Christ speak of His coming. It is to be a catastrophe as swift and sudden as that which fell in the days of Noah and Lot. The world is rapidly tending to its crisis. But, thank God, there will be no crisis for His waiting people. "Ye are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief." God help us to be ever ready and waiting that "when He cometh and knocketh" we may open to Him immediately.

THE SONS OF GOD.

We are called into His family. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; and we are the sons of God" (I John 3:1).

Not only are we the sons of God in name, but in reality. No angel has ever been called a son of God. No created being is born into this high family circle. It is the peculiar prerogative of those that have come into the second birth, the heaven-born disciples of Jesus Christ. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." Beloved, have

you come into this high calling, and are you "walking worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called?"

We are called to the intimate fellowship and personal friendship of the Lord Jesus. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:9). "Henceforth I call you not servants, but I have called you friends; because all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you" (John 15:15).

People have no higher ambition often than to belong to the inner circle called society, or to be numbered among the intimate friends of some distinguished statesman, poet, or literary man. The intimate friends of kings and princes are few and carefully selected, but the humblest believer may become the confidential friend of the most glorious Man in the universe. He may know the very secrets of the Master's heart, and may pour his most sacred confidence into the listening ear and responsive sympathy of the Son of man. What a distinguished honor! What a sweet and sacred friendship! Are you, dear reader, appreciating it, proving it, and meeting all its high and sacred conditions?

CALLED TO BE SAINTS.

"Sanctified in Christ Jesus; called to be saints" (I Cor. 1:3).

It is our privilege and standing as believers to be sanctified in Christ Jesus. But that is not enough. We may boast of our standing and yet utterly fall short of our calling. We must also be saints by the

actual experience of personal sanctification and practical holiness.

ADORNING THE DOCTRINE.

We are called to our secular occupations and situations, and in these we may just as truly serve God as in our spiritual ministries. The apostle Paul dwells with much emphasis in the seventh chapter of First Corinthians upon these secular and social callings. "Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it. But if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord being a servant is the Lord's free man. Likewise also he that is called being free is Christ's servant. Let every man wherein he is called therein abide with God." In the time of Paul the place of the servant was much harder than it is today. It was abject slavery in which the servant was under the entire control of the will of a wicked master. Christianity did not come to break up this evil system directly, but to teach its subjects to adjust themselves to it in the spirit of Christ, and to dignify their humble situations by recognizing themselves as the servants of Christ, not of course of cruel master or mistress. He does not close the door upon ambition or aspiration. If we can legitimately rise above our social conditions, let us do so. But while they continue, let us meet them in the spirit of Christ, and as the servants not of men but of the Lord.

ALWAYS A BLESSING.

We are called to be a blessing, "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise bless-

ing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (I Peter 3:9).

The apostle means that we are not in the business of cursing and cutting and condemning people. We are doves, not hawks. We are lambs, not wolves. We shall always be worsted by the world and the devil when we try to use their weapons. We are in the business of being kind, gracious, forgiving, and beneficent. Let us stick to our calling.

We are called to suffer for Christ's sake. "For what glory is it if when ye be buffeted for your faults ye shall take it patiently, but if ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For, even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committeth himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Peter 2:20-23).

This is another part of our calling, to be abused, misrepresented, wronged and be sweet about it. This is what we are here for. What would you think of a soldier going to his captain and saying, "Look here, I enlisted in the army, and went to the front, and actually they have been firing at me." The captain would do a great deal more than laugh at him and say, "Why, that's your business. It is the calling of a soldier to be fired at." Beloved, are we living up to our calling in gentleness, patience, and the love that "suffers long" and still "is kind."

CHAPTER III

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

“The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch”
(Acts 2:26).

ANTIOCH, we are told, was fond of giving nicknames to people and things. This is an Oriental peculiarity especially. It is surprising how often the slang term or popular nickname given by the crowd expresses the peculiarity and individuality of the person, and sticks to him as by a law of the fitness of things. Many of our common household words have been derived from this habit of calling things by their right names. The husband in the old Saxon home was the *house band* that held the family together. The wife was the *weaver* that made their clothes; the spinster was the *spinner* that prepared the materials for her mother to weave. And so we might go on indefinitely and show how the majority of the most familiar terms have grown out of this habit of naming things according to their uses.

Almost all Scriptural names are significant. Adam means *the earth*, because he was formed from the dust of the ground. Eve means *living one*, and the name was given to her by her husband the moment he received the promise that she should become the mother of the coming seed who should save the world. Enoch means *dedicated*, and well belonged to the first and highest type of consecration. Isaac means *laughter*, and the name was a memorial of the joy that hailed

his birth. Jacob, the keen and mean *supplanter*, well earned his first name; and when he won his second title, it was the signal of glorious victory—Israel, the *prince of God*. Moses, *one taken out of the water*; Samuel, *asked of God*; Elisha, *God's salvation*; Jabez, *sorrowful*—all these designated the very history and character of their subject as nothing else could have done.

So this word, *Christian*, came to the old church in Antioch by virtue of a similar process. The multitude, curiously looking on from day to day at their services, their songs of praise, their words of testimony and teaching, their life and character, could see one feature predominating over everything else. There was one name always on their lips; there was one Presence they were always invoking; there was one word they were always repeating—*Christ*. So they came to call His followers *Christ ones*, for that is just what Christian means, a *Christ one*; the people that worshipped the Christ, that loved the Christ, that sang of the Christ, that preached the Christ as the hope of the world and the supreme object of their love and service. So in China the simple multitude long ago found out that the word *Christian* merely meant a citizen of the countries nominally called Christian. An Englishman, an American, a Russian was a Christian as distinguished from a heathen, by virtue of the fact that he belonged to a nation nominally Christian, but he might be a drunken loafer, a swearing ruffian, or a brutal criminal, and yet be a Christian all the same. But they found out that there was another class of people who had something characteristic and distinct about them in addition to

their name. These talked of Jesus, and they professed to have His spirit and character, and, so far as it was possible to judge, they succeeded in imitating that character, and were marked by qualities so different from other Christians that the natives gradually learned to give them another name and called them *the Jesus people*. It was a beautiful testimony to the power of a living type even in the eyes of the heathen. So the cultivated Syrians of Antioch happily crystallized the impression which these new religionists made on them into the name that has stuck to them ever since, and has become to us a name of glory and of praise, and instead of being a term of reproach and ridicule ought to be the sacred and cherished ornament of every follower of Christ.

But the question naturally comes to us by way of application, Is our testimony, is our worship, is our life today such as would lead a witnessing world, if it knew nothing of our religion, to call us Christians? Would there be so much of the name, the testimony, and the Spirit of the Christ in our faces, our songs, our assemblies, our organization, our work, and our daily lives, that this name would naturally spring to their lips as our true designation, and the disciples should again be called *Christians*, because they were Christ ones? Or would such an on-looker say, after listening to some general assembly, or annual conference, or Sabbath morning service in some fashionable church, "These must be Methodists, or Baptists, or Presbyterians, or very fashionable, influential, cultured, and high-toned people?" Would that be the complexion of a modern congregation? Oh, that we might carry our

credentials on our countenances, on our very shop fronts, on our tongues, so that, as much as in Antioch of old, the world would still instinctively say as they looked on us, "These are Christians." But the name has a deeper significance into which we must venture.

THE PERSONALITY OF CHRIST.

It expresses the intense personality of Christ in all true Christian life and work.

A Christian ought to be a "Christ one." I think it was Mr. Studd, the well-known missionary, who said a few years ago, that what the world wanted today was not more Christians, but more Christs. Perhaps it is not Christlike men that are needed, but Christ men. It is not the imitation of Christ, but it is identification with Christ that constitutes vital Christianity. It is not the human trying to copy the divine, but it is the divine coming into the human and lifting it to its own level and making it second nature to be like God. Godliness is God in us. Christlikeness must come from Christ life. The secret of it is the deep mystery of death to all self-life and resurrection by a real spiritual miracle into the very nature of the Risen One. This is the mystic story: "I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

✓ THE CHRIST LIFE.

Never did the Master utter a mightier word than when He said in that upper room, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Christianity is not coming into a

new way of living, of believing, of worshiping, but Christianity is coming into a new relation to a Person. It is meeting Jesus and going on with Him henceforth. It is passing out of the old Adam race into the new Christ race. For there are two races; the one under the curse of guilt and the doom of death, and the other race consisting of Christ-men born out of heaven, men who have yielded their old life to death, and by death are now free from the sentence that they have fulfilled, and living by virtue of a new-born life. There is no curse, there is no condemnation, and they inherit all the rights of their living Head. It is of this the apostle says so profoundly, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Traveling once through the mountains of Kentucky to a distant frontier village, I sat down with the conductor to talk to him about his soul. He was not a Christian, but said he would like to be could he only get at it, but there were so many ways. The Campbellites said one must be dipped, and the Methodists said one must have an experience, and Presbyterians said one must find out if he were among the elect, and he was seriously confused. I said to him, "Here am I going to Livingston. How am I to get there? I do not know the geography of Kentucky, I do not know how to get across the rivers and through the mountains; but I find a man at Louisville called a conductor who tells me that he has a train running through to Livingston; that all the cuts and bridges are already made, and that all I have got to do is to go along with him and stay on board until I get there. And so," I said, "that is how I am going to Livingston, and that

is how you can go to heaven. You do not need to know all about it, but you need to know the Conductor and to get on board His train and stay there." I am glad to add that the simple, straightforward Kentuckian took it all in and got aboard there and then. It is thus that "Christ is the way." Beloved, have you met Him? To be a Christian is to be a man that has met with Christ, and taken Him for salvation and every other need.

Then He added, "I am the truth." It is not a question of which creed is right. They may all be right in a sense and in a measure, and yet they all are wrong if they do not reveal Him and bring out His face on the printed page as the personal center and substance of all true doctrine.

ONE WITH CHRIST.

And above all else He adds, "I am the life." This is sanctification. This is the deeper life. It is not an experience of some joyous feeling, some act of cleansing, some victory over sin, but it is Christ Himself taken in to dwell as the heart of your heart, the soul of your soul, the life of your life. Christ for your faith, Christ for your love, Christ for the power to will the right choice and do the right thing, Christ for your peace, your joy, your purity, your power. "Not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

This, then, is to be a Christian, a Christ one. It is to know Him; it is to be one with Him; it is to live by Him; it is to draw every breath from Him, to take

every step leaning upon Him, to form every plan looking to Him, and to learn the meaning of His own figure, "Abide in me and I in you, for apart from me ye can do nothing."

This is the answer to the world's cry and the world's need. This is the "desire of the nations." This is what the Buddhist is seeking after in his longing for Nirvana, or rest. This is what the poet, the philosopher, and the dreamer are feeling after in the touch of genius, the dream of inspiration, the fine fancies of their *ignus fatuus* visions. This is what Christian Science is trying to reach when it talks about mind power. This is what material science is reaching for in trying to reduce all the forces of nature in one ultimate force, whether it be gravitation, or electricity, or simply an inscrutable force and movement beyond which nothing more can be known. It is Jesus Christ, the primal Source of all life and power, who has come down from God to give God's life to man and to be reincarnate in human souls and bodies. Theosophy tells us that we may be reincarnated and that we are but embodiments of other lives that have gone forth in other forms. I do not want a second incarnation. I have had enough of one, and I want Christ to be incarnate in me once for all, and then never pass out into a lower transmigration, but carry Him with me in the power of His endless life. That is what Christian means. It is to be one with Christ in faith, in love, in life and in glorious and eternal destiny.

A Christian is one that has been anointed with the Holy Ghost. The word "Christ" itself means "the anointed one." There is a difference, therefore, between

the meaning of Jesus and Christ. Jesus is the son of Mary, who saved us from our sins by His sacrificial death. Christ is that same Jesus baptized with the Holy Ghost, united to God, and now baptizing with the same Spirit that rested upon Him.

The ceremonial system of the Old Testament is full of illustrations of anointing.

THE TEMPLE ANOINTED.

On the first day of the second year of Israel's journey from Egypt a strange thing occurred. A simple structure built by divine prescription in every minute detail was given over to God, and then the hands of Moses were laid upon it and it was anointed with the holy oil that was significant of the Holy Ghost. Then from the brow of Sinai and the heights of heaven, the majestic pillar of cloud and fire, that had hung suspended in midair, slowly moved downward and entered that sacred place, and henceforth rested over the ark in the Holy of Holies as the Shekinah flame on which mortal eyes might not gaze save once in all the year when the high priest alone reverently entered that sacred enclosure with the blood and incense. From that day the presence of God dwelt not above, before, or behind, but *within* the tabernacle. God was not merely with His people now, but in their midst. Type it was of that sublime fact that should mark the second era in every believer's life, when the Holy Spirit who led us to Christ, and has been leading us since now enters the very center of our consecrated being, becomes resident in our heart and makes us, too, the

temple of God. Then we become Christians, indeed, the Lord's anointed ones. Beloved, have you?

THE LEPER ANOINTED.

This high distinction was not merely for the temple and for the high officials of that temple, but the poor leper, with body falling to pieces through loathsome disease, and his presence forbidden even in the sanctuary of God, might come near, first to the blood, and then receive the anointing oil, and, cleansed and healed, come into the nearest and the highest place in God's fellowship and service. So, poor sinner, you, too, may be anointed and forget the stains of your defilement in the sweet fragrance of His sacred anointing. The very highest of His blessings are for the lowest and most lost of sinful men.

THE PROPHETS ANOINTED.

So Elisha was anointed by Elijah to be his successor, and for fifty years he went forth to be the messenger of God to Israel. A Christian, therefore, is one that has been sent forth by the Holy Ghost to be a true New Testament prophet. "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." Prophecy, therefore, is the gift of representing God to the world and bearing His messages to men. It does not need the gift of insight into the future; it does not need miraculous powers such as an Elijah or an Elisha administered. It just needs that you should have something put into your soul by the Holy Ghost which the world needs to hear, a living message of helpfulness, of salvation, of consolation.

Are you speaking for God? Have you something in your heart that you must speak out? Have you a message of which you can say, "We cannot but speak?" Do you love to gather your little children around you, Christian mother, and pour out your full heart, in song and story, the little nursery tale, stranger and sweeter in the memories of childhood than Arabian Nights or mystic fable—the story of Jesus and His love? Do you love to go to your class, Sunday School teacher, your soul bursting with the pent-up pressure of something Christ has given you to help those young lives who look to you alone, perhaps, for all they know of a better world? Have you, my fellow Christian, a message, too, born of your own struggles and victories, of a Christ that can save and heal and satisfy, and do you love to tell the story in the chamber of sickness, in the ministry of Christian fellowship, and in the assembly of His people? And as larger ministries open, in the mission, the pulpit, and the mission field, it is only as the Spirit anoints us that our work can be His work and can come from the heart to the heart with the living power of a God-given ministry. This is to be a Christian, indeed; a life going forth with this watchword, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."

THE SICK ANOINTED.

"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer

of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." This holy chrism is for the body, too, and it means not the anointing merely of earthly elders and mortal hands, but the quickening touch of the Spirit of God in these frames. Science can tell the constituents of the body, but cannot give it life. But the Holy Ghost who breathed the first inspiration into these mortal frames can also quicken them, exhilarate them, keep them from premature decay, and preserve them in the imparted life of Christ until their life work shall be done. The grand word *Christian* takes this in, too. Beloved, have you?

THE PRIESTS ANOINTED.

There is nothing more sweet and sacred than priesthood. It means to stand between God and sinful men, between His mercy and their guilt, between His help and their helplessness. It means to be a "days-man" with one hand upon the throne and the other upon the poor, broken heart, and form a blessed link of communication between. It means to have a heart full of sympathy, compassion, and tenderness, to be able to take on others' griefs, and even stand for others' sins and faults and bear one another's burdens. The great High Priest is its supreme type, standing for the guilty and made sin who knew no sin; praying for the needy, and conveying to them the help of God for every emergency; nay, stooping down to the discouraged, the weak, and them that are out of the way, and bringing them back in the arms of His tenderness to the Father's bosom. And for this priesthood we are anointed. There is a need in human

hearts still for human sympathy. The cry of the poor Romish devotee for a mother God, for the intercession of a woman, expresses something that God would have us meet here. O mother, sister, wife, Christian woman, nay, Christian man, God would have you so tender, so gentle, so accessible that the little child would not be afraid to come to your bosom with its sensitiveness and suffering. The sinner would feel drawn to weep out his guilt at your side, and the discouraged and broken-hearted would come to you as to the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. This is anointed priesthood, to be at leisure from ourselves, to feel for others, to be responsive and tender without being sentimental and weak, and to stand for the sorrowful and even the sinning as Christ stood for us, and above all other ministries to prove to its utmost the power of prayer, the ministry of intercession, the silent place before the throne where we can stand for men as the great High Priest is continually standing for us. Beloved, this is to be a Christian, a Christ one, an anointed priest before the throne.

KINGS ANOINTED.

We do not care for kings today. The name has fallen into disrepute, because it has been so poorly represented. But there have been some kingly kings, such as good King Arthur, the fragrance of whose memory still sweetens the old legends of his realm and his reign; and the gentle Victoria, who closed the cycle with an equally benignant life and shed upon the throne the graces of womanhood and the diviner light of Christian virtue. But there is one true King, the King

of kings, the King of meekness, grace and love. He will yet redeem the title and show what kingliness means. Whatever else it means, it means manliness, nobleness, self-conquest, heroic courage, unselfish goodness. We are called to be kings with Him in the dominion of that glorious age which He is soon to usher in, but we must begin our kingliness now and be trained for those high dominions. These thrones and crowns are not to be given at random, but to those who are to drink His cup and to be baptized with His baptism now. Just as David's outcast followers in the Cave of Adullam and the fastnesses of Judah were raised from the lowest ranks and trained to be Israel's princes when David came to his own, so today Christ is calling and training a race of kings; not the subjects of the millennial reign, but its princes, and they are marked and must show and wear real kingly insignia. Thank God, the Holy Ghost is anointing us as kings, and when we see some brave man stand like the lads of Babylon's furnace, and say, "Our God is able to deliver us, but if not, we will not" compromise our conscience; when we see some loyal Christian refuse the bribes of business advantage for conscience' sake and sacrifice even everything rather than righteousness; when we find some public man in the face of political corruption dare to be true at the cost of ridicule; when we see a child of God fearlessly sacrifice influence, popularity, the favor of the Church and the world, to stand for some truth of God which others deny; when we behold some timid worker standing amid poverty and reproach, ridicule and rejection, and holding some hard place and some forlorn hope in Christian work with heroic cour-

age; and when we see some noble missionary sacrificing the comforts of home, the congenial fellowships of life, perhaps life itself, to be a witness for Christ in some dark heathen land; yes, and when we see some poor native Christian, whose name may never be known on earth, yield up his life rather than deny his Lord, thank God, we know there are yet uncrowned kings waiting for the coronation day. God knows them. He is keeping the record on high, and He is saying to us, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." But it is only the Holy Ghost who can create such lives and sustain such characters. They must be anointed as Christians in this high and holy sense. Beloved, God gives the sublime ambition to be true to that worthy name by which we are called, and to be Christians indeed in these last days as well as in Antioch of old.

CHAPTER IV

SIN AND ITS REMEDY

“By mercy and truth iniquity is purged” (Prov. 16:6).

“He that covereth his sin shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh it shall find mercy” (Prov. 28:13).

THE Bible doctrine of sin is immeasurably higher than any of the conceptions of human religions. Man's religions either unduly excuse and palliate it or inexorably condemn it. Man's mercy would sacrifice justice and purity on the one hand; on the other, man's justice and judgment have no place for mercy. The peculiarity of God's teaching about sin is that it measures it in its full malignity and guilt and at the same time provides for its forgiveness and removal with a wisdom, love, and power to which all natural religion is utterly a stranger. There is no weakness, soft indulgence, or compromise in God's esteem of sin, and yet there is no sin too great for God to forgive and cleanse. The awful fact of sin has brought out something in the divine nature which normal conditions never could have revealed. Like a great iceberg floating down to the southern seas, until it meets the Gulf stream, and that great and shoreless stream of warmth embraces the monster until it melts in dissolution, so divine love has met the monster of sin and embraced it to death and left a new record in the government of God and the story of the ages which wondering angels and ransomed men shall never fully

comprehend—"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

THE WORLD'S ESTIMATE OF SIN.

"Fools make a mock at sin" (Prov. 14:9). The world holds virtue and righteousness at a low value and lightly scoffs at Puritanical precision, calling its forbidden pleasures and illicit indulgences sport, amusement, having a good time, or just a little bit of fun. Youth, temperament, temptation are allowed to excuse the most flagrant violence of purity and virtue, and it is almost taken for granted that every young man is expected for a while at least to "sow his wild oats" and play the game of fool and freedom, while everything—conscientiousness, self-control and good morals—is almost certain to be ridiculed as "straight-laced," "old fogey," "pharisaical," or "hypocritical." John Angell James tells that when he first left home to attend college and knelt down to pray at night before retiring, he was greeted with a whole fusilade of boots and shoes. But he stuck to his guns, and before a week ended the attacks had ceased, and one or two of the boys were praying with him. The man or woman that lightly jests about sin will find some day the laugh turned the other way and the comedy a tragedy of shame and sorrow. Let us be careful how we lower the standard of right and let down the bars of holy restraint. The most fearful feature of the devil's latter day religions, such as Christian Science and New Thought, is that they ignore sin. This is perfectly consistent with the devil's whole precedence. He began in Eden by mocking at sin and saying, "Ye shall not surely die," and he has kept up his favorite lie all through the ages,

until today he has some sweet name, some pretty phrase, some shrewd evasion or excuse for almost every vice and crime. Let us remember that the voice of God from the first to last is intelligible, inexorable; that sin is exceedingly sinful, and that "the soul that sinneth it shall die."

THE UNIVERSALITY OF SIN.

"Who can say, I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin?" (Prov. 20:9). This is the testimony of God's Word from beginning to end. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none righteous, no not one." From every age and from every land the testimony of human nature is the same. Man's conscience instinctively testifies to his sin. The burden of sin, the fear of punishment cannot be charmed away by pleasure, poetry, art, or philosophy. It is this that makes life miserable and death terrible, for "the sting of death is sin" and "the wages of sin is death."

THE LAW OF SIN.

"The fruit of the wicked tendeth to sin" (Prov. 10:16). Sin is the natural tendency of all men. It comes out in the issues of life just as naturally as the fruit grows upon the tree. You cannot make a bad tree bring forth good fruit, and you cannot make a bad man do really good things. Divine religion, therefore, does not attempt mere reformation, but goes to the very roots of character and demands and gives regeneration. Then it is true, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have

your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life."

THE SINS OF THE HEART.

"The thought of foolishness is sin" (Prov. 24:9). The Lord Himself said, "Out of the heart proceedeth evil thoughts." Sin begins in a thought. "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." He that looketh upon a woman with unholy desires has already, in God's sight, committed the sin which may never actually materialize. The true self is the unseen man who stands behind the mask of your countenance, and whose thoughts, feelings, desires and purposes are all photographing and phonographing themselves every moment upon the tablets of eternity and the records of judgment.

THE SINS OF THE TONGUE.

"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin" (Prov. 10:19). Language is the embodiment of thought and gives it actual form and potential force. Your unspoken thought reaches no one but yourself and may harm no one else, but your words are winged messengers, winged arrows, poisoned arrows too often. They bring your sin into vital contact with other lives and kindle fires through the whole course of nature until at last your sinful tongue itself is set on fire of hell. Solomon must have heard and seen much of the curse of an evil tongue, for the Book of Proverbs is crowded with pictures of this little member in all its manifold transgressions—the false tongue, the slanderous tongue, the backbiting tongue, the flattering tongue, the frivolous tongue—they are all here and their works are bitterness, destruction, and misery. Well may the apostle say, "If any man offend not in words, the

same is a perfect man and able also to bridle the whole body." The first thing a physician asks of his patient is usually, "Put out your tongue;" but just as truly is it the test of spiritual health and soundness of heart. Beloved, has God saved you from the sins of the tongue?

THE SINNER'S WAY.

"The way of transgressors is hard" (Prov. 13:15). The tempter may flatter and for a time the course of evil may be smooth, but at last every sinning soul shall find that God has spoken truly when He said, "Say ye to the wicked that it shall be ill with him." The transgressor is going in the face of nature, and he will find that sin is violence to the true order that God has made in His universe. Just as it is harder for that car to run with its wheels off the track than on, so it is harder to do wrong than right. You are sinning in the face of God's law, God's providence, your own conscience, your true happiness, the welfare of others, and the final judgment of God, and you shall find at last that you, too, have the hard way. What a story the Bible tells! What a cloud of witnesses reiterate it all along the way. Lot trying to enjoy the attractions of Sodom until at last smirched and well nigh consumed in its destruction; Achan enjoying for a few passing hours his worthless price and then dying amid a shower of stones and leaving his name for a proverb and a curse; David turning aside from the path of virtue and overshadowing his glorious reign with a curse that never passed away; Solomon neutralizing all his matchless wisdom with the sin and folly that covered his closing days with shame and left a heritage of division and

declension to his kingdom for centuries to come; and all that long train that completes the procession of the broad road that leads to destruction—how they all, as they pass out of sight, unite to echo the same bitter cry, "The way of transgressors is hard."

THE INEXORABLE RESULTS OF SIN.

"His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray" (Prov. 5:22, 23). What a striking passage, what a solemn picture! A man weaving the web that is to be his winding sheet. A man forging the chains with his own hands that are to bind him in the dungeon of retribution. A man earning by his own toil the wages of death that are to be so fully paid. Wisely did the old colored woman say to the impertinent youngster who was laughing at hell and the impossibility of finding enough brimstone to make such a pit of sulphurous fire, "O honey, they all carry their own brimstone with them." Sin is hell. Every time you do wrong you create a habit that makes it easier for you to do wrong again. Every time you wound your conscience you lay up in store a fiery dart with which that conscience will smite you in the day of remorse and remembrance. No need for flaming avenger to drag you to your doom. As naturally as the flood that rushes down the torrent will you find the level of your own place. There is nothing so terrible as for a man to wake up and find that he cannot stop sinning. Everlasting punishment is reduced to a very simple argument by the fact that it is just ever-

lasting sinning. One is reminded of the bitter cry of a stage driver in the delirium which accompanied his fatal sickness after a life of awful sin. He had been accustomed to drive a stage on the precipitous incline where he had to use the brakes to hold back his heavy vehicle. As his miserable soul was rushing down the more terrible incline of death, he cried out in dismay, "I am rushing on the down grade, and I can't get my feet on the brakes!" Oh, how many men are there to-day held by the cords of their own sins!

PROVIDENTIAL JUDGMENTS AND RECOMPENSES OF SIN.

"Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner" (Prov. 11:21). The full judgment of human lives does not come in this world, but there are terrible foreshadowings even here. How striking the testimony of a cruel king in the chapter of Judges. This wicked tyrant had just been captured and punished by a terrible judgment, and his bitter testimony was, "Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table; as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died." How often that tremendous word has been fulfilled, "It shall be done to thee as thou hast done." "Judge not, that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged," and "as ye measure to others it shall be measured to you again."

THE HARVEST OF SIN.

"He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity" (Prov. 22:8). This word vanity is a word of frequent use

in the writings of Solomon. Again and again it is the final note in his dirge of disappointment over the failure of all earthly hopes, and "vanity and vexation of spirit." It speaks of the utter emptiness, hollowness, disappointment, failure, and cruel mockery that come at last at the end of a wrong career. It may be long delayed, for the harvest does not always immediately follow the sowing, but it comes as surely as God has said, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." And the reaping is always greater than the sowing. If you sow the wind, you shall surely reap the whirlwind. What if you do succeed in getting money? The money will fool you and fail to give you happiness. What if you do win honor and fame? They will prove a hollow mockery and leave you to cry as others have before, "I have everything, and everything is nothing." What if you do win flattering friends? They will only have the greater power to deceive, disappoint, and fail you. If there is sin in the foundations of your life, you may build as high as heaven and you may build with the costliest materials, but your edifice will overwhelm you in its ruins.

THE REMEDY FOR SIN.

"By mercy and truth iniquity is purged." The word "purged" is the familiar Hebrew word, "to cover," so often applied to God's propitiation for sin. The allusion is undoubtedly to the mercy seat that covered the ark and the broken law with its covering of blood, so that God did not see iniquity in Jacob or perverseness in Israel. Solomon introduces here two words that are comprehensive of the whole plan of salvation, mercy and truth. Mercy is that Divine love that loved

us even when we were dead in sin, and provided a great plan of redemption through Christ's atonement. Truth is the Gospel message which brings that mercy to us and enables us to believe it, receive it, and be saved thereby. It is through the truth that we receive the Saviour and appropriate His covering blood and righteousness. It is through the truth, also, that we are sanctified and purged from the power of sin. God's Word searches and reveals every fault and stain and then leads us to the fountain of cleansing and the source of grace and power to purify, and saves to the uttermost.

GOD'S FORGIVENESS OF SIN.

"He that covereth his sin shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh it shall find mercy" (Prov.28:13). This brings us still more fully into touch with the practical application of God's great remedy for sin. The chief hindrance to appropriation of it is the covering of our sins. This expresses a great deal. We may cover our sins by lack of true conviction, by the absence of a sense of sin and an awakening of conscience. Or we may try to excuse and palliate our sins. God cannot save us until we confess judgment and take the position so finely expressed in Romans, "That every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God." In courts of law while the accused person pleads not guilty, the trial must take its course, and the crime must be pressed home by all the force of the prosecuting attorney. But when the person pleads guilty, then mercy can interpose and at least lessen the severity of the sentence. So we read of God's divine

court of justice that "he hath concluded them all under sin that he might have mercy upon all." But we must unite with God in this conclusion before we can receive His mercy. For the Pharisee there was no mercy; he acknowledged no sin. To such people Christ can never be a real Saviour. We must meet Him on the ground of utter unworthiness and surrender. "But he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy." Confession is practically giving up the contention and the defense. It is calling sin by its right name. It does not mean blazoning your past life before the world, but taking the place where God put you of a guilty, hell-deserving sinner. Confession is to be made to man only where man has been affected by your sin and you owe the restitution, but you ought to confess to God all sin and so to confess it as to renounce all sins, evasion, and self-complacency. Take the sinner's place and claim the sinner's Saviour.

But your confession must be echoed by practical righteousness. Sin must be forsaken. Repentance is more than sentimental sorrow. It is a change of mind, a change of will, a change of conduct, a change of direction in your whole life. It is facing the other way, turning your back upon sin and henceforth following after righteousness.

This at once puts the soul on the ground of mercy, and before you have felt any thrill or received any witness, you are already accepted, forgiven, and saved by the simple change of attitude. We read of the publican who had taken this attitude "He went home to his house justified." From the moment he took his right place he was in possession of God's mercy and

salvation. How very simple a Gospel this is. As Lincoln once said, "The way to get God on your side is to get on God's side." Will you get on God's side of sin, even as you read these lines, and have God forever on yours?

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SINS OF OTHERS.

"Hatred stirreth up strife, but love covereth all sins" (Prov. 10:12). The grace that you have received will make you gracious to others. The pardoned sinner by inevitable necessity must be charitable, forgiving, and tender toward his erring brother. Therefore, we find in the New Testament that unforgiveness is an unpardonable sin. This is not only true of your individual wrongs, but of all sin. The Christian is not permitted to sit in judgment upon the sins of others. *We are not fit for this work.* God graciously saves us from it and reserves it for the judgment seat of Christ and the unerring hands of His mighty angels, who shall sever the wicked from among the just in the great separating day. If you have a spirit of censoriousness, of criticism, of searching out iniquities, of condemning, of evil speaking, of slander and backbiting, you know nothing of the Spirit of Christ, and you will probably find some day that your own sins are not forgiven. There is no place where the conscience of Christians is so callous and blind as about this matter of judging one another. Our concern is the love that thinketh no evil and that covers all sins. Oh, the wounds we cause the heart of Christ and the hearts of our brethren by our lack of love! Bitterness, malice, calumny are as the piercing of a sword to those against whom they are turned. But it is a two-edged

sword and the keenest wound is given to the hand that wields it. God give to us the love that thinketh no evil, that beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and never fails.

CHAPTER V

THE TRANSFORMATION OF JACOB

"The Lord hath redeemed Jacob and glorified himself in Israel" (Isa. 44:23).

"Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile" (John 1:47).

ONE of the most remarkable creations of the imagination in connection with dramatic literature is the idea of a man with a double personality, alternately an angel and a demon, and equally at home by turns in both of these characters.

But the Bible has already given us in the story of Jacob the picture of two men, so utterly distinct that one stands for all that is most mean and despicable in human nature, and the other for that which is most lofty and sublime in holy character.

And true to the Oriental custom this finds expression in the two names of Jacob and Israel, which are interwoven with all the fibers of sacred history and prophetic literature. The people of the East, like the sharp newsboys of the street, always give nicknames with appropriate significance, and we shall find as we examine a great variety of Scripture passages that these two names have distinctive meanings and are not to be confused or taken at random. "Fear not, thou worm Jacob and ye few men of Israel." Jacob is the worm, Israel the small minority of separated lives. "One shall call his name Jacob and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname him-

There may be depths and heights of it that we may study for thousands of years after we have arrived at the home of the soul. The saved man is continually praising and blessing God for the fact that he has been born again, and that Christ was manifested to take away our sins, and that He has done it, and we know it a little better than we know anything else, it is such a knowable thing, and such an enjoyable thing, and such a livable thing, but not explainable.

Well, now, beloved, we take the next round. We have just noticed that Christ was manifested to take away our sins, and now we turn to First John and read 3:8, and we have this beautiful statement, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." Now here the reader will notice that Christ was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil. Now that is a different thing from what we have just been discussing. First, He was manifested that He might take away our sins; and second, He was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil.

Here the reader will see the two manifestations of the Son of God. Now the "works of the devil" is, without a doubt, the carnal mind in the human heart. We read that the thing in

the heart must be destroyed, and we read again that the thing is to be mortified, and then we read again that the thing is to be crucified, and neither of the above terms is ever applied to the conversion of the sinner, but always carries the idea of the converted man getting rid of the "old man" (as he is called in a number of places). In one place we read of the "old man" and his deeds, which means the "old man" and his children, and some of his children are old enough to name and have been named. Just listen to the "old man" call his children to dinner: "Anger, pride, jealousy, malice, hatred, variance, emulation, strife, wrath, drunkenness, murder, lying, fearful deceit," and such like as we read in the old Book. Now these are just a few of the "old man's" children.

We have just read that Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, and now, reader, I am ready to admit that it looks like if Christ could destroy the green-eyed monster that is the father of all the above children, that every Christian on earth ought to go down before God and get the blessing, and the sooner the better. Why not throw up both hands and surrender just now, let the "old man" die, let Jesus crucify the "old man," back up the hearse, haul off a

another word for this sort of thing. It is the word "corner." They get a man in a corner and then rob and ruin him. They take advantage of the distress of the unfortunate to rise through their fall. Probably the majority of the great fortunes of today have been thus established. The late Dr. Spencer in his "Pastors' Sketches" tells of a question he once asked his prayer meeting: "Is there ever a time when we do well to be angry?" "Indeed, there is," he said, "and that time for me was to-day. As I passed along one of our streets, I saw a poor woman sitting on her household goods, with her crying children around her, and I asked her who had turned her on the street, and I found that the man who had done this thing was a deacon in this church."

A distinguished professor in Princeton once said that the most contemptible man on earth and the man on whom the heavens looked down with the deepest loathing was your trim, well-conditioned, well-groomed church officer and Sunday School teacher, who, after a well spent Sabbath with his class and his collection basket, went out on Monday morning to get the best of other people and build up his fortune by financial methods skillfully adjusted to steer clear of the doors of the penitentiary, but without any reference to the golden rule or the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In an age when the very atmosphere is poisoned with these conditions, we cannot too often and too solemnly hold up God's lofty standard of that honesty which is not

the best policy but which is above all policy and founded upon the principles of righteousness and love.

THE SELF SUFFICIENT SPIRIT.

Above everything else Jacob represents the self confidence which generally belongs to the smart and the clever, and which expects to get along by its own resources and without the help of God. So Jacob believed in his own contriving and played the game well and long. With the aid of his crafty mother he cheated Esau out of his birthright and his blessing, and afterwards, although for a while outwitted by his uncle, succeeded at length in even outlabaning Laban, until at last he broke down in the final catastrophe and at length had to fall back upon God. This is the last refuge of the carnal heart and the deepest sense in which each of us has to die.

THE LEGAL SPIRIT.

Even Jacob's religion partook of the old quality of Jacobism. When God came to him at Bethel, and Jacob's first religious experience began, there was no love in it; there was little confidence; it was mostly fear. His response was, "How dreadful is this place. Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not." He was like that great multitude of legal Christians of whom some one has humorously said, "They have an awful God." But even here his old bargaining spirit was not forgotten. He accepted God's promise with an *if*, and in return entered into a contract that if God would really live up to His Word, he would give Him a tenth of all his means. But it was all in

the spirit of bargain making and conditional upon God's doing what He said. Some people think that a tenth of their income is a great sacrifice to make for God. It would not be a bad idea to remember that this began with Jacob and was the first step of his mean and selfish life toward godliness. To suppose that New Testament consecration goes no further would indeed be a very narrow conception of the glorious gospel of the grace of God. As Dr. Taylor has so well said, "Judaism gives a tenth, but Christianity gives all." Let us stop and turn the mirror upon ourselves. Perhaps we have purged away the grosser things, but have we got down to the little meannesses and selfishnesses of the natural heart? Have we discovered Jacob and handed him over to the cross of Jesus Christ and asked God to save us from the wrinkles as well as the spots of the life of self?

DIVINE LOVE.

But God loves even Jacob. He has redeemed Jacob and He is not going to give him up because of his great and glaring faults. When the miner finds at great cost a rugged mass of golden ore, he does not get discouraged because there is so much of the rugged quartz and the miry clay about it still, and only here and there a little seam of shining metal. But he goes to work and first crushes it in the stamp mill until it is ground to powder, and then lets in the floods of water to wash away the sand and rock and leave the heavier gold behind. Then he puts it into the crucible and melts it, and at last it comes forth unalloyed and molten gold. So each of us at first, like

Jacob, is just a lump of rugged, unattractive ore. But God has redeemed us and is not going to cast us away. And He, too, puts us under the pressure of trial and the weight of His mighty hand. He, too, brings us through the floods and the fires, and for us the day comes at last when He can not only say, "I have redeemed Jacob," but "I have glorified myself in Israel."

THE HIGHER TYPE, ISRAEL.

This represents in a general way the higher things in every man and woman. There are in the worst natures some voices that call to better things, some instincts that feel after God, "if haply they might find Him." When the steamship *Atlantic* went down in the Long Island Sound, the great bell of the ship floated on some broken timbers for several days and called out over that waste of waters and that mass of shipwrecked, lifeless men and women a tragic summons to awake. And so over dead souls there are voices calling to God and righteousness and heaven. Oh, listen to them! Men and women of the world who seldom think, stop in your mad rush of sin and folly, and hearken to your better self. In a colliery catastrophe in France, more than a thousand men went down to death in that fearful tomb, and three weeks later a little company of gaunt, half-dead fugitives from the wreck emerged into the light. They told the story of their escape, how first they felt a slight draught upon their faces; and as they attempted to follow in its direction, a faint light appeared through an opening. Then they heard the voices of their fellow men, and deliverance had come. Oh, listen to the faint breath

of heaven, the glimmering taper of that celestial light and rise above the awful weight which is submerging and destroying you.

TWO NATURES.

Israel stands no doubt for the divine life that has come to every Christian. While Jacob still survives, the birth of Israel has come, and there are two natures struggling in that man and woman, like the two boys that struggled before their birth in their mother's womb. Yes, there are two natures in the Christian life, and the struggle between them is a tremendous tragedy. The apostle Paul has described it in the seventh chapter of Romans. "When I would do good, evil is present with me. I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members bringing me into captivity, etc." We do not say that this is the ideal Christian life. This is living in a menagerie with the wild beasts close by as well as the peaceful lambs and doves. If you are still there, be sure to keep the wild beasts well under restraint. All honor to the earnest, upright and courageous men and women who are fighting the evil within them with true hearts and frequent victories.

But thank God there is something better than this, for Israel represents not merely a struggle but a victory, and stands for that fully consecrated and Spirit-filled life where the battle is no longer mine but the Lord's. Two natures? Yes, but they are not mine. My old self has been crucified and handed over to Christ, and I no longer identify myself with it, and henceforth it is Christ through the Holy Spirit who

possesses and fills me and fights all my battles with self and sin. When the cloud entered the temple and tabernacle, there was no room for man. There was but one presence there; and when Christ fills all our being, there is no room for self and sin.

There are some things in the story of Jacob that shed much glorious light upon the meaning of Israel. "The sun arose upon him as he passed over Peniel." What a radiant landscape fills all our vision as we see the victorious Israel going forth from the night of conflict and the long dark days of earthliness and selfishness which had gone before us. Henceforth it is eternal day. The sun has arisen upon him, and "his sun shall no more go down." Beloved, are you living in the sunlight of God?

Again we hear him saying, "I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved." The revelation of God, the presence of God, the face of God—this is the supreme glory of the transformed life. Is it yours and mine?

THE TRANSFORMATION.

Victorious power is the essential feature of this higher life. "As a prince thou hast power with God and with man and hast prevailed." This is the life that knows the secret place of the Most High and the secret of victorious prayer. This is the life that is effective, efficient and overflowing with blessing to our fellow men. This is the life that accomplishes its purposes and tells for the kingdom of God. O beloved, is it yours and mine?

How did all this come about?

There was much that was preparatory. The best

thing about Jacob from the beginning was that he appreciated and set his heart upon God. A good bargainer, he wanted only the best things, and he found very soon that the best was God's covenant and blessing. With intense and concentrated purpose he set himself to secure this as the miser hoards his gold and the miner seeks his treasure. Let any man set his heart upon God, and as surely as the law of the fitness of things is supreme, he will attain his object.

A CRISIS.

There was a night when all this came to pass. It was not an evolution, but a revolution. There was a Peniel stream; and when he crossed it, all the past was behind him. There is a moment when that water rises to the temperature of steam and passes into vapor and power, and there is a set time in every consecrated life when the die is cast, the victory is claimed, and the human passes into the divine.

It came through great pressure, through an emergency so extreme that all his contrivances failed him, all outlets were cut off, and there was no way for deliverance to come but from above. So God in His inexorable love has to shut us up to Himself.

It came through the failure of all his efforts, contrivances, and resources. Still we find him scheming and sending on his presents to Esau, to propitiate his offended brother. But at last he feels that everything is insufficient and that it must be God or ruin.

Even his religious efforts must fail. The old strong will now turns heavenward, and wrestling with the angel, he cries in desperation, "I will not let thee go

except thou bless me." But this, too, must fail, and it is only when touched by the hand of God that his struggling ceases, and the blessing comes.

Surrender, submission, and death to his own self-sufficiency were the final stage of the crisis. Look at this new victor as he passes over Peniel. He is no longer the shrewd, scheming Jacob; he is no longer the strong man of the past, but a poor, limping, halting pilgrim, leaning upon his staff. This is God's Israel. This is God's eternal paradox. "My strength is made perfect in weakness." "When I am weak, then am I strong."

It came through prayer, and we, too, shall always enter in and overcome upon our knees.

It brought a great deliverance in temporal things. Esau was changed. The alienated brothers met in each other's arms, and the curse was turned into a blessing. So God says of us, "In the day that I shall have cleansed you from your iniquities, this land, which ye say was desolated, shall be as the garden of Eden."

It led on to a long life of deeper testings, teachings and trial. When we enter into this deeper life, we are beginning, not ending, the chapter of Christian experience; and it is a preparation for true service and usefulness, and a secret to be worked out in all the details of life until like Israel of old the chapter shall be finished, and our testimony shall be "I have waited for thy salvation, O God."

Its richest fruition came when Israel himself had passed away. Through generations yet unborn his name was to survive in the nation that he founded. For it was not Abraham the great, and Isaac the good

who became the founders of the Hebrew nation, but transformed Jacob and newborn Israel. And so for us the richest rewards and results of a consecrated life are yet to come, when, "in the ages to come he shall show forth" what some one has called "the magnificence of his grace in his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

WHAT IT MEANS TO US.

If you are Jacob, do not be discouraged, for the Lord loves even you, but let the light in and do not be afraid to see yourself as God sees you, and to hand yourself over to Him for His transforming grace. And when the tests and trials come, do not run away from them but meet them.

When the crisis faces you, and the supreme opportunity of some tremendous trial confronts you, oh, let Him turn the "valley of Achor" into a "door of hope" and lead you from the wilderness to the Promised Land. How sad the story of those who refuse and become "reprobate silver for the Lord hath rejected them."

CHAPTER VI

OUR UPWARD CALLING

“The high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14).

“Many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt. 22:14).

“They that are with him are called and chosen” (Rev. 17:14).

“That ye may know what is the hope of his calling” (Eph. 1:18).

THE theological manuals have much to say about “effectual calling” as one of the privileges of the believer. It is defined in one of the catechisms as “a work of God’s free grace wherein, convincing us of our sins and misery, and enlightening our minds in the knowledge of the truth, He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the Gospel.”

If this be a correct definition, God’s calling is much more than a message from heaven to man. It is a message that carries with it the response and leads us to action and decision. In this view it is indeed a great and glorious thing to be “the called in Christ Jesus,” and it adds a fine touch of majesty to our text, “They that are with him are called and chosen and faithful.”

But God’s calling has a yet higher meaning than even the fine definition above. He is ever calling us anew, calling us on and up to higher aspirations and achievements. This is the significance of the first text which we have quoted, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ

Jesus." And this gives special illumination to the last text quoted above, "that ye may know what is the hope of his calling." The apostle's prayer for his Ephesian disciples was that the eyes of their hearts might be so enlightened that they might apprehend all that was involved in this upward calling and miss nothing of all that is comprehended in God's best. May the Holy Spirit illuminate our hearts and shine upon His precious Word as we attempt to trace the meaning of our heavenly calling through the Holy Scriptures!

A "HEAVENLY CALLING" (Heb. 3:1).

Earth has many voices and is ever calling us with its siren songs and its alluring pleasures and ambitions. But there are voices from above if we would only hearken. There is a land beyond the setting sun and the far horizon. There is a depth beyond the deep blue canopy of the sky. There is a realm whither our loved ones have gone and whence there comes to the responsive heart a divine attraction that should outweigh the laws of earthly gravitation. Have we felt the powers of the world to come? Have we listened to the voices of the unseen? Have we hearkened to the heavenly calling?

"He hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Peter 2:19).

It is a call as significant as that which led the Hebrew children out of the darkness of Egypt that awful night when death was knocking at every door and a darkness that could be felt hung over Egypt's land, while the light of the pillar of fire shone upon the path of the pilgrims and led them into God's marvelous

light. Have we come out of the dark world of sin and eternal night into the light of life and hope and everlasting day?

It is a calling which embraces the lowly and despised ones of earth. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world hath God chosen, and things which are despised hath God chosen; yea, and things that are not to bring to nought the things which are" (I Cor. 1:26-28).

The world calls the distinguished to its assemblies. But there is not standing room for the humble and poor. Just as David's heroes and princes were called from the ranks of obscurity and even sometimes of infamy to be the aristocracy of his future kingdom, so God is calling sinners from the depths of sin and shame to sit with Him upon His throne and rule the ages to come.

A PERSONAL CALL.

"He calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out" (John 10:3). "I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" (Isa. 43:1).

God does not love us or save us in groups but one by one. Each of us has an individual value and a personal relation to Him shared by no other. Beloved friend, have you come into this personal intimacy, heart to heart, soul to soul, with the Lord Jesus Christ, so that for you there are just two people in the

universe supremely necessary, "My Lord and I?"

We are called, first, unto eternal life. "Lay hold upon eternal life whereunto thou art also called" (I Tim. 6:12).

God calls each of us through the Gospel to accept His free offer of salvation. But the Holy Spirit also comes with a personal pressure, and then it becomes with each of us a matter of individual choice. We may refuse and lose our heavenly calling, or we may "lay hold upon eternal life." "Today if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts."

CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

So Aaron was called to his high priesthood (Heb. 5:4). So the Holy Spirit said of Barnabas and Saul, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2). So Paul says: "When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen" (Gal. 1:15, 16).

So each of us is called to our several ministries, and it ought to be as true of us as it was of the Master, "I have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Isa. 42:6, 7). Have we found our calling? Are we doing the work to which He has called us? Are we seeking and finding the lost for whom there is no one else to care? Are we reaching the prisoners of dark-

ness and despair and helping to send the light to the Gentiles and the Gospel to a benighted world?

He has called us to His kingdom and glory. "The God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory" (I Peter 5:15). "He called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 2:14).

He is calling those who will hearken to meet Him at His coming. "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the lamb" (Rev. 19:9). This was what the apostle meant when he spoke of the "prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus." A little before He had adjured every hindering cause, "if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead!" He meant, we can scarcely doubt, that that high and glorious privilege was one that might be missed by the careless and unwatchful, and therefore he was pressing forward and turning aside from every hindering cause, "if by any means" he might "attain" to this out resurrection. We may not be able to explain or define in the phrases of dogmatic theology exactly what this means, but there is something very solemnly held forth by the Holy Spirit in the warnings and promises of His word that may well make "us both hope and fear," and run no risks as we wait and watch for His appearing.

GOD'S BEST.

"Let us walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called" (Eph. 4:1).

Let us rise to meet "the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14).

One of the texts which we have quoted might be

translated: "Many are called but few are choice." Gideon's army began with twenty thousand, but ended with three hundred. Twelve disciples followed the Master, but only three went in with Him to the house of Jairus, to the Mount of Transfiguration, to the garden of fellowship with His sufferings. The Master did not forbid the ambition of the two disciples that wanted to sit with Him on His right hand and on His left, but He told them it meant suffering, sacrifice, and strenuous earnestness and endeavor. It is to this the Holy Spirit is ever calling us, to "lay aside every weight," to forget "the things that are behind, press toward the mark" and to practise in our spiritual life what the scientists call the "survival of the fittest," or, what in the language of the spiritual philosophy has been called "God's best."

Beloved, are you responding to this upward calling? Are you hearkening to the voices from above? Sinner, have you heard the call that bade you escape for your life to the "hope set before you" in the Gospel? Worldling, have you heeded the message that has come to you so often, perhaps from some deathbed scene or some hour of awful trial, and summoned you from the perishing things of earth to the hopes and realities of heaven? Oh, how these voices speak to us! There is not one of us but can remember moments of deep and solemn impression, earnest resolve and loftier aspirations which perhaps have faded like the morning cloud. And some of us are missing our highest vocation and losing our eternal crowns. God saved and called you for something higher than the narrow and selfish ambitions that are submerging your life. Oh,

listen to the voices that are speaking still, the cry of a perishing world, the signals of the Master's coming, the deep unrest that cannot be content with a life of worldliness and ease, and the impressions and convictions that are still calling you to a life of sacrifice, service and separation.

The Upward Calling.

A Voice is calling me, a Hand has grasped me,
By cords unseen my soul is upward drawn;
My heart has answered to that upward calling,
I clasp the Hand that lifts and leads me on.

I'm turning from the past that lies behind me,
I'm reaching forth unto the things before;
I've caught the taste of life's eternal fountains,
And all my being longs and thirsts for more.

A brooding Presence hovers o'er my spirit,
The Heavenly Dove my heart doth softly woo;
I catch bright visions of my heavenly calling
And all there is for me to be and do.

A mystic glory lingers all around me,
And all the air breathes out the eternal spring;
I feel the pulses of the New Creation,
And all things whisper of the Coming King.

And in my heart I hear the Spirit's whisper,
"The Bridegroom cometh, hasten to prepare!"
And with vessels filled and lamps all burning
I'm going out to meet Him in the air.

—From *Songs of the Spirit*.

CHAPTER VII

THE HEAVENLY RACE

"Wherefore, seeing that 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).

The world has always loved a race. The Word of God, while not sanctioning all man's amusements, ambitions, and competitions, simply uses these stirring metaphors as figures of higher aspirations. Every reader of Paul's letter to the Hebrews was familiar with the scenes of the Greek and Roman amphitheatres, and the text would appeal to them with a force even greater than to us, notwithstanding the revival and perhaps exaggeration which our own age has given to athletic sports.

The first picture suggested by this fine text is the race. And the race suggests

THE COURSE.

This was a clearly defined course which the runner was to follow. We, too, have a course "set before us," and "if a man strive for mastery, yet he is not crowned except he strive lawfully." While the Word of God clearly lays down the path of Christian duty and aspirations, yet there is for each one of us an individual course which the Holy Spirit will make plain to the

obedient heart. "He will choose our inheritance for us," and it is the promise assured to the consecrated heart "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant. The meek he will guide in judgment, and the meek he will teach his way."

THE GOAL.

There is a point toward which the racer presses and a shining mark which he keeps ever in view. What is the goal of the Christian race? In one sense it is perfection of personal character and holiness and our entire conformity to the will of God and the image of Christ. In another sense it is the accomplishment of the purpose which God has given to us for our life work. Above all else it is to please God and be accepted of Him.

THE PRIZE.

There is a prize. Besides the free gift of salvation offered on equal terms to every sinner there is infinite room for aspiration, ambition, and earnest competition. In the fourth chapter of John, our Lord speaks first to the Samaritan woman about the gift of God, but later He says to His disciples, "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal."

What is the prize which God calls us to and holds forth to our aspiring view? To an earnest spirit perhaps the greatest prize will be the consciousness of success; to stand upon the heights of eternal attainment and feel that the broken story is all told and the conflict over at last; that we have not failed, but, through His infinite grace, His purpose for us has been accomplished, and the supreme aim of our life has been re-

alized. This was the deep significance of that shout which escaped from the dying lips of the Lord Himself as He yielded up His life. "Finished" was His triumphant cry. His work was done; His battle won; His purpose accomplished. This was the deep, unspeakable sentiment back of Paul's latest testimony: "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." Of course there was a crown to follow; but attainment, achievement, and accomplished victory were crown enough had there been nothing more. Oh, that we may be able at the last to add this finishing touch to the story which closed the record of Joshua's triumph, "Nothing failed of all that the Lord had spoken; all came to pass."

Then, of course, there will be crowns, distinctions, splendid environments, adornments, and glories. He that made the ruby and the diamond, He that tints the sunset clouds and arrays the bird of paradise, He that paints the rainbow and projects the glorious landscapes of earth's mountains and valleys—He will have robes of white and crowns of splendor for those who have overcome. How cheap will then appear our petty social ambitions and the baubles of political and military glory when the ransomed shall sit down upon their thrones, the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, the wise shall be as the brightness of the firmament, and "they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

To some souls the most attractive rewards of our eternal hope are the larger opportunities of splendid service and congenial employ which the Master has promised to His faithful servants, "Be thou ruler over

ten cities;" "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom;" "We shall reign with him on the earth;" "Ye that have followed me, in the times of restitution shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel"—these are some of the inspired hints which the Scriptures have given us of the occupation of our future life. It is for these high ministries we are in training now, and our work for God is just an apprenticeship in which we are learning to use the tools of nobler service by and by. Compared with these great prizes, how poor are earth's ambitions, how empty earth's pleasures, and how blind the men and women that are bartering eternal crowns for a mess of pottage.

THE RACE SUGGESTS STRENUOUSNESS.

A race is not a walk, or a ride, but it is the most intense form of physical exertion, and calls forth every muscular energy and every mental faculty in the very highest possible degree. So the ideal Christian life is an earnest one.

No time for trifling in this life of mine,
Not this the path the blessed Master trod;
But strenuous toil; each hour and power employed
Always and all for God.

The race is not a bound; it is not a flight but a series of rapid steppings. We cannot reach the heights of holy ambition by one great paroxysm of enthusiasm, but we must climb them step by step, breath by breath, moment by moment.

"We have not wings, we cannot soar;
But we have feet to scale and climb,
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time."

Let us therefore not be discouraged because we have not attained it all at a bound, but let us step out step by step and day by day, and "so run that we may attain."

PATIENCE, PERSEVERANCE, CONTINUANCE.

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." It is the last step that wins, and there is no place in the pilgrim's progress where so many dangers lurk as the region that lies hard by the portals of the celestial city. It was there that Doubting Castle stood. It was there that the enchanted ground lured the tired traveller to fatal slumber. It is when heaven's heights are full in view that hell's gate is most persistent and full of deadly peril. "Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

THE RUNNING.

In training for human competitions there is need for much careful preparation, patience, and self-denial. The candidate must lay aside all self-indulgence and put himself under the most rigid training. And in the race itself every impediment must be discarded and even all superfluous flesh trained down so as to give him every possible advantage in the strenuous strife. So in the heavenly race the apostle reminds us that we must "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us."

"The sin which doth so easily beset us" may have reference to some natural tendency, hereditary taint, or long established habit of evil. The fire brand has to

be kept as far as possible from the fire, and every wise disciple will be especially watchful against the things which once have had dominion over his life.

But there are many interpreters who hold that the apostle is here referring not to sin in general, but to that one particular sin which he has been emphasizing all through the epistle, and which was the peculiarly besetting sin of the Hebrews to whom the epistle was primarily addressed. "Take heed," he had said in an earlier chapter, "lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." And again in a later chapter he had appealed to them most earnestly, "Cast not away your confidence which hath great recompense of reward—if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe unto the saving of the soul." Let us especially guard against all forms of unbelief. Let us give ourselves no liberty ever to doubt God or His love and faithfulness to us in everything and forever. We can set our will against doubt just as we do against any other sin; and as we stand firm and refuse to doubt, the Holy Spirit will come to our aid and give us the faith of God and crown us with victory. It is very easy to fall into the habit of doubting, fretting, and wondering if God has forsaken us and if after all our hopes are to end in failure.

THE WEIGHTS.

But we are not only to lay aside sin but every weight. There are weights which are not sins in themselves, but which become distractions and stumbling blocks

in our Christian progress. One of the worst of these is despondency. The heavy heart is indeed a weight that will surely drag us down in our holiness and usefulness. The failure of Israel to enter the land of promise began in murmuring, or, as the text in Numbers literally puts it, "as it were murmured." Just a faint desire to complain and be discontented. This led on until it blossomed and ripened into rebellion and ruin. Let us never be discouraged. Let us refuse to be unhappy. Let us count it all joy even when we cannot feel one emotion of happiness. Let us rejoice by faith, by resolution, by reckoning, and we shall surely find that God will make the reckoning real.

Anxious care is another weight closely akin to despondency. Worry, fret and all foreboding and fear are the offspring of unbelief and the parents of every sin.

But pleasure may become as dangerous a weight as pain, and there are many forms of diversion, recreation, and amusement which really "war against the soul." The Word of God has not given to us a rigid law of prohibition respecting popular amusements, but there are two or three principles which may safely regulate everything of this kind. One sure criterion is this, "all things are lawful unto me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." Any indulgence which becomes necessary to us is a weight, and if persevered in, will become a sin. Any habit which we cannot get along without should at once be cut out of our life. In the old prescriptions of the ceremonial law regarding leprosy of houses and garments, there were some cases where the evil could be corrected and

the house or garment saved by taking out the infected portion, but there were other cases where there was no remedy but entire destruction, and the diseased object must at once be consigned to the flames. There are right hands and right eyes, for which there is no remedy but heroic treatment and utter inexorable separation.

In the same class might be named doubtful companionships. There are people in whom we may have become deeply interested, and to whom we are perhaps strongly attached, whose influence upon our life is really harmful. Either they absorb our strength, consume our time, prey upon our vitality, or they divert us from the path of highest duty and leave upon our heart a sense of loss and an influence that really separates us from God and weakens us for the highest things. Each of us must decide these questions for ourselves. But let us remember that though "all things may be lawful, all things edify not," and the one great question is to make the most of life and avoid everything that might risk our crown.

The same is true of our reading. There is much reading on the part of true Christians which is pure waste and not far removed from actually indulging in the things and sharing the society that we read about. One can go to the theater or the dance in a dramatic novel almost as truly as by actual contact. Then there is much reading that holds in solution the insidious poison of infidelity, rationalism, irreverence, unscrupulousness, worldliness, and sometimes a subtle form of downright impurity and moral defilement. Of course, the very power of the enemy lies in his ability to dis-

guise it. But a true conscience will detect it and a wise courage will condemn it and refuse it just as much as we would the poisoned candy or the vitiated air.

Even our business may become a weight. Many people are so absorbed in secular things that they have no time or strength for spiritual culture, home life, or the service of the Lord. Deeper still is the danger of burying our heart in sordid gain and becoming blighted with the passion of money making and the grosser forms of graft and dishonesty into which it is so likely to lead. "For they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition."

Finally, even Christian work may become a weight by running into either a routine of formalism or a rush of excitement and self-activity in which God is little recognized, and the worker often becomes as selfish, ambitious, and unsanctified as the man that is running some secular business or some social organization. Even our work is not the main thing, but to be occupied with Him, to be led by Him, and to let nothing separate us from His fellowship and presence.

THE WITNESSES.

We are not running a solitary race. Countless eyes are watching us from the heights of heavenly attainment, and glorious lives are calling to us from the records of the past and reminding us that as they have overcome, so may we. The text is just a summing up of the sublime chapter which has preceded and of that long catalogue of illustrious names, which have adorned and illustrated the records of faith from the beginning.

Paul calls them witnesses. A witness is not only a spectator, but is also one who is brought forward to prove something. These witnesses have something to prove and their testimony from first to last might be summed up in one word already spoken in this epistle, "Cast not away your confidence which hath great recompense of reward." Abel stands up to say to us "By faith I obtained witness that I was righteous." Enoch proclaims from the holy past, "By faith I walked with God, and was translated to be with God forever." Noah proclaims, "By faith I stood alone for one hundred and twenty years, and God honored my testimony by saving me from the waters of the deluge and the deeper floods of antediluvian sin." Abraham stands above them all as the great pioneer of faith discovering new worlds as his inheritance by believing and obeying God. "Even Sarah" comes in for her testimony, notwithstanding her failure, to the power of God to make the old young again and accomplish the impossible even through these mortal frames. Isaac in his quieter life tells us of the patience of faith. Jacob reminds us that the most crooked materials may be divinely transformed through the discipline of faith. And Joseph sums up the story of Genesis by testifying to us that even suffering cannot harm us, but wrong and injustice will be crowned with greater glory for all who suffer innocently and believe unflinchingly in God. But time would fail to follow all the record of those "who through faith and patience inherit the promises." They are calling to us from the heights that they have won and telling us that what man once did man can do again. Not only do they

remind us of the necessity of faith, but also of that patience by which faith has its perfect work. For in this race, as we already have seen, we have need of patience, and it is perseverance that wins at last. Let us fear to take ourselves out of the hands of our heavenly Guide or to miss a single lesson of His loving discipline by discouragement or doubt. "There is only one thing," said a village blacksmith, "that I fear, and that is to be thrown on the scrap heap. When I am tempering a piece of steel, I first heat it, hammer it, and then I suddenly plunge it into this bucket of cold water. I very soon find whether it will take temper or go to pieces in the process. When I discover after one or two tests that it is not going to allow itself to be tempered, I throw it on the scrap heap and sell it for a cent a pound when the junk man comes around. So I find the Lord tests me, too, by fire and water and the blows of His heavy hammer, and if I am not willing to stand the test or am not going to prove a fit subject for His tempering process, I am terribly afraid that He may throw me on the scrap heap, and that it may become true of me which God said about His ancient people, 'reprobate silver, shall men call them, for the Lord hath rejected them.' "

OUR GREAT LEADER.

"Looking unto Jesus the prince leader 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." He is the Great Witness. He, too, had to run this race as our Pattern. He, too, had to overcome by faith and patience. He,

too, had to endure the cross and suffer the shame. But He has finished His course. He has won His triumph. He is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, and He is calling us from on high and telling us that what He as a man accomplished for us, we can surely accomplish through Him. Not only does He beckon us from on high to rise to the heights whence He is calling, but He comes down to the arena and runs the race, not merely by our side, but in our heart, the strength of our life, the inspiration of our courage, the source of our very faith, and the life of our very life, whispering to us:

I have overcome for thee,
Thou shalt overcome through Me.

Shall we listen to the voice which calls us from on high? Shall we rise from the fading visions of this vain world to this heavenly vision and this immortal crown? And shall we go forth anew saying:

“That prize with priceless glories bright
Shall still new lustre boast,
When victors' wreaths and monarchs' crowns
Shall blend in common dust.
Blest Saviour, introduced by Thee,
Have I my race begun,
And crowned with victory at Thy feet,
I lay my honors down.”

CHAPTER VIII

THE HEIGHTS AND DEPTHS OF PRAYER

“Praying always with all prayer” (Eph. 6:18).

“Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Luke 11:9).

THESE words open to us a large vision of the wonder world of prayer. Like the world which the telephone and telegraph reveal, it is indeed a land of mystery and of heights and depths, lengths and breadths which none of us have more than begun to explore. How wonderful to a child or a savage it is to see one talking along the electric wire to distant places and to persons far beyond our sight and ordinary hearing. How much more wonderful it is to be able through the telephone of prayer to reach that distant world that we call heaven and to communicate with the very headquarters of the universe at any moment and under all conceivable circumstances.

“Let him hear thee talking to thy God. He will not forget it when he is old and gray.” Such is the wise counsel which “Tupper’s Proverbial Philosophy” has given to a Christian mother. We have heard of a parent who, when her child was beyond control, used to kneel clasping the little hands in prayer, and tell God all about it, and instantly there fell upon the little heart a hush of awe, and the proud spirit was broken before the mysterious influence of the unseen and eternal.

As we pass under the guidance of our text into

this wondrous Land of Prayer, the first station we come to is inscribed with the words

“ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU.”

This is the simplest aspect of prayer. It is just to ask of our heavenly Father the things we need. It is a request, a petition, and surely what is worth having is worth asking for. How simple and inspiring is the record of the Hebrew lad who was born in misery and dubbed with the name significant of sorrow, who in his despair turned away from even a mother's frown, and sought comfort, sympathy and help in prayer. Jabez prayed and said, “Oh, that Thou wouldst bless me indeed, and keep me from evil that it might not grieve me. And the Lord granted him that which he requested.” Like an answering echo the Holy Scriptures seem delighted to record the response to his prayer that every other supplicant may be encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace. How much the Scriptures say about asking! “If ye, being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him.” Or, as Luke improves it and gathers up all good things in that gift which is the best—“give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.” How repeatedly the Master said, “All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” “Ask and receive that your joy may be full.” How mighty the promise of the inheritance of the world itself for simply asking. “Ask of Me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for thy possessions.”

"Ye have not because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye might consume it upon your lusts." We must ask therefore according to His will and His Word and with a right spirit that He may be glorified in answering our petition.

And we must ask in faith, with confidence. "Let him ask in faith, nothing doubting, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. Let not that man think he can receive anything of the Lord." "This is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us, and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

What an inventory of our rights and privileges! Are we claiming them? Are we asking according to His mighty will? Are we asking largely and are we receiving that our joy may be full?

The next station in the Land of Prayer invites us by the message

"SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND."

This is a great Information Bureau where we come not only for help but for light and direction. There are two sides to prayer. There is something for us to say, but there is much more for God to say and for us to hearken to. One great object of prayer is to "inquire of the Lord." "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." How unseemly it would be for us in the presence of an earthly superior to monopolize all the conversation. The best conversationalist is the best listener. The true attitude of prayer is, "I will hear what God the Lord

will speak, for he will speak peace to his people and to his saints, but let them not turn again to folly ;” or with Habakkuk the prophet, to say, “I will go and stand upon my watch, that I may see what he shall say unto me and what I shall answer when I am reproved.”

God has much to show us in our hearts that must be made right before He can grant us all we are asking. Then there are steps for us to take so that we may come into line with His plan for answering our prayers. There is a “right side” on which we must cast our net before we can find the draught of fishes and the supply of our needs. It was while the apostles “ministered to the Lord and fasted” that He revealed to them His great plan for the evangelization of the world, and said, “Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” Had they rushed on, unheeding His new directions, and simply asked Him to bless their work and their plans, they would have fully missed His greater will. A little later they were suddenly arrested in the midst of their evangelistic tour through Asia, and again compelled to listen to God. Then the message came bidding them cross the sea to the new continent of Europe to inaugurate that great missionary campaign, whose benefits and blessings we are reaping today. It would be well for us if we would not spend so much time begging God to bless our work and further our plans, but rather be occupied in asking Him to show us His way and enable us to accomplish His will and work.

We climb a steep ascent and at the next portal there hangs a heavy knocker and a legend reads

“KNOCK AND IT SHALL BE OPENED.”

This is the station where messages are repeated and where we often wait before we receive the answer. There is no doubt that the Scriptures recognize a kind of prayer at certain stages in our Christian experience which finds expression in such words as *beseech*, *entreat*, and *supplicate*. There is a great variety in the original words in the beautiful Greek language to express the different phases of prayer. There are two or three of these words it is unnecessary to attempt to define more precisely to the English reader, but which every Greek scholar will recognize, which are usually translated by such expressions as *supplication* in our version, although frequently the English word corresponding with the original is simply *prayer* and so the precise shade of meaning is sometimes missed. A few of the passages where these stronger expressions are used will be sufficient to illustrate and impress this idea of the intenser forms of prayer. In the description given us of the Lord's conflict in the garden (Heb. 5:7) the Greek words used express the most intense form of supplication. “He offered up *prayers* and *supplications* with strong crying and tears.” It was a crisis moment when Satan was attempting to crush Him before the time appointed and thus defeat the purpose of His great sacrifice, and in an agony of conflict He fought that battle on His knees, and it stirred His being to its profoundest depths of earnestness and suffering.

Another of the Master's prayers, described by the strongest Greek word, is in connection with Peter's fall and recovery. "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee that he might sift thee as wheat! But I have *prayed* for thee that thy faith fail not." This was no ordinary prayer but an intense supplication. Peter was at the supreme crisis of his life, and there was but a step between him and that fatal despair which sent Judas to his doom. It was no easy prayer that the Master wrestled through that day, but an agony of conflict and a mighty, hard won victory. Such hours of agony and suspense come to us when some life is hanging in the balance, when some soul is at the cross-roads of decision, when some peril is impending and the issues of eternity are depending upon our victorious intercession.

Another illustration of this kind of prayer is found in James 5:17, in connection with the prayer of Elijah. The authorized version says "He prayed earnestly that it might not rain. And he prayed again." The original is much stronger. "He *prayed* with a *supplicating prayer*." The description of that prayer in the Old Testament history is most vivid. We behold the prophet in travail of soul, with his head bowed between his knees, as though he were wrestling through some awful conflict, or, like Atlas, carrying the world upon his shoulders, he sends his servant again and yet again for some token upon the sea or sky to show that the answer is approaching. It was an agony almost like Gethsemane.

In this connection the apostle James tells us in the preceding verse that "The effectual *fervent prayer* of

a righteous man availeth much." Literally it might be and is translated in the Revised Version "the supplication of a righteous man is mighty in its working." Rotherham translates it "Much avails a righteous man's supplication, working inwardly." It is this kind of prayer which the apostle refers to (Col. 4:12) in connection with his friend, Epaphras, "Always laboring fervently for you in prayers."

The same intense verb is used by Paul in speaking of his prayer that the thorn in his flesh might be removed. "I *besought* the Lord *thrice*," that is, I prayed most intensely, and persevered in prayer until an answer came, not removing the thorn, but giving something immeasurably better, even the power of Christ to counterpoise the pressure of the enemy, and turn the curse into a tenfold blessing.

One more illustration will suffice. It is Paul's prayer for the conversion of his kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom. 10:1). "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." This was more than asking; it was supplicating. It was the kind of prayer that must ever give birth to souls. It was said that while Evan Roberts was pleading in his meetings for the salvation of sinners, during the Welsh Revival, his groans and sobs were heart-rending, and the floor was flooded sometimes with his tears.

Can we question, beloved brethren, that there is for us a ministry of prayer which will stir our hearts to their profoundest depths and become a spiritual force that will have power with God and with men? Do we know anything of this kind of prayer? Are we willing to learn it, and like well tuned harps to be responsive

instruments to the touch of heavenly fingers; or, to change the figure, to be open to "the passion of God" and share with our Master "the travail of His soul" through which still all souls must be born again, and the new creation begotten by the power of the Holy Ghost?

In conclusion, there are some striking figures which emphasize these deep and solemn lessons about

THE HIGHEST FORMS OF PRAYER.

The first of these is incense. "Let my prayer come before thee as incense" (Psa. 141:2). Some of this incense was "beaten very small" (Ex. 30:36). Our prayers, like incense, should be burning with the fire and fragrant sweetness of the Holy Ghost, and should cover the smallest trifles of our daily need.

Another figure is suggested by the story of Elisha's death-bed (II Kings, chapter 13) and the sign which he gave to King Jehoash through the bow and arrows. These arrows represent the definiteness of true prayer, while the bow suggests the force behind it, the impulse that comes from desire, confidence, and the inbreathing of the Holy Ghost.

There is a fine illustration of the highest kind of prayer in the parable of Luke 11:8. The word "importunity" here used does not mean noisy pressure, or urgency, but rather that kind of faith that dares to come to God in hard places and expect Him to do the things which for man would be impossible. It is when the door is shut, the time has passed, and our prayer seems out of season and out of reason that faith can claim, and God delights to give, the greatest blessings of His love and power.

Finally, prayer is represented in James 5:16 as a great spiritual force, "working inwardly." It is a mysterious force, but none the less real, and there are no miracles more wonderful than those affected by it.

Dr. Chapman has told the following touching story of answered prayer.

"One day there was sent up to my room a card announcing the presence in the hotel office of a gentleman whose name was not familiar to me. When I met him, he introduced himself as Mr. M. He told me that his wife was a former member of my church. When I asked him about his own church connections, he said, with a deal of bitterness, 'I have no use for such things, and I am, myself, an infidel.' He then began to speak so blasphemously of God that I told him he must either cease such conversation or leave the hotel. He then apologized and said that he was on his way to pawn his overcoat to secure money enough to fill a prescription which the doctor had given him for his son, who was supposed to be dying. I offered him the money, which he would not take, and with an apology for his conversation, in which he explained that his concern had almost made him lose control of himself, he went away.

"The following Friday, I was speaking to a great assembly of men, when I saw this man hand a slip of paper to one of the ushers. When I opened it, I read as follows: 'Will you please pray for a boy who is dying? This request is sent by a believing mother and carried by an unbelieving father.' The boy had pleuro-pneumonia in its worst form. The doctor had called in that morning and announced that his case was

hopeless. 'No human power' he had said, 'can save the boy, so far as I can see.'

"At twenty-five minutes to one o'clock, in the public meeting, I called upon Major Cole to pray, and such a prayer I had never before heard. It seemed to open the heavens and to bring down upon us a flood of glory. He asked God to raise the boy from his death-bed that he might save his father. And this is what came as a result: Between half past twelve and one o'clock, the condition of the boy suddenly changed. Before the day was done he was out of danger. In an incredibly short space of time he was moving about the house, and soon was in the city at his business.

"I know the father and have met the mother of this boy. They have ever since been my personal friends. The father was driven to his knees, and in the process of time was brought to see Christ as his Saviour. I saw him stand before a great assembly of Christians and say: 'God has led me from the darkness of infidelity to the brightness of faith, and I do now accept Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour. He raised my boy literally from death, and I cannot but believe in Him.' "

CHAPTER IX

DIVINE HEALING AND MEDICAL SCIENCE

“Every good and perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

THERE is a place for natural and scientific healing. In the economy of nature in almost every form of life and organism there is a certain recuperative power. The abrasion of a branch heals itself and frequently is stronger in the place affected than before. The severed bones of a dislocation knit by a natural process, and it is said they seldom break again in the same place, which has been not only healed but reinforced by nature's recuperative power. The chief reliance of the intelligent physician is upon this innate force in the human frame which the doctors call *vis medicatrix naturae*.

This natural principle has been turned to account by the skill and experience of centuries in connection with the medical art. While there have been in every age quacks, pretenders, and charlatans, yet, upon the whole, the science of medicine and surgery has made much progress and accomplished undoubted results for the relief of suffering and the benefit of humanity, especially in the past century. While its skill is limited and its work marked by much human imperfection, yet he would be a very narrow-minded critic who should refuse to class it among the good gifts of God's creation and providence. It is not a perfect gift by

any means, but there is much in it that is unquestionably good.

And there are multitudes of people who know no better way. They do not know the Lord either as a Saviour or Healer, and to deny them the only help they are able to avail themselves of would be shortsighted, cruel, and fanatical.

But God has a better way for His children. Divine Healing is the heritage and privilege of the family of God, while like Joseph's boughs that ran over the wall, its blessings reach beyond the people of God and often bring help and deliverance to those who are strangers to His love, yet it is primarily intended for Christians. "Is any among *you* sick, let him call for the elders of the church, and the prayer of faith shall heal the sick and the Lord shall raise him up." This is the "perfect gift" which recognizes no limitation of functional or organic disease as human remedies do, but claims the boundless promise of the infinite God for all our needs.

DIVINE HEALING SUPERNATURAL.

And Divine Healing is wholly different in its principle and processes from natural healing. It is distinctly supernatural although not always miraculous. It means the direct touch of God, a divine addition to the innate forces of human nature. It is not the mere improvement of old organs, functions, and conditions, but it is the beginning of a new kind of life, even the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus Himself imparted to us through our union with His person. It is the beginning, the germ, the earnest of our own future resurrection.

Therefore, it is as impossible to combine it with natural healing as it would be to combine a journey to Albany by a stage coach and an express train, or the ascension of the latest skyscraper with one foot on the elevator and the other on the winding stair. The truth is medical methods are mechanical while Divine Healing is not by external applications but by an internal and subtle vital force which medicine cannot supply or imitate. If a combination is attempted, it will probably result in a conflict instead of a union of forces and do more harm than good. It is all right to ask God to bless the use of means, but this is wholly different from the direct operation of Divine Healing which needs no help from man and where the attempt to help may only hinder.

DIVINE HEALING A GIFT.

Divine Healing, being part of the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, comes to us on the principle of free grace and by simple faith without works. We cannot work it out any more than we can work out the salvation of our soul. We can only receive it by simple trust as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Indeed, the double action of the mind in "looking this way and that way" as between the doctor and the Lord is very apt to weaken faith. We know that the faintest prop is often sufficient to tempt us to lean our weight upon it and lessen our supreme confidence in God alone. We all remember the story of the man who in his dream heard a voice calling to him, "Let go that twig;" and as he let go, he fell into the arms

of mercy which were waiting to receive him. A very little twig is often sufficient to keep us swinging with part of our weight at least withheld from that entire committal which is essential to effectual faith.

In order, therefore, to receive divine life for our body, it is necessary that we should turn from all other hopes and reliances, realize our entire dependence upon the Lord, and commit our case definitely to Him, believing that He undertakes it and refusing to doubt or question even though there may be some testing and delay. It is the prayer of *faith* that heals the sick, and Christ has defined faith in this explicit way, "When ye pray, believe that ye receive the things ye ask for, and ye shall have them."

DIVINE HEALING AN IMPARTED LIFE.

As Divine Healing is the direct imparted life of the Lord Jesus Christ to our body, it is essential that we shall know Him and know how to touch Him to appropriate His strength and live by His life. It is as true today as it ever was, that as many as touch Him are "made perfectly whole." But to touch Him is much more than to mingle in the jostling crowd and to run after other people who appear to us to have some gift of healing or power of faith that we do not possess. Therefore in this work we teach people first to come to the Lord for salvation and to become personally acquainted with Him, and then as they learn to live upon Him for other things, it will be perfectly natural for them to take Him also for their bodily needs and find experimentally true such precious words as these, "In Him we live and move and have our

being." "The life, also, of Jesus is made manifest in our mortal flesh." "Because I live ye shall live also." "The Lord is for the body and the body is for the Lord." "He that eateth me even he shall live by me."

NO RETREAT.

After we have known the Lord as our Healer it is a very serious thing to go back to the "beggarly elements of this world." Faith can go forward forever, but there is no divine provision for retreat without great peril and loss. The pathway of life is strewn with mournful examples of the children of God who have turned aside and fallen by the way. Medical treatment does not appear to have the same effect upon those who have learned the better way and given up the good for the perfect gift. Even drugs have a doubly deleterious influence upon a body that has been cleansed and purified by the life of the Lord Jesus. Let us be very careful about even looking back after we have taken advance ground. "If they had been mindful of that country from which they went out, they might have had opportunity to have returned, but now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God." Let us not make our God ashamed of us.

CAUTIONS.

As law abiding citizens, however, let us be very careful about ignoring or violating the laws of the State. While you may not think, and I do not think, that vaccination makes a material difference for one who is really trusting God, yet it would be a very

arrogant and discourteous attitude to refuse to conform to the requirements of the public schools and the medical authorities with regard to this matter, as well as the whole system of sanitary legislation, which is a matter affecting the interests of the community quite as much as your own.

Finally, let us be very careful about assuming the responsibility for the healing of others, and thus making ourselves liable as criminals in many cases through the death of persons who were in no condition to trust the Lord for themselves. We have no right to assume the responsibility for others beyond their own faith in God. It is well to remember that far-reaching direction which the apostle has given us respecting our social attitudes, "He that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved unto men."

CHAPTER X

THE PLACE OF SICKNESS IN DIVINE DISCIPLINE

(Job 33:14-30).

HIS message of Elihu's is an anticipation of the spirit of the New Testament. All the voices that have spoken thus far represent only the groping blindness of the old dispensation—suffering as a mystery and God as a severe and a hard Judge. The light of the Cross and the deep, sweet meaning of divine chastening and divine discipline had not yet been understood.

The name Elihu really suggests a messenger from God. It means one who belongs to God, or rather, one to whom God belongs. He introduces Himself after all these voices of human wisdom and human ethics as the messenger of the Spirit. He tells Job that the inspiration of the Almighty hath given him life and that He is to Job instead of God. The light that he throws upon human suffering and Job's mysterious trial is indeed very clear and very much like the later teachings of the Lord Jesus and the Holy Ghost through the Epistles of the New Testament. Let us briefly sum up in a few simple principles the philosophy Elihu gives of human suffering, especially physical suffering.

THE PLACE OF SICKNESS IN THE DIVINE DISCIPLINE.

“God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth

it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed." He speaks through some suggestion to the sub-conscious mind in sleep, but man understands not. He speaks again perhaps in His actual providences, but man is still blind and persists in the same wrong and forbidden course. And then God takes hold with a stronger discipline, lays His hand upon the sufferer, and he is stricken with sorrow, pain, down into the very marrow of his bones, and Elihu is here probably describing the case before Him—the poor figure whose bones are sticking out, whose jaundiced face portrays long suffering "so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat." He looks like death, a ghastly skeleton whose life is drawing very near the pit.

In all this he tells us God has a purpose. It is not the work of blind chance. It is not the work of an alien or an enemy. It is not natural causes. It is not Satanic hate merely. It is not because of sin only. There is a real divine purpose. It is discipline. It is the beautiful lesson of the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, what the Apostle there calls "son training." "If ye endure chastening (son training) God dealeth with you as with sons." It is not judgment. It is not punishment. It is loving, Fatherly discipline, the golden thread of gracious purpose, heavenly teaching, and restoration on some higher plane through all the mysterious stages of this trial. So he brings in this important fact that God does use physical suffering and disease as one of His teachers to His children, one of His voices to subdue the heart of man, one of His messengers to bring to us Divine blessings. There is no

doubt God has some part in everything that comes, even though it is by permission. "The Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bore unto David." There was a reason for it. David needed the awakening blow, the chastening experience, the sanctifying touch of sorrow. God did it. And He still does it although He allows in some mysterious ways the agents of evil to be His instruments. He causes the wrath of man to praise Him, and He even uses Satan indirectly to bless His people unwillingly. So, dear friend, if you have had trial, suffering, sickness, it may be because God is saying something, because He has said something, and you received Him not, and said it again, and you still were deaf and blind. Now, He is saying it again so emphatically that every fiber of your being will comprehend and respond. It isn't, perhaps, that God is angry with you. It may be that God wants to carry you further on and you have not gone with Him. It may be that God has some new experience for you, and your part is to get quiet and hear what God the Lord will say. This then is the first lesson—the place of sickness in the Divine discipline.

THE NEED OF AN INTERPRETER.

"If there be an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness." Oh, the need of a wise teacher in the hour of trial! Oh, the sorrows that have come to us through ignorance and misunderstanding of God's purpose for us! How blind we are! How ashamed we are! How humiliated I feel because of the needless sufferings of God's children and of my own life because I did not better understand God's thought and plan. "If there be an interpreter." How

confusing the voices of many on every side. How much wasted thought and teaching there has been about this problem of sickness and suffering! How many various conflicting schools there are today in their different views of the problem of sickness and of the way to get relief. We are here reminded that God has a voice, that there is a true light, that it has come. We shall not find it easily. It is "one among a thousand." Nine hundred and ninety-nine voices may be false and misleading. The majority are wrong. The trend of human experience is wrong. We need to search to find the way to wisdom.

The other Old Testament poem, the Book of Proverbs, tells us that if we would find wisdom, we must search diligently and daily watch at her gates and the posts of her door. We must search for her as for fine gold, as the miner pursues the vein in the rock, sometimes at great expense for many a day and year before he finds the deposit. Have you God's view, God's teaching about it? It is not an open question. It is not a matter about which you may do as you please or think as you like. How I thank God for over thirty years of comfort and light, confidence and blessing and some useful service because in His infinite mercy He let me get His thought about it. He sent me an interpreter, "one among a thousand," and he taught me God's purpose in regard to the suffering life.

THE INTERPRETER.

The Holy Ghost is the Interpreter. You cannot fail to regulate your physical life by anything less than the Bible any more than you can regulate your moral life by anything less than the Bible. I consider it my duty

to regulate my physical life according to the Bible. I find, then, the responsibility belongs to God and the peace and rest to me. I think if you have a clear, logical mind you cannot see any other alternative. God has given us light about our physical life. That light is important, is indispensable, is imperative. Oh, the lies that are going about today about sickness! Oh, the half-truths that people are following! Christian Science is one of these lies. Spiritualism is one of these lies. Psychological healing is one of these half-truths—a little truth in it. It is helping the doctor by means of self-hypnotism—your thought and mind. But it is pulling yourself up by your boot straps, that is all. It begins and ends with you. It is reaching out, but it is not touching God in a direct way, and He is able and willing to touch you. "If there be an interpreter." Thank God for all He has given us. There is plenty of it in the Bible to make our path plain and to give us deliverance in every time of need.

THE DIVINE PROVISION FOR SICKNESS.

"Then He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down into the pit: I have found a ransom." First of all it is the graciousness of God, God's compassion, God's benevolence, God's love, God's desire to help us. We owe everything to this, and to that compassion we owe physical as well as spiritual blessing. How often we read that when Jesus saw the leper and sufferer "He was moved with compassion." "When He saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion." I love to think when a sick one comes for healing, that I do not need to pull and strain

and shriek and shout to call the attention of the heavenly Father's heart to this suffering lamb and sheep. Ah, no, He has far more compassion than I have. He has followed that poor toiling woman all these years. His heart has ached for her many a time. He has longed to deliver and help her if only she could understand, if only there were an interpreter to let her know His heart and the way to reach His help. He is longing to heal. He is not reluctant. He needs no leverage to get it out of Him. He needs no saints to pray, for His own heart is interceding, His own hand is stretched out for blessing. He is beforehand with you. He thought of you before you thought of Him. He so loved the world that He began before we were born. He is gracious.

Next He has found an atonement. "I have found a ransom" (or as the margin is "an atonement"). Surely we cannot mistake the finger that points to the Cross of Calvary, to the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ! It was not an easy thing. It has been found after a search of infinite wisdom and love. God found a way. No one else could have found it. No one else could have imagined it. No human heart could ever have dreamed of anything like the atonement and Gospel of Jesus Christ. Love found the way. A ransom means something that removes the cause and ground of sickness, something that removes the guilt of sin from those who come. As there could be no death without sin, Paul says there could be no sickness without sin. If you remove the root, you remove the poison and the bitter fruit. So the atonement of Jesus Christ has paid the debt, has discharged the mort-

gage of this old house, our body, by paying the debt of the soul. We are free, and we may come now and claim exemption from all the curse of the law, from everything that has come upon us because of sin. That is God's ground of healing. It is not one of the things that need some special apostolic power or some marvelous faith. It is the purchase of the blood of Christ; it is the birthright of the redeemed children. That is what the atonement means. You can come though you feel guilty and unworthy; you can cover yourself with the precious blood, and then claim it as if you had never sinned, too. That is where the atonement comes in. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven." That is how the atonement helps us in physical healing. It takes away the guilty sin. It enables us to say, "The Lord has reaped my crop of misery and guilt, and now I claim the purchase, the harvest of His redeeming love, the fruits of His grace and sacrifice."

Beloved, have you seen this? Have you prized it? Have you proved it? Does it say to you, "Deliver him from going down to the pit." That does not mean the pit of hell; it means the grave. The Hebrew word wherever it occurs always means physical death, my premature death, my death as a judgment, my death as an unhallowed blow from the hand of the enemy, my death in every sense in which there is any curse in it. The ransom delivers you.

THE QUICKENING TOUCH.

"His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall

return to the days of his youth." This is not the old life, but a new life, the child's second childhood. "He shall return to the days of his youth." It is not fixing up the old, worn out machine; it is putting in a foretaste of immortality, a little bit of the resurrection. That is what David sings about. Not only "He redeemeth my life from destruction," but "He satisfieth thy mouth with good, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have" another building inside of it "an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Divine Healing gives you freshness, gives you the life of a child, sets your blood throbbing and your heart springing, puts zest into you, makes life a joy and labor a luxury. It keeps you young. O beloved, you ought to know it and have it and give it to others just by your springing step, your radiant face and your joyous life. I owe everything in the last quarter of a century that I have been permitted to do for God to the blessed impulse this has given to my own life. I could say the same of many others I know. Let us prove it and believe it and be happy, radiant, joyous people, showing that this old philosophy is true, and it is just Jesus giving us His flesh, putting His heart in ours and reliving His life in these vessels of clay.

THE SPIRITUAL BLESSING.

Not only does He bring this physical rejuvenation, but "He shall pray unto God, and he will be favorable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy." Spiritual blessing, joyfulness, the opening of the gates of communion with heaven, making eternal things in-

tensely real so that the spiritual blessing is far more blessed than the physical quickening. Elihu saw this long ago and how true it has been for us. It has gone deeper than the physical healing and has stirred every part of our being. Many of you can testify how it has come into your brain and given you new power to think, new visions of truth; how it has come into your spiritual life and made the service that you do for God go twice as far; for I believe the Word I speak with a divinely quickened voice has more power in it than the word spoken with human elocution. I believe the steps I take in the power of Jesus Christ and in ministry for Him accomplish more effectual work, for God is in it as well as in the message. He has this for you, this that will quicken all your spiritual being, making the things of God as real as the healing has been real in your mortal frame.

THE WAY BACK TO GOD.

How can the poor suffering man get all this? He tells us here, "He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profiteth me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God often times with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living." How shall we get this help? In the old straight, simple way. There is no other—repentance, humility, getting low down at his feet, turning to Him with all our heart and from everything that may have been connected with our suffering. He will show us if we have the desire to follow the light. God is too good to give us the light unless

we mean to follow it. "Turn ye at my reproof. I will pour out my Spirit upon you." The moment you turn He will pour out His Spirit; the moment you say, "if there is anything in my life, anything You are speaking to me about, 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak.' " "Turn ye at my reproof. I will pour out my Spirit. I will make known all my words unto you." He will give you all the light you want if you want it.

I remember when visiting England many years ago, a dear old friend of mine, a schoolmate, the minister of a very wealthy Presbyterian church in London, invited me to dine with him and his wife. He showed me his beautiful church and parsonage and parish, and we talked about old times. He knew why I was in London. I was attending a convention on this very subject. He said, "I have intended to go into your meetings but I have been so busy. My wife wants me to go. She believes all this. I sort of half believe it. I never seem to have got quite ready to take my stand." I looked at him without letting him know what I was thinking about. I thought of myself in that humble company of outcast ministers. Most of us were meeting there very little popular applause or ecclesiastical sympathy. I thought of my humble work here in New York City, the little company of simple-hearted, plain, unfashionable Christians that stood around. I looked at him and his splendid church, wealthy congregation, and magnificent position—scholarship and influence in that great body—and I thought, My dear brother, what on earth would you have done if you ever had received the light? Could

you have borne it? Could you have sacrificed all this? It would have cost you everything that is so dear to you. In my heart I felt that God in His infinite mercy had kept back from that man the complete light that would have forced him to a decision. Because if all that light had come, he might have said no, he might have disobeyed the voice of God and brought upon himself a greater sin. In my heart I felt that perhaps he was not able to stand the light. God will give us light, all the light we are willing to use. It was not until I took my Bible one day and clasped it to my heart and said, "Every promise which this book holds, every direction which I understand in it I take as my law and as my life," that I had no trouble in understanding some of these things. It was when I was committed. I do not say I have understood them all. I am sure I have not begun to understand them. I mean to say that in so far as we are candid and honest and obedient in the Spirit, God will give us the light and lead us on to still higher things.

CHAPTER XI

HINDRANCES TO DIVINE HEALING

“Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way: but let it rather be healed” (Heb. 12:12, 13).

 HIS is God's word of encouragement to us to lift up the hands of faith, and confirm the knees of prayer. Often our faith grows tired, languid, and relaxed, and our prayers lose their force and effectiveness. God is always encouraging us, bidding us “lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees.”

TIMIDITY.

The figure used here is a very striking one. The idea seems to be that we become discouraged and so timid that a little obstacle depresses and frightens us, and we are tempted to walk around it, and not face it; to take the easier way. Perhaps it is some physical trouble that God is ready to heal, but the exertion is hard, or it is easier to secure some human help, or walk around it in some other way. There are many ways of walking around emergencies instead of going right through them. It may be some call of duty that we feel hardly equal to, and we put it off saying, “I am not strong enough for it.” Why not go right through? “Make *straight* paths for your feet.”

FEARFULNESS.

Perhaps you are lame. It is natural to let your poor

lame feet "be turned out of the way." But "rather be healed," go straight over the mountain and not walk around it. What a vivid picture it is! What a striking message! How often we come up against something that rather appalls us, and we want to evade the issue with the excuse, "I am not quite ready for that now." Some sacrifice is to be made, some act of consecration to be done, some obedience demanded, some Jericho to be taken, some Jebus that is in the hand of the enemy, some soul that we have not the courage to claim and carry through, some prayer that is hanging fire or some physical trouble that is perhaps half healed and we are walking around it. God says: "Lift up the hands which hang down." March straight through the flood, and, lo, the waters will divide, the Red Sea will open, the Jordan will part, and the Lord will lead you through to victory. Don't let your feet "be turned out of the way," but let your body "be healed," your faith be strengthened. Go right ahead and leave no Jericho behind you unconquered and no place where Satan can say that he was too much for you. This is a profitable lesson and an intensely practical one. How often we have been in that place. Perhaps you are there to-day.

OLD TRADITIONS.

This verse suggests discouragements and hindrances that keep people back from full victory. One of the worst hindrances is our old traditions and training. We were brought up to think in a certain way, and it is very hard to get out of it. It frightens us to think of pulling up an old stake and going in the face of the

cherished traditions of our fathers, and the enemy has a great hold on us there through early training and the accumulated force of many generations of habit. We were born that way and brought up to think that way, and our good fathers and mothers believed that way, and we have taken it for granted without thinking much about it ourselves. All this is against the life of faith, and when you come to step out there is a wrench; there is a tearing asunder of old ties, and you get frightened, and say, "Oh, dear me, I am going to drift away from solid moorings!" I know how the devil frightened me and told me I was getting into all sorts of dangers and that I should stick to the old faiths. Well, when I began to think these things out, I found I had no faith at all. I had just taken these old traditions for granted, and I never thought them out for myself. It was just a mere say-so that I had to be "redeemed from the traditions of my fathers."

Paul says that the Galatians were "redeemed from their traditions," from the old notions that had been handed down. We should take nothing for granted, but open our Bibles and ask the Lord to show us what we are to believe.

THE AGE OF MIRACLES PAST.

Then, what we might call current theological maxims and teachings are all against our faith. For example: "The age of miracles is past." We have never stopped to think about it. Of course it is just a great, big lie like most of the proverbs that are abroad. Because, if the age of miracles is past, then the age of Jesus and the Holy Ghost is past. We are in the same age that

Jesus was in. Jesus said: "I am with you even unto the end of the age." This is the same age, and it is not going to end until He comes, so we are in the age of miracles; we are in the age of the apostles, the age of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Christian dispensation. That is one of the lies the devil has sugar-coated, candied, and crystallized in the form of a theological maxim.

WORKS VERSUS GRACE.

Here is another: "God helps the man that helps himself." That sounds so sane, but it is not true. God helps the man that *can't* help himself; that is grace. These things we have taken for granted and they have colored all our conclusions, and this idea of trusting God to break through the natural order and to do the thing that is impossible frightens us; it takes away our faith and we must be gently and patiently led into the new divine order. And there are so many more of these things: you hear them in the pulpits, read them in the essays and arguments that are all abroad, and they hinder.

UNBELIEF.

Then the natural unbelief of the human heart is all the same way. The facility with which we lean upon a prop and look to second causes and turn to human means—it is natural for us; it is human; it is the evil heart of unbelief with which we are born, and of course Satan helps it all he can.

INFLUENCE OF FRIENDS.

Then the influence of friends has so much to do with it, too; friends who believe differently; friends whose

opinion we honor and value. They are dead against it; they lose confidence in us if we become fanatical and foolish. Many a wife has been robbed of the blessing just by fear of her husband; many a husband by the sharp tongue of his wife, many a dear child of God by some minister that he esteemed and whose disapproval he has not the courage to face. The influence of friends! What a fearful responsibility good people have in using their influence to dwarf and paralyze the faith of God's children!

SYMPATHY OF FRIENDS.

Then the *sympathy* of friends is another of the hindrances we have to face. When trouble comes, may the Lord deliver us from the gushing, sickly sweetness of our languishing friends that are so sorry for us and only hurt us. "Lord, pity thyself," Peter said to the Lord Jesus. There rose up in Him a wholesome revulsion, and He said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." When people pity you and when you pity yourself you may know it is of Satan. You can create disease almost any time by dwelling on it and thinking you have it. If I had the most fearful disease in the world I should not want to know it. I should not want any physician to tell me of it. The very fact of knowing that I had a cancer inside of me which was eating out my life would just take the life out of me. Hundreds of people are dying literally of anatomy. They know every organ in their body, and it is everlastingly hindering them. Sympathy, pity, don't seek it. If you cultivate the habit of letting people know how you feel, having them palaver over you and pull you along, you will find you will grow up a great big baby, and

you will never be able to stand on your feet. I carried in my chest for more than a year a very serious condition long after my first healing, which I knew, if I had stopped to think about it, was a deadly touch of the worst of all diseases. But I did not dwell on it; my family knew nothing about it. I held it up to God, and one or two Christian friends stood with me in quiet prayer until it all passed away. I could not have gone through the battle if I had had people asking me how I was.

DEPENDING ON OTHERS.

Then we are so often discouraged by the failures of others; people who have gone wrong. There again we shall always fail if we count on people. We cannot know the causes of their failure. I remember in my early ministry, in connection with Divine Healing, praying myself sick for a woman whom I had visited for weeks, and it seemed to me that she must get well. I could not let her die; yet she died and for a week or two I was crushed. We have no business to pull people through without their faith. It is between them and God. We are to help, we are to take a mighty hold, but we are not to take the responsibility of it. I found out afterwards that this lady was just fooling me; she was taking treatment all the time. There are reasons we do not know. You must not look at people. There is always a reason for failure which is not known to you. Look to God; believe Him, and make no allowance for your failure. Keep your eyes off people altogether.

FEAR OF FANATICISM.

Then again we are often hindered by our fear of

fanaticism, fear of false teaching, and I do not wonder. I have been sick for many a long year with the foolishness and weakness of fanatical teachers, but I had to hand it over to God and leave it with Him. God often showed me that these things must be to test His people, to teach them sense, to compel them to be watchful, "to try the spirits" and to use keen spiritual judgment. When any one comes to me and tells me that he has got out of Christian Science, I say, "how in the name of all that is sensible did you ever get in? What business had you in getting in? Where were your spiritual senses and your watchfulness that you ever got into those things, Doweyism, Sanfordism, Christian Science?" The very face of the thing is so outrageously unscriptural, blasphemous in most cases, or false in its very principle. It seems to me so strange that Christians will run after all those dazzling baits, the fishhooks that the devil throws into the pond. They see something bright, and they run after it and swallow it, and it has a hook. We should not be afraid but we should be humble and watchful and take His holy Word and His Holy Spirit and be bold. Just because we have seen so much of foolish teaching, we should be bolder than ever for the truth.

THE FEAR OF SATAN.

Then the devil's fears are perhaps the most tremendous obstacle that he puts in the way of people. He frightens you; something comes and it looks malignant; you don't understand it; it is mysterious; it is baneful; it is dangerous and you conjure up a thousand fears. Now we must be armed against those things. We must remember that fear is always from Satan,

and that we should never do a thing under the influence of fear. You should never make a decision under the influence of fear, or you will be sure to go wrong. "I feared a fear, and it came upon me." Wait until you are calm, deliberate, and have put everything before God and asked His counsel, His will, and His way. How frequently people rush into operations! How sad these things are!

NOT KNOWING GOD.

I think perhaps the greatest of all hindrances in our getting hold of God for our bodies, however, is the lack of knowing Him, because after all in its deepest essence Divine Healing is not a thing, it is not an experience; it is not an "it," but it is the revelation of Jesus Christ as a living, almighty Person, and then the union of this living Christ to your body, so that there becomes a tie, a bond, a living link by which His life keeps flowing into you, and because He lives you shall live also. This is so real that I just groan and cry in spirit for the people that don't know Him that way, and I wonder sometimes why He has let me know Him. There is not an hour of the day or night that I am not conscious of somebody that is closer to me than my heart or my brain. I know He is living in me, and it is the continual inflowing of the life of another; and if I had not that, I could not live. My old constitutional strength gave out long, long ago. Somebody else breathed in gently, with no violence, no strange thrills, but just a wholesome life.

When you have gone through a great pull it is so good to have Him rest you and be conscious that there is somebody there taking care of you, nursing you,

giving the balm of His life to you. It is to get acquainted with Him; it is to be wedded to Him; it is to give yourself up to Him and have Him reveal Himself to you, and then give Himself to you. It is nothing short of that, beloved. It is simply to get in touch with the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are conditions. You must be in touch; you have to drop a lot of other things before you can be in touch with Him. You have to let go of this foolish world. Let Him have you, your being, your body, your life, and then He will delight to come to you. It will be no strain; it will be simple trust. Then you will have a jealous feeling that you will not want anybody else to handle your body but your Lord.

Let us acquaint ourselves with Him, and thereby God shall come in to us. We have a living Christ; He has a body just like ours; He has a heart just like your heart, only stronger; lungs like your lungs, only more perfect; nerves like yours, but there is strength enough for millions, and He wants to duplicate Himself in each of us and keep us until our life work is done. Then He gives us a nobler vessel and fills it eternally with a nobler life. Will you let Him do it?

CHAPTER XII

ENTHUSIASM

"I would thou wert cold or hot" (Rev. 3:15).

HERE are two kinds of Christians. There is the conventional Christian—orthodox, correct, and cold. And there is the fervid Christian—afame with zeal, irregular often in his methods, less concerned about order than results, less interested in confessions of faith than in getting people to confess Christ, and every fiber of his being absorbed in the one intense business of serving his Master and saving his fellowmen. Which is the Scriptural type? Which is the most needed in this strenuous age? Is there a more supreme necessity in the Church of God and the development of Christian life than divine enthusiasm and the passion fire of love to God and the souls of men?

FIRST LOVE.

God demands the intense and supreme love of His people. When it comes to love, even human love, there is no place for indifference. It must either be love or lukewarmness. Christ's reproach against the Church of Ephesus was, "I have it against thee that thou hast left thy first love." First love here means not the early love of the young disciple, but *the love that puts Christ first*. God's last message to the churches of Asia and through them to the church of the latest age is, "Because

thou art lukewarm, I will spue thee out of my mouth; I would thou wert cold or hot."

SELF-SACRIFICING LOVE.

Even in human affairs there is no nobler passion than self-sacrificing love. Greek valor grew invincible by dwelling on the memory of Leonidas and Marathon. Rome cherished the patriotic legends of her early history above all other glories. The story of Horatius, the legend of the noble knight who plunged headlong with his steed into the yawning gulf at the gates of Rome, which nothing else could fill, and thus laid the foundation of the capital in his own heroic self-sacrifice—these were the inspirations of Roman courage and the noblest records of her history.

England and America vie in keeping forever green the names and memories of the illustrious men who laid down their lives for their country. Poetry and history find their charm in the heroic page, and without the warm blood of sacrifice the annals of time would be dull indeed. The youngest of the world's great empires is richest of all in her legends of heroic sacrifice. When asked to explain the secret of Japan's extraordinary success in the Japanese-Russian War, a returned missionary attributed it to the fact that every Japanese soldier considers it his highest glory to be permitted to die for his Emperor, whom he recognizes as the representative of God. He goes into battle, not taking the chances of life and death, but laying down his life as a sacrifice and counting it a supreme honor to die for his country's flag.

Surely, Christian zeal should not be behind the spirit of the world and the men that have nothing higher

than a human motive to inspire them. Surely, if for an earthly cause men will dare to die, the Lord of heaven and earth may well expect a nobler heroism from His followers redeemed at such a cost, inspired by such a pattern, and promised such an "exceeding great reward."

EXAMPLES FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

The sacred types of holy character given to us in God's Word are all heroic types. At least, it is the heroic element in them that makes them great. The story of Abraham finds its supreme interest in the altar of Moriah and the sacrifice of Isaac. The romance of Jacob centers in his seven years of toil for one he loved better than his ease or comfort. Joseph is the hero of innocent suffering crowned with glory. Moses sacrifices an earthly crown to become the founder of God's chosen nation. David reaches his throne through years of exile, suffering and conflict. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel were all sufferers who scorned the terrors of danger and death that they might be true to God. The supreme glory of Paul's life was his unequalled suffering borne without a murmur and as the very badge of victory in the army of his Lord. And above all others, the Captain of our salvation has trodden the blood-marked way and was "made perfect through suffering." It was the element of self-sacrifice that formed the supreme glory of His life, and its climax is the cross of Calvary, which stands forevermore as the memorial of sorrow crowned with victory and love, perfected by suffering. Indeed, it has been well said that God never seems to value anything supremely until it has upon it the

cross-marks of suffering. Even Jesus grew tired of a throne that cost Him nothing, and came down to Bethlehem and Calvary to win a new kingdom by His precious blood and His death-defying love.

THE EFFECT OF SELF-SACRIFICE ON THE HEATHEN.

There is nothing that will so impress the world as the spectacle of Christian self-sacrifice. Our missionaries tell us when they go to the foreign field that it is extremely difficult to convince the natives of China, for instance, of their unselfish motives. They cannot be persuaded that there is not some ulterior design, some mercenary purpose. They are so accustomed themselves to give nothing without its equivalent that they cannot believe in unselfish benevolence. When they really do find that the Christian missionary has no motive but their good, they are completely overwhelmed, their confidence is at once established, and their own lives are lifted up with the same high devotion. We cannot expect the world to believe us and our testimony if we are not willing to risk something for it; and undoubtedly the noble examples of our missionary heroes in patient suffering, unwearied toil, and lifelong sacrifice for the souls to whose salvation they have devoted their lives, have formed the strongest claim upon their confidence and devotion.

There will never be much power in a luxurious church, a self-indulgent Christian worker and a minister that preaches about a crucified Saviour without having himself shared His cross. "The marks of the Lord Jesus" are the truest badge of genuineness and power. There is something intensely attractive in an

earnest soul. The heart of the world responds to enthusiasm in a leader. It was the fervid soul of Peter the Hermit and other enthusiasts of his day that roused the slumbering world of the Middle Ages to the most extraordinary enterprises and sacrifices for the purpose of reclaiming the cross of Jesus Christ from the hands of the infidel. Oh, for ministers, evangelists, missionaries, and men and women on fire with enthusiasm for Christ and love for perishing souls! Men will begin to think about their own souls when they see our earnestness, our tears, our sacrifices.

AN INCENTIVE TO BEAR TRIAL.

The power of an intense enthusiasm will inspire us for the greatest achievements and uphold us amid the severest trials. The soldier that is pressing on through the arduous campaign and intent only on meeting the enemy, cares little for the privations of the march or the trials of the way. He does not expect material comforts; he has set out with the expectation of facing heat and cold, hunger and exposure, sleeplessness and toil, and every sort of inconvenience and suffering. Enough for him if he achieves his object and carries back the flag of victory.

And unless we go into the battles of the Lord with this spirit, we had better not go at all. If we are going to be annoyed with every uncongenial neighbor, if we are going to break down with every inconvenience we meet, if we are going to complain because we cannot travel in a palace car and have men and angels wait upon our comfort, we had better go right into the world at once and enjoy its short-lived joys

and comforts. If we really love our cause and are on fire with holy zeal, we shall be able to say like Paul, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself that I may finish my course with joy." When Jacob toiled for seven long years for the wife he loved, they "seemed to him but a few days for the love he bare her." And so the heart that knows anything of the fervor of divine love will be little moved by the passing trials of this earthly lot.

"Let cares like a wild deluge come
And storms of sorrow fall,
Let me but safely reach my home,
My God, my heaven, my all."

AN ANTIDOTE TO SELFISHNESS.

Such a spirit will be an antidote to selfishness. Nothing else can overcome selfishness except love. The writer knew a beautiful girl, surrounded by luxury and followed by a train of admirers. Her existence was one of utter selfishness. She lived only to please herself and for the adulation of those who ministered to her vanity. Nothing more vapid, worldly, or utterly worthless could be imagined than her thoughtless, frivolous youth. In fact, it seemed as if she never could be of service to anyone else or fitted for any high and noble duty. But years later he met her again amid altered circumstances. She was the wife of a poor man, the mother of several beautiful children, and her life had become one of assiduous, self-denying love and toil. Early and late she labored with her hands to minister to those dear ones, and there was no frown upon that still beautiful face and no discontent in that radiant eye. The writer asked her if she

was happy amid these strange surroundings, and she said that she never knew real happiness before. He asked her if she did not feel the hardships of her altered life, and she said she had no hardships; toil was a delight, because love had come and transformed the butterfly into an angel. So love always transforms. It is the only antidote to self. Someone has beautifully said:

“Self is the only prison that can ever bind the soul;
Love is the only angel that can the gates unroll;
And when she comes to call you, then rise and follow
fast.
Her way may lie through darkness, but leads to light
at last.”

The dry rot of modern Christianity is selfishness, worldliness and love of ease, the pursuit of pleasure, the gratification of our own desires. All this is incompatible with true love to Christ, but all this the heart will cling to until it is lifted out of it by a superior passion. This cannot be accomplished by the conventional type of religious life. A stronger force is needed; the more glorious and consuming flame of heavenly love. The writer remembers a very beautiful society girl once brought to Christ. When he called upon her a few days later, he found her in a state of intense religious happiness. After a little conversation he ventured to ask her what she was going to do now about the dance, the theatre, and her worldly pleasures. She smiled brightly and said: “Why, now I have no need for these! I have something better.” That something must have a keener zest to it than the cold, conventional type of most of our modern piety. There must be a better world before we can rise above

the lower one. There must be a divine joy, a heavenly love, and a heart-filling service for God and our fellow-men. This alone can take the taste from earth's enjoyments and make us say, "Thou hast kept the good wine till the last."

A DIVINE PASSION FOR SOULS.

One of the most beautiful and practical forms of Christian enthusiasm is love for souls. This becomes a kind of instinct, something like the instinct, although infinitely higher than that which God has given to the lower orders of creation in the pursuit of game. The passion of soul-winning leads us to watch for souls on all occasions and at all times, and to take the most intense delight in winning them for God. It leads us to adopt ourselves to people, to study them, and to attract them through the responsive chord which we can always find in every heart. A cold, unsympathetic nature will never be used to draw souls to Christ. In the Arctic Circle they sometimes use a lens of ice to kindle a fire by means of the solar rays, but not so can we kindle human hearts. The medium must be itself on fire.

Very beautifully does Anna Shipton tell us of her vision of heaven, how one night as she lay down, weary in her work, and longed that she might wake in heaven. She fell asleep and dreamed that she was sailing into the harbor of heaven through a sea of glass, and myriad forms of loved ones were standing on the shore to welcome her. But looking around, she noticed that the waters were filled with drowning men and women and children, who were reaching out their hands with despairing cries for her to save them. Im-

mediately she lifted up her face to the beautiful city and said: "Father, not yet do I ask Thee to take me to that blessed heaven, but rather to send me back to save those lost ones." Then it seemed to her that the very cords of her heart were loosened and became cables as she swam through the sea, and the drowning ones clung to her very heartstrings as she painfully drew them home, and the very water was stained crimson from her own heart with the agony of her love.

Thus it was that the Master sought and saved us. It was no easy task for the Shepherd to seek and find His lost ones, but love made it a delight. It was the reproach of His enemies, "This man lieth in wait for sinners." Of His journey to Samaria it is said, "He must *needs* go through Samaria," and the reason was that a poor lost woman was waiting at Jacob's well for His messages of love. His last act on the cross was to stretch out His hands and take with Him to paradise a dying malefactor, and still through the Holy Spirit He is ever seeking and saving the lost with wearied and patient love.

Paul's spirit was the same. "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved," was his earnest confession, and in even stronger language he added: "I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kindred, according to the flesh." Again he says: "I am become all things to all men, if by any means I may save some."

This is the secret of all successful evangelistic work: a deep, intense desire for souls. Rutherford used to

say: "Your salvation will be two salvations to me, your heaven two heavens to me."

THE SECRET OF MISSIONARY SUCCESS.

The same passionate love of souls is the source of the missionary's power. Nothing else will ever make us happy or effective amid the uncongenial surroundings of a heathen land. But to the true soul-winner all considerations of personal comfort, congenial surroundings of even apparent success are forgotten in the one thought, "There are immortal beings here to be lost or saved." Some one was telling such a person of the discomforts of heathen lands: "There are scorpions there; there are deadly serpents there; there is scorching heat there; there are cruel and murderous savages there." But finally he asked: "Are there men there?" "Yes, there are many millions of them." Then the answer was: "Where there are men I must go and seek and save them."

Dr. Duff was an example of missionary enthusiasm. It was a splendid spectacle to see the old veteran as he pleaded for India and begged the young men and women of Scotland to go out to that needy field. Once in a great meeting in the General Assembly Hall he fainted in the middle of his address, and they bore him to the vestry unconscious. In a little while he recovered and begged to be taken back. "You will die if you do," they said. And the old hero answered: "I'll die if I don't. I must go and ask the young men of Scotland if there is nobody left but me to go back and tell the millions of India of the love of Jesus."

It was this intense enthusiasm that led Livingstone

to traverse the Dark Continent and to live and die with one supreme ambition: to heal the open sore of Africa. It was this that sustained McKay amid the awful perils and trials of the early days of Uganda. It was this that kept the martyrs of China at their posts amid the awful days of the Boxer rebellion until hundreds of them sealed their testimony with their blood. It was this that enabled Pastor Harms, Pastor Gossner and Count Zinzendorff and the Moravians to count every earthly thing but dross as they sent forth the first pioneers of the Gospel to the snows of Labrador and the scorching suns of Africa and India. It is this divine enthusiasm in human hearts and lives that to-day is pressing forward into every open door in the Philippines, in Porto Rico, in China, and in Tibet. There is no sublimer passion than the love of souls, and especially the love of myriads of lost heathen souls. Even Francis Xavier, with all the faults and errors of the Romish Church, was ennobled by the missionary passion, and there is no more splendid record in the annals of Christian history than the life of this apostle of love, sweeping over the world like the Apocalyptic "angel flying in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach unto all them that dwell upon the face of the earth," until at last he sank dying there over against the shores of China, crying with his latest breath: "O rock, will you never open to my Lord?"

The missionary enthusiasm is reviving in the church of God. Let us fan its rising flame, let us kindle it afresh in the hearts of our children, our students, our friends, until it shall set on fire the slumbering Church

of God and light on every mountain top of the world the signal flames of our Lord's return.

THE NEED OF A PASSIONATE LOVE FOR CHRIST.

Above all other forms of Christian enthusiasm is personal devotion to Jesus Christ. He who accepted Mary's costly ointment and let her pour its sweetness upon His own head rather than keep it for the poor, still longs for the passionate love of His disciples. The love of Jesus is, indeed, the supreme passion of the sanctified soul. How exquisitely Madame Guyon has described it:

"Still, still, without ceasing, I feel it increasing;
This fervor of holy desire;
In the love of His Name I would die in the flame
Of a love that can never expire."

How beautifully the saintly Tholuck speaks of his passionate love for Christ and says: "It seems to me as if it were only yesterday that Jesus had died on Calvary." How intense the soul breathings of Brainerd, Payson, McCheyne, Jonathan Edwards and other souls to whom it was given to lie, like John, upon the Saviour's breast. Our practical age may scoff at what it calls mysticism, but the Master has a place for Mary at His feet and John upon His bosom quite as important as for Martha, with her busy hands, and James with his practical maxims and teachings. There is no power so transforming as the love of Christ.

Henry Drummond tells of a Scotch girl whose life had been one of fashion and frivolity until one day all was changed and she became serious and earnest, and the leader in all unselfish work for God as she had

once been in all the follies of fashion. Her friends were surprised and questioned what could be the cause. It was generally believed that this was due to some tender passion that had been awakened in her heart toward some noble Christian man. This was the more believed because she always carried a locket on her bosom which no one was permitted to see. For a little while the flames of her devotion burned with a bright and heavenly flame, and then it burned out her frail young life, and it was known that the end was near. Her most intimate companion, a young lady whom she fondly loved, was with her to the last, and just before she died she took from her bosom the locket, and, handing it to her, said: "No one has ever looked within this sacred clasp but me, but I want you to take it and open it after you have come back from my funeral, and then carry it upon your breast; and my last prayer is that it may be as great a blessing to you as it has been to me." Sorrowfully and tenderly the sacred trust was fulfilled; and when the last clod had fallen upon the coffin and the last touch had been given to the little hillock above her head, her friend threw herself upon her face in passionate tears. When she grew calm enough, she took out the sacred treasure and opened the clasp, and through her tears tried to gaze upon the sacred enclosure. There was no human photograph; there was no earthly face or name, but just this little verse printed on a satin ribbon: "Whom having not seen we love; in whom though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." That was the Hero that had won her love; that was the Heart that had set

her on fire ; that was the passion that had awakened all her being into life and love, and transformed her life from selfishness to service.

Beloved friend, that is the true secret of the highest living. God teach it to you and me.

O love that gave Thyself for me,
Help me to live and love like Thee,
And kindle in this heart of mine
The passion fire of love divine.

CHAPTER XIII

THE VALLEY OF DITCHES

“Make this valley full of ditches” (II Kings 3:16).

AN unholy alliance of three kings, one a man of God, the second a follower of Baal, and the third an out and out heathen, were marching against the king of Moab. Such alliances always go wrong and deserve to. This allied army soon found itself perishing for want of water in one of the valleys of Edom. Then the follower of Baal showed his colors by beginning to curse God for the calamity that came. But Jehoshaphat, the man of God, although wrong in being in such company, immediately turned to God and asked, “Is there not here a prophet of the Lord?” Then it was that Elisha, who had come along under some divine presentiment that such a danger would surely arise, came forward and at the request of Jehoshaphat waited upon God for a message of deliverance. Our text was the answer that came. It is a striking message and full of lessons for us all.

NECESSITY, THE OPPORTUNITY FOR GREAT BLESSING.

This was a time of tremendous need. The army was perishing and utterly helpless. But the prophet insists first of all upon still further emphasizing their need. He bids them dig a lot of ditches in the valley. These ditches represented their desperate need. What is a ditch? There is nothing beautiful about it; it is just a great open space dug in the earth. How finely

it represents our deepest needs! We are not to come to God with our floral offerings and our beautiful self-congratulations, but with our great and awful needs. We have them all right, but let us see them, acknowledge them, bring them into the light and lay them at His feet. Let us come to Him not with our goodness, but with our badness; not with our experiences, but with our failures. Let us lay open before Him those secret rents and chasms in our past or present that fill us with dismay. Tell Him the very worst; keep nothing back, and surely our extremity will be God's opportunity, and our necessity shall become the mount of blessing and the door of hope.

GOD WORKS IN SILENCE AND STILLNESS.

"Ye shall not see wind nor rain, but this valley shall be full of water." Without a sound or sign, from sources all invisible and apparently impossible, the floods came stealing in all night long; and, when the morning dawned, those ditches were flooded with the crystal waters and reflecting the rays of the morning sun from the red hills of Edom. Our unbelief is always wanting some outward sign. The religion of most people is largely sensational, and they are not satisfied of its genuineness unless they have frequent displays of fireworks, cyclones, and manifestations. The greatest triumph of faith is to be still and know that He is God. It was not the earthquake, the whirlwind, or the flame that brought Jehovah to Elijah but "the still small voice." The greatest victory of faith is to stand before some impossible Red Sea and hear the Master say, "Stand still and see the salvation of your God," and then "Go forward." As we step out

without any sign or sound—not a wave-splash, nor a breaker rolling—but the same flood still there and wetting our very feet as we take the first step into its waters, still marching on we shall find the sea divide and the pathway open through the very midst of the waters. If we have ever seen the miraculous workings of God in some marvelous case of healing or some extraordinary providential deliverance, I am sure the thing that has impressed us most has been the quietness with which it was all done, the absence of everything spectacular and sensational, and the utter sense of nothingness which came to us as we stood in the presence of this mighty God and felt how easy it was for Him to do it all without the faintest effort on His part or the slightest help of ours. Oh, for that faith that can act by faith and not by sight and expect God to work although we see no wind or rain.

THE FACILITY OF GOD'S WORKING.

“This is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord,” said the prophet. To human thinking it was simply impossible, but nothing is hard for God. How delightful it is to have some one help us when we are conscious that it costs them no effort, but that their means are as ample as their heart is large. How glorious it is to realize the omnipotence of God and to look up in His face and say with Jeremiah, “O Lord God, thou hast made heaven and earth by thy great power, and there is nothing too hard for thee.” We strain and wonder if God can really give us the little pittance for which we ask, and, like the prophet Elisha, God is simply grieved with us because we ask so little.

He is so immense that He can scarcely get down to the pettiness of our little faith. It is much easier for God to do some great and difficult thing than some petty trifle. The realm in which He lives is the impossible, and the power with which He meets it is the omnipotent.

It is so easy for Him to do all that our faith can ask because it is all provided beforehand. Once it was not easy for Him to save lost men; there were difficulties, impassable difficulties in the way because of His own holy nature and our sinfulness. But now these have been removed by the atonement of the Lord Jesus, and the way is open for Him to give us all that we can ask and "exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." The forgiveness of your sins, the sanctification of your soul, the healing of your disease, the salvation of that loved one, the removal of that difficulty which would mean so much to you, are but light things in the sight of the Lord your God. It was this that charmed Him when the Syrophenician woman came with her mighty faith. What she asked was a heaven to her, but as her faith conceived it, merely a crumb for Him. And all she asked was that as a little dog she might have this crumb from the Master's table. It would cost Him no more than it had often cost her to drop a bone to her little dog as she sat at meat. Jesus was delighted with her splendid trust and could only cry, "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Oh, let us measure up to the magnificence of God and meet His majestic greatness and His mighty promises with a faith worthy of His omnipotence.

EVERY BLESSING A STEPPING STONE TO GREATER BLESSING
AND SPECIAL SERVICE.

“This is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord: He will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.” The valley of ditches was but a stepping-stone to the conquest of Moab. And so when God gives us some signal answer to prayer we are not to sit down in contentment and put the amen to our praise and prayer, but we are to rise up and claim the mightier blessing and service to which this is but the prelude. When God gave the woman of Sarepta the faith to yield her last handful of meal to the prophet Elijah, and see it multiply for a whole year’s supplies, this was but the stepping-stone to the greater miracle which followed later when God gave back her son from the dead in response to her still greater faith. When the Master surprised His first disciples with the miraculous draught of fishes, the miracle was but a foreshadowing of the greater things which He was yet to show them and accomplish through them when instead of fishes, they should gather souls into the kingdom by thousands. He said to Peter, no doubt in anticipation of that apostle’s mighty ministry on the day of Pentecost, “Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.” Paul’s wonderful conversion was not given in order that he might spend his life in talking about the extraordinary experience, but that he might go on to still greater experiences and be encouraged, by what the Lord had already done for him to press on to still mightier expectations and achievements.

When the Lord meets us in some great and wondrous blessing, He does not intend us to sit down

there and spend our life wondering and talking about it, but to go forward into greater ventures of faith and look for mightier victories of grace and power. Has He met you in saving grace and power? That was only that He might lead you on to claim the higher blessing of your sanctification. Has He healed your body of some terrible disease and manifested His power in your physical life from day to day? That was only that you might use your new God-given strength in special service for Him and be encouraged to prove His promises in mightier victories of faith and holy service. Has He delivered you out of some great emergency and met you with some miracle of His mighty providence in one of the hard places of your life? That was only to prepare you to claim still greater miracles of providence and grace for His kingdom and glory. All that you have yet known of His power is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord. "He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand." Those Moabites stand for every adversity, obstacle, and extremity in your life. They stand not only for your spiritual enemies—the world, the flesh and the Devil—over which God is able to give you perfect and permanent victory, but they stand for the enemies of God's kingdom and the victories He expects you to win, not for yourself alone, but for His Gospel and His work. He does not mean you to be always getting out of difficulties and fighting a defensive warfare, but to carry the battle into the enemy's country and go forth in aggressive and triumphant conflict against the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, against the ignorance, misery and sin that are

all around you and that are destroying your fellowmen, and especially to go against the strongholds of Satan in the heathen world, until the last citadel of Satan shall have been won, the last tribe of earth shall have received the Gospel as a witness, and the last member of the bride shall have been gathered out from among the nations so that the Lord Himself shall come.

O ye that have received so much from Christ, ye that are the children of much blessing, the monuments of such wondrous grace and mercy, the witnesses of so much that is supernatural and mighty in God's healing power and providential working and ye that have received such manifestations, gifts, and graces from the blessed Holy Ghost, what are you doing with your blessings? Have you stood looking and wondering at the waters of Edom and talking for evermore of the marvelous miracles that He has wrought, or are you moving on against the Moabites and "Forgetting the things that are behind," pressing forth to those that are before "for the mark of the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus." You have crossed the Jordan and you have seen the walls of Jericho fall down, and there you stand still blowing the old rams' horns and telling the world of your marvelous experiences instead of getting up and moving on. The Gibeonites are still before you; Ai and Beth-horon still must be fought and won; thirty-one kings must be conquered; Hebron and Timnath-Serah are yet to be inherited. On, still on, until the last stronghold is captured and the last Canaanite destroyed.

HALF-WON VICTORIES.

The curse of ancient Israel was that they stopped half-way in the conquest of the land, and the remnants

they left unconquered became in a little while their own conquerors and oppressors. In this passage the prophet tells them the conflict with Moab must be a thorough one, the work must not be left half done. "Ye shall smite every fenced city and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones." They pressed the battle to the gates of Moab until at last the king was compelled to sacrifice his own first-born son upon the walls of his capital as a silent appeal for mercy. Does that mean that for us in the conflict against our spiritual foes, we are not to rest until the flesh and sin have died with Christ and that in our battle for the Lord, we are not to be content or satisfied until that glorious consummation when sin itself, of which Moab was a type, shall die for evermore?

It surely means inexorable war against Satan, sin, and the world. Men and women of God, men and women for whom God has done so much even in this humble work, are you waging this inexorable war? Are you fighting this good fight? Are you pressing on as much as lieth in you for that mighty victory? Are you counting all that lies behind you as but a light thing, compared with the great and mighty things which your quickened faith has dared to claim, which the mighty promises of God embolden you to ask, and which the infinite power of the ascended Christ and the descending Holy Ghost are waiting to give in these last days as the crowning blessing of the Christian age and the ushering in of the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

CHAPTER XIV

AWAKE

“And that, knowing the time, that it is now high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Rom. 13:11).

WHERE is nothing more wonderful, more beautiful, more valuable than that marvelous gift of God—nature’s sweet restorer, the balm of sleep. It is like a new creation to awake each morning with a fresh anointing of life and energy. But there is nothing more full of peril sometimes than sleep, when the robber is taking away the treasures of your home, or the assassin is lurking at your door, or the fire is creeping up the stairs of your dwelling, threatening your life and your possessions. Or perhaps you are asleep on the verge of some awful precipice and do not know it, or when some great opportunity is passing by, and the Bridegroom Himself may have come and gone and left you behind. Oh, then it is a precarious, and perilous, and solemn thing to sleep.

God’s clarion call to His people and to the world again and again repeated is “Awake thou that sleepest; arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” O slumbering Christian, awake! O slumbering soul, sleeping perhaps on the brink of eternal death, “it is high time to awake out of sleep!”

THE WAKING OF NATURE.

There are many wakings. There is a waking which comes through nature herself, the beautiful touch of mother nature, which is already in the air, when spring rises from her snowy pillow and comes forth in all the beauty of her vernal adorning. Already we begin to feel its prophetic impulses and its stirring pulses in our being. The warbling birds, the humming insects, the flowing circulation in every plant—how beautiful is the waking of spring! It is a resurrection, and a prophecy, and a parable of a new life that comes to the soul, and of that glorious morning coming by and by when this universe shall hear His voice and feel His touch, and there shall come forth a new heaven and a new earth “wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

THE WAKING OF HUMAN LIFE.

Another wondrous waking is the waking of a human life, a new immortal being, born to die no more forever. Two eyes to look out on the wondrous scenes of earth and heaven with new mystery and new delight. Two ears to learn the sounds and significance of earthly love. A mind and heart to expand until their powers shall only be less than God's. How wonderful, how mysterious the waking of your existence and mine!

THE WAKING OF YOUTH.

How marvelous the springtime that comes to human lives when first young womanhood and young manhood discover the mysterious forces that are budding into life and thrilling them with a strange consciousness of good and evil, and their own being in a

mystery which they do not yet understand. The waking of youthful strength, and youthful passion, and youthful intuitions of right and wrong—what a wondrous waking! Oh, how it needs the fostering hand of wise, and tender, and holy motherhood and fatherhood, and yet more, the blessed touch of Jesus and the teaching of God's holy Word and Spirit.

THE WAKING OF THE HEART.

This is still more wonderful when the first thrill of passion, of emotion, of affection stirs your being; when you find unfathomable depths of feeling that you never dreamed were there before; when you discover that no longer can you be happy alone, but that other lives concern you, and that there are tendrils in your being that must fasten on human souls, and some great love takes possession of your being, and you can never be the same again. What a wonderful waking it is! And though so often it is erring, and though so often it may go astray, it is one of the mysteries of life on which we gaze with profound solicitude and concern—the waking of a human heart.

THE WAKING OF THE INTELLECT.

Then, again, there is the waking of a human mind, the unfolding of the intellect and understanding, the first impulse of culture and expansion, the discovery of new worlds in the wondrous developments of modern thought and science, perhaps the consciousness of strange, new intellectual forces in your own soul, powers yet latent and fraught with the possibilities of stirring millions of your fellow-men—the waking of the intellect!

The birth of a true ambition in a young life, how wonderful it is! How solemn it is! How mighty a force in human history!

THE WAKING OF A SOUL.

But, oh, so much more when this is the waking of a soul, the waking of the human spirit to discover the greater world where God lives, the world of things that it did not know before, a world of suffering, a world of joy, a world of power that takes hold of heaven, of eternity, of God; that wakes up to find that it was made for God, and for infinity, and for eternity, and that it never can rest in the petty things of this passing world of time. The waking of the soul! How it came to Abraham when first the strange thrill of a divine touch came into his life, and he bade farewell to his land, to his home, and to all earthly ambitions, and followed that strange voice a thousand miles across the desert and found God. How it came to Moses amid the palaces, and luxuries, and ambitions of Egypt as he saw himself the heir of the world's greatest throne, the leader of the armies of that mighty land, learned in all wisdom of its ancient people, with everything within his grasp that human ambition could claim, but in his heart an aching void the world could never fill, and he turned wearily away from the palaces on the Nile and the thrones of the Pharaohs and "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," for "he endured as seeing him who is invisible." That was what he saw—an unseen presence. He caught the vision of God, who fills all things, and his heart could never rest again on earth, for the magnet of God's love

turns to its true pole, to the true center of its attraction. How David awoke amid the hills of Bethlehem to this same strange call, "My soul thirsteth after God; my heart longeth for God, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, to see thy power and glory as I have seen thee in the sanctuary, for thy loving kindness is better than life." "Many say, who will show us any good. Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us." "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup. Thou maintainest my lot." Yes, it was homesickness for God. It was the cry of the human heart for that world for which we were born, that life which belongs to us by heavenly heredity, and is our true inheritance. And as its light fell upon the brilliant student of Tarsus, on his way to Damascus, how it changed his future, and the world's future, and casting aside all prospects of splendid scholarship and earthly power, he cries, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. And I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse that I may win Christ, and be found in him," for, "forgetting the things that are behind, I reach forward to the things that are before. . . . I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

I see a form you cannot see."
"I hear a voice you cannot hear;

That is the explanation of such lives. They have wakened. God has touched the soul, and the vision of the eternal has come, and it is true

“For, oh, the Master is so fair;
His smile so sweet to banished men,
That they who meet Him anywhere
Can never rest on earth again.”

They have wakened to the call of heaven. Have you, my friend? Have you? Or, are you still sleeping on the brink of night?

THE WAKING OF CONSCIENCE.

There is a story told in the book of Samuel about a wonderful man, a man after God's own heart in many ways, who, in the very height of his success and his public service as a king, as a priest-king of God's own peculiar people, was suddenly smitten with a strange fascination of forbidden love, and, yielding to the snare, he took the wife of another to his palace home. Then he cunningly and wickedly connived to murder that husband, sending him into the front of the battle, brave and true to his king, to fall as a sacrifice to his vile passion. For two years the dream went on, and he slept in the arms of his sin. His conscience was asleep. One day the prophet of the Lord came to him and told him a strange story about a man that had just one ewe lamb. This man loved it and petted it, and it lay in his bosom; it was dearer to him than his life. But one day a stronger neighbor stole his lamb, took it to his bosom, and slew the owner and protector of the precious charge. Then the prophet paused and said, "What shall be done to him?" Quickly the king answered, "Let him be punished without mercy." Then the prophet with sad and solemn eyes looked into the king's soul and said, "Thou art the man." "Thou hast done this thing before high heaven, and thou hast forgotten this black and crimson sin. Thou art asleep

even while I speak." Strange, was it not? Then he waked with a great sob of penitence, and wrote that fifty-first Psalm, that cry of a broken heart, "My sin is ever before me. Cleanse thou me from blood guiltiness, O God." It was the waking of a sleeping conscience. It is possible for you to sin and sleep on. It is possible for you to sin and chloroform your conscience, and shut your eyes like the foolish ostrich in the desert, who puts its head behind a leaf, and because it cannot see the enemy thinks it is immune. Ah, no, beloved; while you slumber, judgment slumbereth not. There is a waking. God grant it may not come too late. We read of a man that "in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment. And Abraham said, Son, remember." He had never thought of it till he found himself in hell, and then he remembered. And the memory was hell enough for a lost soul. Oh, to remember! Oh, to see it then as God sees it! God forbid it, dear friend, that your waking should come too late.

We read of the sons of Jacob that they cruelly betrayed and sold their brother Joseph. Years passed by. They forgot all about it. They thought it was nicely covered. One day in Egypt they cried, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the anguish of his heart, and would not hearken to his voice." Oh, it will come back. Now, my friend, while you are young and perhaps well and your nerves are strong, you can laugh it off; but when fever comes, when nervous prostration comes, and your body breaks down, and all the fiends of hell haunt your sick chamber, and all these voices say, "Son, remember"—ah,

to wake up then! God help you, God give you the waking now when the blood is waiting to cleanse you, and the love of God can forgive you and put it into oblivion.

How beautifully Jesus can bring us the consciousness of sin and at the same time pardon. "Go call thy husband," He said to that woman at Jacob's well; "we have talked long enough together. Bring your husband." She looked up with face crimson.

"Sir, I have no husband." And then He met her eye. He said, "I am glad you told me the truth: I knew it all the time. Thou hast had five men, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. I am glad you told the truth." Then when the waking came, and as she hurried across the hills, this was what she had to say, "Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" It was that fact that had impressed her, had wakened her to a sense of sin without discouraging her, without crushing her. Pardon as well as judgment. O beloved, come to Him who brings the candle in one hand and the blood in the other, and of whom it is said, "There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared."

Then, again, I see Him standing in the house of Zacchæus, the hardest kind of a sinner, the last kind that a revival reaches. Yes, you can get the down-and-outs, but that well-dressed, keen, shrewd fellow,—perhaps a deacon, or even an elder—that is a different thing. But Jesus got Zacchæus. "Zacchæus, come down," He said, "for today I must abide at thy house. I invite myself to dinner. Make me a royal feast," and the Lord broke his heart with His great love. And I

see Zacchæus standing up and crying before the Lord has said a thing, "The half of my goods I give to feed the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man unlawfully, I restore him fourfold." Yes, he saw in the light of Jesus how mean he was. He did not need a word said to him. One glance at that holy face, at that modest robe which He did not even own, at that self-renouncing life that had gone through this world thinking only of others, and Zacchæus saw himself in all his selfishness, and he emptied out all the baggage that was sinking the ship, and cried, "Lord, I want to go even a little farther than the law requires; here is my heart and my life." And Jesus said, "Today is salvation come to this house."

What a beautiful waking, to see things as God sees them! So, beloved, He is waiting to show you at once yourself and Himself.

AWAKING TO A VISION.

A great purpose, a great consecration, a noble life work—oh, it is splendid to wake to that, to find out how small you have been, to see how petty the things are you are living for, to get a glimpse of the crown you are missing, of the splendid ambition that God will give you instead of this miserable, self-centered pursuit of fashion and pleasure. Oh, to see some great and shining purpose until it hypnotizes you and becomes a passion, the passion of your life! Like the Scotch girl, the belle of society, and the center of all her own thoughts who suddenly became heroic, and unselfish, and noble, and when she died, the explanation was found in the locket on her breast, "Jesus,

whom having not seen, we love." She had wakened. She had seen Him. She had followed Him.

Macaulay tells us of one of the great statesmen of England, Warren Hastings, who squandered the patrimony of his fathers in a wasteful, prodigal life, and who at last one day stood in the crowd and saw the mansion, and the art galleries, and the far-reaching lands of his patrimonial inheritance sold on the auction block, and he a bankrupt, a pauper, a dishonored fugitive driven from his native land. But on that day, Macaulay says, Hastings put his foot down, clenched his fist, and, striking a table said, "It is gone, but by the graves of my fathers I'll live to win it back." He went to India, and there for years he led the British policy and the British triumph until India was won for England, and Warren Hastings went back the greatest man of his times, and the first thing he did was to buy back the estate of Dalysford and put his feet on the place where he had sworn that great oath, and realize its fulfilment. That was a great purpose. It was a human purpose, but it was a worthy ambition of a wrecked life. O beloved, there are times when God stirs men's and women's hearts to nobler resolutions.

Attending the funeral of David Livingstone in Westminster, London, Henry Stanley saw the vision of his selfish life, and there he consecrated what remained of it to a high and noble purpose, and today Central Africa is open to missions because Henry Stanley had that waking and went back to that land to reclaim it for civilization and for God in fulfilment of that high purpose, that noble waking.

William Wilberforce followed the society leaders of London for half a lifetime until his noble talents were thrown away, and his life was a miserable failure. One day he got hold of a little book, the story of "The Dairyman's Daughter," a little tract of an English girl, her life and her death. He waked up from his dream a new man, and he went forth to become the liberator of every slave in England, the benefactor of his nation and a great suffering race, and one of the noble names that cannot die. It was a great waking.

Thomas Chalmers was a selfish, indolent preacher in Scotland. He read a cold sermon once a week to his people, and spent Sunday afternoons and the rest of the week fishing in the highlands. Thomas Chalmers read the story of Wilberforce, and there came a great waking.

He saw the smallness of his life, the possibilities of his gifts and talents with which God had endowed him, and he went forth in a new career, and became a great leader in the Free Church of Scotland and the noble issues that made it stand in the very van of progress and missions. He waked from his dream.

So some of us have waked; some of us have caught the vision; some of us have heard the voice. Oh, that you might hear it, dear friend, today and wake!

"Not many lives have we, but one,
One, only one.
How precious should that one life be,
That narrow span."

There comes sometimes a great stirring, a great waking to a people, a nation. That call made England free with her Magna Charta. That call made the United States free with her Declaration of Independ-

ence. That call saved the Union and added a new chapter to the story of this land. That call is waking the best blood and the best impulses of the world even in this awful time, and out of it will come a new waking of human forces.

There came the great awakening of the Reformation in the time of Luther. There came the great awakening of Wesley and Whitfield in the seventeenth century. There came the great awakening of the Moody revivals in the early life of many of us. And these stirrings of a deeper spiritual life are necessary. They are the tidal waves that lift the flood higher and leave it on a new plain. Oh, that we might pray and prepare for such an awakening! Better to cease to exist, Lord Shaftesbury said, than to die of a dry rot. He told about the decaying nations of Europe, and he said that he hoped that England would cease to exist before she sank to the condition of Spain and other decaying lands. God save us as a people from that state of getting crystallized, of getting hypnotized by the world, and the flesh, and the devil into the respectable sleep of average Christianity!

THE DEADLINESS OF SLUMBER.

In closing, let me add, "It is high time to wake out of sleep." God only can show you whether you are asleep. I am afraid we are all asleep to some extent, for "while the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept." In a sense, up against Calvary, up against the white light of heaven up against the coming of the Lord and the awful realities of eternity, I am afraid we are all asleep. "They all slumbered and slept." But, oh, some are so fast asleep that they do not want to be wak-

ened. When a man is freezing in the snowdrift, he cries, "Let me alone. It is so delightful to lie still and forget my misery. The pain is nearly over now; let me die in peace." That is the worst symptom, not to want to wake up. It is disagreeable to be awakened, to have to exert yourself, to have to realize your condition, rouse yourself, make an effort. I heard of a man who had taken chloroform by mistake. He found the drowsiness creeping over him, and he wanted to lie down. But he knew he had just a moment to escape. He flew to the nearest drugstore. "Save me," he cried, and then lost his senses. But he was in time for the antidote. O beloved, if you are asleep, do not go by your feelings, but have sense enough before it is too late to hear the call. "What meanest thou? O sleeper, arise, and call upon thy God." "It is high time to awake out of sleep."

AWAKE TO REALITY.

When people sleep, they are intensely occupied with things that are not real. I have gone through many tremendous battles and public interests and occupations, but when I awakened, I found it was a dream.

People asleep are interested intensely in unreal things. O men and women, are not some of you interested intensely in dreams of pleasure and folly, things that pass away, and the real things, a fire smouldering in the basement, the burglar breaking into your room, you do not realize? Unreal! Is your life unreal? Or, are the things of God as real to you as they are to Him? and as they will some day be to you? "It is high time to wake out of sleep" because your sleep may be fatal. "It is high time to wake out of

sleep" because, while you sleep, the Bridegroom may come and the door be shut for you. "It is high time to wake out of sleep" because the Master needs you and He calls, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"

"It is high time to wake out of sleep" because while you sleep, somebody dear to you is perishing. "What meanest thou, O sleeper?" O father, mother, friend, what is it going to cost some of us? If you do not want to be saved and sanctified for your own soul's sake, surely it is worth while for someone that you love! God help us, every one, to wake out of sleep, to be at our best, alive to our own souls, alive to the trust committed to us, alive to the call of God, and alive to the souls that some day will be dearer to us than our own!

CHAPTER XV

TWO KINDS OF SORROW

“Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (II Cor. 7:10).

THE world is full of sorrow. It comes both to the sinner and to the saint, but oh, how different it comes to each!

THE SORROW OF THE WORLD.

There is no comfort for the sinner's sorrow. There is no profit in his pain. Like the fire which consumes the dross, so the flames of suffering burn his heart to ashes and leave nothing but the bitter dregs and the burning lye.

COMFORTLESS TRIALS.

What can we say to comfort the heart that has no God, no Christ, no hope beyond, and no faith in an overruling Presence here? Is there any task so trying as to stand by the bier of one who has died without the Saviour and speak to a sorrowing household who are equally destitute of His love and to whom that parting is forever? One can understand the terrible force and meaning of the apostle's words, “That ye sorrow not as others who have no hope.”

WASTED SORROW.

The Christian's trials are a wholesome discipline intended to teach him precious lessons in the school of

holy character. Our trials are but "child training," as the apostle beautifully calls it in Hebrews, but the sufferings of the ungodly have no such issue. True, they are intended to arouse the conscience and transform the life, but they are unheeded and unblessed and God at last gets tired of inflicting pain that does no good, and we hear Him crying in the pathetic language of the prophet, "Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." How sad that so many have to suffer bereavement, disappointment, loss, and failure and after all be like the one of whom Jehovah says in Isaiah, "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth and smote him, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart."

If our trials only taught us any good, they would not seem so hard, but to suffer in vain and find it has only embittered and hardened the heart, this indeed is the very bitterest of grief.

VAIN REGRETS.

One of the sources of the worldling's sorrow is the painful reflection upon his past and the stinging memory of opportunities lost, of loved ones wronged, of sin and suffering that never can be repaired again. There is no more bitter drop in the cup of retribution than to have God say to a soul, "Son, remember." To go alone with our own heart and retrace our wretched steps through all the chambers of memory and see in the full light of experiences the consequences of our sin and folly knowing that it is irremediable—this in-

deed is the "sorrow of the world that worketh death."

FUTILE FEARS AND GRIEFS.

One of the sweetest comforts of the Christian is the thought that he is saved both from his past and his future. The promise of the Lord is, "The Lord will go before you, and the God of Jacob shall be your rereward." That is, God will take care of your future and your past. But the ungodly have no such overshadowing Presence. The past remains in all its grim reality and fraught with all its future fruition, and, before them there are foreboding fears and the thousand anxieties that all the world's philosophy is unable to still.

SELF JUDGING.

Conscience is the dread accuser of the wrong doer, and conscience, without the restraint of divine mercy, is a terrible tyrant. There is no punishment more severe than that which you have power to inflict upon yourself. To see your worthlessness, to know that you are wholly bad and helpless to make yourself better, to condemn yourself in utter disgust and self-despair has no healing virtue in it, no help for you, and no balm to alleviate the pain. It is but the beginning of the eternal fire. People sometimes think because they call themselves hard names and inflict severe penances they have somehow made atonement for their evils. There is nothing in this. It is but the scorpion which spends its life in stinging others and then ends its own life by stinging itself to death.

CHAGRIN AND HUMILIATION

because of the deserved punishment of sin is another

form of the vain suffering of the world. Many people are quite comfortable about their wrong doing till it is found out. Then it looms up in lurid colors, and the keenest suffering comes from wounded pride and the sense of humiliation before others. But there is no uplifting power in this. It does not reform the criminal to degrade him and expose him. It only destroys the last lingering spark of manhood and drives him into deeper despair. God does not thus try to reform and save, but rather blots out the very semblance of the evil and lifts us up again into confidence and hope.

DESPAIR—THE CLIMAX OF THE WORLD'S SORROW.

One of the illustrious statesmen of this land a century ago is said to have ended his life by repeating in tones of deepest anguish over and over again the one word, "remorse," "remorse," "remorse." But that remorse did not bring true repentance or take away one particle of the deep depravity of his soul. It is but the beginning of the worm that never dies and the fire that never shall be quenched.

We have several instances in the Bible of people who said, "I have sinned," and yet it did not save them. Pharaoh cried out "I have sinned," but it was only because he wanted to escape the judgments of God which his sin had brought upon him. Saul said more than once "I have sinned," but it did not save him from going back and repeating his sin until at last he perished in his infatuation. Judas brought back the price of the Saviour's blood and threw it at the feet of the Pharisees, crying, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood," but Judas went headlong immediately afterwards to self-destruction.

We have many instances, also, of people who were sorry, but it did not make them better. Herod was very sorry that he had to behead his much respected friend, John the Baptist, to please an infamous woman and a bold and heartless girl, but he did it just the same, and brought upon himself the curse of innocent blood. The young ruler that came to Christ was very sorry that he could not accede to Christ's terms and part with all his earthly treasures and follow the Master. "He went away sorrowful for he had great possessions." But his sorrow did not bring him back or lead him to true decision for God. He is sorry still, no doubt, for his fearful mistake, but his sorrow is that of the lost.

O beloved, sentiment will not save you; tears will not wash away your sin. The question asked of one who was bewailing his evil course may well apply to every one who reads these lines: "Sorry, are you, for what you have done? Well, are you sorry enough to stop?"

True repentance means more than a gush of emotion. It means a change of will, an altered attitude toward sin and God. Is that your attitude?

There are many kinds of godly sorrow besides true repentance. For example, there is

THE SORROW THAT GOD COMFORTS,

the trials that bring Him closer to us and reveal Him to us as "the God of all comfort." That is a beautiful promise in the Seventy-second Psalm, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass." The grass has just been cut down by the gardener to prevent it from

going to seed and drying up at the root, but it is bleeding at every pore. The gardener pours water on it or the rain falls in healing showers; the wounds are assuaged, the roots refreshed, and lo, it springs up again. So God loves to visit the wounded heart, and it is never until we have suffered that we really know Him in all the tenderness of His love and understand such promises as this, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort thee."

TRIAL SANCTIFIED.

The gardener mows the grass for its good, and the Father chastens us "for our profit." That richly laden vine would have no fruit if it had not been cut back by the pruning knife. So we shall some time thank God for our hours of deepest trial and the radiant memories of life's retrospect.

SUFFERING WITH CHRIST.

The highest form of human suffering is fellowship with Jesus Christ in His burdens. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him but also to suffer for his sake."

SORROW FOR THE SINS OF OTHERS.

This is one of the sublimest heights of Christian love, to take on ourselves the load of another's wrong doing and make intercession like Him who "was made sin for us, who knew no sin," and still bears upon His bleeding hands the names of sinful men in intercession before His Father.

This is why God has sometimes to let us know the bitterness of having some loved one go astray that we may know the Father's sorrow over His wandering

child and the Shepherd's grief for the poor lost sheep.

SORROW FOR OUR OWN SINS.

There is a place for repentance in every Christian experience. There must be a definite conviction of sin, a calling of things by their right names and a turning away from all evil and giving God the right to cleanse and destroy it. Then God not only forgives but cleanses and takes away from us its memory and power.

But this is not the terrible and hopeless sorrow of the world. It comes through a different process and from a different source. It is born of faith and love and not of doubt and fear. The truly contrite heart is sorrier for its sins after it knows that they are forever forgiven.

How beautiful are the Bible pictures of repentance. Look at that woman weeping at the Saviour's feet and bathing them with her tears of love while the Master says, "Much forgiven, she loveth much."

Listen to Zaccheus standing among his acquaintances and declaring "The half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." What could be more beautiful, more inspiring, more encouraging than that kind of sorrow for sin?

Look at Peter turning his face toward his Master in the moment of his profane denial, and catching, not a withering look of anger, but a pleading glance of sorrow and love. He breaks away from the multitude and hurries out to hide his tears as he gives way to uncontrollable anguish and sorrow for the wrong he has done his Saviour.

Listen to the prodigal hastening home and crying upon his father's bosom, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

This is repentance, and it is almost the most beautiful thing in the world. No wonder that God says, "The sacrifices of the Lord are a broken spirit." "With this man will I dwell who is humble and of a contrite heart and who trembleth at my word."

There is a sorrow that comes from a deeper sense, not merely of our actual sins, but of our sinfulness and lack of entire conformity to the will of God.

As the light of self-revealing comes to the heart and we see ourselves as God sees us, there comes a deep, intense longing for purity and entire conformity to God. How finely this comes out in the Fifty-first Psalm, which was David's cry when he saw his own heart in the light of his terrible fall. It was not that he was afraid of punishment, but it was the sense of having grieved God and of having lost spiritual purity and blessing.

How keenly Job felt this when the searchlight of God was let in upon his soul and he cried, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes seeth thee and I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

How beautifully the Lord Jesus describes this in the fifth chapter of Matthew in the opening paragraphs of the Sermon on the Mount, where He pronounces the blessing first on those that are poor in spirit, that is, the souls that have seen their spiritual short comings, and then adds a similar benediction on those that

mourn; that is, that mourn because of their spiritual poverty and are deeply affected by their shortcomings and failures. On such, the Lord says, there rests a great blessing and to such surely comes the divine consolation.

THE FRUITS OF GODLY SORROW.

In the following verse the apostle describes the fruits of true sorrow for sin. "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge. In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (II Cor. 7:11).

"What carefulness it wrought in you," that is, what watching against the recurrence of a similar fall. "What clearing of yourselves," that is, what honest, earnest efforts to undo any ill effects of our wrong doing upon others. "What indignation," not against others, but against ourselves. "What fear," that is, what godly fear and vigilance lest we should be again entangled. "What vehement desire, what zeal, yea, what revenge," that is, what earnest resolve, by the grace of God, to retrace our steps over the same ground and recover all that we have lost.

God lets us do this in infinite long suffering, and like Samson, whose dying joy it was to win the victory even by the sacrifice of his life, that he had thrown away through his sinful folly, God permits us to retrieve our failures.

The story is told of a regiment, which by cowardice had lost its colors, and the Colonel had refused to give

them a new flag. At length, in a bloody campaign, the opportunity came to recover their lost honors. The enemy was posted upon a hill, and the Colonel, pointing to it, said, "Boys, there are your colors. You can win them back." And up that hill they charged, captured the enemy's flags and guns, and recovered the colors they had forfeited.

So God brings into each of our lives some hard place, some strong temptation, which is just another name for a new opportunity to recover what we have lost, and it is then that our true sincerity and godly sorrow are fully vindicated. God has deliverance for His tempted children. God has victory for us over every failure and every defeat. Let us take heart and allow Him to make us more than conquerors through His love.

A jeweler was once engaged in cutting a beautiful cameo figure. Suddenly he discovered a dark streak in the stone. It was a flaw. At first he thought he should have to throw it away, but after thinking hard over it, there came to him the fine conception of working that stain into the drapery of the figure. This he succeeded in doing, so that it became an actual ornament and appeared like a flowing robe upon the spotless figure of the design and added immeasurably to its beauty and effect.

So God permits us to take our hard places and failures and shape them into robes of transfiguration to show to wondering angels through all eternity the marvelous power of that grace for which nothing is too hard. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

CHAPTER XVI

LENGTHENING THE CORDS AND STRENGTHENING THE STAKES

“Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes” (Isa. 54:2).

THIS is a familiar verse and really inspired the opening of modern missions. Preaching on this text a century and a quarter ago, William Carey announced the memorable outline, “Attempt great things for God, and expect great things from God,” and then went forth as the founder of modern missions to live it out in heathen India.

The text is an obvious allusion to an Oriental tent. The travellers have found it necessary to increase the accommodations of their tent. But more is needed than a wider covering. The cords that fasten the canvas must also be lengthened, and in proportion to their length the stakes that hold them must be strengthened. It is a law of mechanics that the lengthening of the space to be spanned demands a corresponding increase of strength in the timber or in the rope. Therefore, while the prophet calls upon us to enlarge our tent, and to stretch out the cords of faith and endeavor to larger limits, we must at the same time establish a stronger center of action and secure a firmer base of operation.

LENGTHENING THE CORDS.

This is the day of large things. Human knowledge

has been vastly expanded, and human enterprise has kept pace with the wider vision. Commercial enterprises are all patterned on a colossal scale. Fortunes are counted by millions and hundreds of millions. Man's activities span the earth and would scale the heavens. Single corporations to-day compete in their achievements and revenues with the governments of the greatest nations. The real kings of the century are the captains of industry and the controllers of trusts and banks. The log schoolhouse has given place to the mighty university with its clustered colleges and armies of students and graduates. The little bazaar in which our fathers bought and sold their wares has been exchanged for the vast department store. The modest chapel in which our fathers worshipped, and one or two ordained officials did all the work, has been succeeded by the institutional church with its associated charities and its hundreds of busy laborers. Time and space have been in great measure annihilated, and the leaders of literature, music and art have their audiences in every land and speak to the whole wide world.

And God is calling His people to larger things. Surely the spirit of faith should stretch a vaster compass than the mere ambitions and enterprises of man. Surely the kingdom of God should be built upon vaster foundations than the perishing edifices of a transitory world. Surely the God, who Himself fills all immensity, in whose sight the inhabitants of earth are but as grasshoppers, within the hollow of whose hand the ocean lies, and who "taketh up the isles as a very little thing"—surely such a God as this may well say to us,

“Enlarge the place of thy tent, stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.”

A CALL TO SELF-SACRIFICE.

The text calls us, in the very lowest and simplest sense of the passage, to unselfishness, to a life that stretches out its heart strings beyond itself and reaches to God on high and men below in the expression of its love and service. Selfishness is the opposite pole of love; and if God be love, selfishness must be Satanic. “Love seeketh not her own.” Selfishness has no other aim but to get and to hoard and to absorb all the gifts of God and all the blessings of life upon its own desires, pleasures, and honors. God is calling us to a deeper self sacrifice and a larger love, a love that will take in the unlovely, a love that will embrace the world, a love that will lay its life down like the Master, for the glory of God and the good of others. God give us the love that tries to see the best in everyone else, the love that is free from censoriousness, criticism and pride, the love that finds no self-complacency in its own gifts and ministries and blessing, but turns every blessing back to God again for His glory and others’ good. Oh, that we might be as covetous of love as we are of the more wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit, for then God could trust us with His richest blessings. We need a love that will give beyond all former love, a love that will delight in God and find duty and service a luxury and not a task, a love whose prayer will be all unselfish prayer, and whose very experiences and gifts will only be instruments of larger service and wider

blessing to our fellowmen. Above all we want a deeper love for souls, a more intense desire for the evangelization of the heathen world and a more profound passion and sorrow for the perishing around us and the Christless world in the regions beyond.

A LARGER FAITH.

We want to lengthen the cords of our expectation and our spiritual vision. We want to see the new things which God has for us and then to claim them with a faith that will not let them go. We want something more than the faith that clings to the Rock of Ages, even that faith that reaches out both its hands to the souls that are sinking all around us. We want the faith that takes deliverance for others, that fights the battles of the Lord, that breaks down the walls of Jericho, that claims the salvation of men, that ventures on the hardest fields and the most hopeless tasks, that dares the impossible, that sets its foot upon every yet unconquered land and claims the victory for God, nor rests until the battle is won. How our faith has been spent in simply getting or keeping our own salvation, in bearing our own troubles, in fighting our own battles, in claiming our own blessings! Oh, for the faith of service, the faith of interceding prayer, the faith of soul-winning power, the faith that will bring the evangelization of the world and the coming of the Lord.

A LARGER VISION.

We want a more living hope and a larger vision of the coming kingdom and the future age. When we see that world in its true glory, all other ambitions

wither and all other visions fade away. That alone can counteract the spell of "this present evil world." That alone can attract our noblest ambitions and make all earthly gain and glory seem but loss. The enterprising business man is the man that sees far ahead and purchases the best real estate in the city of the future to find himself some day a millionaire through his foresight. But we who look for a better city and "a kingdom which cannot be moved" should have a larger enterprise. Oh, that God would give us this vision night and day until we shall be heartsick of the world's distractions and homesick for our Bridegroom's coming, and all we think and say and do shall have inscribed upon it "unto the coming of the Lord!"

A LARGER SERVICE.

And surely the larger service in which we can be engaged is the evangelization of the world. This should be the supreme business of every church and every Christian. In so far as it has been our great object in this Alliance work, it has given dignity, strength and divine incentive to every department of the work. It has saved us from a narrow, religious selfishness. It has brought to us the sympathy of the largest minded Christians, and it has doubtless been the chief reason why God's blessing has so richly rested upon our work. In so far as each individual Christian makes this his great life work, it will have the same uplifting influence and the same enlarging blessing. We grow up to our ideals, our inspirations, and our aspirations. That was indeed a sublime conception of John Wesley when he called the world his

parish. If you are working for your fortune, if you are working for your family, if you are working for your salvation, if you are working for the happiness and power of your own Christian life, if you are working for your church, your pastor, or your denomination, you are working on a small pattern, and you will turn out a small product in the end. But if you are living and working to make this world the kingdom of Emmanuel, you will partake of the grandeurs of your aim, and God will give you "largeness of heart as the sand upon the seashore."

Now God wants us even in this direction to rise to higher planes and reach out to larger horizons. He wants each one of us as individuals to have a more intelligent, intense, and world-wide grasp of the work and enthusiasm for its success. God wants our faith, our prayer, our sacrifices, and our giving to grow from year to year, and to find new channels, new opportunities, and new resources.

And He wants us as a body of workers to lengthen our cords and to press forward to larger things. Our missionaries are calling for a forward movement. They tell us of extraordinary opportunities, and they have made the noblest sacrifices in order to encourage others in the work. They tell us how a moderate increase in the means available and the workers needed would double all our present operations. They call to us to move forward into new China, into new Japan, into the open doors of India, into the interior of Africa, into the republics of South America, into the land of Palestine where God is already gathering the outcasts of Israel by the tens of thousands and bidding

us to pass on to them the message of their coming Messiah. It is no time for retrenchment, but God's call is, "Enlarge the place of thy tent, stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations, and lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes."

STRENGTHENING THE STAKES.

Our advances can only keep pace with our bases of supply. Our tent will topple over and fall in ruins if the stakes that hold it are not strong in proportion to the cords that are anchored to them. How may we strengthen the stakes?

A DEEP AND SETTLED SPIRITUAL LIFE.

Any religious movement that is not backed by a truly spiritual constituency will fall by its own weight. The secret of missionary contributions and effective missionary workers is true consecration in the home field. Godly families, praying circles, holy influences, are the atmosphere and birthplace of every great enthusiasm. The church of Antioch had to be founded before Paul and Silas could go forward on their great world enterprise, and Antioch ever stands for the large-hearted and profoundly spiritual element in the home field. According to the power at this end of the line will be the manifestations at the other end. Wisely, therefore, more wisely than we knew, the Lord has guided us in this work in slowly, patiently, and thoroughly laying the foundation of a consecrated constituency, a profound spiritual movement, founded upon personal union with the Lord Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost. Without this our work

abroad will fail. Beyond this our missionary enterprises cannot go. Water will rise to its level and no higher. We are not losing anything, therefore, by strongly cultivating the deepest spiritual life and sending forth our missionaries from the fire of Pentecost and the altar of consecration.

UNITY AND HEART FELLOWSHIP.

We need unity among the workers at home and between the home and foreign fields. We must be "perfectly joined together in one mind and one judgment." We must let nothing separate us. Where we may differ about phases and phrases of spiritual truth and life, we must not allow the differences to divide us. There is room in the Alliance movement for great variety of expression and experience, and there is certainly room for the highest manifestations of God's power and blessing, for the very aim of the work from the beginning has been to bear witness to the supernatural. And there must be more than outward union; there must be heart fellowship, there must be that oneness in the Spirit which enables us

"To share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear."

This is especially necessary between the home and foreign field. Our foreign work must never go beyond the sympathetic cords of fellowship and prayer. We believe it is possible in the Spirit to be so one that God can have the burden bearer at home for every burdened heart in the foreign field, and some ready intercessor to hold up the sinking hands of the workers in the crisis hour, even as Aaron and Hur held up

the hands of Moses. Beloved, whatever gift of the Spirit you ask, do not fail to ask that touch of love, that heavenly priesthood, that fellowship in Christ, and those "bowels and mercies" which will enable you to bear "one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

THE POWER OF PRAYER.

It is the great ministry of the High Priest above, it is the very channel of our fellowship with Him, and it ought to be our most continual, delightful, and effective ministry. We should covet it as the sweetest mark of our Master's confidence and communion. We should exercise it as the most helpful ministry in which our moments and hours of leisure can be employed. We should begin and end the day with it and jealously watch for every possible moment of time as the hours go by to turn again to the heavenly telephone and swing again the holy censer with its incense of prayer. We should have our stated times of fasting and prayer for the special needs of the work and for the special calls of the Spirit. We should have our concerts of prayer when together we can mingle our petitions before the throne, and we should be ever watching for the burden of the Spirit as He lays upon our hearts here and there some tried worker or some crisis in the work. There are some who are especially called and fitted for this ministry. There are women especially, daughters of Jerusalem, sisters of Anna, Deborah and Priscilla, whose ample leisure and womanly sympathy especially fit them for this most Christ-like ministry. Oh, shall not a great multitude present holy hands to Him to be filled with fresh cen-

sers and ordained to stand at the altar of intercession with an everlasting priesthood and an unbroken circle of upholding prayer; prayer which will keep back the power of sickness and Satan, which will inspire the workers with new power and zeal, which will open the doors of the heathen world and the hearts of the heathen, and which will flood the dry ground of this neglected world with the latter rain and then be emptied back on earth in living coals of fire to bring the divine signs and the glorious coming of the Lord.

THE TRAINING OF WORKERS.

We may sometimes forget that the Lord Jesus spent nearly all His earthly life in the training of a few men to carry on His work after He Himself had passed on. This was even more important than His public preaching and teaching. So we find the apostle directing Timothy, "The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit unto faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." The schools of the prophets were the strongest bond in ancient Israel between the nation and Jehovah. The kings and even the priests failed, but God could always count upon some of His prophets. To-day we are face to face with one of the most essential of all the foundations of our Alliance work—the Missionary Institute, which stands for the spiritual and Scriptural training of wise and Spirit-filled messengers of Christ for the whole Gospel to the whole world. We thank God for what it has accomplished. We feel, however, that there is still much to be done in the way of more thoroughly bringing the workers into touch with

the great work of evangelism and soul-winning. More and more this work of training must be unconventional and adjusted to the conditions around us in this transitional age, not too much founded on the conservative and elaborate systems of the theological schools, but more particularly fitted to convey the Spirit's message quickly in these last times, both to the people of God and to the heathen world. Nor must we forget to make provision for the younger element of our Alliance families. Something has been done in this direction, but only enough to show at once the condition of the work and the need of larger provision for it. If we are living in the generation which is to see the Lord's return, surely we cannot afford to run any risk of leaving our little ones behind us when the Master comes.

There must be also the more liberal support of the home work; the consecration of our business and secular life to God and the use of every class and every element in the one great business of preparing for the Lord, and the constant recognition of our work as emergency work with immediate reference to our preparation for the Lord's return.

God help us to strengthen the stakes as well as to lengthen the cords and so enlarge the place of our habitation and reach out to the fullness of His purpose for our own work and for our time.

CHAPTER XVII

A GREAT PURPOSE AND ITS ACHIEVEMENT

"And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land" (Acts 27:44).

"He thanked God, and took courage" (Acts 28:15).

MORE than any other mere man Paul represents all the lengths and breadths, and heights and depths of the Christian experience. His journey to Rome is one of the most picturesque and suggestive chapters in all his marvelous history. It is a sort of miniature of the story of Christianity, as well as the experience of the individual Christian. Back of it we always see like an undertone and final cause

HIS GREAT PURPOSE.

In the largest sense, Paul's great, supreme purpose was to please and glorify his Master and accomplish his ministry. He expressed it himself in the fine testimony found in his farewell to the elders at Ephesus: "That I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify of the gospel of the grace of God."

But besides this general purpose, his life was broken up into many special enterprises of lofty endeavor and glorious achievement. The great life conflict consisted of many special campaigns which for the time engrossed all the strength of his being.

In the present case, his special aim was to reach Rome and preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus there. The origin of this purpose is stated in Acts 19:21, immediately after the great riot in Ephesus. "After these things," we read, "Paul purposed in the spirit when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia to go to Jerusalem, saying, after I have been there I must also see Rome." This "must" indicates a very profound conviction and imperative resolve, the force of which comes out with tremendous emphasis in the later incidents of his journey. This was not a thoughtless purpose nor a human impulse, but formed in the Spirit by his distinct leading. Such purposes alone will stand the tests of life. So sure was he of his Master's leading and the Spirit's voice, that none of the discouragements and distractions which followed could for a moment move him from his high resolve and invincible determination.

It is a great thing to have an aim in life. Decision of character, as John Foster has taught us in his great oration, is the secret of success and perhaps the strongest element in human genius, especially on the part of men of action. Dreamers never accomplish much. When some high ambition takes possession of a strong nature, its accomplishment becomes a necessity. "It is necessary for me to go; it is not necessary for me to live," said the great Roman when his boatmen tried to persuade him from his perilous voyage on the Tiber. It is of momentous importance that such natures should have a right goal, for they will move with tremendous momentum to whatever goal attracts them.

Paul had the highest possible purpose, and it lifted him to its sublime level.

Dear friend, have you a supreme purpose in your life, and at each new stage have you learned to receive from the Master some special commission, some inspiring task, some worthy object which will absorb all that is best in your being and draw out your noblest powers in its achievement? We talk sometimes of unprincipled people. That just means people who have no controlling or steadying principle or aim. It will develop especially, and ennoble all your character and life to have such a purpose, to believe in your destiny and in the God that is shaping it, and then to pursue it with invincible courage and perseverance to the glorious end.

THE OPPOSING FORCES.

From the very outset it seemed as if all the powers of earth and hell were bound to defeat him. So vast and far reaching were to be the results of his visit to Rome and his planting the gospel in the citadel of the Caesars, that no doubt to the Prince of darkness it was a decisive issue of the apostolic history.

GOOD PEOPLE.

First he was tried and opposed by his companions and friends, and even the very prophets and prophetesses of the Lord tried to dissuade him from his journey to Jerusalem, which was part of his plan to visit Rome. But their pleas only met the fervent response: "What mean ye to weep and break my heart? I am ready not only to preach the gospel, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of Jesus."

BAD PEOPLE.

The hostile Jews tried to mob him at Jerusalem, and then to condemn him in their council, and finally to assassinate him through forty conspirators, who had sworn that they would neither eat nor drink until they had shed his blood. Failing in all this, they publicly accused him before the Roman authorities, and endeavored by every pretext and influence to secure his destruction or at least defeat his plans. But through all he pressed on and trusted God to turn the armies of the enemy in his favor.

DELAY.

His next discouragement was delay, the tedious waiting years at Jerusalem and Cæsarea. Nothing is more trying than to have to wait while opportunities sweep by, and our hands are tied, and anything but divine courage and confidence would faint and die. *But faith soon learns that all God's greatest work is slowly done.* Noah waited 120 years for his promise, Abraham twenty-five years for his, Joseph a score of years, Joshua and Caleb nearly half a century for their inheritance, and even David was hunted amid the caves of Judah for nine years before he won his kingdom. And so "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise."

THE MISTAKEN COUNSELS OF MEN.

He was hindered and tried by the mistaken counsels of others. He had warned the captain of the vessel that was conveying him to Rome not to leave the haven of Crete, but the captain took counsel of his own com-

mon sense and the Roman officer in charge listened to him rather than to Paul. "And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence they sailed." But that south wind blew softly from the mouth of hell, and they soon found themselves in the jaws of an awful tempest. So often are we hindered by the sensible people who think they know more than the divine Spirit, and have no place for the counsels or the courage of faith and prayer.

THE HATE OF HELL.

The tempest of the Adriatic was an angry blast from the prince of the powers of the air, and the viper which afterwards threw itself upon him on the shores of Malta was one of the fiery darts of the wicked. Fiercely raged that fearful attack until all hope seemed lost, and mere earthly courage would have sunk in despair. Not so this brave soldier of faith. His very difficulties but strengthened his purpose and added glory to his final triumph.

HIS GLORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT.

The trials which met him only strengthened his faith and intensified his purpose. Human impulse gives way before pressure. Divine faith grows stronger by resistance.

GOD'S OVERRULING PROVIDENCE.

Paul's trials afforded an opportunity to manifest God's overruling providence in spite of the opposition of the enemy. *God loves to take the devil captive and*

make him fight the battles of the Lord. Everything that the adversary did to hinder Paul turned rather to the furtherance of the gospel, and opened the way for his going to Rome, until finally his appeal to Cæsar made it necessary that he should be sent to the imperial capital for the hearing of his case. And so we behold the interesting spectacle of a missionary to Rome provided with a free passage at the expense of the government and through the very agency of his bitter enemies!

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE AND TESTIMONY.

His trials gave occasion for much service which otherwise had been impossible. His arrest at Jerusalem afforded an opportunity for his appeal to his own nation from the steps of the castle. His detention at Cæsarea enabled him to preach the gospel to Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. Thousands of souls have been saved throughout the Christian age through the very texts which the apostle gave in those addresses. His message to Felix has been used of God to bring sinners to decision, and the words of Agrippa, "almost persuaded," have sung thousands more into the kingdom. So our difficulties and trials all come to us as occasions for some special service for the Master; and when these things happen, let us not be so anxious to get out of our troubles as to accomplish the purpose for which they were sent, remembering the Master's words: "It shall turn to you for a testimony."

Paul's trials were the occasion of his noblest testimony for Christ. Was there ever anything more stirring than that single confession: "Whose I am and

whom I serve." How concisely, how forcibly it expresses in a single sentence the very essence of a consecrated life! Or, again, what confession of faith ever rang so true as his noble words as he stood upon that rocking deck: "I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me."

A NOBLE EXAMPLE.

His trials afforded an occasion for his own example of the noblest Christian manhood. In that hour when the hearts of all had failed him, and the very captain seemed to have given up in despair, and the crew grown so heartsick that they did not even care for food, we see this solitary man, a prisoner and a convict, taking command of all that company, rising superior to fear or danger, and with infectious hope and cheer eating before them all, bidding them be of good cheer, and assuring them there shall be no loss of any man's life, but only of the ship. It is in such an hour as this that the quality of the true Christian appears, and God permits the emergencies that come to us all for the very purpose of bringing out in bolder relief the grandeur of a life of faith and godliness. Are we using our trials to show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of the darkness into His marvelous light? Such souls can never know defeat, and Satan's weapons are turned against himself and the curse transformed into a blessing.

FAITH AND WORKS.

These trials were used to show to us how wonderfully the purpose of God is ever in harmony with the agency of man. The apostle had declared with abso-

lute assurance that there would be no loss of any man's life, and yet when the craven crew were trying to escape and had lowered the boat for this purpose that they might sneak away unobserved, Paul turned to the Roman soldiers, and said, "Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved." Both these statements were true. In the first place, God did intend that they should all be saved, but in the next place He intended that they should be saved through the co-operation of the crew. There is, therefore, place both for faith and works so finely expressed in the familiar quotation, "Act as if all depended upon us; believe as if all depended upon God."

We learn from this story by how small a margin and through what trifling means God's mightiest deliverances are often accomplished. Some people think that a life of faith is all a chapter of romance, and that we are to expect angels to interpose at every turn with miracles of marvelous deliverances. Surely if ever an occasion justified some extraordinary manifestation of omnipotent power, this did. But no chariot of fire appeared for this servant of Jehovah, no celestial galley sailed up to this sinking ship to take off the great apostle; no cohort of angels came to bear the greatest of all missionaries safely to the shore, but on a piece of old plank, or a clumsy raft, with tremendous effort, and by the narrowest margin probably he took his place in all that company of whom it is said, "Some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass they all escaped safe to land." God is often glorified much more in using some

trifling instrumentality for the help of His children than by some stupendous miracle. When the Lord Himself entered Jerusalem as its Messianic King, He used a little colt, and still in our lives He loves to show "The hiding of his power" by employing the things that "are not to bring to nought the things that are."

THE VALUE OF ONE BELIEVING SOUL.

There was just one man in all that company of 277 souls in whom heaven was interested during that momentous voyage. For his sake the rest were saved and the shipwreck turned into a great deliverance. It was necessary that that one life should be preserved and that his mission should be fulfilled. It is said of Lot, weak as he was, "I cannot do anything till thou be come thither." God could not touch Sodom until Lot was out of it. For the sake of the little company who know and trust God, this old earth has been kept from final catastrophe, and all the events of providence are moving in behalf of the purpose of God and the welfare of His people. If one soul shall be led by this message to yield itself to Him, that single soul is worth all the corporations of the city or the gold mines of the world.

THE VICTORIOUS POWER OF FAITH.

There is no finer lesson in all this drama than the value of good cheer. That spectacle of courage and confidence in the dark hour of despair—smiling upon that passing ship, eating and drinking with contagious cheerfulness, and bidding all that trembling crowd to be of good comfort, may well put to shame our misera-

ble murmurings, grumblings, and despondencies, and inspire us with that spirit of gladness which is one of the brightest and most essential of the fruits of the Spirit. There are no circumstances in which the child of God should ever lose his sweetness or be overcome by gloom or sorrow. Let us learn to "Rejoice evermore," and to act as if we believed that all things are under the control of our Almighty Friend, and that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

Beloved, if we are on God's side, we can truly say like him, "Whose I am and whom I serve." If our great life purpose has been stamped with His approval and healed by His covenant promise, nothing can be against us; we cannot fail, and we may ever go forth saying, "Thanks be unto God that always causeth us to triumph in Christ Jesus."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CURSE OF SELFISHNESS

"If I have eaten my morsel alone" (Job 31:17).

THIS is classed by Job among some of the basest and most abominable offenses against God and humanity. He gives us a catalogue of seven different crimes of which men are guilty and solemnly asseverates his innocence of all. The first of these respects the law of purity; the second, of honesty; the third, of charity toward the poor and helpless; the fourth, against greed and avarice; the fifth, pride and vainglory; the sixth, idolatry, and the seventh, vindictiveness and malice toward his fellow men. To have eaten his morsel alone places him in the same category with all these gross and glaring vices, and to Job's lofty sense of right it is just as odious and abominable as licentiousness, idolatry, or greed of gain.

The expression here used stands for selfishness in all its forms. It represents the heartless and self-centered spirit that absorbs all the blessings of life to itself, and neither thinks nor cares about the needs and sufferings of others. Our Lord has given us His estimate of this spirit in the parable of the rich farmer who lived only for his wealth, and who is described as saying to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, eat, drink and be merry." The parable has told the story of his fearful doom, and lighted it up with the solemn moral, "So is he that layeth up

treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

Selfishness has a thousand forms, but no matter what its aspect, it is always the deep fountain of all human sin and the worst foe each one of us has to face. Archbishop Whately said, "If you ask me to tell you who it is that causes you the greatest trouble and threatens you with the direst danger, I can only say that if you will look in the glass, you will see an excellent picture of him." The sin of selfishness puts you in the place of God, and is high treason against the sovereignty of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Let us look a little at this monster who so easily disguises himself that he has become the rival of heaven and the idol of every human heart.

SELFISHNESS IS CONTRARY TO THE LAW OF NATURE.

The scientist will tell you that every plant and animal is adjusted according to a law of mutual dependence and helpfulness. It takes two flowers to produce the seed that will reproduce and perpetuate the blossom. They must meet in the exchange of the fertilizing pollen which gives life to the plant, and in the distribution of the pollen every element of nature and multitudes of living creatures are made to minister to future generations. The honey bee, as he sucks from flower to flower the sweet nutrition, deposits the fertilizing pollen of some other flower in the cup that he visits, and thus ministers to others while satisfying his own industry and appetite. The very life of the plant is built on the principle of its death in order to give life to the next generation. The beautiful blossom

withers and dies, but out of its sepulchre comes the little seed pod which is to create a new summer of radiant blossoms. The wild creatures of the wilderness and the birds of the air band together in herds and flocks for mutual protection, and the instinct of motherhood leads them to provide for the next generation with the most self-sacrificing care, and even sometimes to lose their own lives for their young.

All nature is full of interdependence and helpfulness. The philosopher calls this altruism. It is just a little foreshadowing of divine love. Emerson has well expressed it :

“All are needed by each one;
Nothing is fair or good alone.”

Burns has put it still more strongly :

“God never made an independent man;
’Twould mar the general concord of His plan.”

The very animals themselves are inspired with the instinct of helpfulness to the suffering. A dog will risk his life to save a belated traveler or a wandering sheep. The papers recently told about a dog that had been cruelly beaten by a rough man. As he was beating the dog, the man fell into the river. The noble dog leaped in and rescued him and brought him safe to land.

A missionary surgeon in Madras tells how one day he set the broken limb of a little dog that he had found on his door steps, and the next morning he heard a scratching and whining at the office door. When he opened the door, lo! there was the little dog whom he had healed and with him another dog who had also a

broken limb. The grateful little animal had brought him to the friend who had helped him in his distress.

O ye who are eating your morsel alone, who are hoarding the gold of earth or the Gospel of heaven while others are perishing, the very creatures that you despise will some day rise in judgment and condemn you for a selfishness which is worse than inhuman, nay, worse than brutal, because the very brutes themselves would be ashamed of it.

Selfishness is

CONTRARY TO EVERY TRUE INSTINCT OF HUMANITY.

God has put upon the heart of man an intuitive feeling of consideration for others and appreciation of benevolence and self-sacrifice. There is nothing more wonderful than the social law which binds humanity together in families and communities.

Henry Drummond has given us a beautiful picture of the development of love in the human breast. It did not spring from lust, but from a far sweeter, purer fountain, namely, the beauty and influence of a little child. Is there anything more touching than to see some strong man pursuing his toil in the dirty mine, or in the rushing factory, or in the sun-scorched harvest field, day after day and year after year, in exhausting labor for the small pittance of his weekly wages, but happy and satisfied if on Saturday night he can take to his little home the means to supply the wife and children whom he loves better than his ease and selfishness, and rewarded over again a thousand times by their smiles of affection and the happy gladness of the little ones as they climb upon his knees or perhaps tax

his strength in hours of watching by their beds of pain? The secret of it is the instinct of love which God has put in every human breast. Once this man cared for none of these things. His life was free; his pleasures were coarse and selfish; but a gentle hand has touched his heart; the magician Love has bound his life with the bands of God, and he never again would be willing to eat his morsel alone.

True, we find everywhere, even in human nature, exceptions to this law—the coarse and brutal and selfish natures that can prey upon a famine-stricken land, and put up the price of corn to fill their coffers just because the poor are starving; the capitalists who can keep back the coal from the perishing, and with fiendish delight rejoice in its rise in value, caring nothing for the helpless women and children that pine; the ruffians that fight for life in the burning ship or flaming building and trample down the innocent and helpless in their struggle for escape; the boors that can monopolize the best seat and look out for the main chance and laugh at their shrewdness while they get the best of the weaker and duller minds around them; these are abnormal types. But this is not true human nature. Public opinion and humanity condemn it and denounce it. All the heroisms of history are made out of the very opposite material. The noble captain standing upon the deck till the last of the passengers is saved; the brave swimmer plunging into the surf to rescue the drowning victims—these are the types of character that win the admiration of the world; these are the heroes that illumine the pages of human history; these are they that have made the patriotic tra-

ditions of our country glorious. In contrast with such, the selfish wretch who has no higher object than his appetites and his pocket, has been well described by Scott:

“Living, he’ll forfeit just renown,
And doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.”

SELFISHNESS IS CONTRARY TO DIVINE LAW.

God’s law is a law of love. His very nature is beneficence. All-sufficient in Himself and needing no creature to minister to His happiness, yet He called into being this glorious universe and surrounded Himself with the happy beings on whom He poured out the riches of His goodness. Every ray of sunshine, every radiant star, every tinted blossom, every song of warbling bird or holy angel speaks of His love. He might have made this earth a torture to its inhabitants, but He has fitted things harmoniously to every sense, and but for sin it would have been a paradise of happiness. God’s blessedness consists in blessing others, and therefore He has put a curse on selfishness in its every form. Nothing ministers to our real happiness that is not prompted by love. There is a law of retribution that in the end brings upon the selfish one the curse which he sought to escape.

Æsop’s fable tells of the poor suffering ass that begged his companion, the horse, to draw part of the load, “For if you do not,” he said, “I fear I shall die, and then you shall have to carry it all.” The lazy horse, however, shirked his load, and the poor ass sank and died under his burden. Then the farmer made the

horse carry it alone, and in addition he laid upon him the burden of the dead ass. "Foolish horse that I was," said he to himself, "not to heed my companion's appeal. Now I have not only to carry a double load but a dead weight, too." Selfishness always becomes a dead weight upon every life that tries to carry it.

Even the heathen tell of the abhorrence of the heavenly powers to selfish purposes and aims. They have a fable of a selfish chief that dug a well and posted a law that none should drink of it but his own family. The well, however, failed to have any water. At length they appealed to the oracle, and the oracle told them that it would be dry until he shared it with the people. Then he still contrived to hold on to his selfishness in another form by announcing that the people could have it all night but he should have it all day. The following day water still failed to come until the sun went down, and then, as the multitudes gathered around with their empty vessels, lo! the gurgling waters came bursting from the springs beneath and filled the well to the brim, and they drank and filled their vessels and went away rejoicing. But when the morning came, the water disappeared again until the selfish monster learned the truth that we gain by giving and live by loving.

In an old churchyard in England is this epitaph and epigram:

"What I gave, that I have;
What I kept, that I lost."

God's law is a law of love. Even His commandments to His people He told them of old were "for thy good alway." The denunciations of the prophets of Israel were chiefly brought against the selfishness

of their luxurious age. Listen to Amos as he cries, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, that lie upon beds of ivory and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock and the calves out of the stall; that chant to the sound of the viol, that drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph."

Selfishness is

IN DEFIANCE OF THE LAW OF CHRIST.

"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." He gave to His disciples a law of love higher even than that of the Old Testament. It is no longer "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," but it is "Love one another as I have loved you." His birth in Bethlehem, His toiling youth, His life of constant self-surrender, sacrifice, and privation, His ministry of benevolence and unceasing blessing, and His death of voluntary shame and agony—all these have lifted up a flaming protest against the selfishness of man that make it mockery and blasphemy for any man or woman to call themselves the followers of the Lamb, who are living for gain, aggrandizement, or pleasure.

HIGH TREASON AGAINST THE THRONE OF GOD.

Selfishness sets up another god instead of Him. The one you seek to please, the one whose will you uniformly obey, the one whose interest you supremely seek—that is your god. Selfishness is the worship of man and worse than the worship of humanity; it is

self-worship, it is blasphemy, it is rebellion against the throne of God, and it will bring upon your head the damning curse of a God of love. You that want your way about things, that think the universe was made for your convenience and comfort, and that fret and fly into a passion because things go contrary to you, you are arch rebels against the King of love and will go down with Satan, your king, to the rebel's doom.

The followers of Jesus Christ are called to

A LIFE OF SELF-SACRIFICE.

Discipleship means learning of Him, following Him and being disciplined by Him. Only those who walk in His steps of self-denial and unselfish love dare call themselves His disciples, and the one badge evermore of true discipleship is the cross mark of the Lord Jesus. As Whittier has sung so truly and so grandly—

“Wherever through the ages rise
The altars of self-sacrifice;
Where love its arms has opened wide,
Or man for man has nobly died;
I see the same white wings outspread
That hovered o'er the Master's head.”

Dear friend, have you these cross marks on your life? Are you welcoming the glory of partnership in His love and sacrifice and saying day by day—

“The cross of Christ I'll cherish,
Its crucifixion bear;
All hail, reproach and sorrow,
If Jesus leads me there!”

SELFISHNESS CONTRASTED WITH THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.

Shall we attempt to describe the normal life of the modern church member? A carnival of fashion, dress,

equipage, entertainment and pleasure; fashions and furnishings designed chiefly to afford opportunity for more lavish expenditures than others have been able to reach; not only one home, but even three; automobiles, a summer yacht, a summer trip; hundreds of thousands for decorations and art; enough for a single banquet sometimes to send out a score of missionaries, and in the humbler walks of life a wretched imitation of the splendid pageant of the rich and great.

Let an angel come down from heaven fresh from listening to the song "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain;" let him read the summer advertisements in our newspapers and magazines; let him take a flying trip to our seaside watering places, our summer hotels, our summer entertainments, and even our religious amusements, and I think I hear him say as he turns away from the disgusting spectacle, "There must be some mistake. This can't be the world for which He died. These surely can't be the men whom my Lord redeemed by the precious blood of Calvary." Put the picture of our selfishness, our folly, our mad race for money and enjoyment up against Gethsemane and Calvary, and we, too, shall want

"To hide our blushing face
While His dear cross appears;
Dissolve our heart in tenderness
And melt our eyes in tears."

SPIRITUAL SELFISHNESS.

This is something sadder and more terrible even than the picture of the world's gaiety and folly. Think for a moment of our spiritual blessings. Even to recount them would take volumes and days. Think of

salvation and all it meant to you when first you felt your sins forgiven. Think of God's holy Word and the comfort its precious promises have brought to you. Think of the Sabbath, with its holy rest and its heavenly opportunities. Think of the Church, with its privileges, fellowships and means of grace. Think of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and all the blessing He has brought to you. Think of the countless joys and blessings that have filled your Christian life. Think of the privilege of prayer and the open gates of the throne of grace. Think of the providence of God that guards and guarantees your life. Think of the hopes of the future that have taken the sting from death and gilded the vista of immortality. Think of the dying friends that you have seen pass through the gates while the glory shone through and revealed the very gate of heaven. Think of the glorious meeting to which you are looking forward in a little while with the loved ones gone before. What would you take in exchange for these? What language can express, what tongue can tell the preciousness of these glorious gifts of grace?

And yet the mass of your fellow-men have none of these things. They know nothing of salvation, of the Sabbath, of the Bible, of the Comforter. To them life is a dreary burden, and death, a dreadful terror. They have no hope of meeting their loved ones gone before. To them it is darkness, desolation, and long despair. And yet the Gospel of Jesus could make it as bright to them as it is to you, but you have never given them that Gospel. You have eaten your morsel alone; you have hoarded the Bread of Life; you have monop-

lized the mercy of God; you have been content to be saved with a little circle of your dearest friends, and it is nothing to you

“That a thousand million souls
In Christless darkness lie;
It is nothing that a hundred thousand lives
Each day in anguish die.”

How must it seem to Him? How will it appear to you when you meet them just beyond the grave and look from them to the angry glance of your Judge as He asks you, “Where is thy brother?”

THE AGGRAVATIONS OF OUR SELFISHNESS.

There are some considerations that greatly heighten the fearful crime of such selfishness. One of them is the utter dependence of the perishing heathen upon us for the Gospel of salvation. If there were any other way to meet their need, it would not be so great a crime; but you and I have been entrusted with the task of giving them the Bread of Life. God has given us the key of the Kingdom of Heaven, and we have neglected to open the door. God has enriched us with the splendid trust of the Gospel, and we have stolen the treasure and squandered it upon ourselves. A man was executed not long ago because the man to whom his pardon was entrusted neglected to hasten to the scene of danger, and a life was lost simply through neglect. How horrible would be your feelings if you should have resting upon you the sense of such a crime, and yet there rests upon you the blood of every soul you might have saved.

Another aggravation of this crime of selfishness is

the fearful waste of strength, life, and money in lesser things. Look at the homes of Christians and think of the hundreds and thousands of dollars invested in mere adornments that give little satisfaction. You would be just as happy with a simpler life, and have the joy of rescuing the lost. Think of the useless expenditures of our many churches on decoration, architecture, music, pastime, and amusements, alongside of a mere pittance for decency's sake thrown at the heathen as you would fling a crumb to a beggar. Worthless waste, wicked waste, awful waste, damning waste, against which the anger of outraged love will break soon upon a slumbering and selfish people.

Still another aggravation is the cool indifference of most people to the wickedness of selfishness. Robert Speer tells about a missionary meeting held in a little town in New Jersey. One of the richest men in the state was there, worth millions of dollars. During the meeting he went to sleep. Before it closed the pastor got out some photographs, which he invited the congregation afterward to come up and see. This old man, waking up when the benediction was pronounced, went up to look at them. He saw the picture of some Chinese men and women, showing their poverty and need, and this was his only exclamation:

“Well, ain't them queer-looking folks!”

The pathetic thing about it was not his poor English, but that all the photograph awakened in him was an exclamation of surprise and curiosity at their dress. He had no real knowledge of their condition, yet some day he will have to give an account for neglect of them. The meeting could awaken in him no real sym-

pathy that would draw out from his heart a prayer for them.

RETRIBUTION AND RECOMPENSE.

Selfishness carries its own retribution along with it. It shrinks and withers the soul like the striking figure of the man described by Balzac who got the privilege from the heavenly powers of having whatever he wanted the moment he wished for it, but as a punishment, every time he got anything his skin tightened upon him until he gradually shrank to a pinched and withered shadow of agony and shame.

O men and women whose once divine and noble natures have shrunk and withered until all the thoughts that reach your being are gossip, and dress, and markets, and business, and weather, your life is little better than the chattering parrot, and your soul scarcely higher than the dog you nurse in your lap, the canary that sings in your chamber!

Oh! how much you lose—the sweet and lofty joys of benevolence, the delight of knowing that you have saved a soul and perhaps kindled the light of life in a whole city or nation, and the blessed confidence that there are waiting for you yonder welcomes of joy from every land—for your life has not told for God!

But this is not all. The selfish life brings the curse nearer home. If you have not cared for other people's children do you expect God to care for the salvation of yours? Can you wonder that your prayers are unanswered, your families are cursed with selfishness and sin, and the spirit of your life is repeated in others, perhaps in a grosser form. And if you have not tried to mitigate the terrors of death to some poor, perish-

ing heathen, what if God should let you be left in the darkness in life's last hour, and as you grope and cry for comfort, light, and hope, a terrible voice should whisper in your ear, "It shall be unto thee as thou hast done." "If thou forbear to deliver him that is drawn to death and those that are ready to be slain, shall not he that holdeth thy life render unto every man according to his works?"

CHAPTER XIX

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

“As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone”
(I Kings 20:40).

A MAN had received a trust to guard an important prisoner of war, and while pre-occupied with other things, his prisoner escaped and the judgment upon him was, “Thy life for his life.” The prophet of the Lord takes up the incident, and turning it into a parable, applies it to the king of Israel who had just lost a great opportunity and failed in a momentous trust. The passage has become a kind of proverb and speaks to us of sacred trusts, trifling hindrances, lost opportunities, and tremendous responsibilities.

A GREAT TRUST.

The trust given to this man was to take care of another man. In a different sense God gives to us the care of others. No man dare ask, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Every one of us has some human being for whom God holds us responsible. Father, it is your household. Mother, it is your children. Sunday School teacher, it is those little eyes that are looking into yours for guidance, inspiration, and example. Friend, it is your friend, and there is no more sacred trust than this, to be a blessing to the people you know and love in the intimacies of life. Pastor, it is your flock. Missionary, it is the lost around you. Steward

of God's money, it is the souls that you can reach through other lives by your enabling. God holds each one of us responsible for some soul and no man dare enter the presence of his Judge without having done his utmost to bring at least one soul with him there.

A GREAT NEGLECT.

"Thy servant was busy here and there." There is something very frivolous about the confession. He evidently felt he had been trifling with his trust. He had become pre-occupied in a thousand things and had forgotten the one thing that was expected of him. How directly this strikes at the very root of our neglected trusts and responsibilities. We are busy here and there; and when it is all done, it is but laborious trifling. How busy the fashionable girl is kept with her round of calls, receptions and amusements. How busy the man of affairs, with the things that drive him and leave him no leisure for thought, prayer, and helpful service for his fellowmen. How the imagination runs riot with us even in the house of God and the house of worship, and our thoughts are busy here and there until the opportunity of blessing is gone. The newspaper, the amusing story, the trifling conversation, the things we call diversion steal away our golden hours that might have been spent in silent prayer and strengthened us for life's conflict until they are gone and we rush unprepared into the whirlpool of temptation and danger. If

"Satan finds some mischief still
For *idle* hands to do,"

it is also true that

A Lost Opportunity

Satan finds some business still
That *Christians should not do.*

Especially is it true that we are kept from our highest trust, the salvation of souls and the evangelization of the heathen by a thousand things which keep us busy on lower planes when God is calling us to higher things.

A LOST OPPORTUNITY.

“He was gone.” How solemn the very sound of the words. How they seem to echo “nevermore.” How they tell of souls that have passed beyond our reach, of possibilities, of service that will come to us no more, of calls from heaven that never will return, of doors that are now closed which were once open, of the swiftly passing day of grace and opportunity, of the ripe harvest which we must reap or it will rot upon the fields. Time and opportunity are painted as fugitive figures with but one lock of hair which we must seize if we would detain them, and which once gone return no more.

How true this is with the present generation of the heathen world. One year from today more than thirty million souls will be dead and gone who are today alive and within the reach of hope and help. They must be saved at once if at all.

How the open doors in heathen lands are calling for immediate entrance. China today is open as she never was before and may never be again. The same is true of Japan, to a great extent of India and even other lands. It is the day of possibility, of privilege, of priceless opportunity. God help us to improve it ere the sun goes down.

And God brings to you, my brother and sister, opportunities. He speaks to your heart, he interests you in His work. He shows you some way by which your life may be lifted to a nobler plane and you may be used to open some glorious door for another life by sending forth a missionary worker, by adopting a little heathen child, by sowing the seed in the fresh spring time of glorious opportunity. If you neglect the call, that opportunity will pass. Someone else will do the work that you might have done. In a little while your means may be taken from you, your heart may become interested in other things, your thoughts may be turned into other channels and the opportunity be forever lost.

A SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY.

“Thy life shall be for his life, or thou shalt pay a thousand talents of silver.” Does this mean that God holds each of us responsible to stand for one of our fellowmen. A man for a man, each is accountable for at least one soul that we may tell of Christ and bring to heaven.

And does the other clause suggest by the thousand talents of silver that if we cannot go ourselves, perhaps, we can give the means that will send someone in our place. We cannot buy a release from responsibility, but we can send a substitute; and if we do neither, God says the blood of the heathen will be upon our soul. This is not an isolated passage. In many other places God lays the same responsibility upon us; and if we are faithless, we shall suffer loss and punishment in the day when souls we might have saved plead against us. “If we forbear to deliver them

that are drawn to death and those that are ready to be slain, if thou say, Behold we know it not, shall not he that searcheth the hearts know it and he that holdeth thy life shall he not render to every man according to his works?"

CHAPTER XX

A BACKWARD AND A FORWARD LOOK

“Forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forth unto the things that are before” (Phil. 3:13).

AS we stand on the verge of the passing and the coming year, these words have peculiar appropriateness and significance. The past is gone, and the year is nearly ended. A new period of time is about to open before us, and our thoughts and reflections naturally look back to the things that are behind us and on those that are before. How far, as the followers of Christ and the children of light, should we forget the past and how anticipate the future?

THE THINGS THAT ARE BEHIND.

There is much in the past that we cannot and should not forget. Its mercies and blessings are our inheritance of grateful praise. The precious things that it has brought us and left us are part of our present life and our future heritage.

But there is much that we should forget if we expect to rise to the vision of our text and the spirit of all those who aspire to the everlasting prize of our high calling in Jesus Christ. The figure is that of a runner in some strenuous competition for a great and alluring prize. Much of the course has been already traversed, and the goal is looming into view. Everything depends upon the homestretch and the last supreme

effort. No time must be wasted in distracting efforts or self-complacent looking back upon what already has been achieved; but "forgetting the things that are behind," the racer stretches every nerve and presses forward to the goal.

OUR PAST SINFUL LIFE IS TO BE FORGOTTEN.

The faults and crimes which we have confessed at the cross and buried under the precious blood must not be recalled or allowed to discourage or depress us. They are no longer ours, but have been imputed to Jesus Christ, settled by Him, and buried in His bottomless grave. To dig them up again is to crucify afresh the Son of God and count His precious blood as nought.

THE THINGS WE HAVE SURRENDERED TO GOD.

This means the present evil world, and all the idols and earthly attractions we have put behind us in our heavenly race. Sometimes the enemy would tempt us to regret the sacrifice. It was of this the apostle was thinking when he said, "I count all things but loss (nay, refuse), that I may win Christ." It was a backward look upon her perishing earthly treasure that transfigured Lot's wife into a pillar of warning and judgment. "Remember Lot's wife." God often leaves the door open for His children to go back to the world if they want to. "Truly if they had been mindful of that country from which they came out, they might have had opportunity to return, but now they desire a better country—that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God." Forgetting these

things which are forever behind us, let us go forward singing,

"Far, far behind me!
Far, far behind me!
I've crossed the separating line,
And left the world behind me."

THE FAILURES OF OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Our beginnings in the school of Christ, like all the first attempts of junior scholars, are very imperfect. But the adversary loves to use our mistakes to discourage us. The Lord Jesus was always patient with the stumblings of His first disciples. We must never forget that we are still just another lot of Simon Peters and doubting Thomases, and that the Lord will not reject us because we learn so slowly. Indeed, sometimes our very best lessons come through our humbling falls, and temporary failure is itself a stepping stone to greater success. As the Oriental proverb puts it, to fall a hundred times is not so bad as to stumble once and then stay down just because you fell. Let us thank God that we have still the opportunity of retracing our faltering steps and doing over again the tasks we once did so poorly. The Lord is the great Restorer and is ever saying to us, "Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees, and let us make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed."

OUR VICTORIES.

Let us forget our best achievements, our deepest experiences, and our most signal victories in the sense of

not resting down in them as though the goal were already won.

Someone has well said,

“If conquered, for to-morrow’s fight prepare;
If conqueror, of to-morrow’s fight beware.”

That is to say, if you have been defeated, you will have another chance tomorrow to win; but if you have been successful, you are very likely, through false confidence, to lose tomorrow’s battle. The greatest enemy of progress is self-sufficiency; the greatest incentive to effort is self-depreciation. Therefore, the apostle, notwithstanding the experience of a long life, delighted to say, “I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forth unto the things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize.” God has given us perhaps a year of great blessing. That is but a stepping stone to a far greater blessing; that is but a vestibule to the many mansions of His grace; that is but a key to open other doors and press on to other experiences. The curse of Laodicea, a type of the modern church, the last stage of Christianity on earth, is this, “Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked.” “Make the valley full of ditches,” said the prophet, “and the valley shall be full of water.” Dig deep and open wide the channels of your spiritual need and count all that you have ever felt or known as but a few pebbles on the shore of a boundless ocean,

PAST LESSONS AND EXPERIENCES.

Let us forget the wornout things that are but vessels for a past blessing, but scaffoldings for a lower story in the building of life, but tools for prentice work in our earlier education. After the birdling has left its broken eggshell, it does not go back again to live in that discarded home. After the bird has left its nest, it does not go back again to the little downy bed on the leafless branches, but soars away into the larger world of life. After the boy has put off his knickerbockers and his toys and building blocks to become a man, to wear man's clothes and build houses like men, he does not go back to his juvenile garments, amusements, and occupations. So much that lies behind us was but rudimentary education. God uses certain people to bring to us a particular touch of Himself. God employed us in certain forms of service to give us first lessons in witnessing for Him. God used certain experiences, manifestations and messages to convey to us what we needed for that stage of our life. But let us not hang on to the old nest, to the old knickerbockers, to the old kindergarten methods. God has higher classes for us, new teachers for us, and larger experiences. Let us hold ourselves open, ready, detached, and responsive, and let us lean upon no person or prop that might keep us from getting all that God has to say to us and accomplish through us, as we forget the things that are behind and reach forth unto those things that are before.

THE THINGS THAT ARE BEFORE.

It is one of the divine touches of our nature and one

of the proofs of immortality that the soul is ever reaching out into the infinite and eternal and rising from the limited present to a greater future.

“Hope springs eternal in the human breast,
Man never is, but always to be blessed.”

The difference between man and all other animals is that he is made with his face looking upward and forward while the eyes of all other creatures look downward. The Greek word for man, *anthropos*, means the being that looks upward. It is said that when Alexander the Great divided up his kingdom among his generals, they asked him what he had kept for himself. He looked upward with a smile and said, “Hope.” How poor the hopes of earth to the glorious outlook of Christian faith and hope! How different the prospect of poor sinful, mortal man looking down to the grave and redeemed humanity looking up to the light of the resurrection and the coming glory!

What are some of the things before to which God is calling us to reach out as we face another year?

LARGER IDEALS.

There is a fine verse in Isaiah in connection with the coming of the Spirit. “Until the Spirit be poured out from on high, then shall the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.” When the Holy Ghost illuminates us with the vision which Paul has recorded in the first chapter of Ephesians, respecting “the hope of our calling and the riches of the glory of our inheritance,” then all our past experiences seem to us to be like a wilderness compared with the vision of His grace and glory. The

effect of a true baptism of the Spirit is not to make you intensely satisfied with yourselves, but intensely hungry for more. Has God been giving you these larger visions, these holy aspirations, these outlooks from Nebo's height over all the land of promise? Beloved, if He has, remember He is saying, "Arise and walk through the land in the length of it and the breadth of it, for all the land that thou seest to thee will I give it." God never shows us some glorious possibility without meaning to give it to us if we will press on and enter in. True, Moses saw the land but could not enter it, but the death of Moses prefigured the death of the law that killed him and the coming of a better hope. "Now we have received the Spirit that is of God that we might know the things that are freely given us of God." Let us know them and then He gives them to us. He shows us through the palace of grace, and after we have gazed upon its wondrous chambers, He puts the keys in our hands and says, "All this is yours." Shall we go forth to meet our vision, to claim His higher ideal and make it real?

DIVINE OUTREACHINGS.

But God not only gives us ideals, but inspirations, aspirations and instinctive longings and desires for the things He showed us. The difference between an annual and perennial plant is that when the flower and seed of the first have been perfected it dries up and withers in the ground, and there is no bud of promise looking forward to the coming spring. But it is different with the perennial plant. There you may notice that when the leaf has fallen in November and the snows and frosts of December have locked up all the channels of

circulation in the roots of the plant, every stem is covered with little buds, in which if you dissect them, you will find the blossom, fruit and leaf of the coming spring all wrapped up in their tiny folds. They have next year's life already bursting in their inmost being. And so in the spiritual world the Holy Ghost puts the germ of our coming experience within us, and something in our heart of hearts reaches out with insatiable longings for the things which are not yet actually realized. Thank God if these movings have been implanted in your heart. Thank God if you are not a dead and withered stalk with your old camp meeting experience and your stale Christian life, but longing and yearning for the full manifestation of the sons of God and the "apprehending of all that for which you have been apprehended of Christ." This word apprehend just means a feeling after. There are in the human spirit prehensile organs just as real as the feelers in the anatomy of an insect, the instinct of the bird that makes it reach out for warmer climes, or the roots of the grapevine that stretch away toward some buried bone or some subterranean fountain of water. Thank God for these intense and internal outreachings. They are prophetic of their own fulfillment. Give them right of way, follow them, and they will lead you to God and all His fulness. They are like the two thirsty harts which an Oriental general was taking home in his camp as a present to his bride when he found his army perishing with thirst on the desert, and no water in their accustomed camping places. Vainly they sought for an oasis when some one suggested that they should let loose these two famishing animals, that they might find the foun-

tains through their inner instinct. It was true, for no sooner had they been let loose than they stood for a moment and sniffed the air and then galloped away like the lightning in one direction. Swift horsemen followed them and soon found them drinking at a delicious fountain. They had that within them that found the way to the living waters. God give us more of this Divine instinct that reaches out to the things that are before.

UNFULFILLED PROMISES.

There is no live Christian but has his Bible marked with precious words that are more real to faith than even the government bonds of our earthly treasures. How many of these are yet lying before us in the unrevealed future. How can we afford to let one of them fail! How can we meet our Lord until we have fulfilled and perfected every one of His words concerning us even as the Master did before He finished His course. How can we lay our burden down until we can look back and say, "There has not failed aught of anything the Lord has spoken, all came to pass." Beloved, let us reach out unto the promises that are still before. The Apostle Paul speaks of prophecies that went before to Timothy that by means of these he might war a good warfare. God help us to fight this good fight of faith, to lay hold upon the promises of God, and to stand like Joshua upon the assurance, "Every place that the sole of thy foot shall tread upon, that have I given thee."

UNANSWERED PRAYERS.

Let us reach out to the unanswered prayers that yet

await us. We read of Cornelius that the angel declared to him, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before the Lord." God keeps our prayers unforgotten and recorded in the heavens, and though He tarry a long time, yet He will not wait too long. If we hold fast our confidence, we shall reap if we faint not. O beloved, let us reach out to all our yet unanswered prayers and go home with a finished doxology.

UNFINISHED WORK.

How incomplete all that we have done. How fragmentary our best ministries. How unsatisfying our attempts at service. How much we have now to accomplish for the Lord. How much the Lord Himself has laid out for us. How He delighted in giving the apostle Paul his campaigns in advance and reassuring him again and again, "Thou must testify of me before Caesar;" "Thou must see Rome." Beloved, is there work He has given you? Are there commissions that He has entrusted to you? Do not lightly surrender them. Do not accept discouragement or defeat, and do not rest until you can look up in His face and say, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do."

UNEXPLORED OPPORTUNITIES.

Was there ever such an age? Was there ever such an opportunity? Was there ever such a world-wide open door? How it beckons us in the homeland! How it beckons us in Africa, India, China, the Philippines, the islands, and the neglected continent of South America. Was there ever a people with such a calling

and such possibilities and opportunities? Let us go out to meet them and "reaching forth unto the things that are before, press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling."

THE MIGHTY RESOURCES.

Just as these last years have brought forth from the secret places of nature the hitherto unknown forces of dynamite, radium, liquid air, and other elements, so God has been making known within a generation as never before since Pentecost the power of the Holy Ghost. All the resources of heaven are being placed at the command of faith and love and self-sacrificing zeal. "The Lord has yet to show how much He can do through one believing and consecrated man."

That was the watchword that stirred the soul of Dwight L. Moody and made his life sublime. The same God still lives; the same and greater resources still await us. Oh, let us reach out unto things that are still before and never rest until we have proved to its utmost possibility the mighty promise, "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do because I go unto my Father."

Beloved, the year that is so soon to open before us is a new field of fertile soil, a new land of promise and opportunity, such as we have never known before. Let faith plant it with the living seed of God's own life and truth. Let prayer water it with the rain of heaven. Let hope shed upon it the warmth of an unclouded sun. Let zeal watch for the harvest and reap the ripened grain and let another Christmastide bring

the joy of harvest and the sweet refrain, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Or to change the figure back to the metaphor of our text, let the racer in the arena set his face to the home stretch and the goal. Let faith fix her steadfast eye on the mark of yonder goal. Let hope look with shining face to the glorious prize. Let prayer breathe in the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Let self-denying zeal "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset 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."

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