

S E R M O N S .

BY

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PHILADELPHIA.

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NOTICE.

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Philadelphia, March, 1884.

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S E R M O N S .

GOD IS KING.

“ And let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given him.”

“ And Nebuchadnezzar was driven from men, and did eat-grass as oxen.”—DANIEL IV. 33.

Every generation of men since the time of Nimrod has had its own favorite toy or plaything, its special pastime—religiously, its own idol to worship; intellectually, its own bubble to inflate; physically, its own hobby to bestride; in the realms of the material, some “bone of contention; in the moral spheres, some “thesis of controversy.” And the same is true of our generation. Indeed, in this we excel all the past. We out-Herod all old Herods.

Bodily, we have a hundred hobbies to ride. Intellectually, a thousand drums to beat. Spiritually and morally, always more than one banner to blazon, one trumpet to blow.

Just at this moment the grand thesis of contention is this protoplasmic genesis of life, this natural law of development. But, popular as it is, methinks we are getting tired of it. The drum-beat has become monotonous. The Tom-foolery is played out.

“Development! Development!” The platform, the press, the pulpit, have resounded with the war-cry, till the popular ear is weary! We all feel that men have wasted enough precious time in this sham-battle in testimony to the Atheist’s dream and the Prophet’s interpretation. Even the infidel Baalams are becoming ashamed of their attempts to curse Israel, and only a few of the slower and more stubborn asses think it needful any longer to rebuke the false prophet. If any man will continue to believe that he is only an improved beast, we will not quarrel with his genesis, but only wish him joy of his grandmother. Whenever he can bring us, either out of the old fields of death or the new spheres of life, a single specimen of an irrational animal which has ascended into a veritable man, with an aspiring mind and a controlling conscience, we will pause, like Moses, and take the shoes from our feet, to behold the marvel and search for its meaning.

Meanwhile, we commend to the whole infidel world the consideration of innumerable specimens—incontrovertible facts of man—with such a conscience and intellect, by a resistless law of sinful deterioration daily getting rid of them, and surely, if slowly, descending into beasts. We expect them to consider this protoplasm of evil, this downward development of corruption, this progress backward of sin! They can find in the histories of all the past, in an observation of all the present, abundant specimens, in every stage of development, of living men changing gradually into beasts. We meet them daily in the street and market-place and dwelling—creatures made in God’s image only a few years ago. Your gentle, loving youth, the sweet airs of

heaven fanning their sunny brows, the light of heaven in their flashing eyes, the joy of heaven in their bounding hearts. Now those sunny locks torn and tangled, those bright eyes blood-shot, that face haggard and wan, their breath a blasphemy, their influence a curse, their very lives an agony! Degraded, brutalized into the wretches and ruffians of the ruder world. Life abounds with the specimen. We have one of them, by the pencil of inspiration, terribly portrayed in the text.

I will not detain you with the historic context. Every child knows it by heart. The scene is Babylon, a city of whose almost fabulous magnificence we can now form no adequate conception—the crowning work of the most glorious builder of the heathen world! And in the centre of that metropolis, the most wonderful of all its wonders, behold Nebuchadnezzar's palace. Its hanging gardens and imperial pavilions, occupying an area of eight miles in circumference, filled with all that oriental genius could imagine, or its exquisite art create, or its boundless treasure realize, to gratify royal pride and enrapture royal passion. Seemingly a mansion in some island of the blest for the habitation of a god.

Such was Babylon—"The Golden City, the Lady of Kingdoms, the grandest city the sun ever rose upon, the praise and the glory of the whole earth."

And this is the scene which our text brings to view; and as an actor worthy such a scene we behold the royal conqueror. We say "worthy" such a scene; for certainly, humanly speaking, as a historic man Nebuchadnezzar was never surpassed, if, indeed, ever equalled. Sprung from the old Assyrian line of conquerors, his aspiring soul could not be satisfied with ancestral and

inherited glory, and he fixed his eye on the highest and mightiest of earthly prizes, and won them all.

In the grandeur of his military achievements, in the vastness of his empire, in the absoluteness of his despotic power, in the fullness of his royal riches and delights, his mental experience left him nothing to achieve or desire. And it is in this crowning moment of his gratified ambition he appears in the text. We see him standing at the height of all that splendor and power, looking down upon that glorious Babylon he had builded, and abroad upon the nations he had subdued and the universal empire he had founded, truly a king of kings, a conqueror of conquerors, the most marvelous and magnificent man on the face of the earth. It is a grand scene and a grand actor. But alas for the act!

As we gaze, a great shadow falls over it. That exulting man seems suddenly transfigured, as if some terrible curse had smitten him. His eyes glare. His frame is convulsed. He dashes his crown to the earth. He rends his imperial robes. A wild delirium has seized him. His heroic impulses are gone. The instincts and passions of the wild beast are strong within him. He descends from his hanging gardens. He stalks through the crowd of courtiers and menials. He passes his palace portals as if pursued by fiends. He hurries from the abodes of men, and, turning away from all intellectual and social delights, roams the wild field and has his home with the beasts. This is the picture. We commend it to the infidel. Let us learn its moral lessons.

To us tarrying here in God's house, they may be com-

prehended in these two: *This man's sin*, and *his punishment*.

Let us consider, First—*Nebuchadnezzar's sin*—what the iniquity was which brought upon him this Divine visitation.

Now I need hardly say that this sin did not consist in simply building a grand city, and adorning it royally. Self-considered, it was as right and as wise for Nebuchadnezzar to build a metropolis on the Euphrates as for Solomon to make Jerusalem glorious by the waters of Hebron. Indeed, in their outward acts these two monarchs were not unlike. Solomon, while yet remaining a true servant and especial favorite of Jehovah, greatly glorified his metropolis. He built for himself a palace of such magnitude and splendor that it took thirteen years to finish it. And he built one scarcely less splendid for his Egyptian Queen. And had also a house of the Forests of Lebanon modeled after the Palaces of Assyria. And he built many "treasure cities," and "jeweled cities with bars and gates." And he planted royal gardens, and lavished vastly greater wealth on the temple he built in Jerusalem than ever Nebuchadnezzar on his temple in Babylon, and all this God approved. The sin, therefore, could not have consisted in the outward act, but in its manner and its motive.

1st. *In its manner or mode*. The treasures which the Israelitish monarch used in his great works were saved from the judicious revenues of the State, and gathered as the gains of a just and lawful commerce. But the splendid city and temple of Babylon were erected from spoils wrung from conquered nations and

by the exhaustive labors of an oppressed people. And so we find that God's recorded condemnation was not because of the silver and gold lavished on the architecture, but it was, "*Woe unto him that buildeth a town with blood and establisheth a city by iniquity.*"

2d. Meantime, *there was great sin in the motive.* Babylon was built and adorned solely for the monarch's selfish aggrandizement. Even in the erection of the temple for his idols, he seems to have been thinking mainly of himself.

But the devout king of Israel beautified Zion and lavished his immense treasure on its sanctuary only as a worshipful offering unto Jehovah. Observe carefully this contrast as set forth in the sacred record. King Solomon stood amid the Bruces of the nation, and looking in humble reverence toward that grandest of earthly temples, said, "*Behold, I have built this house for the name of the Lord God of Israel.*"

Nebuchadnezzar looked from the battlement of the palace upon the city and temple, and said in the pride of his haughty and selfish heart, "Is not this the great Babylon which I have builded for the house of my kingdom, by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty." Here you perceive the glaring impiety, both in the mode and motive of these great works of Nebuchadnezzar. They were conceived in pure selfishness and builded in blood. This was the monarch's sin.

Let us consider, Secondly—*Its Punishment*—Of course, the record leaves us in no doubt that his terrible distemper was a positive retribution from God for his flagrant iniquity. And yet it would seem to have been

in this case, unlike Solomon, wrought out according to the laws, and, indeed, by the very processes of his intellectual and moral nature. That very madness was a consequence of a long indulgence of fierce and unrestrained passion. Its elements are apparent in the history.

1. *An intense dissatisfaction with the present.* Nebuchadnezzar was a man of worldly aspirations. His ambition, in its absolutely illimitable sweep and grasp, lifted him above the measure of all common minds, almost into the sphere of higher beings, so that inspiration spoke of him as a second "Lucifer, Son of the Morning." His soul was filled with intense longings, which nothing earthly could satisfy. And standing just at the loftiest height of all possible mortal glory, the simple fact that there was on this whole broad world nothing greater to hope for, no new mountains of ambition for his daring feet to climb, no new worlds for his mighty hands to conquer, and feeling, meantime, as every such grand nature does and must, that a soul's delight in earthly things is mainly in their pursuit, rather than in their possession, this by a great law of his nature filled his heart with the sharpest anguish of unrest.

Rushing toward the fancied treasure at the rainbow's base, only to find himself enveloped in the chill and curse of the cloud and rain. And that sorest of agonies, a disappointed heart, was enough to drive such a spirit forth from the disenchanted present, as if in very envy of the unaspiring beasts, that, to the full of every low desire, rioted and revelled and reposed in green fields and beside still waters. Meantime, beyond this, and more

terrible in its power and torment, there was in his experience,

2d. *The working of a condemning conscience.* Like all men of such grand gifts of intellect, he was naturally religious. His imagination soared into higher realms of life; and a strong normal faith took on the form of superstition. His natural conscience, ever shifting in its direction, now impelling him to fear Jehovah and now to make an image of Baal, though fitful in its operation, was terrible in its power. And the inspired record shows us how that conscience goaded him to madness.

You remember the inspired words of the prophet Habakkuk (He was speaking in vision, of Babylon and its builder), when he said, "Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness unto his house, that he may set his nest on high. Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thine own soul." And then he explains the philosophic working out of the terrible anathema. "For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood and establisheth a city by iniquity."

The thought is, that having reared this metropolis by the strength and spoils of destroyers, his own conscience became a terrible accuser, and as he walked through its high places and its luxuriant gardens and voluptuous pavilions, it was as if avenging spectres were ever rising before him—ghosts of his slaughtered victims—and accusing voices ever whispering around him, as if literally the carved marble of the wall cried, "Woe! woe! woe!" and the gilded cedar of the canopy cried,

“Woe! woe! woe!” And surely here was enough to drive him forth, as an unblessed spirit, from the music and the banquet and the home and the fair forms and dazzling enchantments of that gorgeous palace (as if for all these things only more terribly a place of torment), to the green fields and bright streams, where his peaceful oxen fed.

But even more than this does this inspired Book tell us of the retributive working of conscience, in the anguish of the guilty king. Another inspired prophet describes its workings as being not only with memories of the mortal past, but with anticipations of the immortal future; and in one of the most startling conceptions human language ever embodied represents the same conqueror as approaching Hades, the mysterious realm of departed spirits; and as he stands near its sepulchral portal, to his condemning conscience come forth awful voices of hollow laughter, and all the ghosts of the myriads he had slain in his cruel wars seem rising up to meet him in mockery. These are the inspired truths, “Hell is moved to meet thee at thy coming. It stirreth up the dead for thee; and they speak to thee and say, ‘Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake great kingdoms, and made the world a wilderness? Art thou also become weak as we? And is all thy pomp brought down to the grave? How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning?’” And surely in all this there is enough to account for his terrible madness!

With other men, Babylon seemed “the Golden City, the Lady of Kingdoms,” the pride and glory of the whole earth: and they saw only shapes of glory and heard

only sounds of gladness. But with its guilty, conscience-stricken builder, as he sat enthroned in its high places, and looked around only to hear these strange voices crying out from tapestried walls and golden canopies, "Woe! woe! woe unto him that buildeth a city in blood!" and looked forward only to hear more terrible voices of the ghostly creatures of eternity, crying, "Behold all hell stirreth up her dead to meet thee at thy coming!" then I say it is no marvel thus in that hour of his almost superhuman majesty the guilty king seems smitten with a curse; that his eyes glare and his hands are clenched, and he rends his garment and casts his diadem to the dust, and in the torrent of a mighty delirium, as if flying from some great Petrarchy of death, some pandemonium of demons, rushes from garden and palace to eat straw like a beast.

Now, this is the inspired picture that hangs before you. Its meaning to us is simply a warning unto the ungodly. It sets forth selfishness—the folly of the man who, thoughtless of eternity, lives only for time, and it illustrates that folly in two particulars.

1st. *Because no amount of worldly prosperity will satisfy the yearnings of an immortal spirit* Surely no mortal man can hope to attain more of this world than did Nebuchadnezzar. He was of all men of his time, every way, the first. First by birth; first by genius; first by achievement; and yet set his nest among the stars. You see him here turning away from life's highest prizes in utter disappointment. And so, in the very nature of things, it must be and will be ever. Great as the world is, it is yet too small to fill the capacities and satisfy the desires of a deathless spirit.

Let a man, in regard of wealth or ambition, secure life's highest successes, and climb to the loftiest height of earthly influence and renown, until with meaner men he seems standing on some glorious tower that reaches to the skies. Nevertheless, with himself, the boundless firmaments of heaven seem as far above him as before. And, alas! (only the more for his elevation above his kind) will the air be colder and storms and lightnings more fierce. Within him the deep, yearning, mighty want of immortality will be all unfed, and the agonizing spirit turns away dissatisfied.

A true prophet of God! Oh faithful picture of a worldly life! How have we seen it realized in the lives of all great sages and bards and monarchs and conquerors!

In Alexander's raining tears, in Byron's wounded spirit, in Napoleon's broken heart, in all men who live only for self. But, then, this is not all. There is something more in a life of worldliness than this mere sorrow of disappointment. It involves,

2d. *An element of retribution.* I say an element, for my text does not lead me to speak of any supernatural manifestation of God's punishment of sin. That there may be such manifestations, we have already learned from our study of the picture of the Tower of Babel and the Cities of the Plain.

But in the picture at present there is no delineation of such things. Babylon was in the very highest of its matchless splendor when this agony fell on its triumphant builder. No lightning smote it. No earthquake engulfed it. You see here only the natural retribution of an accusing conscience. And thus, by the very laws of our mind, it must be ever.

Talk as men will, we are all by nature religious beings; or, if the term suit you better, "superstitious" beings. We have seen or heard of the veriest infidels, the veriest atheists, who can suddenly with circumstances of mental peril, when the earthquake was shaking the city, or the ocean was driving the frail bark into shipwreck, then lifting up trembling hands to heaven for Divine aid, uttering agonizing prayers for deliverance.

Every man has a conscience which avenges his sin, and as every man living only for this world is committing every moment the greatest sin in forgetting his Creator, and, meantime, sinning often in some wrong done to his fellow-men, therefore he is constantly arming his conscience against himself as accuser and avenger. Or, even if you can suppose him all innocent of any flagrant iniquity, he is yet certainly doing just as Nebuchadnezzar did. He is doing violence to his own higher and immortal nature. He is turning away from his true moral and spiritual manhood to gratify the instincts of his mere earthly and animal nature, "That his hair may grow like eagle's feathers, and his nails like bird's claws." And in doing this he is arming memory and conscience against his own soul as terrible tormentors.

Grant only that the soul is immortal, and that, with its sins unforgiven and its moral constitution unregenerate, it goes into eternity, and you have admitted the whole truth of retribution. For among the more apparent faculties of the soul are memory and conscience, and these are retribution. For you have only to suppose that the conqueror remembers in the immortal sphere the battle-fields his ambition covered with carnage, or that the murderer remembers the death-cry of

his victim, or that the men who grew rich by dishonesty or extortion think solemnly of the widow's dismantled home and the orphan's broken heart; or that the disobedient child, the unfaithful husband, the unkind parent, carries into eternity an abiding memory of the pale faces and weeping eyes of the beloved and loving dead. You have only to suppose, I say, that such things do live in the memory and conscience; that the immortal sphere shall seem crowded with their shapes and echoing with their voices. And then let that immortal sphere be even the brightest dwelling of heaven, his experience will be like Nebuchadnezzar in his conscience-haunted palace; and he will walk through the pearl gates of a heavenly city, and behold its golden streets and skies of cloudless sunshine, and wear its diadems of glory and its robes of dazzling light, and sit under the shadows of its trees of life, and walk the banks of the crystal river, and, alas! alas! it will be only as the tribulated monarch bearing his great agony within him, for dire forms of evil from his spirit's chambers of imagery will project themselves into those radiant surroundings. Their wild eyes will look on him, and wierd voices appal him. "And the stone will cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber answer it;" and he will cast the crown of glory from his head.

These are the simplest and more apparent lessons of the inspired picture that hangs before us. Oh, that you would study it, all you joyous youth and ambitious men, who seek your only portion in this world, and think to make yourselves happy with these poor, unsatisfying, vanishing things of time and sense! Re-

member! Remember that it is not in our circumstances or conditions that even earthly happiness consists! But it is in the peace of an approving conscience and the loving smiles of a God.

Oh this picture! this picture! Study it as a warning of heavenly love, as the light of eternity falls on it and around! Study it, too, as God meant it to be studied—in striking contrast with the other pictures that hang side by side with it in this marvelous gallery, the Book of Daniel.

We shall consider them carefully hereafter; but now, in parting, cast your eye for a single moment on that which hangs next to it—that den of lions. Ah me! what a change is here, alike in the scene and the actor. Daniel was a poor captive. In his early youth he had been borne as a slave from the house of his father and the city of his God, to wait on this mighty despot in his splendid palace. And when by his wise and beautiful life he had risen to a station of honor, just then he is stricken down, seemingly to disgrace and distraction. He is seized by mighty men. He is torn away from his beloved ones. He is hurried to the horrible den where the monstrous beasts are fed. He can hear their fierce roars as they rage for their prey.

The iron door opens; he is cast in. It closes upon him; and he is face to face with that terrible death. We see the mighty beasts. They glare on him for a moment with their fiery eyes. They bare their white fangs. The cavern shakes with their awful roars. They are crouching for the deadly spring. Behold! Behold! You shut your own eyes and recoil. But what is it? Listen for his death-cry. A soft, sweet voice, as of

heavenly music, steals upon the ear. A wondrous light, growing brighter and brighter, flashes through the scene. A form of ineffable beauty and majesty descends upon the sight! The face is as a flaming fire; the garments white as the light. And there, his eyes flashing, his heart bounding with rapturous love, all fear gone, stands the glorified servant of God, face to face with the angel; and the terrible creatures of the desert, driven back from their prey, despoiled of all terror, seemingly changed in their very nature, crouching silently and gently at his feet.

Oh marvelous picture! Now note the other. Oh thrice marvelous contrast! See the all-glorious conqueror in his royal hall. Its floor of marble, its pillars of alabaster, its walls hung with wondrous pictures, sparkling with gold and gems; and around, music and banquet and wine and rose-odors and forms of dazzling beauty. Oh scene of enchantment!

But the monarch! what aileth him? Starting, as if from a dream of heaven, his eyes blazing in terror, recoiling, fleeing, as the awful shapes go by and the terrible voices cry, "Woe! woe!" Oh wondrous contrast! Oh blessed wisdom of God in this fearful revelation! Oh God! give me that black cave filled with material roaring monsters, and at my side God's angel, filling its chill, black airs with heavenly music, and you may keep pavilion and palace and throne of the conquering king. Where the more terrible spectres of the soul flit and scream, and the stone out of the wall cries, "*Woe! woe!*" And the beam out of the timber answers, "**WOE! WOE! WOE!**"

THE WAGES OF SIN.

“ *The wages of sin is Death.*”—ROMANS VI. 23.

We need not in the introduction of our remarks detain you at any length in examining the fine and elaborate argument of the context. Paul was addressing Christians in the infancy of their knowledge, and still deeply infected with the spirit of legalism ; and he found it a most difficult thing to bring them to an apprehension how the salvation of the Gospel was afforded on the ground simply of a pure grace, and not at all on the ground of a personal merit. And the peculiar phraseology of the text is to be accounted for on the principle of accommodation to their favorite conceptions, which inclined them ever to look forward to retribution as a reward or remuneration. The operation of the system of vassalage or servitude was to them most familiar. And the business so common in the midst of them—of a servant’s work and a servant’s wages—Paul found to be most to his purpose in an illustration of the great theme he then had in hand. So in the preceding context he had been finely setting forth the great moral change of regeneration under the figure of a transition from the service of one master to the service of another, or, rather, under the figure of a glorious deliverance from the thrall and the despotism of an oppressive tyranny, to the blessed liberty of a free and a filial obedience. And of this most fine and fitting

figure our text forms a part. Its reference is to the state of the soul anterior to its deliverance from this great moral thralldom. And its lessons may be regarded as of two distinct classes, as they have reference to the nature of this sinful service, and the rewards of this sinful service, *i. e.*, as setting forth—

First. The work, and,

Secondly. The wages of this bondage to sinfulness.

And leaving for the present all consideration of the other particulars of the metaphor, we shall dwell on these two thoughts, happily in order; and,

First. We would have you observe how the Apostle here sets forth the whole business of sin as a servitude and a slavery.

The man who hath not experienced in the new birth the transition to a rejoicing liberty is set forth as under sin's dominion of despotism, and working daily for wages. Now this word is but weakly and imperfectly rendered by the English term—wages. In the original it denotes that which is eaten with bread, as flesh, fruit, etc. And, as under the old military despotism common soldiers were paid in daily rations, the term came to be used for the pay of Roman soldiery. The representation, therefore, of those who receive it is as in a state of military service and subjection. And you need not, one of you, be told how wearisome was the labor, and how painful the servitude of those who, in the work of a common soldiery, bore on through battle and blood the eagles of the Empire. The old Roman soldiery was accustomed to endure the rudest fatigue, to subsist on the most frugal fare, to carry a weight of armor which would crush a modern soldier into the dust, and to march

daily distances almost incredible to the men of our effeminate generation. The state of soldiership was a state of the strictest servitude, and the most painful and exhausting labor. And, therefore, in the dead language, to speak of a man as "receiving wages," *i. e.*, military rations at all, was to speak of him as bound to a condition of intense toil and intolerable thralldom.

And, therefore, we say, that first of all the text sets forth the state of the unmoved soul as a state of most painful servitude; yea, a state so painful and laborious that a relief therefrom at the moment of regeneration is finely compared to the transition from a cruel despotism to the glorious liberty of a filial heirship.

And this, my hearers, is a most truthful representation. There is no wilder misapprehension in the world than the notion that it is the Christian who becomes a servant, and the impenitent and ungodly who remain in their liberty. Compared with the assiduous struggling and unremitting exertion of men struggling only for a temporal possession, all the loftiest manifestation of Christian toil is but a pastime and a privilege.

The merchantman rises early and sits up late, and the very dreams of his restless sleep are but the prolonged agonies of his waking anxieties that he may add to the gold that rusts in his coffers.

The mariner unmoors for distant climes, and stands out, braving storm and shipwreck, and he is burnt under tropic suns, and hemmed in by polar ice, and beaten fearfully by rushing tempests, and for long months there is naught but the frail planks between him and the unfathomed depths of the ocean grave, that he may bring back the furs and spices for the rich man's home.

The seeker for goodly pearls goes forth in the bosom of the sea, and holds his breath hard, and though storms are above, and fearful monsters of the deep beneath, and the weight of mighty waters on his solitary heart, down, down amid the cold, dark sea he goes, wringing out heart and soul for these toys for princely robes.

The scholar poureth the livelong night, till his eye dims and his brain burns over the mighty problem and the mystic page.

And the statesman bows his soul from its immortal flight, wearing out heart and life in anxious agonies.

And the poet wrings out his very life's blood, drop by drop, amid the scorpion stings of a hope deferred.

And the conqueror, worn and wasted, as if demonized by a wild desire, drives his fierce horse along the ranks of battle, struggling with destiny itself in the energies of despair, and the very world, with all its kingdoms and crowns and thrones, presses with crushing weight on life and heart and soul. And all this for the leaf of a laurel that shall fade as the grave. And who calls this, and such as this, and worse than this, of enormous toil and agony and pain, that men endure for sin. Who calls all this anything else than servitude, vassalage, and slavery?

Ah me! ah me! The god of this world uses his subjects badly. He drives them forth to daily task-bearing, compared with which Christ's yoke is truly easy, Christ's burden light. The histories of the men of this world are histories of yearning desire and toiling energies, and tears, and tortures, and very martyr-

doms, compared with which the bloodiest records of Christian sufferings are but records of immunities and pastimes.

Forth unto the ministries of his fearful despotism goeth the sinner, like an unblest spirit, to dive for pearls amid the cold and crushing sea; to dig for water in the burning desert, and find only the hot sand to press upon his feverish lips; to toil his agonizing way up every mountain pinnacle, as if a path to heaven, and find only the frozen rocks beneath and the roaring, rushing storms above, around.

So that if in contrast with all this you dwell in thought upon the smaller agonies of toil, and these made light by the blessedness of high communion and exalting hope, which a man endures for Christ, oh, then, how truly is that change of mastership experienced at regeneration set forth as a transition from a cruel and crushing bondage to the glad freedom of a filial obedience. And how manifestly true is that metaphor which speaks of the servant of sin as a man groaning under the due military economy, bearing mail of many sheekles through weary marches and amid the wildest tide of battle. And how touchingly impressive to those Roman converts, living in the midst of cumbrous and crushing machinery of conquest, was this comparison of the estate of the impenitent sinner as a poor man enlisted amid those iron legions, and toiling his life out for a soldier's wages.

And from this we are led on from a consideration of the nature of this service to a consideration of the rewards of this service; from the imposed work to the imparted wages of this bondage to corruption. We

have seen how harmful is the labor, how exhausting the ministries, how heart-crushing and terrible the agonies of the service. And we look that for such mastering and mighty exactions there should be the guerdon of some enrapturing and magnificent reward. And the heart stands absolutely still in amazement to be told that for all this livelong assiduity to the exactions of a most intense and intolerable despotism the only remuneration or recompense is death! death!

The wages of sin is—(?) What? Riches? honor? pleasure? kingly pomps and regalia and popularity? laurels that shall never fade? dwellings that shall flash through eternity? No! no! no! All these are the rewards of true righteousness. The wages of sin is death! death! I need not tell you what death means. Indeed, I can not tell you what death means. In the text's true antithesis it is set in opposition to the life that is eternal; ordinarily, the idea of the separation of soul and body. But that is not all of death. It includes the idea of all forms of temporal and final evil. But that is not all of death. It includes the idea of separation from Divine communion and companionship. But this is not all of death, for beyond and above all this there is to be gathered into its definition that enormous outlay of wrath and tribulation and anguish which are experienced in the great payment of retribution.

And this, all this, which the eye hath not seen, and the ear hath not heard, and the thought hath not conceived of, intolerable and overwhelming agonies of endurance. All this is the fearful guerdon of the sinner's servitude; for the wages of sin is death.

And the fitness of this phraseology is of all things most apparent.

1. First of all, there is included in it the idea of wages, a natural issue or inevitable tendency. As the soldier must have his rations of food, so the sinner must have his dreadful wages. Let the great Paymaster die, and the recompense will still follow. We are not, indeed, competent to understand the connection between the moral and the material and the intellectual; but certified we are that such a connection there is as renders the reaping of death the natural harvesting of a sinful sowing.

The man who, either in the delirium of pleasure or the hoardings of wealth or the martyrdom of ambition, is toiling in sinfulness, is wearing out most rapidly the springs and wheels of his human mechanism, and virtually sets thorns in his own death pillow, and digs his own grave. And so, morally, the very feelings and emotions called into play and pulsation amid this sinful servitude are found, on principles of the purest metaphysics, to be in their own nature inconsistent with all happiness; and so eternally. If the great God should just let go of the soul on the border-line of retribution, and never put forth a power to gather round about it the machinery and ministry of a separation torment, it would be found that with the accelerated velocity of a mighty engine, through all the hours of its sinful service, the impulses of passionate weeping had been going on within it. And, brought up by these impulses to the border-line of eternity, God has only to take off His restraining hand, and with a fiery and terrific momentum, like a wandering star, would it rush away, out-

ward-bound, ever outward-bound, to the blackness of darkness forever.

2. But beyond this idea of natural fitness there is embraced in the idea of wages a thought of a proper reward, a deserved recompense. Eternal death is precisely what the sinner merits, precisely the wages which the sinner earns by his painful drudgery of foul service. I know that on this point we are at issue with the cavils of scepticism. It sets out with the assumption that sin is too finite an evil at its worst to receive at God's hand an infinite punishment. But on this point there are two questions for the caviler to answer. And the first is, Where has he learned the great fact of sin's insignificance? For on such a point human testimony hath no significance, with an eye whose weak vision can not pierce the clouds that gather round this isle of being, and a calculus whose mightiest power can not compute the first element of Infinity. How dare he claim for himself, in an unraveling of everlasting issues, an enthronement of his feeble thoughts over all the high things of eternity. Who, who hath told him that sin is too insignificant an evil? What crowned creature of eternity, from those far heights, whereon he could survey the vast sweep of human actions in their immortality of influence, hath come down to assure him that the unholy thing which hath brought such unutterable sorrow into the hearts of God's lash-torn family; which hath shrouded the brightest world in God's firmament with appalling darkness; which has made this green earth, in all the rich furniture of its princely chambers, a great Lazar-house, and a death-room, and a Golgotha, and a hell; which has brought God's own Son out of yon throne of in-

finite majesty, and torn off His Godly robes, and His Godly diadem, and put on Him, in mockery, a crown of thorns and a faded purple, and driven nails into His hands, and the iron into His very heart, and buried Him deep in the great grave, and piled rocks upon its portals to keep Him down, down. Who? who? Tell me who hath descended from yon pinnacles of glorious life to bear witness that that accursed and unholy thing which hath done all this is not a work whose fitting wages must be death, death.

Nor this only. There is another point to be sifted and another question to be answered. Who has told the cavalier that the punishment of sin is in its degree infinite? Oh, this cavil goes upon a forgetfulness of the awful import of the word, "wages." It means daily rations, not accumulated possessions, a reward paid day by day for the daily service, and going, as the impenitent man does, a continual sinner, to eternity. In all those moments which constitute immortality (for eternity to a creature is only prolonged time), with all the realities of a temporal progress and a temporal succession; in all these moments he will receive only the payment of the dread wages of the moment. He will keep sinning, and, therefore, he will keep suffering. So long as God lives there will be no intermission of the work, and therefore so long as God lives there will be no intermission of the wages. He receives a ready payment for each act, and therefore the work is altogether as infinite as the wages. And so the idea of hell as consisting only in a place of punishment for earthly transgressions is short-falling of the sad truth. It is not so much a great store-house, where the sinner in his

life-time has been laying up, with a terrible thrift, his daily earnings, but it is, rather, a mighty work-house, wherein there is to go on through eternity all the drudgery of the service and the payment, ready and righteous, moment by moment, of the dread recompense. And so that sad prison of the outcast and accursed, with all its iron gates and adamantine walls, and mighty fires that burn, and billows of God's wrath that moan and toss themselves and roar, is, after all, nothing more than a terrible system of machinery, wherein the poor craftsman of sin weaves day by day the shroud he wears, and twines day by day the hot lash that tortures him, and forges day by day the dreadful links of his bondage. Every moment of his long eternity he works with all his power for sin, and every moment of that long eternity his payment down is death! death!

3. Age and all never thought them, this comes with that dread word "wages." It denotes not only an appropriate reward, but a promised reward. It has reference to a price for work understood and agreed upon. And even on this point, as terribly astonishing as terribly true is it, that death is sin's wages.

We sometimes speak of the poor slave of sin as deluded by false promises into this dreadful servitude. But alas! alas! there is no delusion. The sinner was not deceived. He bound himself in everlasting indenture to that awful apprenticeship, and it was written out so plainly that he read every awful word. Your daily rations shall be death. Your food and clothing and wages shall be death. True, there was mention made of pleasure. But God's awful truth tore the visor off,

and the soul knew, as the fair phantom was clasped to the bosom, that the painted thing was a corpse.

And there was mention made of gold ; but the immortal hireling knew that, gathered to his bosom, it would be the dread ballast to sink him in drowning agony when the bark was foundering. And there was mention made of thrones ; but the poor, forewarned sinner knew that he girded himself for its mighty labors, and struggled his ascending way to the heights that flashed out in the firmament only, as a leaping point, with a more tremendous momentum to the eternal abysses of death. It was a perfectly understood agreement. There was no hiding of conditions, no concealment of awful realities. Sin offered no other reward than death. The poor hireling agreed to work night and day ; and he was to feed on hot ashes, and drink poisons, and to go clothed in a shroud, and to sleep on a death-bed. And that he might have a home for himself, as a reward of his toil, he took a lease for God's life-time of a dying chamber in the mansion of eternal death.

Oh, its wages ! its wages ! a reward appropriate and well earned and promised. It was written out in the dread bond in characters of blood, that the service should be a slavery and the wages should be death. And now, with no limits for further enlargement, tell me if it does not seem to you the very mightiest of marvels that an immortal man will bind himself to the ignominy of such a work for the agony of such a wages. And tell me, if when the offer comes of deliverance from those dread indentures, to all the joy and the goodness of a free and filial obedience ; when we contrast to all this wild work and wild wages there is mention made of a

free gift of a life eternal ; when the poor, overburdened hireling is urged to fling his fearful bondage off, and leap to the liberty of a gladsome sonship ; when he is assured of the burden he is to lift and the yoke he is to bear—"That the yoke is easy and the burden is light;" that, even while his labor is in this far away province, he shall have foretastes of heaven's own gladness ; and his food shall be a rained manna, and his drink a water from the dry rock, and his raiment of the very texture they wear up in heaven, and his lodgment in chambers habited by seraphim ; and that when the glad hour of recall shall come, he shall go up to final possession of glorious things, and to enter upon the lordship of an estate surpassing all his dreams of heavenly splendor, and increasing ever as eternity rolls away in the greatness of its revenues and the grandeur of its enjoyment. When of such things the Godlike offer is made, and the poor soul instructed with all a father's tenderness to lay hold on the free gift, tell me ! I say, oh, tell me ! if it be not of all marvels the very mightiest marvel, that he will still cling madly to the conditions of that foulest bondage, and bow himself to all the burden of that intolerable labor, and keep his food still burning ashes, and his drink poisons, and his raiment a winding sheet, and his lodging-place a death-bed ; and every dime he can earn above the amount of these fiendish rations goes to pay, throughout all those uncounted quarter-days of eternity, his fiery instalment in that death lease of hell. Strange ! isn't it ? Painful ! isn't it ? Wonder of wonders ! mighty marvel of mighty marvels ! isn't it ? isn't it ? Who would be a

slave to such bondage when the whole world is rousing to cast off its fetters.

Oh, beloved hearers out of Christ, ye who will not have the freedom of children, ye who will bow to this tremendous bondage, read me the dread riddle, solve me the everlasting problem! Why fear ye the world of light, with its streets of gold and its thrones of glory? Why love ye the realms of death, with the quenchless fires and the endless torments? What terrible thing have ye seen, or read of, or heard of, in heaven, that ye flee from its magnificent abodes as from the haunted dens of demons? What glorious and graceful thing is there down in hell, that, as if enamored of despair, ye will break away from every tie, and leap every barrier, and force your fiery way against every obstacle God's love can erect; yea, in the very face of God's burning fires that flash out from those dread battlements, will yet scale them in the hardihood of gigantic demons, hurrying, as if to the gladness of voluptuous bridals, to the everlasting embrace of that awful thing, death!

When heaven is open, why, tell me why ye will work for a master who will lash you to your task with scorpions, and feed you on poisons, and cloth you in sackcloth, and lodge you in HELL.

DEATH FORETOLD.

"This year thou shalt die."—JEREMIAH XXVIII. 16.

These words, you will remember, are the words of Jeremiah, the true prophet, unto Hananiah, the false prophet, who had dared to dispute his Divinely inspired threatenings unto Judah and Jerusalem.

Jeremiah had been dissuading the king of Judah from joining a confederacy against the king of Babylon, declaring that God had decreed their subjection for long years to the Babylonish empire, and that it was their wisdom patiently to submit. But Hananiah denied the truth of this prediction, and confidently prophesied on the contrary, that within two years Babylon's power over the nations should be broken, and the captives of Judah and Jerusalem be restored in gladness to the land of their fathers. Whereupon Jeremiah reiterates more impressively the Divine threatenings of seventy years of severe captivity, and unto Hananiah himself, as a punishment for false prophecy, predicts speedy destruction, saying, "Thus saith the Lord, behold I will cast thee from off the face of the earth. This year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord."

Had we the limits, there is much in this historic event we should like to discourse upon. We know of nothing in all Scripture more terrible to those preachers of so-called liberal Christianity, who either deny or explain

away God's awful threatenings to the children of men, preaching only of encouragement, promises, privileges, without earnest exhortation and warning to escape from that wrath of God proclaimed in the Scriptures. Jeremiah's answer on this occasion is exceedingly instructive.

He first expresses heartily his wish that Hananiah's words may prove true. Nor was this the first time that he had uttered a like wish and prayer, that God would not accomplish His own threatened purpose of judgment upon His rebellious people. To Hananiah's false words, that within two years God would restore the captivity, Jeremiah's hearty response was, "*Amen! The Lord do so. The Lord perform the words which thou hast prophesied.*"

And in all this is Jeremiah the true preacher's pattern, fully exemplifying the feelings of every faithful servant of God who announces Divine threatenings, and who, when these men preach the doctrine of universal salvation, cries out often in his heart of hearts, "Would God it could be so! would God it might be consistent with the Divine glory that all men should be saved!" He has no sort of delight in those images of wrath and tribulation and anguish with which he strives to win men from their iniquities. And if he could find this liberal Christianity in the Bible; if he did not there learn that to save a sinner without repentance and faith would be to dishonor all the Divine attributes, and so virtually to dethrone God in the face of the universe; if he did not find a dread and an everlasting destruction plainly revealed as a punishment of impenitents on every page of these heavenly oracles, oh then with what

a bounding heart he would proclaim, not merely free grace, but universal salvation to the children of men! But so long as there is no such doctrine taught in the Bible; so long as there is not a solitary passage that to an honest and open mind can seem to teach such a doctrine; so long as such a doctrine is opposed to all we know of God's dealings with His creatures in creation and providence; yea, so long as such a doctrine is annihilation of all distinctions between right and wrong, and so an impeachment of every one of God's glorious attributes, he would no more dare preach it than he would to turn heaven into hell or rock God's throne into ruins. For he knows that the wrath of God will be poured out in most full and fearful measure upon those false prophets of God, who dare to question or soften down those Divine oracles which threaten eternal death to the unbelieving and impenitent. And while unto all these encouraging utterances he can say heartily, as Jeremiah, "*Amen! The Lord do so. The Lord perform the words which thou hast prophesied,*" nevertheless, with Jeremiah, as well, unto the false, and at heart infidel preacher of such unscriptural doctrines, he cries, "*Because thou makest this people to trust in a lie, God shall cast thee from off the face of the earth.*" I know how these men love to vilify an orthodox ministry, as those who love to deal damnation round the land, thus claiming for themselves kinder hearts and gentler sympathies.

But judge ye, my hearers, of the reality of such claims. Suppose your physician, finding you under the power of a terrible disease, instead of administering the indicated and powerful medicine, should give you some

sweet and costly, yet inefficient draught, saying his heart was too tender to force upon your lips the bitter potion; or, suppose a watchman, seeing your house enveloped in midnight flames, and, rushing to your chamber, and finding you calmly slumbering, should leave you unroused, retiring with noiseless footsteps, and say, "Oh, he was sleeping so sweetly, I had not the heart to disturb him," then what would the world call these men? Gentle and kind-hearted and loving? Oh, no! no! no! But murderers! murderers! And so will the universe judge at last of every man, who from such a Bible dares to preach the doctrine of universal salvation. God deliver me from their guilt. I would rather go to the Judgment with the guilt of ten thousand murdered bodies than of one immortal soul. And so, had I the power to bring the ocean over this broad continent, and whelm all its living family in one destroying deluge, I would rather go to the Judgment from the commission of such a crime than from having persuaded any living man to believe that if he did not repent and believe he would not certainly be damned. Oh, no! no! We have no sympathy nor fellowship with such men. We recoil from them as malignant demons. We cry in their ears ever and only, "*Because thou makest the people to trust in a lie, God shall cast thee from the face of the earth.*"

Passing this and other instructive lessons of the history, let us separate the words of the text from their connections, and ponder them as addressed to ourselves on this New Year's Sabbath morn. "*This year thou shalt die.*"

Now, I need not pause to prove to you that this very

prophecy will prove literally true to some who hear me this morning. Humanly speaking, it is absolutely impossible that it should not prove true. It would prove such a year of miracles as no man has ever witnessed since earth had a population, and as no man will witness till the millennial, if some of you were not entering upon the last year of your being.

During the past year men have died in our midst, to whom this prophecy seemed on the last New Year's morning precisely as it seems to you this morning. There was a little child sitting in one of these seats, just as you, my dear child, sit in that seat. There was a youth here, with a smiling face and in bright raiment, just as this dear youth is here this morning. There was a man, in strong life and health, in the full tide of worldly business, just as these strong men to-day in God's sanctuary. There was the man with the whitened locks, just as these gray heads are to-day—our crown of glory. And when we spoke about this year as the last of some human lives, the prophecy fell on their ears as on yours to-day; and perhaps they scarcely pressed the thought home to their own spirits, that to them was the message. And yet the prophecy is fulfilled. The sweet child, the fine youth, the strong man, the beloved father, have gone from these familiar places to the great realities of eternity.

And so it will be the present year. Some of these dear children, some of these fine youths, some of these men of business, some of these aged fathers, will be gone forever when this year is closed. To be sure, we do not know who they are; and we thank God we do not. If there is anything about the future of this life for

which our hearts swell in gratitude, it is that we know not with whom we are to part in these several years.

But, then, of this ignorance what is the practical exhortation? That we shall all be careless because we know not who shall die? Do men reason so in other things? There are a hundred prizes, and ten thousand blanks in a lottery, and yet every holder of a ticket expects one of the prizes. In everything else but in this matter of death men prepare for a thing that may happen, as if it would happen; and surely in a matter so momentous, so overwhelming in its solemnity and importance, this rule of common prudence should be the great law of our action.

Some of us will die this year; and, therefore, any one of us may die this year. And so the truth should come home to each one of us with precisely the force of a direct revelation from heaven. "This year thou shalt die."

Now, my hearers, we want to bring this simple truth home to your hearts to-day, personally and practically. And the practical lessons of the text will be set forth, if we consider personally and honestly what our individual feelings should, and indeed surely would be, if God should say to you and to me, "*This year thou shalt die.*" Surely in that case we should look upon the things of this world and of the future world in different aspects and attitudes. This world would look differently, not that such a thought would make a man any the less diligent in business. I do not suppose there is a business man here to-day who could wind up satisfactorily his business in the course of a twelve-month; and if assured that he was to die in a twelve-month,

he would go on more earnestly than ever settling his accounts, making his will, investing his property, adjusting all his earthly business, so that his children or his heirs might be the most benefited by his love, his labor. Neither living religion nor dying religion would detract one iota from a true diligence in business in the service of God. Nevertheless, even the property of this world, which is the grand object of business, would seem a different thing, if the man knew that *this year he should die*.

Suppose the man possesses a round million, yet, after all, what is he worth? What is his property? Simply the use of that million for a few months. His house, his equipage, his furniture, his bank stock, his grand store-house, his ships on the sea, of all these he owns possibly nothing, save their use for a twelve-month. And when that brief lease expires, every one of them is torn from him, as from the veriest bankrupt and beggar. And the very shroud that wraps him, and the grave that receives him, is from the charity of others. Surely the gold and the silver of the world would seem different to us all if we believed in the prophecy, "*This year thou shalt die!*"

And so of the pleasures of the world. We certainly are not of those who decry these pleasures. We thank God that He gives them to His children, and they should be received joyfully with thanksgiving; nor would there be, even in a thought of coming death, anything diminishing one true pleasure to a real believer. I stand here this morning talking about death; and yet I stand here to join humbly in all the well-wishes and felicitations of the season. I say from my heart, A happy, happy

New Year to every one of you. "This Gospel is glad tidings, glad tidings of great joy." God would frown upon me if I did not bid you go forth to the good things God gives you with thankfulness and gladness; nevertheless these pleasures should look to you as to men who may die this year

Surely there are some places of fashionable amusement which a man would not visit in the last year of his life. I know not when I have been more pained than by a report of a late lecture delivered by a learned and most honored jurist of our State, upon the management of theatres. I suppose you have all read it, and I warn you against its insidious principles of evil. His argument is, that the stage has a mighty power to stir up the noblest principles of our nature; that so it might be assumed to be a school of virtue, and should as such have the counsel and countenance of the religious community. Now, we have no limits here for an argument. One statement of facts forever overthrows this all-time and ignorant plea for theatre-virtue. And this fact is, that in all our great cities the trial has been made of conducting theatres without the very foolish accessories of vice, and in every case it has proved a failure; and so theatre managers have given the thing up, and the whole history of the stage is at war with this theory. The dramatic art took its birth in tumultuous pleasures and the extravagances of intoxication; and to these, and such as these, it has always administered.

The Church of Christ has known the character of theatres for eighteen hundred years. It has seen a thousand efforts made to reform the drama to a school of morals,

all in vain, and it now, everywhere, with united voice, denounces the whole thing as a school of vice and impiety; and this not accidentally, but in essence and element, vicious and vicious only. Yea, it denounces all attempts to do the very thing this lecture proposes, as a practical infidelity. And it would as soon attempt to win money by racing horses for the support of the Gospel, or to print texts of Scripture on the back of playing cards, that the gamblers might have matter in the pauses of the play for fine meditation, as to talk of giving a proper and moral direction to any form of the theatre. All this by the way.

But sure I am that this whole class of pleasures, of which the theatre is a type, would loose all their charms for a man entering the last year of his being.

By common consent of all experienced Christians, the stage has been given up to the emissaries of evil. And although Satan with his wonderful power might, if truly regenerated and reformed, become a most efficient teacher of morals, yet as for six thousand years he has proved himself in all his changes still a devil, the Church, hopeless of his reform, will use other ministries, and so is it with the theatre. It is a foul falsehood, the whole of it. Its arrangements, its accessories, its actors and acting are evil only, and continually. Its teachings of human nature are vice ennobling caricature. Its literature, in the grand mass, is impure, profane, polluting, coarse, and revolting in style to all true taste—sheerly and abominably infidel in all its tendencies. Even its boasted elocution, as exhibited in its very finest actors, is only extravagant affectation, rant. So that in any of the practical professions of life, to say that a man

reads or speaks theatrically, is to condemn him in the eyes of all sensible men as a harlequin and a fool.

The whole thing is false and monstrous, and its only purification is the purification of the Hebrew's house of leprosy—breaking the whole thing down, the stones and the timber and the mortar, and carrying them all out of the city into an unclean place. But all this by the way.

Sure I am that of all pleasures of which the theatre is a type, no wise man would be enamored, if certainly entering in the last year of his being.

Passing all this, observe, thirdly, how an expectation of so speedy a death would affect the practical and pervading infidelity of the world. I say pervading, for it is pervading. I have no sort of question but that I speak to-day to many hearts tinctured with an unbelief of the great truths of the Gospel. Perhaps some of you have drank in the coarse and ribald blasphemy of Mr. Paine and his school of the last century. And more I am sure from the popular literature of the day, wherein personal Christianity is ridiculed, its ministry derided, its solemn truths profaned and despised, have come to regard its awful threatenings against sin as at least immense exaggeration.

Now, sure I am of one thing, if you were certain you were to die this year, you would sit down, at least honestly, to examine the evidences of the Bible's truthfulness. Granting only that, however improbable, it is yet barely possible that this Bible may be true, you would give yourselves to its study as of all things most important.

The sophism that it matters not what a man believes,

if he be honest in that belief, would never seem to you a truth in the last year of your being. You would feel then, that if immortality and retribution be realities, your belief or unbelief can neither modify nor destroy them. You would perceive, indeed, that sincerity of opinion may be worse than insincerity. A man lifting a poison cup to his lips, if he sincerely believes it to be harmless, will drink it and die. If he be not honest in that belief, he will put it away, and his very insincerity and dishonesty save him. The question about eternity is not what you believe, but what God has revealed. This Bible, in words as explicit as language can afford, speaks of a Judgment Seat and an eternal retribution unto the impenitent. And the only question for man to answer is whether or not this Bible be God's Word. And if one of you, I care not how rooted and grounded in infidelity, knew that within twelve months you were to die, sure I am, you would give yourself to examine its evidences. The indifference would die in the heart, and the sneer vanish from the lips, and over this awful Book you would bend as over something at least worthy of being considered. You would say, "Oh! Mr. Paine may possibly be mistaken. These sneering liberals may possibly be mistaken. There may be truth in this volume. There may be a hell; there may be a dark and dreadful eternity. And, if so, Oh! they are too near to be forgotten and trifled with. I will turn aside and see for myself what this dread Book declareth. Eternity so near, oh! I must know, I must know, what amazing realities lie just before me."

Then observe again how this apprehended nearness of death would make time seem precious! It would,

indeed, in some common aspect, diminish time's value, because it would surely diminish greatly the value of things earthly and temporal. To-day the philosophic mind moralizes upon the vast influences, political, social, national, of the year that has just departed. Alike of the pulpit and the press, this is the usual burden of a New Year's homily.

Our favorite journals all expatiate upon the great and general prosperity of the nations of the earth, the re-establishment of peace in Europe, the return of the three great powers that were wasting blood and treasure in this struggle, to the development of their industrial resources and the safer policy of peace and trade. The unprecedented and fabulous prosperity of our own land, our freedom from war and pestilence, our thriving manufactures and abundant harvests, our marvelous increase of commerce, till our tonnage surpasses that of Great Britain; and with the balance of trade in our favor, the world, so long our creditor, is our debtor at last. Our amazing increase of population, new territories peopled, new cities founded and filled. Our arts, and sciences, and literature, and all elements of personal and social prosperity increasing with unexampled manifestations throughout all our borders. Our glorious national union, stronger than it ever has been under the very beatings of the storms that seemed to threaten its dissolution. These, and such as these, are the themes whereon philanthropic and philosophic thought to-day expatiates.

And all this is well. We ought to know our own mercies, to recognize and acknowledge our great and matchless prerogative as American freemen in this

Nineteenth Century. Nevertheless, to a man certain that he was entering upon the last year of his being, such temporal interests as these would seem trivial and irrelevant. Tell such a man that time is making wars to cease, establishing the prosperous arts of peace, strengthening great nations, building great cities, and he would say, "Oh, this concerns me little. I am a dying man. Time to me is probation. Its gigantic interest and importance is in the impress it is stamping on my own personal character, the influence it is exerting on my eternal destiny. Every moment, as it contains within itself the germ of immortal realities, hath to me the unutterable value of a positive eternity. And now my days are waning to their final numbering. This year I must die. Every day-spring and eventide is the vanishing of another life-watch to the condemned prisoner in his dungeon. These hours are seasons of preparation for immortality. Tell me not of earth's civil and national interests. Time is too precious for all save eternal interests. Financial and commercial prosperity! Go talk of such things to men who will live half a century; but for me, tell me of the interests that survive death and reach beyond the sepulchre."

Oh! no wonder God measures these mortal hours with such magnificent machinery of time-keeping. One of those probationary days seems too precious to waste even in the foundation of a great city or the conquest of a mighty kingdom. Oh time! time! time! how unspeakable its value, as held in distinct outline of relief against the background of a coming and impending eternity.

Standing here, in the beginning of the last year of

my life, all those mighty movements of the past, its changing dynasties, its rocking thrones, its rising, falling empires, would seem to me only as the shifting of the painted scenery of an evening theatre, whereon mimic kings and conquerors acted a rapid part in a vain and vanishing drama. Nor would this appreciation of time be merely meditation and sentimental. A sense of its amazing personal importance would excite every one of us to its personal improvement. A consciousness of our past remissness in the grave work of preparation for death would quicken us unto diligence in all spiritual activity.

Ah! my Christian brother, what a life you would lead if you were assured from God that this year was to end it. What a father, what a husband, what a friend you would be henceforth to the end of your pilgrimage. You would never again utter an unkind word, nor give way to a simple or unseemly passion, but live, the rather, every fleeting hour so that hearts breaking in love would gather to your death-bed, and tears of agonizing bereavement fall, like rain, upon your grave. How a sense of the nearness of death would modify life in its activities, and life in its aspects! How it would moderate our joys! Not, indeed, destroy them. Oh, no! God hath not colored the skies drab, nor clothed the earth in sable. He means us to be happy, but with an intelligent happiness, a happiness springing mainly from the grand realities of a hastening eternity. From purely temporal joys a sense of impending death would dissolve much of the seeming reality. The man's princely house, his glittering equipage, his grand warehouses, his golden cups of banqueting, ah! they would seem unreal,

spectral, phantom-like things, wrought out of cloud and vapor, vanishing, dissolving, if he knew that in a few months they were to pass away forever.

How this thought, too, would mitigate his sorrows; not that he ought not to feel them; the stoicism of a tearless philosophy is simply brutal. God tunes all the tender chords of the immortal heart to vibrate like an *Æolian*. Weep as over your sorrows, for the Saviour wept. But, then, how unworthy these deep agonies of spirit would seem life's common griefs, if he were to die in a six-month. Poverty, friendlessness, disappointments, sickness, pain, oh! they would seem but as the unreal incubi of a half-conscious dream, the dreamer feeling the while, Ah! these are but phantom-fancies, and will fade when the morning light rouses me to wakefulness. How it would quicken us in the momentous duties of spiritual and probationary life.

Take the weakest and worldliest Christian among us, and a prophecy from God that this year he should die would be as an archangel's trump to his slumbering piety. How that neglected and abused Bible would be taken from its forgotten place, and its covers freed from dust, and its pages blotted with tears. How real now the description of Judgment and heaven. How the fire would be kindled again on that deserted family altar, and the beloved household gathered to join in the prayers of one so appointed to death. How the man's place in the prayer-meeting, so long unoccupied, would be filled when God's people come together to pray. How the man's duty to his own soul would be performed earnestly and instantly. Oh! he would say, "I have been cheating myself long enough with these earthly

phantoms ; and now for eternity ! Life is probation ; I must win treasures in heaven. Out of my path ; I am running a race. Give me sword and shield ; I am fighting a battle." How he would be active, too, in the service of others. Every breath would seem the knell of a departing soul ; only a few months to labor for a world for which Christ died ! How he would labor for God and for Christ, so near eternity and so little done for the Heavenly Father, the great and gracious Saviour. Oh ! he would cry, " I am going to the glories of heaven. I am going to see the flaming seraphims in their labors for Jehovah. I am going to see the glorious crowns which Abraham and David and John and Paul cast in adoring worship at the feet of my Redeemer. And I must, ere I depart, do something for my Master.

Ah ! methinks it would fall as a truth fearfully exhortatory on every Christian heart—*I am to die this year*. How much of life has been wasted. How little advance have I made in the Divine life. How small the treasure laid up in the kingdom of heaven. Alas ! I am a husbandman, and my work is not done. The bending harvest is not reaped. The fruitful clusters are not gathered ; and now, with chilly dews and lengthening shadows, *the night cometh ! the night cometh !* wherein no man can work. Meanwhile, unto the earnest and active Christian, how consoling would be the thought of the hastening immortality. Alas for the feeble faith of modern piety, that death in its simple release from earthly trial should seem a thing so dreadful !

Suppose we actually saw heaven, could look up from these mortal scenes upon the revealed glories of the dwellings of the blest in the City of Holiness. Would

not the coldest heart burn, as Paul's, to depart and be with Jesus? And yet, would that sight render the bliss of heaven more certain to the Christian? Oh, no! no! I have better evidence of an immediate and enraptured immortality to the redeemed soul, than if I could see in all their lustrous substantiality, those gates of pearl, those mansions of righteousness. For I have God's steadfast assurance of such things, and though my senses might deceive me, yet God's truth can not deceive me. As I saw the city, with its glorious gates, I should cry, Oh, it is too resplendent for a reality. It is, it must be a fair and vanishing phantasm. But when the eternal Jehovah tells me of the city, I know it is a radiant and eternal substantiality. I know that the beloved dead, who began the last year with us, are there in heavenly rapture, better than if, with their familiar faces and tones of love, they passed before me in visions of immortal glory. And to a Christian with an Apostolic faith, oh how sweet would be the prophecy, "*This year, this year thou shalt be with them in Paradise!*" Oh! my tears are almost shed, my warfare almost over. This poor heart will break no more. This poor soul will sin no more. I can catch them already—the flash of the crown gems, the swell of the hallelujahs. Oh! let the Heavens open; let the fire-car descend. I am athirst for the living water. I am home-sick for glory. "*Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly!*"

But, then, alas! we have not all this Apostolic faith. And to all without it how exhortatory this prophecy. There are some here who hope they are Christians, who have yet never professed Christ before men.

Now, beloved, I stop not here to argue again your

duty in this matter ; but I ask you, if you knew that the next few months would summon you to the presence of your Saviour, whether you would not be constrained to come with us on the next Sabbath to our blessed communion. Believe me, this shrinking from the sacraments, whatever excuses you plead, springs essentially from shame of the Saviour. Even if the feeling at your heart is a sense of unworthiness, yet this very feeling results from a pride of heart which is ashamed to be saved freely, as a poor, lost sinner. And if you were assured that before this table shall be spread again you would be ushered into the presence of the risen and reigning Redeemer, then sure I am, you could not be kept back from these memorials of His humiliation. You would cry, "Oh! I am so soon to share in His glory, I must share at least once in His humiliation. I must stand by the Cross with the Marys. I must go to the grave with the Disciples. I must, I must do this in remembrance of my Lord." Oh come, then, believing soul, to this table of your Master!

But even with greater force than unto these would come these exhortatory words to you, poor impenitent unbelievers. What mean ye, oh imperiled souls? To walk on this crumbling verge of time all unprepared for eternity? "Oh!" you say, "but I do not expect to die this year." Well, suppose you do not. Even this is of all reasons the very mightiest, why you should repent this moment. You must die some time; and every year spent in sin makes the dying hour dreadful. In refusing this instant call of the Gospel, you say to the great and dreadful God, "I want to live another year in sin, to break all your holy laws, to stand with

my cruel feet upon the broken heart of my Redeemer, to add to that dire and appalling accumulation of wrath against the day of wrath of God's righteous retribution." Ah! better, a thousand times better, that you should die this very moment, than live another year in this ungrateful rebellion.

You may not die this year, and this is the overwhelming reason why you should begin now, this very moment, to turn from your evil courses and lay up heavenly treasures!

But, then, you may die this year. And this very uncertainty as to the hour of Christ's coming is God's argument for preparation. Therefore He says, "*Be ye ready; for ye know not the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.*"

Tell that householder that a thief lies in ambush at his door, and at some uncertain moment the house will be broken into, and you drive sleep from his eyes in armed and eager watchfulness. And so when God and your own conscience tell you, *This year you may die*, you are moved by the most irresistible argument to watchfulness and preparation.

But, then, as any of you may die this year, some of you will die this year. I know not which of you it may be. It may be this young child; it may be this fine youth; it may be this strong man; it may be you! you! you! And you surely have no time to loiter. Condemned already, you are a poor prisoner in his dungeon, awaiting in the last hour the tread of the executioner. Between you and the dread realities of eternity there are only these poor remnants of time. You will never see another New Year. Oh, how short

life seems to you! Time! Time! It is, to you at least, surely, but a hand's breadth, a shadow, a vanishing vapor. And yet on this poor, fleeting vapor hangs your immortal destiny. Alas! how near death stands to you—his very breath upon your brow, his cold hand stretched forth to be laid upon your heart-strings. And eternity, that eternity wherewith you trifle, that Judgment for which you are not prepared, that hell at which you smile and cavil, oh, how near they all are! Their sounds rise around you; their lurid light falls full upon you; and will you even yet refuse your pleading Saviour, who knocks at your door, entreating that He may save you? Oh, beloved! believe Him! Would to God I had power to plead with you fittingly!

I am preaching to you my last New Year's sermon. If I stand here another twelve-month, you will be gone; and I can not bear to have the blood of a soul upon my garments. But I cannot save you. I can only cast myself at your feet, and in earnest love pray you, in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to Jehovah; and I do pray you, by all God's tender and terrible things, by that death-bed already spread for you, by that grave already opening, by that great white throne of Judgment, by that unknown and boundless and terrible eternity, and that abyss which yawns at your very feet, its shadows around you, its tongues of fire lapping the place of your standing, yea, more, more, by God's long-suffering mercies, by the heavenly glories whereunto He waits to usher you, by my Saviour's dying love, this Cross, this crimson Cross of your smitten Redeemer, oh come now, now, to the hope set before you.

It seems to me I cannot part with you to-day, im-

penitent. If you go from God's house in your sins, the fearful likelihood is you will perish forever; that upon the decision you make this holy hour, the Divine hand will set the impress of eternity. And as you choose this hour you choose forever! forever!

THE GREAT QUERY.

“What must I do to be saved?”—ACTS XVI. 30.

My brethren, it is no easy task to preach Christ crucified. I refer not to the constant wearing away of the physical strength under the excitement of such frequent public ministrations, nor to the exhaustion of mental toil necessary to an almost daily elaboration of pulpit discourse by a mind already worn out and wearied, nor to that painful reflection, everywhere and always present to a preacher's thought, that, having done all he can, few will be satisfied and many displeased. These, indeed, with other kindred perplexities, are enough to drive the ardent and aspiring from the ministry into easier and more eligible professions. But I refer specially to that deep sense of unworthiness and insufficiency which presses with mountain weight upon every servant of the Church into whose heart there has entered at all the humble spirit of his Master. To storm the strongholds of Satan by the feeble utterance of a weak and wearied life—this is his work; and who is sufficient for these things. And, yet, thanks be unto God, never was there a perplexity, temporal or spiritual, which met not its consolation in this Book of God. And never does the humble minister of Jesus find himself overborne by the perplexity to which we have adverted, but he opens his Bible; and certain are we that if his eye light on the 16th Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, he will go

away comforted. Nowhere else in the whole Bible do I gather a finer illustration of the truth, that though in the work of regeneration the Spirit of God operates mediately, yet that the mightiest effects are not unfrequently brought about by means the most feeble. What brought the proud heathen trembling and uncovered to the feet of Paul? An earthquake. But what roused the earthquake in its awful strength? Why, the feeble voice of those two old men of Galilee as they sang praises to the prison walls of Philippi. So that it was the simple Psalm-singing of Paul and Silas that extorted the agonizing question of the text—“*What shall I do to be saved?*”

We surely need not here insist upon the thought that the interpretation of that sect which would regard this inquiry as having reference to personal, temporal safety is utterly at variance with the context and common sense. The prison doors were, indeed, open, but not one prisoner had escaped; and had they, Paul and Silas were not counsellors skillful to teach how to escape the penalty of heathen laws. Besides, the answer of Paul to the inquiry settles the matter at once, that it referred to danger far other and mightier than that incurred by a mere want of prison watchfulness.

“*What shall I do to be saved?*” It was the mighty cry of a roused soul, started by the rushing of the earthquake, feeling within itself the burden of unpardoned sin, believing that the world was dissolving; that it stood on the very verge of the abyss of time, and that, all ungirded as it was, was about to be driven forth to the homeless wanderings of eternity.

“*What shall I do to be saved?*” Oh! ye beloved out

of Christ, if ye could look upon time as the jailor did; if ye could look at yourselves as the jailor did; if ye could look far on into eternity as the jailor did; if ye could look at yourselves and at time and at eternity as ye will when the earthquake of death shall shake down the clay prison of your spirits, like him of Philippi, ye would be smitten to the dust to-day; and now and here would the cry of agony break upon the ear, "*What shall I do to be saved?*" "*What shall I do to be saved?*"

Regarding this question as a theme for our consideration this afternoon, we propose dwelling as briefly as may be upon a few of the thoughts suggested by it upon even its most rapid perusal.

First. And we remark, in the first place, that the question plainly teaches us that the soul of every man who has not repented and exercised faith in Christ is now actually, though not indeed irrecoverably, in a lost state.

Now, my hearers, I am aware that it is unfashionable and unpopular altogether to dwell much on such thoughts as this, and if you will assure me that you will find no fault with me, and that God will find no fault with me when the dead are judged, as an unfaithful steward of the mysteries of Christ, for so doing, I will never preach the doctrine again while the world standeth. If I know my own heart, I desire not only your welfare, but your well-wishes; and the earthly wish nearest my soul to-day is, that you will give me such a place in your sympathies that when my work is done and my heart lies a frozen thing in the grave, you will remember my weakness forgivingly, and myself with a tear. But

whether I should obey God rather than you, judge ye. So long as God gives me breath to speak in the name of Jesus, and tells me that the fiercest torments of the damned shall gather round the eternity of an unfaithful ambassador of heaven, I will never cease to proclaim as a grand truth, whose conviction is absolutely essential to salvation through faith, that the soul that believes not on the Lord Jesus Christ is just as verily, though, mark me, not as hopelessly lost as it will be amid the retributions of eternity. This is apparent from many considerations. From manifold declarations of the Bible, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law, to do them." "What things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth might be stopped and all the world become guilty before God." "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the Only Begotten Son of God." The whole testimony of Scripture is at one on this point. - You can not open a single page from which the great truth does not flash out startlingly unto the eye of the soul, that without the operation of some mighty influence of salvation, we as a race are bound unto destruction. Indeed, the very existence of the Bible as a revelation of redemption through the shedding of blood presupposes this. What need of all this machinery of salvation, if there be not the lost to be saved? Why fling out the buoy and lower the life-boat, if there be no man overboard, lost in the storm? The Bible proclaims as its great foundation truth, that all men are sinners. Experience and observation prove

it; and the only way of avoiding the conclusion that all men are therefore lost, is the regarding sin as in itself too insignificant a thing to involve the loss of the soul. But when, I pray you, has man learned that sin is so trifling and altogether inconsiderable an influence? Did philosophy teach him that rebellion against the great God of heaven is so inconsiderable a trifle? Did he discover by any process of metaphysical analysis that that which violates infinite obligations, which is committed against a Being of infinite perfection, which disturbs a series of moral dependencies all but infinite, is itself, or can be itself, anything less than an infinite evil, requiring an infinite punishment? Or, if not from the findings of philosophy, has he learned any such lesson from the observation of facts? From what instance of Divine dealings with creatures has the unbeliever discovered that God regards as an insignificant evil that which has done all it could to shiver into fragments the whole machinery of His moral administration? Did he learn it from the fact, that as a result of a simple sin a third part of the host of heaven came down from their burning thrones, and, girt about with sackcloth of hair, with the fire on the brain and the iron on the bosom, went forth unto the flame-kindling, degraded and desolated and damned? Did he learn it by the entrance of a lost Eden, where, as a result of a single sin, there came down over the fair world so foul an eclipse, that, notwithstanding all the restoring influences of faith in a Saviour to come, earth in its estrangement from heavenly visitation became little lovelier than hell? Did he learn it from the peak of Mt. Ararat, as he looked down upon the earth, hoary

with the yeast of the subsiding sea, and beheld the riven habitations, and the rocked cities and the rotting carcasses of a desolated world and a dead race? Did he learn it from the high place whence Abraham looked toward Sodom, and beheld, and lo! from Sodom and Gomorrah and all the land of the plain the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of the furnace? Yea, my brethren, above all, think you he learned from the Mount of the sin-atonement, where, amid opening graves and a rocking world and a darkened sun and shrouded heaven, there was solved in the death-agonies of God's own Son, the mighty problem of the amount of sin's demerit as a deranging influence in the universe of God? Verily, my brethren, we should like to be told what are the elements in the calculation, whether of fact or of philosophy, whereby the arithmeticians of modern liberalism have computed the slightest violation of the Divine law to be anything less than an infinite evil. We should like to be told the *modus* of the problem-solving, whereby we are made certain that the abettor of a principle of rebellion against the Divine government; a principle that hath made many a vacant place in the ranks above, and filled with wailing the gloomy mansions of the world beneath; a principle that has gathered over our world the dark mantle of apostacy from Jehovah, and transformed it from a star-hung cradle of immortal being into a foul charnel of pining and passionate mortality; a principle that, grown giant by the Divine forbearance, has set its face boldly against heaven, and so far as in it lay torn the fabric of God's moral government all to pieces, and struggled with might and main to rock into the dust the very throne

whereon Jehovah sits; yea, verily, hath reached forth the hand of its mighty daring, and with the ferocity of incensed devils, in the face of a beholding heaven, murdered God's only Son; we say we should like to be told the method of the calculation whereby we are made confident that the abettor of such a principle of antagonism to Jehovah is anything else under the wide heaven than a poor, lost outcast in the universe of God. Brethren, be not deceived in this matter. Beware how you give yourselves up to the pleasing plausibilities of a prevailing and popular liberalism. For, know you, as there is a God above you, that by nature ye are all children of wrath; that ye have been born and baptized and bred up in sin; that by the penalties of a law never to be lessened in one fraction of its mighty exactions ye are condemned already; and, therefore, in the regards of that charity that thinketh no evil and hopeth all things, ye are to-day, in respect of eternity, like helmless voyagers on the open sea—*lost! lost! lost!*

Secondly. Now, this leads me to remark, in the second place, that this question of the jailor plainly teaches that man thus lost must himself do something to secure his salvation. “*What must I do to be saved?*”

We do not regard it necessary to dwell for a moment upon the implied truth that salvation is possible unto man. This is a truth absolutely fundamental to the Christian scheme, that those liberals who find fault with our theology, saying it represents God as unmerciful by regarding our race as lost, if they were considerate, would perceive that we verily magnify the mercy of God by regarding it as that which has opened a way of salvation not merely unto the partially bewildered, but

unto the utterly lost. Nor does it seem necessary that we should insist at much length upon the thought under consideration, that personal exertion is necessary unto salvation. All the lessons of natural theology drawn from a consideration of God's dealings with us in temporal concerns, and all the lessons of supernatural theology drawn from the pages of inspiration, are at one in their testimony on this point, that although means are in themselves utterly powerless, so that there is no natural efficacy in seed-sowing to produce plentiful harvests, or in Bible-reading to produce regeneration, yet alike in each, by His own arbitrary arrangement has God connected the end with the means. So that as he who toils in seed-time shall rejoice in harvest, and he who is patient in well-doing shall reap eternal life. So, also, he who slumbereth in spring-time shall beg in autumn, and he who believeth not shall be damned. The question of the text is most explicit in its teaching that he who would be saved has himself something to do in the matter; and there is no passage in the Bible which, untwisted and unfrittered away by sectarian theology, does not plainly teach us that just so far as God's blessing in the use of means is concerned, there is committed unto the sinner's hands the working out of his own destinies for immortality. We are met on this point, I know, by two sects of errorists, alike antagonistic to each other and to the Word of God.

The one believing that as a result of Christ's atonement the whole human race will be saved, irrespective altogether of moral character, thus disarraying Deity of His truth and His righteousness and His immaculate justice, and tearing away with a daring hand the very

pillars of the eternal throne, and arraying the Divine character in the flimsy garb of a sighing sentimentalism, of an insane and driveling tenderness, yea, making God Himself an immense and omnipotent sinner, by making Him in His operations an Infinite abettor of sin. The other is that of hyper-Calvinism, or Antinomianism, which, because a God wise enough to govern His great empire with some forecasting design must necessarily have decrees or far-reaching plans of governmental operation, would therefore represent man as a mere machine, not to operate, but to be operated upon ; telling us that if man is to be saved he will be saved, and if he is to be damned he will be damned, and not knowing that sovereignty is as far removed from oppression as it is from inefficiency in their anxiety to honor God by making Him a sovereign, do in verity foully dishonor God by rendering Him a tyrant. Now, that both of these systems of belief are dark and dangerous errors is so evident upon the very face of the Bible, that no one ever embraced either, save he who sits down to its study with a pre-arranged creed, to square with which God's living truth must be twisted or frittered away.

The whole testimony of God's past dealings with our race, and the whole testimony of our individual experience, and the whole testimony of the Bible from its earliest prophecy to its latest curse, is at one on this matter of human free agency and human responsibility, and the necessity of human activity unto human salvation. Not, indeed, that man can save himself, or do anything in itself calculated at all to produce salvation ; for the question in the text is not, "*How shall I save myself?*" but, "*What shall I do to be saved?*" But

their testimony is, that he who sits down calmly in his lost estate, trusting to God's general mercy, and he who waits in indolent expectation for the saving influence of Divine decrees, will together be roused at last from their insane idleness, their faith vain, and their hopes withered, and their souls lost. Man is a poor, lost being in the storms of sin; and there is the cloud above and the hurricane around and the sea beneath, and through these floats heaven's life-boat over the wild billows. Be ye as certain as there is a God above you, that there shall be saved by it not a single soul that does not leap away alike from wreck and spar, and struggle toward the heaven-sent craft with the might and the mastery of a living faith.

Thirdly. "Must." Now, this leads us to remark, as the third and last point suggested by the text, the necessity of doing at once that which is necessary unto salvation, namely, to comply with Paul's direction unto the jailor—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved." We say this point is suggested by the text, for the predominant anxiety in the mind of the convicted Pagan was for instant safety. "*What shall I do—not to-morrow, but now—to be saved?*" And here we confess that so manifold and so mighty are the points of advocacy pressing upon us, that, straightened as we are by the narrowness of our limits, we are at a loss in selecting.

(a.) We might dwell upon the unmeasured value of the soul itself; upon its essence, linking it in its immateriality into the essence of Deity; upon its capacities, giving it the hopes and the desires and the aspirations, yea, equipping it with the mighty wings of the angels,

for immortal soaring ; upon its attributes linking it unto existence by a tie that the long lapse of eternity, and the fires of eternity, and the storms of eternity, can never weaken or melt away or shatter into dust, showing you how that which the sinner leaves in jeopardy by a moment's delay is worth more, a thousand times, than all the mighty systems of the universe of God.

(b.) We might set forth the sympathies which all heaven has felt for man in his lost estate, showing you how from the farthest period of eternity the forecasting tenderness of the Most High has fastened itself most mightily on the outworking of human salvation ; how in the council chamber of immensity it was devised, and amid the throbbings of the universe it was acted out ; and how heaven's high arches rang with acclamations when it was completed ; and how, even now, angels speed their delegated way to our lost world, waiting and watching and the Holy Ghost wooing with all His tender influences, and God the Father, beseeching with an all constraining Father's love, and the Son of God praying and pleading by His broken body and His shed blood ; and that, therefore, the necessity for an ardent and instant fleeing for salvation to the blood of sprinkling can be measured only by the height and the depth and the length and the breadth of the immortal and eternal and almighty sympathies of heaven.

(c.) Or, lastly, we might set forth the greatness of the salvation itself, showing you how it consists in the pardon of every sin, a personal justification, the renovation of a ruined nature in God's image, an adoption into God's own household, a consolation in every sorrow, a triumph in death, a joy in the resurrection, a complete

acquittal at the Judgment, a blissful admission into eternal life. We might tell you all we know of heaven, the jeweled pavilion of the eternal one, where every lustre is extinguished, that God, with His burning essence, may be the light of it, and every temple removed, that God may be the temple of it, and every habitation forgotten, that God may be in us and we in Him. Yea, we might whisper startingly all we know of hell, that great exile island of the universe, that great burial place of immortality, that great death-bed of eternal death, and show you that by all that is pleasant in life and all that is painful in death, by all that is fleeting in time and all that is fastening in eternity and all that is alluring in heaven and all that is startling in hell, there is put the light of a living demonstration upon the awful folly of him who does not, as the first great object of his anxiety, seek the salvation of his soul. And I do not doubt but that, as we went along in such a demonstration, the assent of every candid impenitent mind would go along with us, and that each one would go away from God's house with a resolution at some time before death to attend to the eternal interests of the soul. And it is, therefore, just at this point of a determination to procrastinate, that our text meets us with an admonition; and, therefore, upon that only point we fasten your attention to-day. "*What shall I do—do now—to be saved?*" The thought is the necessity, not of the future, but of *immediate* soul-saving.

"*To-morrow.*" Why, by all the frailty of this animal framework, and by all the chances and changes of this shifting mortality, and by all the anger of an incensed and patience-wearied God, the vast likelihood is,

that to the poor, lost soul *there shall be no to-morrow*; that the spar will be washed away from the grasp of the shipwrecked man ere the sun rise up again to shine upon his sea-tossed head. And if to-morrow comes, why, it will come to a harder heart, and a deader conscience, and a love more fastened unto the world, and pulses bounding weaklier for immortality, and a body bound by a mightier likelihood unto the resurrection of despair, and a soul bound by a more awful probability unto the retribution of damnation. It will come as to-morrow comes unto the shipwrecked and the sea-tossed, weakened and wearied by the spar-grasping, and feeblier able to let go the wreck and breast the billows and leap unto the life-boat. Oh! it is this accursed plea of a future time and a convenient season, on which, as an awful resting-place, so many a precious immortal has stretched himself to slumber, and woke up in hell. And therefore it is, that although we have little hope that ye are not, even now, stifling the whispers of conscience by the thought of a repentance to come, and little hope that our feeble words will do anything more than add the weight of another hardening unto the metal of your sinful hearts, and little hope that our ministry unto you to-day will not have proved in eternity "a savor of death unto death," yet in the winding-up of our discourse we would strive to fasten upon you this last lesson of the text, *that if there be anything to be done for your soul's salvation it must be done at once.*

This, more than anything else, is the awful truth breaking mightily upon the soul from the stern scenery of the text. Look at it a moment. That prison of Philippi! What see you? A dark and damp dun-

geon, shattered and shaken, and two old men rising in mild majesty from their earthquake-riven chains. And what else? What else? Behold! a heathen roused by the heaving of the shaken earth, and feeling within him the mighty consciousness of unpardoned sin, and believing that he felt the death-throb of an expiring world and stood on the very abyss of a rushing eternity. Behold! with his damp locks bristling into life, and his wild eyes straining into vacancy, and lip and limb working with the maniac agony of fear, he leapeth into those old men's dungeon, and layeth lowly at the Apostles' feet. Why, what aileth the man? The prisoners are all safe. The dungeon walls have ceased to totter. The mighty earthquake sleeps again. Why, then, that trembling of the body? Why that agony of the soul? Is the man a maniac? Is the man death-struck? What aileth the Philippian there on the damp ground? Why, my hearers, he is lost! he is lost! Hark to his wild cry, "*What shall I do to be saved?*" "*What shall I do to be saved?*" "Go to now, ye that say, To-morrow we will go into such a city and buy and sell and get gain, whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow." Get ye unto the prison of Philippi, and with all those opiate draughts wherewith ye are drugging your own souls into the death-trap, solace, if ye can, that jailor's sorrow and soothe that jailor's soul. "A future time!" "Where, oh where, has God promised it?" "A convenient season!" "Is it so written in God's book?" "To-morrow!" "Why, to-morrow I may be in hell." "Nay, now! now! I am on a volcano's brink! I am out at sea, shipwrecked and sea-beaten! I am on the very borderline of a hopeless eternity! I am lost! I am lost!

What shall I do to be saved? What shall I do to be saved?

So reasoned the poor Pagan when God opened his eyes to see how he hung by a single hair over eternal burnings. Would to God, my beloved out of Christ, ye would reason so to-day. Would to God you could see yourselves just as ye are seen by the far-reaching ages of eternity. Would to God ye knew how frail a thing is life, and how strong a thing is death, and how dark a place is the grave, and how fearful will be the judgment hour, and how blest a home is heaven, and how black a home is hell. Lost! lost! Oh, it is an awful word! How the very sound comes to the heart linked with fearful associations! Behold! there is a babe in the wilderness; the night is gathering and the storm moaning through the branches, and the cry of the wild beast breaking on the ear. How think you the mother feels? The child is lost! And look again! What see you? A gallant ship upon the sea, like a white-winged bird lying with dark breast on the waves. How like a living thing it rides the waters! Ah! but what aileth the voyagers? Listen! That dull sound! 'Tis the maelstrom! They are already on the outer circle of the dread abyss. Louder and yet louder the roar, wilder and yet wilder the rush of the mighty waters! See now the mariners roused from slumber, rushing to the deck! Mark their convulsive struggles at helm and oar! Hark unto their wild cry rising above the roar of the waters! What aileth the mariners? Why, they are lost! they are lost! *Lost! lost!* Why, the very sound is appalling! It is like a death-knell! A lost child! A lost mariner! What think you, then, of a lost soul? Oh! our

thoughts are feeble, our conceptions are those of children over the story of crushed empires. What meaneth it? What meaneth it? A lost soul! Ye children of eternity, ye saved in heaven, ye lost in hell, tell us what it means! Son of God, tell us what it means! Spirit of God, tell us what it means! Expound unto this dying congregation that awful word, "Lost!" For we would see men starting from their dreams to-day. We would see limbs trembling and hearts breaking, and spirits bowed with a mighty dread, and strong men crying out in terror, "*What shall we do to be saved? What shall we do to be saved!*"

A FAITHFUL SAYING.

“ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”—1 TIMOTHY I. 15.

There is abundant material in this text for a thousand sermons ; yea, there are in it themes of thought which have for thousands of years engrossed the scholarship of angels, and whereon will be tasked the powers of all celestial intelligence throughout eternity. It contains, indeed, the whole sum and substance of the Gospel. All that system of infinite and stupendous truth, of which our Divine Lord Himself declared, that he who believed it should be saved, and he who rejected it should be lost. At present we propose no more than a hurried glance at the simpler and more apparent thoughts which its perusal must suggest to every child's trustful intellect. To such humble and devout analysis it presents only two subjects of discourse.

I. *A saying, and,*

II. *The character of that saying.*

First.—We have here an Apostolic saying, a sentence, an utterance, a tornado of thought. And this Paul introduces with a solemn magnificence of language which on any other theme and from any other Apostle would seem pompous, magniloquent, as if he were about to utter some marvelous truth challenging the admiration, the astonishment of the world in the midst of a narrative and an argument unsuggested, almost incongruous, as a parenthetical and suddenly revealed truth, which must

be instantly declared, he breaks out thus sententiously, vehemently, enthusiastically, "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.*"

And what is this stupendous aphorism, this wonderful thought, this all-glorious revelation? Some profound philosophy, which young Timothy had not learned? Some transcending revelation which the Church did not know? Nay, not this, else the world would cry, "*Alas for Paul's pretentious platitude!*" So simple is it, that Sabbath-school teachers repeat it to little children, "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*"

And this was all; and at first it does seem that Paul, coming fresh from those famous philosophic schools, coming back from long wandering amid the mighty cities of that elder world, yea, coming back from that rapture into Paradise, where he had heard eternal mysteries set forth even in tongues of angels; it does seem that Paul might have proclaimed some saying more magnificent and wonderful.

But let us consider for a little this seeming platitude, and see whether Paul only droveled when he declared it so wonderful.

"*Jesus Christ came into the world.*" "JESUS" came. "*Jesus,*" a human name; a Son of Man was born among men. And how did even an event like this seem unto the angels when the first man appeared on this planet? Up to that moment there had been under these skies only forms of irrational life; and so far earth must have seemed a malformation, at least a lavish if not a foolish extravaganza of God. To round such a sphere into beauty, and hang it amid the stars, only as a plantation for forest trees, or a pasturage for cattle!

But when a glorious creature, made in God's own image, wise and mighty to subdue unto himself all inferior types of life, did dwell in it as a palace, and set on it as a throne, then was Divine "Wisdom justified of her children," and the bringing of man into the world seems a work of glory and of love worthy a God.

But more, "*Jesus Christ came into the world.*" "CHRIST!" This is not a human name. It means, The Messiah, The Anointed, The Sent. It is a title of office. It bespeaks the legate, the credentialed ambassador, the representative of kingly power; yea, it designated the mysterious personage whom the prophecy of all time had foretold, and all forms of the older worship adored with mysterious types and in magnificent temples, and for whom all the world waited, as the last awful Theophany, who was to deliver it from all evil, recreating the race in the Divine image, restoring the lost paradise, making all things new.

"*Jesus Christ came.*" Paul does not say, as of other creatures, "*He was brought into the world,*" "*Sent into the world,*" "*Born into the world,*" but he "*Came into the world.*" He speaks of Him as a subject, a voluntary actor. He absolutely affirms here Christ's Divine pre-existence. He speaks of Him as acting before His human birth, yea, of that birth itself as a result of His own volition; of a being self-existent in another sphere, and of His own free will appearing among men. "*Jesus Christ came into the world.*"

But whence came He? Had He come from some other world merely? From some distant star? Some smaller and scarcely-seen orb that sparkles in the firma-

ment of night? Even then advent had seemed wonderful, and all princes and kings of the earth would have gathered to witness and to welcome Him! But Jesus Christ came from the high place of heaven, from the metropolis, of God's great empire, from His position on the right hand of the very throne of God. And now, verily, my brethren, Paul's platitude begins to appear wonderful. Had it been the story of a creature coming from distant star on an embassy, or as a simple visitor to a sister province in God's great empire, He would have excited all nations: But from yonder heaven of heavens Jesus Christ came, the Eternal Son, whose place was on the right hand of the King of Kings. He came to dwell among His creatures; and this does seem very wonderful!

"Jesus Christ came into the world; into this world;" and here the wonder deepens. Had that Divine visit been to some other unfallen and mightier and more glorious province of God's vast empire, it had not, perhaps, been so surprising. But not unto such worlds, in their beautiful holiness, went forth the Divine chariot from the eternal city of God.

"Jesus Christ came into the world—this world." This revolted province, this low sphere of man's wretched and sinful life. Not unto the scenes of transcendent loveliness, where, amid thrones and dominions and principalities and powers, the crowned children of eternity walk their high paths, but to man's lowly home He came, to Bethlehem and Nazareth and Gethsemane and Calvary; and the truth does seem wonderful!

And yet, up to this point, we have only crossed the border of the great mystery.

“*Jesus Christ came into this world.*” But for what? and with what? Up to this point the angelic hosts might have anticipated the wonder. When they learned that the new created race of man had broken the Divine Covenant, and incurred the Divine indignation, they might have expected the going forth of Divine power to sweep such disloyalty away from the face of creation! And when, rising up from that eternal throne, this glorious Son of God prepared for this earthly advent, methinks a strange terror fell on the gazing universe, as if the awful Jehovah were going forth to that once bright world to punish, to destroy.

But not this the record. “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save*”—TO SAVE.

Nor ends the wonder here. To save whom? To those angels looking down upon this rebellious earth, it might have seemed that, while the race were in revolt, yet some individuals still retained their love and their loyalty; and so they might have thought, that if the Son of God went forth on an errand of mercy, it would be to deliver such righteous souls from this sphere of rebellion, and sweep away into merited destruction the remnant of the race.

But not this the story. “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*” “SINNERS!” Not the pure, the unfallen, the holy; not merely the noble, the excellent, the lovely; but the rebel, the outcast, the despised of God’s law, the reviler even of God’s infinite loving-kindness. And verily, I record, all this does seem full of wonders. And it is worthy of all the pomp of diction and pretension of thought, wherewith Paul prefaced it. *This is a*

faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Now this leads us, as the other obvious and simple subject of the text, to consider,

Secondly. The character or excellency of this Apostolic saying. As Paul puts it, “*A faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance.*”

The word here rendered *saying*, in the original is very expressive. It is “*Logos*,” the same which in John’s Gospel is applied to Christ Himself, and translated “*The Word.*” It denotes a *remarkable saying*, an aphorism, a proverb, a Divine saying, a formula of language which, because of its importance, has become axiomatic.

“A saying,” “Faithful,” *i. e.*, a true saying, a system of doctrines whose verity is demonstrable—absolutely established.

Paul here, as if in prophecy and miracles, the manifestly Divine character of Christ’s words and works, there was an amount of evidence compelling all rational faith, does not pause a single moment to argue the truth of his saying, but asserts it triumphantly at the outset, as something already proven, and henceforth only to be proclaimed and accepted.

And this “*saying*” may be considered as Paul’s Creed, formulary of doctrines, confession of faith. For, carefully considered, it will be found to embrace all doctrines which the Church holds as fundamental to salvation; to wit: that man by nature is a poor, lost sinner; that Jesus Christ, uniting two distinct natures—human and Divine—is his only Saviour; that His mission of salvation was not merely as a prophet to instruct, but as a

priest to atone; and that He came not to save all men in general, but individually and personally, such as, feeling their own guilt and danger, turned away from all systems of self-righteousness, cast themselves for salvation on this great atoning sacrifice, expressing their true penitence and faith in this comprehensive formula of belief and love.

“It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” So Paul puts the marvelous comprehensiveness of his saying. And he adds to all this, the thought of its ineffable and infinite preciousness.

“A saying faithful and worthy of all acceptance.” The word acceptance denotes, in the original, hospitality and loving reception of a guest, a taking at once as truth into the intellect and the heart. The word “All” is used here in its very widest application. Paul declares that this *“faithful saying”* is worthy of universal unquestioning, instantaneous and adoring reception. The acceptance of all men—of the rich, the wise, the mighty, the noble—for it proclaims them all alike *“sinners;”* and, the while, of the poor and the wretched and the ignorant and the outcast, for it teaches that in God’s regard all men are esteemed equal, for all men are sinners. It is worthy of the reception of all men in all their varieties of moral character, for it teaches the man of the most exalted natural virtues, and beautified with all the purities of the highest social life, that he is, notwithstanding, *a poor, lost sinner*. And it teaches the veriest outcast from all that is lovely and of good report, that for him there is eternal life, for *Christ came into the world to save poor, lost sinners*. It is worthy

the reception of every order of intellect, for there is a simplicity and comprehensibleness in this saying which the most child-like and unlearned and imbecile can understand. And, the while, there is a breadth and a height and a magnificence and an absolute infinity of truth which will throughout eternity baffle the powers of every finite intelligence, and which the angels of God bend over in adoring scholarship, desiring to look into. It is worthy the acceptance of all men in every possible sphere and condition of life.

I may be in prosperity. God may have gathered around me, in His boundless love, all the beautiful and bright things of earth, until, walking in a paradise and reposing in a palace, my heart be tempted to make idols out of the finite loveliness in forgetfulness of the Infinite. But, then, one thought of this stupendous deed of my Redeemer will so touch my proud heart that in adoring, over-mastering gratitude I shall turn away from every idol, and worship only my God.

I may be in adversity ; and in my lonely and forlorn home there may be only the crust of bread and the cup of water. Or from some grave, whereunto has gone down my darling, there may have risen up a thick cloud, in whose shadow my home and heart seem sunk in the very Valley of Death. Yet even there are thoughts of redeeming love.

Salvation ! Salvation ! Its grace in the present and in the future, its invisible and infinite gladness will so overbear all mortal agony and anguish, that, as Paul, in the high places of Christian faith and hope and love, far up, as it were, even midway between earth and heaven, I can look down on the wildest storms and

seas of earthly trial, and laugh them to scorn as only "*the light afflictions which are but for a moment,*" because on them falls, the while, all the unveiled splendor, "*the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*"

I can not enlarge. Enough of these brief, mortal thoughts incite us to feel the truth, for all the immortal powers and eternal life of an angel can never comprehend it. This truth of Apostolic faith and rapture and love, this saying faithful and worthy of all acceptation, that *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of which I am chief.*

Now to this faithful saying. Are you a little child? See that wonderful babe as it weeps in the manger of Bethlehem. *Jesus Christ came to save you.* Are you in the prime and strength of proud manhood? See that wonderful form upon the cross, bearing your sins, enduring your sorrows. *Jesus Christ came to save you.* Oh! I would not weary you with my much speaking; yet, standing as I do to-night, so close to this suffering Saviour, and knowing how much you need to feel in your heart His converting grace and His comforting love, I cannot suffer you to turn away from the Cross of my suffering Lord without one earnest word of exhortation and entreaty. You may tell me that you have seen too much, and know too much, to be scared by poor trickeries of priestcraft. But we tell you, this is no deception, no fraud, no delusion. Ask your father; ask your mother; ask yonder dying saint, whose fading eyes are yet flashing with the out-bursting glories of immortality. Nay, look upon this Cross, this suffering, dying victim, suffering for you, dying for you, and learn, learn; that it is "*a faithful saying, and worthy*

of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."

But the application is mainly unto Christ's professing followers. We have been considering this great fact of redemption as set forth in our blessed sacrament, and we want to go away and abide under the full power of its truths. If hitherto we have been remiss in the work of our Divine Master, we want this truth to quicken us. Oh, how can we longer live at this poor, dying rate, in a world where the Son of God died to save us! He came from the embraces of His Father's love. He came to a world of sinfulness and to a life of agony, that we might be saved. *Redemption!* Oh, what a thought it is to quicken every power in His blessed service! *Redemption!* Why, we lay in that awful dungeon. There was no voice whispering of home in the thick darkness. Those iron and adamantine bulwarks shut away all angelic succor; shut our poor souls in unto despairing anguish; but we are redeemed, bought back. A glorious light flashed through the prison-house; the heavy chains fell off; the awful portal opens; and see! see! a glorious form stands on the threshold, in His hands a precious ransom—all the riches, all the raptures, all the glories that had been His with the Father before the world was; and all, all, all lavished on our redemption. And now, now, now what shall we deny unto our Divine Master. Oh! may God quicken us in self-denying work for Christ's Church and kingdom by the power of Paul's simple saying, "*Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.*"

But if this truth be powerful to exhort, it is yet mightier to comfort. *Redeemed! Redeemed!* Oh,

what a word it is! *Saved! Saved!* (I love to repeat it.) Oh, what a thought it is! A child saved from a burning house! From foundation to roof the red surges hem him in and roar around him! But see! right through the encircling fire rushes a mighty deliverer; and, reckless of danger, though his own garments are scorched and his own flesh burnt, yet he bears that babe forth, in all its joyous life, to its mother's arms again. *Saved! Saved!* A man overboard in a night of storms, lifting one despairing cry in the stormy air, and then sinking, despairing, in the devouring seas! But, behold! a life-boat lowered, manned! Darting like a sea-bird through the blinding spray, and strong arms outstretched to snatch the poor cast-away from the very jaws of death. *Saved! Saved! Saved!* Oh, what a word it is! Yet all this is nothing to one soul's salvation from the angry flood and the awful fires to which sin was bearing us! Oh, what gratitude becomes us! What exalting, everlasting joy should be ours! Who talks of trials now, and sorrow, and afflictions? Oh, let these weeping eyes flash, these breaking hearts bound, these complaining lips send heavenward their exulting hallelujahs!

We can not utter it as a cold doctrine to be believed, but we must sing it as a hymn, shout it aloud as a triumphant hallelujah. "*It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief!*"

CROSS AND CROWN.

"If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together, for I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."—

ROMANS, VIII. 17, 18.

Some one has beautifully denominated the Bible "A record of human sorrows." Beginning with the story of a heart-breaking expulsion from Eden, and ending with the terrible and tearful predictions of the Apocalypse, it is in all verity like the seer's scroll—"written within and without with lamentation and mourning and woe." The Bible is a record of Christian loss, and therefore of necessity a volume of mournful histories and a compilation of tearful and touching incidents. For whatever others may receive in this world, the Divine allotment unto every saint is affliction; and the tender words of Jesus unto His trembling Disciples in all time are, "In the world ye shall receive tribulation." We do not say, my brethren—God forbid we should say—that a Christian is not, even on earth, mostly happier than the man who hath not felt the love of God shed abroad in the heart. Yet his well-spring of happiness is from a point other and deeper than unalloyed earthly prosperity. The internal texture of Christian appareling may be unto the wearing spirit all soft and silken, yet in its external aspect, even unto Christians themselves, it seemeth like the garb of Him crying in Judca's wilderness—sack-cloth and camel's hair and a leathern girdle.

Christian biography is of absolute necessity, from the very nature of human affiliation to God—a record of human sorrow. And for this reason do I give thanks daily unto God for the transcription among them of the life of Paul, a man whose life was all bitterness, whose pathway to heaven was emphatically and peculiarly rough and thorny and arduous, and yet whose joy in God carried it so mightily over all emotions of native despondency that he walked it in the exulting majesty of a conqueror in his triumphant pathway to heaven. And in respect of Paul we rejoice specially in this, that what may be termed his internal biography, *i. e.*, the history of his emotions and frames of feeling, have been recorded by his own hand in his Epistles. So that after the heart of Paul hath decayed for eighteen centuries in the cold grave, yet with the emotions of that heart we are to-day conversant; and, opening the pages of his inimitable Epistles, we can learn the secret of his abiding joy, as from the resistless eloquence of his living life.

Our text forms a thankful passage from this internal life of the Apostle. It gives us the reason of his joyous exultation amid all the trials and tribulations gathering so thick along his pathway, and as addressed to ourselves sets forth the philosophy of Christian consolation under afflictions in two general and great particulars, to a consideration of which in their order we invite your attention this morning.

First. The first thought insisted on in this connection is, that afflictions are a necessary preparation to the heavenly state. “If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.” The word “that” at the beginning of the second clause expresses the re-

sult and design, *i. e.*, "We suffer to the end, that we may be glorified together."

Now, in the exposition and expansion of this thought it is satisfactory enough just to show that God even arbitrarily had connected happiness in heaven with the endurance of earthly tribulation. There are a thousand things bearing to each other in the movements of God's administration, the relation of cause and effect, or of design and result, the philosophy of whose connection we can in no way discover. And in such cases it is quite enough to be assured of the fact, though utterly at fault as to its philosophy. In the case under review it is quite enough for one practically to know, that by an ordinance of God the heavenly estate is to be attained through much tribulation; that between the estate of man's unstartled carnality and heaven's revealed glories there is spread a dark and desolate region, over which the spiritual pilgrim must find, weeping and wearied, his adventurous way; that the Port of Peace wherein a redeemed soul would cast anchor for eternity lies afar off over dark and stormy seas; and whether or not I can tell why God hath caused so fierce a sea to roll around this Isle of Being, it is enough for me to know that if I would gain that secure and peaceful harborage, I must weigh anchor and spread sail and stand out in staunch seamanship over against blast and billow.

Leaving the philosophy to take care of itself, the fact is that about which there can be no question, that the way unto the New Jerusalem lies by the Garden and the Golgotha, and that if any man will reign with Christ he must first suffer with Him, denying himself and taking up his cross and following hard after Him, attain-

ing the crown as Jesus Himself attained it, by rough journeying in a pathway of trials and temptations and tears.

But, beloved, though for all practical effects the simple knowledge of the fact would suffice, yet much, even of the philosophy, is not at all beyond us. To the eye, even of the most cursory observation, there is an observable connection between the endurance of affliction and the upgrowing of heavenly graces ; and not only are we able to believe the truth that the glorious estate of heaven is attained through much tribulation, but at least partially are we enabled to understand how it is that under the economy of the spirit these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, can work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. On this point we remark,

First. That the effect of afflictions is the dislodgement from our hearts of the thousand beautiful forms wherein the world solicits our worship in its enmity to God. The idolatries of the world are the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life ; and although there is no power at all in the ferocities of self-inflicted maceration over such influences, and the scorpion-scourge that lashes sin out of its strong fastnesses must strike below the surface and reach the soul, yet such a power does go forth with the infliction of heaven-directed chastisements.

The lust of the flesh ! What field or facility is there for its mighty ascendancy, where, like Job's, with his ashes and sackcloth, the body lies stricken and sore under the chastisements of the paternal rod ? The lust of the eye ! What possibility of bowing down in deep love

unto the idols of gold and jewels and vast wealth, when, like Lot in his exodus from Sodom, they are all left, houses and gardens and homes, with the fierce kindlings of heaven-sent flames? The pride of life! The thirst after the honors and applauses of men, ambition's yearning for the grandeur and equipage and pomp of a vain-glorious world! What field for it to bring offerings rich with incense and golden censurs, when amid the heavings of heaven's earthquakes the temple and the altar and the god are hurled together to the dust? In a word, while the lash of a self-inflicting maceration may be nothing more than a straw in the hand of a proud carnality, in removing sin from the senses to the soul, yet in my Saviour's hand affliction is the scourge of small cords, driving dove-sellers and money-changers from God's temple in the heart.

Second.—And this leads me to remark, secondly, that temporal afflictions tend not only to weaken the dominion of sin within us, but tend, also, as well, to invigorate the growth of Christian graces in the soul. The field here open to our consideration is too wide even for the most cursory illustration. You may expatiate here at your liesure, and will not fail to perceive how every spiritual grace groweth grandly under the severest appliance of affliction.

1. Take humility, that grace which in a contrast of man with his Maker, or of man's present with his primeval glory, brings him to lie in low and lovely self-abasement at his Maker's feet, and tell me if, like the oak amid the mountains, it shoots not downward its roots deepest and strongest when beaten by the clouds and winds and storms of heaven.

Nebuchadnezzar walked royally in the palace of his kingdom of Babylon, and lifted up his voice in its height and his haughtiness, and said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" But behold! driven forth by the rod of chastisement, herding with the soulless things that die, and beaten by the rain and dew and storms of heaven, he lifteth his weeping voice to heaven, blessing Him whose dominion is above—an everlasting dominion—and before whom all the inhabitants of the earth are of none repute and vanity.

2. Or, take patience, one of the noblest jewels in the diadem of Christian graces, whose essence is submission to the Divine will, and whose whole effect is to lay us, body and spirit and soul, at Jehovah's feet; and consistent though it be with the prayer that the cup dregged with worm-wood may pass away, yet, mingling always with the entreaty a spirit of beautiful resignation, "Not my will, but Thine be done." And how seems it possible that this grace can thrive well save under the stern influences of disappointed hopes? Who does not perceive at a glance, as clearly philosophic as the connection of cause and effect, that as its natural result tribulation worketh patience? Behold yonder! the mother has returned her beloved charge unto the Egyptian princess; and Moses, though doubtless a true child of God, yet, grown haughty amid the gratification of unrestrained wealth, rises up in his impatience of Divine delay and slays the aggressive Egyptian.

But look again! and behold how in every hour of his long wanderings from the begun Exodus at the

Nile to the completed Exodus at the Jordan; how, more than any other man, perhaps, that has lived, his life seems crowned with the delightful manifestation of patient love; and wonder not at its manifestation. For forty years amid [the wild solitudes of Midian's deserts hath Moses been learning in the school of affliction as a keeper of sheep.

3. Then once more, for though the principle is most true in respect of every Christian grace, yet our limits forbid further enlargement than to take faith—a principle, I grant you, of miraculous implantation, but dependent for its vigorous development upon the universal principles of grace-growing. Take faith, and see how necessary afflictions are to its vigorous and largest exercise. Is faith a reliance on Divine care-taking? Where meets it its fullest manifestation? In the heart of a rich disciple whose house is filled with a prodigality of all the good things of earth? or in the heart of the destitute disciple who, in want of life's commonest enjoyments, knows what it is, in the uncertainty of literal want, to say, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Is faith an abiding sense of God's presence and God's protection? Where can you find it in such beautiful displays as when, amid the darkness and desolation of life's desert path, the stricken child perceives that he should stray forever hopelessly were it not for the Father's guidance and guardianship that leads him on?

Is faith the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen? Where towers it into such colossal stature as when under the dark shadow of intense sufferings? Of things present and things visible there is not one to mar its vision and divide its regards.

And thus might you run through the whole catalogue of Christian graces and perceive how naturally and necessarily do they grow in strength and stature under the stern discipline of sorrow, and how, just as the oak tree is storm-beaten into strength, and just as the soldier is fought into courage, and just as the mariner is shipwrecked and tempest-tossed into seamanship, just so is a Christian raised into the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus under the rugged training and tutelage of tears.

And this leads me to remark, *Thirdly*, That temporal afflictions tend to force the heart away from the things of time, and fasten it on the nobler things of eternity. God made earth as man's permanent abiding-place, and in the fine adaptation of its counterpart objects to man's internal desires, beautifully was it fitted to become his spot of constant and contented inhabitation. And the process whereby his affections are weaned from the world, and fastened on the far-away shores of immortality, must be like the processes of a compelled sailorship in a hostile port, tearing the bark fiercely from its moorings, and driving it in strong tempests to sea again. And thus it is that the abiding and earnest desire to depart and be with Christ has never sprung up in all its mastery, save in a heart despoiled of its idols by the iron weight of sorrow.

Our property melts away amid flames, and there, standing amid the ashes of our cherished things, we pine for wealth incorruptible by moth and rust. Our home is spoiled of all its beautiful influences, and then, in the solitude of its forsaken hearth, we sigh for the social circles of the "Many mansions in our Father's house," our dear

friends whose names are written on the purest tablet of the heart. They pine away from our bosoms, and droop and die; and then, standing in wild anguish by their beloved graves, we mourn for an ascension to that bright world where partings are forever unknown and Death, in his dread and desolating grandeur, is for aye a memory, and never more an anticipation. And thus by a process purely philosophical, and everywhere acted on, does the great God beget in His children a longing for heaven. Go out to-night and look at the stars, that stud in marshalled glory the azure vault; and what causes them thus to burn and brighten? Why, darkness—the shadow of a deep night on all the beautiful things of sunlit vision. And as in the material, so in the moral world. If mortal men have looked toward heaven, and beheld its unfolding glories coming out star by star as orbs at eventide, it has been when the shadows of earthly sorrow brooded in solemn midnight over house and heart.

Now, our limits forbid that we should dwell a moment longer on this first point of the text. Christians should not despond in the midst of afflictions, because they furnish a necessary preparation for the heavenly state.

And we go on very briefly to consider the second great reason which our text sets forth for consolation in affliction, namely, That in contrast with the glories which they tend to work out they are worthy of no consideration.

“For I reckon,” etc. The word “reckon” is technical. It means to compute arithmetically. Paul asserts that coolly and carefully he had held them in merchant-like contrast, and verily he was of all men best prepared

for such a reckoning. The sufferings of the present evil world! In them who hath matched Him? "In labors most abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons most frequent, in death oft. Of the Jews five times received he forty stripes, save one; thrice was he beaten of rods; once was he stoned; thrice suffered he shipwreck; a night and a day had he been on the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of his own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils on the sea, in perils among false brethren! In weariness and painfulness and watching often, in hunger and thirst and fastings often, in cold and nakedness and dungeons and deaths! Thus understood he better than other men what were the realities of the sufferings of the present time.

And of the glories which are to be revealed! Too wonderful to tell them had he witnessed. Whether in the body or out of the body he knew not, and it mattered not. But caught up to the third heaven, and listening to the unutterable words, and gazing upon the transcendent visions of grandeur and glory that burst in that high dwelling of the God of gods, he had descended again to walk, a living man, among the gilded toys for which living and dying men barter their eternity. And though never for a moment does he attempt a revelation; and I thank God for it, because an attempt to describe presupposes the possibility of description, and, until this mortal shall put on its immortality, I would have heaven hidden, not by a veil of darkness, but by the depth of its own unapproachable and perfect glory. Though never for a moment, I say, did he attempt a

revelation of the sights that he saw and the words that he heard, yet one thing at least did he. He "reckoned." Under the full beatitudes of their abiding memory he contrasted them with his present suffering, yea, with the pencil of arithmetical calculation he sat down, subtracting the one from the other, counting afflictions as the human price paid, and glory as the Divine inheritance given. And then and there he reckoned that the sufferings of the present world are not worthy to be compared with the glories which are to be revealed in us. And who dare gainsay his reckoning? Who so well as Paul knew whether these light afflictions, which are for a season, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?

My brother, are you in poverty? Well, it is necessary often that a Christian should be thus. We are pilgrims journeying towards heaven, and what we need is, not the palace reared in strength and the gold hoarded in coffers. No! no! We need the leathern girdle about the loins and the scrip with the water-cruise, and the tent to be stricken lightly at rise of sun—God, who knows well, sees it best for you to be poor.

But this is the question—What is the pressure of your present wants, compared with the prodigality of your hastening allotments? Oh, those treasures in heaven! Gold inalienable, garments incorruptible! Tell us, what meaneth it, ye risen dead? To be joint heirs with Christ unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled.

Or are you despised, my brother? Do the rich and the gifted frown on you as on an outcast? And has your offering been that richer thing than of worldly wealth—the sacrifice of reputation on God's altar?

Well, be it so. Ye are in an enemy's country, and what right to expect other treatment than of strangers and spies? But, then, this is the question—How are these sneers and reviling of dying worms to be compared with the glorious and triumphant welcome that shall peal forth around you as ye get home yonder by the streams of life?

Have you lost friends? Is the home deserted? Is the soul prostrate and the heart desolate in its longings for the beloved ones? Well, God help you, brothers! If there be one starless standpoint in this night of storms, it is by the cold grave whereunto have gone down the beautiful, the cherished dead. Yet it is well even thus to be stricken. The tie which bindeth heart to heart links sometimes an iron bondage between the soul and heaven.

And all this is the question—What, with all its agonies, is the hour of bitter parting on earth to compare with the hour of everlasting meeting in that heavenly home? Ah! and that other sorest of all earthly tribulations—death! Yes, you must die, my brother, soon, very soon. Already, it may be, angels are on the way from your bright world to stand in your dying chamber; and ere we meet again in God's temple, you may feel it—all the awful strife and agony of death. And truly it is dreadful. God forbid I speak kindly of a monster whose iron foot, in its desolating majesty, is on every heart. God meant us to fear death, that we may get ready to die. But this is the question—Let the grim monster come in all the terrors of his array of darkness, yet, after all, what reckon you? That the terrors of an earthly death can be compared with the higher triumphs of a life eternal?

Beloved, we can not continue further the contrast. On such a theme we feel as the Disciples felt on the Galilean mountains, looking up into heaven, all light with the revealed glory of their ascended Saviour. We know not what we shall be. The curtain lifts not yet. The unspeakable words thrill not these stranger airs. This only do we know, that dark as may be our present allotments, they are but the storm-beatings into seaman-ship of the spirit homeward bound over the waters. We know that these light afflictions that are for a season shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and, knowing this, we urge you with all the tears of our hearts, that if ye are not yet Christians, ye tear yourselves away at once from these earthly entanglements that lead to death, and if you are Christians, ye give yourselves more earnestly and ardently unto Gospel faith and Gospel following. Oh! there is might and motive and majesty in Paul's glowing arguments. As that which is an affliction, and an affliction for a moment, and a light affliction for a moment, can weigh little in the contrast of that which is a glory, *i. e.*, the burning magnificence of heaven, yea, a weight of glory, yea, an exceeding weight of glory, yea, a far more exceeding weight of glory, yea, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, so the folly of that man who loses the whole world is infinite wisdom in contrast with him who loses his soul.

And here we leave you amid the scenery of the text. Behold Paul's bark anchored at its earthly moorings! And he, aged and withered and weak, yet with his skill of eternal reckonings all unimpaired, sitteth on the vessel's deck to calculate the gains and the losses of his

contemplated voyage. Before him—ah! he knew it well, for he had been out amid its hurricanes; before him spread an ocean arched with angry skies, and swept by mighty winds, and wrought upon tempestuously by strife and storm. And had he known no more, that bark would have decayed piece-meal in the soundings of this mortal shore. But more he does know. He is thinking of the bright land beyond the islands of the blessed that smile in glorious beauty beyond, beyond.

And behold! he rises from his reckonings in the glorious ambition of a high seamanship; his heart boundeth; his eye flashes; he hath immortal longings. He is in a strait, to weigh anchor and spread sail and stand out for eternity.

GOD'S FORBEARANCE.

“ Who can tell if God will turn and repent and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not ? ”—JONAH III. 9.

The duty of observing national fasts in times of great national peril is plainly taught in God's Word ; and the Divine blessing which attended them, even in cases not specifically commended by God, gave to the human authority appointing them an implied Divine sanction. The recorded fasts of Israel, when defeated by the men of Ai ; of Ahab, when denounced by the prophet Elijah ; of Jehoshaphat, when assaulted by the confederate forces of Ammon and Moab ; of Nineveh, when visited by Jonah ; of the Jews in Shushan, and the returning captives at the river Ahava ; all illustrate this truth. In every one of those cases the manifest blessing of God attended the exercise of fasting. Jehovah mercifully interposed in behalf of the penitent, “ to give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”

On fitting occasions, and in a fitting spirit, therefore, the appointment by rulers and governors of days of national humiliation comes with the full force of a Divine sanction. And it can not but be acceptable to God—this public acknowledgment on the part of our highest national authority of a power still infinitely above it, unto which all human government is alike subservient and accountable. And, even amid all the mournfulness of the occasion, very cheering it is to the

pious heart to witness this public acknowledgment that against God we have sinned and from His judgments are we suffering. And from this national recognition of the fact that in our present exigencies Omniscience can alone guide, and Omnipotence alone save us, does our faith grow strong, that God has not yet cast us off forever, but will mercifully interpose, as of old, to preserve and bless a repentant people.

But in order that this national act may secure Divine forgiveness for the past, and favor for the future, it must be thoroughly and unfeignedly what it purports to be—a day of fasting and prayer and humiliation before God for our national iniquities.

And if, instead of this, it shall be made the occasion to disseminate partisan political opinions, or to appeal unto selfish and malignant instincts—of uncharitable criticisms and criminations—to discourse of and deal with other men's sins rather than our own, carrying our lighted candles in our search after evil leaven away from our own houses into the dark corners of the dwellings of our neighbors. If in such a spirit our part be performed, then will the occasion only aggravate the evil, and by our hypocrisy and self-righteousness we shall incense still more deeply the Infinite Jehovah.

Nor are we here merely to confess indiscriminately, and in a general way, our own national sins. Our business is to consider in particular such sins as God seems now threatening signally to punish, *i. e.*, those acts of iniquity which in the manifest working of Providence seem, in the relation of antecedents and consequents, to have brought us as a nation into our present imminent peril. We are, of course, not un-

mindful that all sins are occasions of Divine displeasure. Nevertheless, we are as well to remember here, that particular sins receive at God's hand special punishment; and so intimate and apparent, for the most part, is the connection between the sin and its punishment, that seldom in any given case are we left in doubt as to the iniquity for which in that instance we are suffering chastisement.

An intemperate man may be, the while, a dishonest or impure man. But while he is suffering the terrible delirium that comes from strong drink, we feel that it is especially for his drunkenness God is then punishing him. And as of individuals, so of nations; in particular ways and times God visits and punishes particular sins. And we repeat it, on occasions like this of public humiliation, we are chiefly called to understand and repent of these special sins whose evil influences we are at the time experiencing.

It is, indeed, right and befitting on this day to acknowledge and bemoan all our manifold offences. Truly in many ways and times are we before God a most guilty people. There is not a precept of the Divine law thundered from Sinai that lies not this day under our feet, broken and dishonored, as the Word of an insulted and despised Jehovah.

We have had other gods before Him. And our manifold and multiplied forms of national idolatry have cried as loudly against us unto heaven, as if we had built glorious shrines unto false gods, and burnt thereat costly sacrifices in a ritual of false worship.

We have taken the name of the Lord our God in vain. Profane swearing has come to be regarded as

American rhetoric ; and every breeze of heaven that comes from the Divine hand, odorous of blessing, bears back unto the ear of God its foul burden of blasphemy.

We do not remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. That season of heavenly rest lies, as an outcast thing, broken down in our streets ; and creation groaneth and travaileth in the unwilling bondage wherewith we are compelling even its brute elements to profane God's Holy Day.

We do not honor father and mother. That filial reverence and love which, as the primitive form of obedience to authority, lies at the foundation of social and governmental prosperity, hath become a thing old-fashioned and obsolete, and is looked for almost in vain amid our land's youthful and restless and irreverent impatience.

We do commit adultery, till the cheek of purity burns in places of public concourse, and the heart of faith looks almost for the very judgment of fire that came down upon Sodom.

We do bear false witness. Slander, falsehood, perjury in high and low places, are dark threads woven in the very woof of our social life, until our grand national boast and once glory of free speech and a free press have become an abomination and a curse, as an unrestrained and infamous license to abuse and injure our fellow men.

We do kill, till the blood of murdered men cries out against us from every city street and every by-way in the wilderness.

We do steal, till popular dishonesty, under its various forms of defalcations and assignments and extensions

and compromises, hath so destroyed the old-fashioned faith in men, that every social or political influence which wakes a ripple in the waters of commerce, begets a panic and a crisis, wherein all confidence is unhinged and all credit shipwrecked.

We do covet, so that to become rich is the absorbing desire of American life. And the stronger pulses of the American heart and conscience can be felt only in the great tides of commerce.

All these things in their most manifest and heinous forms are we doing, until our national attitude before God is that of a young giant, heated with wine, standing with his bold face against the heavens and his feet trampling God's broken tables in the dust in mockery and despal. And for all these things humiliation and true penitence do manifestly become us. God is angry with us, and it is time that we paused in the madness of our national impiety, and with keen apprehension of Divine anger, sought by tears of Godly sorrow and deeds of active obedience, to avert from our national life the just judgments of God. Of all these popular sins there should be this day sorrowful remembrance and sincere acknowledgment in our approaches unto God. For doubtless all these iniquities have conspired to kindle His indignation, as He casts on us, even now, the frown of His awful face and terrifies us with fears of His awful displeasure.

But while considering thus generally our national iniquities, on a day like this, appointed with a special reference, it is our more personal duty to consider those particular sins which God is now especially threatening to punish, *i. e.*, those sinful actions which in the economy of

Divine Providence seem to have brought us, as a nation, into our present exigence of peril; and surely on this point there is no room for misapprehension. The least philosophic mind in our midst perceives at a glance the cause and character of the present crisis; and our service in God's house to-day will be a failure, nay, more, an offence and provocation, if we shrink from looking at this whole matter honestly, examining as Christians and conscientious men the cause of our distress, and seeking to learn our duties and repent of our sins in regard of it.

Now, confessedly, on all hands, we have been brought into our present condition of distress and alarm because of our attitudes and actions in regard, in one way or another, of this simple thing—slavery. But for this we should unquestionably be this day, throughout our entire borders, the most prosperous and happy of all nations upon earth. And the strange fact, that at the close of a year almost unexampled in its abundant material of prosperity, we find ourselves in a crisis of pecuniary distress and political convulsion that has had no parallel in our history. This strange fact, I say, we all perceive to have resulted directly from our acts and attitudes in reference to slavery. For these God in His Providence is manifestly distressing us, and our business should be to discover, if possible, wherein in this matter we have sinned.

Now, on this point there is a class of moralists among us who dispose of this whole question quite summarily, and to themselves satisfactorily, by declaring that this thing—slavery—is itself the sin with which God is angry and for which He is distressing us. In our permission of this holding property in man, say these men, we are

showing ourselves a nation of oppressors, and therefore God is rising up to dash us in pieces, as a potter's vessel. And if this explanation be true, then is our whole duty plain; and as we would escape the threatened destruction, we must, at all events and at any cost, get rid of this national iniquity. For we have not assembled this day as statesmen, seeking to perpetuate forms of national life by political expedients, but as Christian men, anxious by penitential tears and turnings-away from iniquities to appease Divine anger and escape the just judgments of God.

If slavery be the great national iniquity whose protection under our Constitution is so offensive to God, then it is our duty, a duty on which our future destiny depends, and which God will assuredly bless us in performing, to rise up and declare as Christian and confederate States, that we will abide by no Constitution which recognizes and protects it.

But, then, honestly and calmly considered, is this thing so? And, without protracted or philosophic argument, we answer the whole question unhesitatingly in the negative.

God has never destroyed nations, and never will, for any acts which He has not Himself plainly forbidden, nay, which He has not fearfully denounced as abominably sinful. And with regard to this whole matter of slavery, it suffices for our present purpose to say, as has been unanswerably a thousand times before, that God has never forbidden it or declared that it is sinful; yea, rather may we say that the Bible abundantly leads us to believe that He does not so regard it. The Divine treatment of positive sin is never to permit it unrebuked,

never, indeed, to legislate about it, but peremptorily and at once to denounce and forbid it. God does not say, "Thou shalt not lie or steal or covet or kill or commit adultery, except in certain cases and under specified conditions; but by a broad, sweeping, uncompromising negation denounces each and all such acts at once and forever.

But in regard of this holding men in involuntary servitude God has expressly permitted and legislated for it, saying to old Israel, by the mouth of His servant Moses, "Of the heathen that are round about you, shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids, and they shall be your possession, and ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them as a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever." Saying, moreover, to the Christian Church of all time by the mouth of His servant Paul, "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed."

Now, these passages, with all their numerous parallels, coupled with the fact that both Testaments were written in the midst of involuntary slavery. And yet, neither in the old nor the new is it anywhere either forbidden or denounced as sinful. Settling at least this point satisfactorily to all who take the Bible as a rule of faith and practice, that it is not the simple existence of slavery in our nation which has excited God's anger. And the evil thing must be found in our own acts and attitudes in regard of it.

Wherein, then, have we sinned in these acts and attitudes? And in answering this question we are here to consider our own sins, and not those of other men.

Were we keeping fast to-day in a Southern sanctuary, and were the speaker addressing a congregation of slaveholders, he would regard it as his duty, as God gave him grace, fearlessly to be fulfilled, to descant only upon the iniquities then and there abounding. He would not waste precious moments in enlightening their consciences as to other men's sins; and if he knew in those communities of abuses of power and prerogative; of slave-holding characterized by cruelty and oppression and impurity; of State laws that are iniquitous, and social customs that are monstrous; of acts and attitudes in regard of this institution justly exciting the indignation of the Christian and civilized world; or if there were manifest, in their relation to other States, a want of brotherly kindness and courtesy and forbearance, or of honest loyalty to our national Constitution; if ambitious place-men were seeking to kindle strife, and Christian ministers were daring to preach treason and Christian men to pray for treason in God's sanctuary, then, I say, would the speaker, as he looked for favor from God, lift up his voice in earnest rebuke of the sin and in tearful entreaties unto repentance.

But I am not in such a presence, not addressing such men. With these sins in this day of humiliation we have no personal concern. Our duty as Christians is with our personal iniquities. Wherein, then, have we sinned in regard of this thing—slavery? And I answer—

First, and as the foundation of all our other practical errors. We have manifested a disposition which Paul in respect of wickedness ranks with that of the thief and the malefactor and the murderer, *i. e.*, we have made ourselves “busy-bodies in other men's matters.” What-

ever may be our individual opinion of slavery, we have no more concern with Southern slave-holding than with Russian serfdom. To it we have no relation, and in regard of it sustain no responsibility; and while manifold and monstrous social evils exist in our very midst, for which God holds us responsible in wasting our sympathies in this direction, we have subjected ourselves to the severe rebuke of our Lord, as hypocrites laboring with the mote in a brother's eye with a beam in their own; yea, to the more tremendous rebuke of His example, who, spending His whole earthly life in the midst of those despotic forms of slavery, uttered against it no word either of reproof or denunciation.

Meanwhile, *Secondly*. Not satisfied with this constant intermeddling with what in no way concerns us, we have pursued our work with the very worst and most wicked spirit. Ignoring all the meekness and gentleness wherewith true piety labors to reform and bless mankind, we have launched against our Christian brethren of the South arrows poisoned with the venom of most malignant passion. The vocabulary of abuse has been exhausted in the taunt and vituperation and invective wherewith we have assaulted Christian men and Christian Churches as dear as ourselves unto the heart of Christ.

Nor this the worst, for, *Thirdly*. We have in this matter, in its most inexcusable and intolerable form, borne false witness against our brethren, because this, like every social institution, is liable to abuse, and has practically been abused. And there have been cruel and unjust masters, as there have been unjust and cruel parents and magistrates. We have carefully searched out

these casual enormities, and declared them essential to the system, and denounced all slave-holders as living in shameless sin, and guilty before God of the most abominable iniquities. And on this point are we perfectly confident that of all instances of unscrupulous and persistent evil-speaking the world has ever witnessed there can be found nothing to compare with the malignant misrepresentation our Southern brethren in Christ have received at the hands of nominal Christians at the North. We may not, indeed, all have been engaged in this work, but we have all been partners in the iniquity, by suffering it unrebuked in our midst, yea, by protecting and encouraging it, indeed, under the plausible plea of maintaining inviolate "freedom of the press and of speech" as a grand prerogative of freemen, as if personal liberty involved a license to utter, regardless of truth and of consequences, at all times and in all places, whatsoever of evil thought may be inspired by malignant passion; a license incompatible with all higher personal rights and all general social welfare, and therefore no more to be protected or tolerated than a license to fling fire-brands into our houses and plunge daggers into our hearts; a license, moreover, which the Word of God most emphatically denounces, declaring that "the tongue," unrestrained in its licentious utterance, is one of the sorest of social evils—"a world of iniquity, defiling the whole body, setting fire to the course of nature, and itself set on fire of hell."

Now, these are some of the wrongs we have been guilty of in the matter under review, and manifestly out of these wrongs have sprung our present difficulties. This spirit of self-righteousness and uncharitableness

and false-witness has been steadily waxing mighty in our midst. Entering, year after year, more and more as a controlling power into our politics, and a disturbing force into our religion, it has destroyed the old parties in the State and broken in two the great Christian denominations of the Church, till, culminating in a fierce national controversy, it has brought us this day, as incensed and belligerent sections, upon the very verge of national destruction. For such evil acts and influences, so far as they have been ours, we are this day penitentially to humble ourselves before God, following in this regard the Apostolic rule—"To cease to do evil, and learn to do well"—not thinking to excuse our wrong doing by that of other men, but, leaving them to bear the burden and meet the issues of their own iniquities, to set ourselves right in this matter with our own consciences and in the sight of men and before God, assured that when we have done this, and then only, can we with any well-founded faith look for that Divine aid and deliverance which is promised unto the sincere and humble and obedient penitent. We do not say that, even if we do this, God will surely interfere for our deliverance. There are periods in national, as well as individual life, when it is too late for repentance; and Christian patriotism confesses this day to a strong fear that the measure of our popular iniquity is full, and we are ripe for destruction. Certain it is, the sins of our land lie heavy upon us, sins of omission and commission; sins in high places and low places, of the rich and the poor, of the ruled and the rulers; sins in the heart, on the tongue, in the life; sins against God's judgments and God's mercies; rebellion against God's

law and ingratitude against God's love ; iniquities, in a word, in every place and of every kind and in every degree and against all obligation. Ah me ! what a tremendous account of evil thought hath a holy God written up against this so highly blessed people ; and who marvels that we are in jeopardy, when sin, such fearful and foul sin against God, lies as a palsy on the intellect of our wise men and a crushing load on the strength of our mighty men ?

Meanwhile, though thus manifestly and even consciously guilty, we can perceive little in our midst of that sincere national repentance which secured unto an imperiled people God's deliverance of old. In the midst of all this manifest peril, where, so far as human wisdom can foresee, the deplorable alternative is, either a bloody extirpation of a rebellious section or the never-ceasing struggles of rival confederacies. In a crisis which might draw tears from angel eyes, the last great experiment of free institutions seeming to fade, and the shadow on the world's dial-plate pausing to go backward through the long centuries of social progress. Yet, thus fearfully circumstanced, what do we see ? We see, on the one hand, armed and open rebellion. States that owe all they have and are to God's blessings on this Union, seemingly dead to every patriotic and philanthropic sentiment of our nature, blind even to every smaller and meaner consideration of self-interest and self-preservation, deaf to all utterances of political science and the wisdom of experience, striving to wreck this grand ship of State, that out of its fragments may be constructed some crazy raft, which, without chart or

quadrant or compass, they may steer by conjecture and the stars.

This on the one hand ; and on the other, men equally insane and abandoned ; States exultant with an unseemly and fearful mirth, denouncing all concessions and compromises, and clamorous for blood. When concessions are only unto righteousness, and compromises are only unto the wronged, and the only blood that can be shed is the blood of our brethren, verily, there is little in all this that looks like national repentance. And as such repentance is the alone condition of the Divine favor, we do feel—we can not but feel—that we are in one of those great exigencies, a state of suspense between hope and fear, wherein we have no certainty that God will interpose for us.

Of one thing we are certain, that our only hope is in God ; and we have no hope in God, save in His prescribed way of repentance and reformation, and earnest prayer. In these respects, having performed our duty, then, and then only, can we cast the whole issue upon a Divine and gracious Providence. Our present duty is,

First. To cherish in our hearts a profounder sense of our dependence as a nation upon the Divine favor. From a want of this practical sentiment our whole peril has sprung. So idolatrous have become our feelings toward our national Union, that we have regarded it not only as self-perpetuating without Divine conservation, but as absolutely indispensable to God's great purposes of mercy and salvation toward the rest of the world. The Divine favor has scarcely been named or reckoned among our elements of prosperity ; and in our national patriotism political sagacity has been more valued than

Godliness, and the ballot-box rather than the mercy-seat has been relied on and resorted to as our grand national palladium.

And with this infidel idolatry, Jehovah has waxed wroth, and is teaching us this day that all the material resources and social influences within us, whereon we have so relied, are, without the Divine blessing, only so many powerful elements of our destruction, and that all these bonds of national union which we have been wont to term *indissoluble*; this communism of social and commercial interests; this brotherhood of kith and kin and race; this grand geographical unity; this proud and priceless partnership in the common memories of a glorious past and the common interests in a dazzling and limitless future; these, all these, and whatever else has seemed to us as bands of triple steel round our imperial confederacy, are only a poor spider's web when an incensed God turns away from us the light of His countenance.

This, then, is our first duty, to return to the simple and strong Christian reliance of our fathers, as well for national as for personal blessing, only upon the sovereign power and mercy of God. This will lead us,

Secondly. To that unfeigned repentance for our sins which can alone secure us the Divine favor. As national judgments are inflicted for national sins, therefore national reformation is the only hopeful way to escape from them. But national sins are but the aggregate of individual sins. A nation only repents when the persons who make up the nation repent, each for his own sin. We must, therefore, enquire diligently this day as to our particular sins of omission or commission where-

with God is angry, sincerely confessing and determinedly forsaking them, and in a new and heartier consecration resolving henceforth in all our national relationships to love our brethren as ourselves, and Jehovah supremely ; that with all our might and mind and strength we may know God, and keep His commandments. In a word, we must firmly and boldly do our duty before we can even ask the Divine assistance.

I am not here to speak evil of any man, much less of men in authority, but I am here to declare as a grand principle of the Divine government, that God helps only those who are striving to help themselves. The mariner who first lets his bark drive amid breakers, and then, recreant to all brave seamanship, lets go helm and rope, that he may weep and pray upon the quarter-deck, that man not only disgraces his manhood, but as foully dishonors God as the veriest infidel. Repentance toward God is no indolent and tearful sentiment, but a strong, resolute purpose to turn away from all that is evil, and struggle for and cling to all that is good. National repentance includes actual national reformation, a conscientious determination to do what is constitutional and right and for the general good in all circumstances and at every cost, assured that only when fearlessly and to the full of our power we are performing our duty can we look for or even ask the Divine interference. Having done this, then,

Thirdly, and finally, we must seek God's merciful interposals by instant and earnest prayer. As if we had nowhere else to go, and felt that without Divine aid all our efforts are useless, we must besiege the mercy-seat with intercessions for every section and every interest of

our distressed country. We must pray that God will give us individually and for our own personal sins the grace of repentance ; that He will remove from our hearts the false pride of opinion which would impel us to persevere in wrong for the sake of consistency ; that He will for Christ's sake freely forgive all those national sins which have called down upon us these Divine judgments ; that He will dispose the people of all these States sincerely to repent of their own special wrongdoings, and henceforth to give diligence to every work of justice and brotherly kindness which the Constitution and laws recognize and require ; that He will bestow heavenly wisdom upon our rulers, legislators, and conventions, that they may adjust all questions now disturbing our peace upon the everlasting basis of justice and mercy ; that He will give unto our magistrates alike the conscience and the courage resolutely to enforce all righteous laws for the protection of all good citizens and the signal punishment of all that are disobedient ; that He will mercifully hold us back from revolution and bloodshed, and so carry us through all our perils as to check forever the spirit of anarchy, bring permanent peace to a distracted people, and strengthen and perpetuate to the end of time the bonds and brotherhood of our national Union. Feeling, in regard of all these great interests, our own entire dependence upon God's gracious help, we are to plead with Him from every principle warranted in Scripture ; from our own personal and national necessities ; from the welfare of the Church of Christ ; from the highest good of the human race ; from His own infinite power and sufficiency, the merits and intercessions of the Saviour and the glory of His own most holy name

in the safety and comfort of His own chosen people. By all such arguments are we to plead that He will graciously interpose in our behalf, overruling for good all the conflicting opinions and passions of men, so that henceforth, with a tenderer love and a stronger faith and a closer consecration, we may work out our grand providential mission as a united and peculiar people, whose God is the Lord.

And, having thus performed conscientiously our own duty, we can cast all our imperiled interests upon His gracious providence, assured that whatever be the result, it must be ultimately for the best. We have no right, nor, indeed, have we a reason to despair of our country. One great object in our national fast-day, is to revive our courage and strengthen our faith. Just in proportion as we cast the whole issue prayerfully upon God, will our own confidence be restored. It is mainly because we have forgotten God, ignoring Omnipotence as a grand and controlling force in our national life, and mindful only of the stormy and short-lived passions of the hour, and the powerlessness of human policies to stay or control them; only for this practical infidelity that we have all been frightened out of our proprieties and our common-sense, into a feverish panic and childish and cowardly despair, uttering doleful lamentations over the ruin of our country, and chanting requiems over the sepulchre of our free institutions, as if the ultimate destinies of a land like this—a land created by a miracle of Divine power, and preserved by God's love, and baptized with God's baptism—were in the hands of the unprincipled demagogues of the hour, who, like birds of evil omen and foul wing, delight in strife and fatten

upon carnage; forgetting that high above all the dust and din of human passions sitteth the glorious Jehovah, ordering all things in sovereign love unto His redeemed Church, and in whose serene and omnipotent orderings all these malignant impulses of evil men are but as chaff driven away by the breath of His mighty power, the unseemly slush on the golden wheel of His Providence, which from the first, even until now, has moved demonstratively over this continent in the progress of a purpose to bless through us the nations and redeem by us the world. And it is time we rose into higher frames of manly and Christian courage and trust.

It seems to me sinful to believe that God has forsaken this favored land; and if He still be gracious toward us, we shall yet assuredly be saved from this peril, how and with what instruments we may not perhaps foresee. In prayers for national, as for individual deliverances, we rely not merely upon Divine power to do the work, but upon Divine wisdom to devise means and measures. In asking God to perpetuate our free institutions, we have no right to dictate to God in what form our liberties shall be made permanent. We have no right to assume that their present form is of all the best, nor even, as we have been wont to suppose, that our entire national unity is essential to our most efficient working out the great purposes of God. This, indeed, seems to our feeble reason almost a necessity, and for ourselves, we as confidently expect the integrity of this Union to be ultimately preserved—not one name blotted from its great brotherhood—as we expect yonder sun to rise and set on another generation. But be this as it may, if we cast our land upon Omnipotent grace, whether we re-

main in our present confederacy essentially one or take another form of coequal confederacies, two to each other, and one to all the world beside, at least in some form, as God's hand shall fashion us, we may safely trust that He will accomplish through us His grand work on the earth and bring us in prosperity and triumph to a grand national future.

Such a confidence in God is to-day both our duty and privilege. We have met in God's house just that such a confidence may be strengthened within us, that our calm common-sense may be restored to us, and we be lifted up from this God-dishonoring despair into the cheerfulness and courage of Christian faith. Oh that God would give us the serene and steadfast trust of the old patriarchs and primitive believers!

David, the man of God and the monarch of His chosen people, should be our pattern in peril. Often was he brought into fearful popular tumults, and once amid terrible convulsions his human counsellors advised him to escape from his severe and seemingly inextricable difficulties by despairing flight. But this he resolutely refused to do, as inconsistent with his faith in the righteousness and grace of Jehovah. And I know of nothing in human language grander than that beautiful and dramatic record—"In the Lord do I put my trust; and how say ye, then, Flee as a bird to the mountains. If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do? The Lord is in His Holy Temple; the Lord's throne is in the heavens. This the question of doubting antiquity, "If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?" And the answer in all its sublime and triumphant truth, "The Lord is in His most holy

temple." Oh! glorious comforting of exulting faith, be it ours this solemn hour as God's redeemed children. Without, amid the assemblies of unprincipled and ungodly men, there may be cries of passion and clamoring for blood, but here! here! omnipotent, omniscient, all-merciful, is God! God!

And do not tell me, as if to drive me from my strong Christian faith, of any fearful signals of disaster, of foul fanaticism on the one hand and foul treason on the other, uniting their unholy forces to rock into dust this beloved nationality, till this fair heritage of freedom—the noblest, the loveliest yonder sun shines on—shall become a desolation, its waters tears, and its precious things ashes, and its only remaining glory the monuments of the dead. Tell me not of this, for I tell you of a glorious and Almighty One, whose we are and whom we love and on whom, from all His merciful interposals in our marvelous past, we have learned confidently to rely, and who never will forsake us if we cling to Him in faith. I tell you of one before whose breath all human passion is palsied, and in whose march stormy seas sink into stillness. "The Lord! The Lord is in His most Holy temple," and His, His the power, the grace, the triumph, the glory! Here! here! on this mercy-seat, sitteth one whose "voice stilleth the noise of the seas, the roaring of the waves, the tumult of the people."

Here we have access to a presence and can cast the interests of our land upon a wisdom and a power before which human counsels and combinations and evil purposes and angry passions are as mists on the mountain-side when the mighty wind is roused, or the great sun shines.

Let us, then, approach Him in humble, loving faith, bringing our beloved land, all-glorious with the memories of His earlier and omnipotent deliverances, and bathing it in tears of humble, grateful penitence, and casting it in sublime confidence at His almighty feet; and leaving it there, go forth to our earthly work and walk, cheerful, as of old time, in our daily tasks and joys, our faces shining, our voices exulting with faith and hope. And henceforth unto all birds of evil omen, all cowardly counsel, that would fill us with fears and frighten us from our proprieties with forebodings of ruin, and the removal of foundations, let our answer be ever like David's—confidently and gladly—"The Lord! The Lord is in His most holy temple, and His kingdom ruleth over all."

A LIVING SACRIFICE.

“Present your bodies a living sacrifice.”—ROMANS XII. 1.

It is the remark of one who, though he wasted the substance of his immortal nature on the sickly sentimentalities and affectations of life, yet possessed within him the elements of rapid and resistless thought, that “there comes in every man’s experience a season when the world seems suddenly to have lost its familiarity, and everything to have become new.” I know not how it is, but no one can have passed the sunny land that lies between rudimental youth and early manhood, without feeling the full force and beauty of that remark. We come into this world with our senses untrained and our faculties undeveloped, whose air we have never breathed and whose waters we have never tasted and whose sunlight we have never felt, and yet all things smile upon us as familiar things. The child never wonders that the flowers bloom and the skies smile and the waters murmur; nay, he would not wonder if the lily were tinted with a lovelier hue, and the streams went down with a more beguiling murmur, and the far-away heaven glowed and glittered with a more surpassing glory. But the time does come, before the storms of early manhood, when he begins to wonder; when the flowers and the forests, the winds and the water-falls, the sunshine and the starlight; when, in fact, everything, from the green thing of the field to the giant orbs of the firmament, seems invested suddenly with the interest of a marvel

and arrayed in the colorings of a strange and startling mysteriousness. And this fact in the economy of human nature is as true in respect of God's Word as it is of God's works. A child reads the Bible as he reads the page of a story. He admires, but he does not marvel. Open the scroll that bears the annals of the infant world, and the child's eye wanders delighted over the record that tells him of the trees that waved in their living beauty and the streams that went forth in their bright strength from the paradise of God. But to the eye of him for whom the living oracles are invested with a new-discovered mysteriousness; if there be beautiful things in that record, there are wondrous things as well. He looks toward the gate of the forsaken paradise, and his grief that it shuts forever between him and those radiant waters almost gives place to wonder at the vision rising to his view. Right beside that majestic portal rises in its mysteriousness an altar of burnt offering, and the shining of the fiery armor of the cherubic watchmen is dimmed and darkened by the smoke going up from the offering of burnt sacrifice; and the scene which to one was a delight becomes to the other a mystery. It is a mystery, and to the mind into which has never come down the light of life it will ever retain its mysteriousness—that the flesh of beasts fed upon the rich pastures within Eden was laid as a bleeding and blackened oblation upon the altar of the shepherd-priest without Eden. There is something in the institution of bloody sacrifices at all, and especially in their offering with the pride and the pomp of the Hebrew ritual, which the unrenewed soul can not comprehend, and which he alone does not wonder at who perceives in all the circumstances of those

bloody ceremonials not only a true and thrilling type of Christ, but a graphic forthshadowing of the spiritual worship of the heart that worships in spirit and in truth. To him, and him alone, there is a beautiful and evident design of teaching man the true nature of heart-worship in the elaborate ceremonials of temple and altar worship. And therefore it is not to him a wonder that the first altar that reeked with the blood of sacrifice was within sight of Eden, for there had been sin within, and there should be suffering without the paradise of God. It is not for us to follow out the beautiful analogy between the material worship of the elder world and the spiritual worship of the new dispensation so strikingly insisted on in the text and in many other connections of Paul's Epistles. And we have adverted to it only because the words under consideration are incapable of exposition if we forget that analogy. The temple service of the Jew was one of type and symbol and shadow; the veil has been rent and the type interpreted. But it is wise for us, as Paul so delighted to do, to turn back again and illustrate the thing signified by the abrogated ceremonial. The mind of the chiefest of the Apostles seems to have been steeped in the spirit of the Jewish ritual; reared in the strictest sect of the Hebrew religionists, his thought, forever with the love of his young years, dwelt upon the mysteries of their majestic rites. And therefore, when addressing Gentiles, it is as a Jew he speaks. The heart-worship of the new dispensation seemed to him but the spiritualization of the material worship of the old, and we do not wonder that he wielded the burning figures of illustration thus fitted to his hand with unmatched power over the human conscience.

Present your bodies as "living sacrifices." What an exhortation! Who but the man that preached of God's judgment-seat before the iron-hearted men of Areopagus would dared have made it? You read it, and remembering that it is to worshipers under a new economy Paul wrote, your imagination shrinks and startles from the scenery opened to your view. You seem to stand beneath the far-spread canopy of a majestic temple. The glow and the glory of the mighty architecture of a Divine hand swells around you. Up from the jewels sparkling at your feet to the golden fret-work of the colossal roof, through all the aisles and arches of that mighty fane, steals the lustre of a revealed Divinity. Far away, where the glory is most glorious, with the flames kindling on its mighty front, rises the altar of oblation, and around stand the glittering vessels of the service, and the white-robed courses of the priestly line. And as you gaze, the mysterious portal is thrown back to the day, and the rush and surge of the multitude of worshipers falls upon the ear. You look again; and lo! a solitary worshiper, a human soul in the garb of its spirituality, stands before the altar flames. The chant of the mighty hallelujah is hushed, and a thrill of exulting wonder swells the heart as you behold that spiritual worshiper lifting up in the arms of its faith that living human form wherein it had so long dwelt as a pampered guest; and while the flames sparkle, and the incense burns, casting it as a living sacrifice upon that gigantic altar of burnt offering. Such is the scenery opened in our text; such were the ideas of the world-abandoning, flesh-sacrificing, heart-subduing spirit of true Christianity that stretched themselves into giant piety in the mind of Paul. And you,

my hearers, if you shrink from just that act of spiritual worship ; if your heart startles at that thought of the faggot and the flame ; if that soul of yours, in the might of its immortal spirituality, will not bring that body of yours, with its living members and its bounding blood, and cast it as a living sacrifice into the altar-fires of God's living temple, then have ye no part or lot with the Apostle of the Gentiles in the holy place wherein he has entered ; then between you and the temple wherein the spiritual Israel of God worship hangs the curtain of a fearful obscurity, and if through the veil, as through a dim and distant transparency, ye catch partial glimpses of the glory within, it will be as the Egyptian host gazed upon the lurid splendor of the cloudy pillar through which Jehovah looked. To gaze and wonder and perish.

“Present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God.”

In this exhortation with that wonderful power of condensation of which he was master has the Apostle embodied the whole essence of Christian duty. In his high and noble views of humanity he speaks of the animal of man's nature as a thing separate from himself, as a mere accident, having no part or lot with the immortal spirit that moves within. It is the soul, as the only thing worthy of being addressed, that Paul addresses. The giant will that can put forth the muscles of its immortal fingers, and cast the living body, as a thing of dust, away ; to it, in the performance of a ministry from heaven, Paul speaks.

“Present your bodies a living sacrifice.” “PRESENT.” It is good to turn away from the semi-antinomian orthodoxy of the present day, and observe how Paul,

while he yielded to no man in his views of the entire sovereignty and freeness of Divine grace, yet delighted to inculcate the obligation of perfect and perpetual conformity to the Divine law. No man can read the writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles, and not perceive that his idea of Christ's atonement was an expedient not merely to render men salvable, but to save them. And yet so far is he from perverting that blessed doctrine to an occasion of licentiousness, that he constantly employs it as a powerful incentive to the performance of good works; and nowhere else do I find so matchless a refutation of the foul, yet favorite cant that a faith in the unlimited and irrespective sovereignty of Divine grace tends to beget and foster religious libertinism, as in the fact that the Apostle of the Gentiles in every page and paragraph of his matchless Epistles seems to recognize and inculcate the necessity of active and entire conformity to the Divine will as necessary to our salvation. With that rapid and resistless swell of thought which formed the characteristic peculiarity of his ardent mind, Paul seems to have devoted himself, as his master-purpose, to the encouragement of Christian men in the attainment of gigantic practical and active piety. From the exciting scenes of the great world, wherein he had so loved to mingle; from the arena of strife and the wrestling struggle; from the race-course and the battlefield, did he gather illustrations and motives to urge on the spiritual athlete in his labor while the day lasted wherein he could work. His thrilling voice falls upon the ear of the sluggish Christian like the trumpet peal of battle upon the hearing of the soldier slumbering on the field of fight; and the man who should dare to

sport with God's thunderbolts would be wiser than he who from the Epistles of the Gentile Apostle dare deduce the doctrine of antinomian licentiousness. It is beautiful, too, to observe how skillfully in the figurative exhortations of his imaginative mind the two great truths of Divine sovereignty and human accountability meet and mingle. It is grace that smooths the race-course and fastens the jewel, but the spirit of an active love must fasten the eye and strain the sinew. It is grace that builds the bark and glasses the ocean and rears in some distant clime the haven of repose, but the new-born soul, as an immortal voyager, must for itself weigh the anchor and spread the sail and launch forth in strength of heroic daring to brave the billow and the blast. It is grace that from the shattered ruins of man's primeval nature rears again with arches and columns and a priestly line the temple for God's spiritual worship. It is grace that builds the altar, and kindles the fire upon its mighty front, and lifts the curtain of a fearful obscurity from the majestic portal. But it is the new created soul, as a spiritual worshiper gifted with the fervor of an angel's love and girded with the raiment of a spiritual priesthood, that enters that temple with a tread of strength, and arranges the vessels of the service; and while the anthem swells and the incense burns, lifts the breathing body in its mighty arms, casts it as a living sacrifice upon the burning altar of the living God. It is the Christian himself, in the exercise of an active and ardent piety, that "presents" the offering. He can not, to be sure, render it acceptable. The God he worships sits upon a throne high and lifted up, and the smoke of the offering that burns upon the altar will,

for aught he can do, be an offence unto Him; but he offers in the name of Jesus Christ, and he offers his all, for he offers *himself*.

“*Present your bodies.*” Not the gold of your coffers, nor the jewels of your casket, nor the herd of your pasture, nor the fed-beasts of your stall, but your body, with its muscles and its sinews and its living limbs. I cease to wonder at the comparative multitude of the proselytes that gathered around the substantial ceremonials of the Hebrew faith, when I consider how like the dust of the balance were the services they paid and the oblations they brought. They brought their beasts; the proselyte of a later and lovelier faith brings his body.

The expression, “Your bodies,” is perhaps nearly equivalent to “Yourselves.” In the use of it Paul wished to render prominent the idea that the whole man, body and soul, was to be devoted to the service of his Maker. It was this alone that man could offer—the other things of the visible creation were already God’s, not only by their creation and preservation, but in virtue of their unsubdued and unshaken allegiance; but man was an apostate, and therefore he might bring himself to God’s temple, and cast himself as a free-will offering upon God’s altar. But this was not the whole of the Apostle’s design. It is wonderful how often in this writing we find the flesh spoken of with apparent loathing. It is an “earthly house,” from which the spirit guest longs to go forth on the broad and bright journeyings of eternity. It is an enemy, the law of whose members is warring with the law of his mind. It is a vile body, which the immortal Spirit yearns to cast aside, that it may array itself in a radiant covering like unto

Christ's glorious body. But here, as the burning figures of inspiration pressed upon his soul, Paul seems for a moment to have forgotten his desire to be absent from the flesh. He had found a use for that "earthly tabernacle"—that vile covering, those warring members. In the midst of God's spiritual temple he perceived the flames kindling upon the majestic altar. The worshipers in their immortality thronged the courts; but their hands were without offerings, for what could they bring? Every beast of the forest was the Lord's, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. He would take no bullock out of their house, nor he goats out of their stall. But as Paul looked upon those worshipers he remembered the animal of their immortal nature, that polluted framework of materialism, with its debased and groveling tendencies, and lifting up his voice till the aisles of the temple rang again, he cried, "Present your bodies. Present your bodies as living sacrifices." Oh! I do not know how, with this startling cry of the Apostle of the Gentiles ringing in the ear, God's professed children can tamper with the movements of carnal appetite, and plead the involuntary possession of a depraved nature as an excuse for want of entire self-dedication to God—unholy appetite and passion! Why, it is just because your members are suffused with them, so that with the intensity of a mighty desire they struggle to yield themselves servants to uncleanness, that your vile bodies are fit offerings for the burning altar of the living God. It is just because there has come down a dreadful disruption upon the original harmony of your complex nature, so that in the soul of every renewed man there goes on a constant warfare, the spirit warring with the flesh, and the flesh

warring with the spirit, that this world is the very best world wherein a spirit could train itself for the skies. In the bright unfoldings of eternity there will be seen an evident design of mercy in the arrangement that left the new-born soul chained to the members of a polluted and putrifying body. It provides it a race-course whereon to shake the dust from its sandals and strain toward the prize. It spreads before it a battle-field, upon which, in the strength of its risen Lord, it can struggle for the mastery. It furnishes, ready-prepared to its hand, a burnt-sacrifice for God's altar. "Present your bodies;" yes, my brother, that frame-work of your immortal nature in its pollutions; those impure desires; those carnal appetites; that hungering after forbidden gratification; that clamoring for sensual pleasures; that lust of the flesh; that lust of the eye; that fastening of the soul upon things that perish with the using; those unholy emotions which link you, as a perishing thing, with the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air are to be cast from you in your spiritual worship, as the Hebrew in his substantial worship cast from him his oblation—"a living sacrifice unto God." "A sacrifice"—a thing to bleed beneath the knife of the Levite, and to burn and blacken in the fierce flame kindled on the altar; to feel in all its members the touch of the flame scorching it to ashes. So that life on earth shall not be the pampering of a corrupt appetite, but the struggling with unholy propensity such as the high priest witnessed between the shrinking sinews of the victim and the touch of the corroding flame. "A sacrifice"—the free-will offering of the whole man, not merely the renewed soul with its lofty aspirations, but the decaying flesh, with its lowly tendencies, to the living God.

You are to lay the grasp of a renewed will upon every impulse of an unsanctified nature, and force it away, as the Israelite led to the temple the struggling beast, to smoke for a burnt offering unto Jehovah. "A living sacrifice." The Hebrew led to the temple the firstling of his flock, and left it there to die. There was the glitter of the consecrated knife and the stifled breath of fear and the gushing of the hot blood and the sound of the death-gurgle, and that which smoked upon the altar was the flesh of the dead. But in the instituted worship of the new economy the oblation upon the altar must be a living sacrifice. "Let the dead bury their dead;" but he who would worship Jehovah in spirit and in truth must bring his body as a *living* sacrifice unto God. *Living*, because, while the sinew shrinks and the flesh shrivels, the heart beats and the pulses play with the free impulses of a life hid with Christ. *Living*, because every member and muscle of the self-dedicating victim feels keenly the fierceness of the consecrating flame. *Living*, because the temple service ends not with the day, but through all the hours of a burdening mortality there goes on the ceremonies of the fearful ritual. The priest stands girded for his toil, and the flames sparkle and the flesh quivers and the smoke ascends, till the cold, black waters of death are poured upon the firelight of the altar.

"*Present your bodies a living sacrifice.*" Oh! in view of such an exhortation I know not how those who are at ease in Zion can lay to their souls the flattering unction that they are born of God. I know not how the man who lives in this world as if it were his home, seeking its pleasures and securing its friendships and bowing his immortal soul in a slavish conformity to the lusts of the

flesh and the lusts of the eye and the pride of life, dare put forth his hand to the vessels of a service whose offerings are a "*living sacrifice unto God.*" I can not tell, for I have not been told of the ritual ceremonials of that gigantic temple, over whose portal hangs the curtain of the grave. I do not know how blessed and how glorious shall be the employment of the spirit of a just man made perfect, when, arrayed in the raiment of a celestial line, it shall be a king and a priest unto God. But I do know that this side the veil that hideth the upper sanctuary there is no resting-place for the Christian, and that while he tabernacles in the flesh, he stands as a Levite in God's lower temple, and his business is to offer his body, with its struggling lusts and its groveling propensities, a living sacrifice unto God.

And you, fellow disciple of the Lord Jesus, how sounds this exhortation in your ear to-day? You have been named with the name of Jesus; are you careful to depart from iniquity? You have declared yourselves servants of God, to glorify Him with your bodies as well as your spirits; are you yielding your members servants of righteousness? Are you struggling to keep your body under, as Paul struggled, with the fearful thought pressing upon your mind, "Lest otherwise ye should be a castaway?" Are you trampling under your feet, as an accursed thing, every unholy propensity of the flesh which would assimilate you to those that perish? Do you look upon those carnal and corrupt desires that struggle for the ascendancy, not as guiltless appetites, to be gratified, but as living things, to be crucified on Christ's Cross, and offered on God's altar? You are a runner for a prize; is your animal nature but the limbs

and the sinews that bear you to the goal? You are a soldier of the cross; is your body but the weapon of your warfare, that may be shriveled in the conflict? You are worshipers in God's spiritual temple; do you stand there in the spirit of Paul's exhortation, your soul girded with the strength and clad in the garments of an immortal priesthood, with but one task and one desire—to keep the vessels of the service bright and the altar flame burning, and your bodies the *burnt offering*—with their appetites and their desires, their members and their muscles and their bounding blood always ready to be offered—nay, always *offered*—feeling and feeding the flame of self-dedication—“crucified unto the world—living sacrifices unto God?”

Oh, my brother! if you have dedicated yourself, soul and body, to the service of your Lord, then have you bound yourself, soul and body, unto an iron task, under which there is no sluggishness and no slumber and no folding of the hands to sleep. The sybarite's bed of roses has no places in the dormitories of the priest court. You have girded yourself to follow in the giant footsteps of your great Forerunner, and just as He, in the might of His Divine nature, walked with His shrinking humanity to the summit of Calvary—thus bearing His mortality as a breathing oblation to the death fires of a colossal altar—so are you to walk earth as the floor of God's mighty temple, and though the heart shrivels and the pulses shrink from the searching steel and the scorching flame, you are to lift that breathing body in the arms of a self-devoting faith, and as the only offering large enough for the Divine yearning, lay it upon God's altar a sacrifice, a living sacrifice—a living sacrifice unto

God. Never, in view of this startling exhortation, let him that loves the world and the things of the world, whose business on earth is the pampering of appetite and the indulgence of carnal desire and the gratification of the lusts of the outer man, whose soul startles at the flame and the faggot, and shrinks from the plucking out of the eye and the cutting of the hand, to whom heaven is only a delight as a land of carnal repose amid summer and sunshine, and to whom hell is only a terror as a feeding-place for the fang of the worm upon the material heart-string, never, oh never, let him suppose that he has part or lot in the services of a temple whose sacrifices are "living sacrifices unto God." And you, my impenitent brother, who stand proudly aloof from the service of your Lord, between whom and the glowing and glorious architecture of God's spiritual temple there hangs to-day the curtain of a night-like obscurity, to you, even unto you, is the word of our salvation sent. You are like the Scythian stranger, who wandered by the portal of the Grecian fane in the days of its majestic beauty. You gaze upon the marble majesty of its external pomp, charmed by its grace and its goodliness; you stand perhaps upon its very threshold; through the mighty veil that spreads before you, you listen to the bursts of the hallelujahs that peal through its giant arches, and catch, as through a dim transparency, partial glimpses of the splendors within. But oh! my brother, into your heart of hearts there has never entered an imagination of the glories, bright and burning and everlasting, that break upon the eye as the curtain is lifted, and a spiritual worshiper of the Spirit God enters; of the pricelessness of the odor that burns upon the air;

of the swell of the hallelujah that bursts upon the ear, in view of splendors of sight and of sound which none but senses unsealed by the influences of the new birth can perceive, we beseech you to dedicate yourselves this day to the temple service of the living God. Do you shrink from the severe ceremonials of that spiritual ritual; does your soul put away from it with loathing the thought of offering that breathing body as a living sacrifice unto God? I know too well how the heart of the natural man loves not the consecrating flame that would gather around the flesh with its appetites and its lusts. But, my brother, did you ever think how much better it will be to enter into life halt and maimed than having two hands or two feet to be cast into hell-fire? If the question were between eternal self-gratification or eternal self-sacrificing on earth, your present attitude might be a safer and a wiser one, but the election is between a temporary living sacrifice here and an eternal living sacrifice hereafter. We admit all you can urge of the hardships of a Christian's life on earth. We will go farther than you can go in our ideas of the painful services for which a Christian girds himself when he enters the spiritual temple of the living God. We tell you that the soul is to stand unshrinking and unslumbering by the mighty altar, and the body to lie shriveled and scorching in its rising flames; but yet we know well that with all this the soul will be lapsed in Elysium compared with the service for which you are preparing your souls. Oh! my brother, did you ever remember that while God and the Lamb are the temple into which the souls of just men made perfect enter, that only the dark curtain of death separates between you and the rites

of a mighty fane, the vessels of whose service and the raiment of whose priesthood, whose spreading floor and whose sparkling roof, whose altar and whose arches and whose living things are wrought and woven of the immortal flames of the second death. Have you ever thought of the ritual service of the temple of hell? How that body of yours that shrinks so sensitively from the thought of defilement, with its sensibilities sharpened and its nerves restrung, shall be given over into the arms of the giant tormenter, and with the wail and the worm and the smoke of the torment, be offered forever as a living sacrifice on the altar of hell?

THE CENTURION.

“ There was a certain man in Cesarea called Cornelius, a Centurion, of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, and gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.”—ACTS x. 1, 2.

There is nothing, it seems to me, in which simple common-sense is so much needed and so little found, as in this matter of experimental religion or practical salvation. I take it for granted, that in every community there are at least a few persons who are thoughtful for eternity, and sometimes, at least, wish they were Christians. And yet of these few the larger part utterly ignore, in this important matter, the common-sense of the children of this world, wise in their generation. They may be divided into two classes—

1. The one thinking that because God is a sovereign in grace they have nothing to do in religion till God converts them.

2. The other thinking that because they are free-agents there is no need of regeneration at all if they do what they can. And they are both wanting in the common-sense of men wise in their generation; for it is the peculiarity of such men to learn present wisdom from all the experience of the past. If they travel on land, they follow the broad highways flung up for them. If they voyage on water, they are guided by well-authenticated charts. And it is only in man's journey to heaven that he obstinately follows his own

thoughts and devices, utterly ignoring the experience of the past.

In the Bible not only is the great plan of salvation philosophically explained, but practically illustrated in the lives of God's true children; and if men would be wise in spiritual as in temporal things, and study the Bible to learn what religion is, no one really wishing to be a Christian would remain long unconverted, for so plain is the path of practical piety, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

Now, taking it for granted that there are some of you this day who really wish you were Christians, I ask your attention to this history of Cornelius as a practical illustration of this whole matter. We have here, so to speak, a model conversion—the inspired record of the way in which the first regenerated Gentile became personally and experimentally a disciple of Christ. And thus considering this history, we have here three simple themes of remark—the subject, the instrumentality, and the efficient cause of conversion. Let us consider,

First, The Subject—Cornelius, the Centurion, the first Gentile convert to Christianity. And at present we are not much concerned with his personal biography. He was an officer in the Roman levies then serving in Palestine. His residence was Cesarea Palestina, a beautiful town twenty-five miles north of Joppa, and fifty-five miles from Jerusalem. Tradition assigns him to a patrician branch of the great Cornelian family, one of the most distinguished Italian houses, which produced a greater number of illustrious men than any other in Rome. All this matters not, but with his spiritual or religious biography we are now only concerned. Our

text describes him as “*A devout man, one that feared God with all his house, gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.*” This, you will observe, was his religious character before the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The whole history, wherever Peter speaks of him as of another nation, and wherever the Jewish Christians manifest so much astonishment at his conversion, is against the idea that he was a Jewish proselyte, and had received circumcision. He seems to have been an intelligent and conscientious Gentile, who, living among the Jews, saw the superiority of their religion to heathenism; had studied their Scriptures, abandoned idolatry, and regarded and worshiped Jehovah as the one only living and true God.

Be this as it may, his spiritual history in the text is striking and most instructive to the two classes of men we have already described. The one passively waiting for God to convert, the other actively thinking to be religious of themselves. He seems to have heard of the marvelous Pentacostal powers—the Divine influence from on high, making man a new creature. And for the experience of this he was hoping and praying. But how waiting and how praying? Idly pleading for Divine grace to descend omnipotently upon him? Oh, no! Active, earnest, up to all the light he had in the securance of salvation.

“*He was a devout man*”—a worshipful man. Having from contact with the Jews come to a knowledge of the true God, he not only made Him an object of solemn meditation, but engaged continually in acts of sincere worship.

“*He feared God.*” This outward situation expresses his true feelings. The word denotes obedience. Acquainted with the precepts of the Jewish law, he strove to conform to them. He turned away from idols, hallowed God’s Sabbaths, revered His name, and in all acts of his life strove to honor and obey Him.

“*He gave much alms to the people.*” His religion ended not with the first table of the decalogue. He sought to conform his whole life to all those precepts of the second table which are included in the Saviour’s second command—“*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself!*” He did not worship God, and cheat men; nor do good to men, and forget God. In short, he was striving in every way to bring his heart and life into conformity to the great principles of the kingdom of God. He did not commit the practical solecism of expecting any miraculous gracious change, while living in positive (or even passive) rebellion against God. But without waiting for any such manifestation, began at the very outset to live like the surrounding Christians, thinking, most wisely, that just this attitude of obedience was the only attitude in which he could hope for regenerating grace. But though thus earnestly working, he was, the while, as earnestly waiting. He had seen enough of the workings of Divine grace, and knew enough of the deep-rooted and desperate carnality of his own nature, to understand that all his work was in vain without the Divine work.

And so, as the record adds, “*He prayed to God always.*” This means, of course, that he offered up stately the thanksgiving and petitions of the Jewish worship. But it implies more, as his prayer was

answered by the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that gift must have been the absorbing object of his prayer. He was ever looking, hoping, praying for that converting grace.

This, in short, is the history of the first Gentile convert; this the truth taught as we consider this subject of salvation. This history shows him in the only true attitude in which grace can be hoped for. He was working and waiting, not working without waiting, as if he could do all things; nor yet waiting without working, as if he could do nothing; but working and waiting. Working as earnestly as if he could do all; waiting as devoutly as if he could do nothing.

And before passing to the other points of the text, we wish to impress this truth on the conscience of the two classes we have spoken of—the *moralist*, thinking he does not need regeneration; the *immoralist*, waiting idly for regeneration. Would that you both would study this history. Ye moralists, who think that if you do as well as others you will receive, as of merit, the life everlasting, behold this Centurion, so elevated above all his Gentile fellows in his whole manner of life, that he seems in the full exercise of all Christian graces. And his biography reads like a beautiful model of the true Christian character, and yet wrestling all the while in heaven-besieging prayer, as if his only hope of salvation was in God's converting grace. And you, too, *waiters for miracles*, who say you are willing to be Christians, and wish you were Christians. You, it may be, honestly pray God at times that He truly make you Christians, and yet do not at once begin to live like Christians, behold how at once, altogether before the gift of the Holy Ghost, this

Gentile soldier began a life of earnest and constant conformity to God's law. Oh! study this record and learn, both of you, the true philosophy of the plan of salvation; that there is something that you can do and something that you can not do in this work of regeneration, and that the only way to prevail with God to do His work is an instant and earnest diligence in the doing of your own part. Now, this leads us to consider,

Secondly, the instrumentality of salvation, as set forth in the text, *i. e.*, the means whereby man's conversion is accomplished. This, of course, all Bible readers know to be a preached Gospel. Everywhere is this truth set forth in revelation, that in Christ crucified is our only salvation. Apart from that, by two insurmountable barriers is man hemmed-in to destruction.

I. By the holiness of the Divine nature.

II. By the sinfulness of the human nature.

The first causes God to hate the workers of iniquity; the second causes the worker of iniquity as truly to hate God. An irreconcilable antagonism exists on both parts, which is done away by Christ's death, and by that only. It reconciles God to man by satisfying His holy law. It reconciles man to God by such a gracious revelation of His love as melts and breaks even the heart of adamant. This truth everywhere the Bible teaches, but nowhere else, it seems to me, more impressively than in the narrative of the text.

Consider it a moment as exhibited in the conversion of Cornelius. The prayers and alms of the Gentile had gone up for a memorial before God. The man had done his work, and now God is to do His work. But how? With what means or instrument? By a direct and im-

mediate miracle? By giving gracious efficacy to such truths as the Centurion already understood? No, indeed! but in a way and with an instrumentality that can not seem to us but most marvelous. We stand in thought with the devout Gentile as he wrestles with God for this great blessing. As we learned in a subsequent verse, he had spent all the day in acts of solemn worship, and now, at the ninth hour, his whole soul seems hungering and thirsting after this mysterious righteousness of God. He had striven in vain, with all the strength that was in him, to attain true peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost, and now, in earnest prayer, casts the whole work on God. Yes, and here and now his prayer is to be answered. Behold! the heavens are opened. A glorious angel descends. Yes, it hath come—that revelation so waited for and prayed for. And methinks you can almost see the face of the wrapt Gentile glowing with mingled awe and rapture in expectation of the blessed words that celestial visitant is about to utter. Oh, what glorious truth he awaits to hear about immortality and eternal life, about heaven and about God! What songs the angel might have sung! And yet what does he hear? Alas for his expectation! he hears no word about any of these high mysteries. Not a word about heaven, not a word even about salvation. The angel's message seems all of the earth, earthy. Hearken, "*There is a tanner's house by the seaside in Joppa, and in it lodgeth an Apostle of God. Send thou, therefore, for Simon, whose surname is Peter, and he shall teach thee.*"

And this is all. Alas for the kindly hope of the devout Gentile! This the whole burden of the revelation

of the angel sent from God's glorious presence in answer to prayer; this all the communication from the Eternal One, for which so long he had waited and prayed—to learn of “*a poor fisherman that lodgeth in Joppa!*” Yes, this was all. But this was enough. That shining seraph might have taught glorious lessons, wondrous truths about God and the throne of God and the spheres and types of the higher life that peoples eternity; but not these the truths just then most needed by that wrestling mortal spirit. Salvation was what he wanted—some way in which a sinful nature might become holy, and fallen man be reconciled unto the Infinite Jehovah. Not visions of heaven, but an open way unto heaven, the Gospel, the glad news of salvation, the precious, soul-saving story of Christ and Him crucified. And this no angel dared utter. From lips of clay alone, in words of mortal man, from a ministry of the very human nature linked to the Divine in the Incarnation, thence alone might come the revelation of this great mystery of Godliness. And as the Divine Son took not on Him the nature of angels, so, though angels might minister unto the heirs of salvation, they might not utter words making men heirs of salvation. And so was the angel's message the most blessed God could send; for, though the seraph might have taught lessons of truth about all the high things of immensity and eternity, that would have enraptured an unfallen mortal, yet what this poor convicted sinner wanted was a lesson of pardon, of justification, of a way opened for fallen man to God's mercy-seat, God's palace of life and love. And therefore, better than all else that angelic voices could utter, were these simple words—“*There lodgeth one, whose*

surname is Peter, by the seaside in Joppa!" It was by the Gospel of Christ only that the soul of this Gentile could be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. And therefore the vision of the angel was only the forerunner of one more blessed; for better in that Gentile's house than the shining wings of the angel, were the weary, way-worn feet of that humble herald of the Cross.

And verily there is set forth here, as nowhere else, the solemn importance, the awful influences of this ministry of reconciliation. In the light of this record, these places of Gospel utterance ought to seem very sanctuaries, the very house of God, the very gate of Heaven.

How it should make the Gospel preacher tremble, to feel that no angel out of heaven dare stand where he stands, and speak the words he speaks; and the while render him careful, as for his life and soul, that he mingle no thought of carnal philosophy, no thought, even if it were of an angelic intellect, with the truth as it is in Jesus, just to remember that even that shining One out of heaven dared not beguile, even with eternal revelations, a poor soul only hungering for the bread that came down from heaven. And how it should render these seats wherein you sit places girt about with eternal solemnity, just to think that you are there listening to words of deeper moment and more tremendous influence upon your immortal welfare than any words even Gabriel could speak, were he standing here in his glory. And how it should magnify all our conceptions of the preciousness of this Gospel, and send us forth to gather these perishing multitudes within its precious sound, and excite us to give it free course and full glory over

all the earth, to remember how it is fraught unto the suffering creature man with a greater blessedness than all that God's shining ones could bring down out of heaven. So that just to send the missionary of the Cross to the dark places of the earth—to man's sorrowful house and man's sinful heart—is a work of greater mercy than if you could send to minister and abide in every such dwelling, one of God's brightest angels in glory and power. Passing this, let us consider,

Thirdly, the efficient cause of salvation. Important as the Gospel is, it is seen here to be only an instrument. If only uttered by man without an attending Divine influence, it is as powerless to save as the poor truths of philosophy. All this is most impressively taught in this record.

The direction of the angel to Cornelius is instantly complied with. And we can well imagine the impatience wherewith the Gentle awaited the coming of the unknown man from Joppa, whose herald was an angel. We are indeed scarcely surprised that at his approach (supposing one thus announced from heaven must be more than a man—perhaps a Christ) Cornelius fell down at Peter's feet and worshiped him. And we can picture to ourselves the silent, absorbing, enrapturing, and almost awful expectancy with which he awaited the first words of this Apostolic man who had come to him commissioned of heaven to speak truths which no angel dared utter.

And we can not avoid the impression that at first the Centurion's feeling was disappointment. Accustomed to the brilliancy of the old Roman eloquence, and expecting truths gloriously supernatural from this heaven-

commissioned stranger, the simple and unadorned narrative of this plain fisherman of Galilee was not what he expected. He listened for some wonderful revelation. He heard only in plainest speech the story of Jesus of Nazareth, how, anointed of God, He went about doing good, and was hanged on a tree, and was raised from the dead, and that whosoever believed on Him should have remission of sin. Surely this was not what he looked for, and yet it was all that he wanted. *Remission of sin!* Yes, that was his mighty need. And as that stupendous truth of salvation fell on his ear, suddenly (showing that now God's great purpose of grace was to be fulfilled in him, and that through that simple Gospel, as a channel, was to be poured upon his enraptured soul the full flowings of God's mercy), as amid the glories of Pentecost, the power of God fell on them. The simple Gospel of Christ was felt to be salvation. The Gentile's heart melted in love, and his soul swelled with the rapture of the higher spiritual life, and he was bathed in the very effluence and effulgence of the Infinite and Eternal One—a baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire.

And of all this the practical lesson is, that all true conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit. Without it there can be no salvation. There may be all outward moralities—almsgiving and ritual worship and daily prayer and ecstatic raptures, as of bright angel-visits. Yea, there may be even the most solemn and earnest preaching of the true Gospel, and it will in the end prove to be no more than the sweep of winds over the awful valley of vision, if God send not through the channel of ordinances the flowing of His grace, and the poor, lost soul be not sanctified by the heavenly baptism.

These, then, are the simple lessons of the text—

1. That for any genuine work of grace, either in an individual or a church, there must be not only solemn preaching and earnest prayer, but, as well, diligent preparation.

2. That this preparation consists in at once beginning or resuming the performance of all Christian duties.

3. That just so soon, but never until then, as men have done their part, God will do His part.

And the application of these truths is two-fold.

1. To God's own children. We are approaching the communion. We need a revival of pure and undefiled religion. We want sinners converted. We want a baptism of the Holy Ghost, not a spasm, a sensation. Especially do we desire that our beloved kindred and neighbors and friends should become disciples of Jesus and members of His Church. And our text teaches us that it is not enough to pray for them, or to get a whole church to pray for them, or even to go up to the great assemblies of God's people. Before we can pray for them with any hope, and before we can honestly ask others to pray for them, we must first do our own duty to them. Just what Peter did for Cornelius when he went to him personally, and in his own house, surrounded only by his own kinsfolk, spake to him of salvation, and won him to Christ. And letting alone the application of this truth to others, I am persuaded, dear brethren and sisters, that if you individually would make trial of this thing, each one of you selecting some impenitent neighbor or friend or beloved one, and speaking to them earnestly, as Peter did to Cornelius,

a hundred souls would be converted at once, and Zion built up, and your Saviour glorified.

The other application of the text is to those out of Christ. I am sure I speak to some who wish they were Christians, who, perhaps, sometimes pray that God will convert them. Now, the text teaches you whose is the fault and why the failure. If you want to be Christians, you are not to wait till you feel some miraculous change within you. You must begin just as you are to live and act as Christians. Go home to-day, and pray for yourselves; break off your known sins; study your Bible. If you are a parent, call your family together, and pray with and for them. When on the morrow you go to your business, go as honest men, to make manifest in every act of your lives great religious principles; go, in short, and so live that your record shall be just that of Cornelius. Not that he lived like a heathen till God converted him, nor that he lived like a hypocritical Pharisee, for a pretence making long prayers, while he devoured widows' houses, serving Satan secretly six days of the week, and the Lord on the Sabbath with noisy demonstration, but that he was "*a devout man, fearing the Lord, doing good among the people, and praying to God always.*" And then, and not till then, as sure as God liveth, will your experience be like that of Cornelius. Then, then, will the blessed Saviour meet with you in His life-giving grace. Your hard heart will be broken in penitent love, and you will have a sense of forgiven sin, and the whisper of an approving conscience, and the peace of God passing all understanding, and a faith as an evidence of things unseen, making heaven a great reality, and hope as an

anchor, holding you fast in every storm, and a joy as of a child of God, and an heir of eternal glory. And you will be a new man in a new world under those Divine influences and effluences—" *a baptism of the Holy Ghost, and a baptism of fire.*"

OUR HEIRSHIP.

"If children, then heirs."—ROMANS VIII. 17.

"A testament is of force after men are dead."—HEBREWS IX. 17.

We have heretofore considered these texts separately. We put them together to-night for the sake of a different range of thought and a particular practical application. The first declares that all true Christians are co-equal heirs of God. The second brings the whole heirship under the tender metaphor which is so appropriate to our circumstances as a church, which has just set forth sacramentally the death of the Incarnate God.

We have met here to-night as heirs succeeding to the possession of an estate upon the decease of the owner. On those former occasions we examined the exegetical question whether the Greek word in the second text should be "testament" or "covenant," and showed that according to either rendering the same great truth was expressed, that Christ's death was necessary for the salvation of men. We do not propose to repeat that train of thought. Enough for our present purpose, to remind you that here Paul brought the whole matter under the graphic figure of a property bequeathed to heirs, which bequest takes effect upon the death of the owner. His argument carefully sets forth all the legal conditions of such a transaction.

1. A large property.
2. A proprietor with undisputed title.
3. The fact of this owner's death legally established.

4. A will or bequest, either oral or written, according to forms of law, attested by unimpeachable witnesses.

Such is salvation secured to every believer by the death of Christ.

Now, keeping in view this striking metaphor, its application to ourselves is most appropriate and touching. It is the custom, at least in older countries, very soon after the death of any large proprietor, for all his relatives, who by request attended his obsequies, to come together in the old mansion, and then his last will and testament is produced and opened and read, that every heir may know what their deceased kinsman has left them. And so we, having in this sacrament beheld the death of our dear Lord and kinsman, have, as it were, now re-assembled in His own house to behold the opening of His will, and learn what He hath bequeathed to us, His heirs, that we may cherish grateful memories of our Benefactor, and rejoice together in view of our own rich legacy. Thus regarded, these texts are suggestive of many practical lessons. We have here,

First. A lesson about brotherly love. Surely if there be any circumstances in which members of the same family should truly love one another, they are just those represented in the text. We hear sometimes of men quarreling in such cases. We hear of envyings and animosities growing out of such bequests. We hear, indeed, of dissatisfied kinsfolk attempting to render void the codicil, or even "break the will" of the deceased person, and though all this is, in certain cases of manifest incompetency, proper and right, yet when the validity and authenticity of the will are fully established,

the wishes of the testator clearly understood, and when immense wealth has been so equitably and impartially distributed as to render every heir absolutely affluent, then surely such exhibitions of animosity and envy are unseemly and monstrous.

Now, just such are all unchristian contentions in the Church of Christ. Whether in the form of discords in the same particular congregation, or of sectarian bigotries in the one general Church, these things are not merely painful; they are disgraceful; they are monstrous. They are manifestations of anger by the death-bed of a common relative. They are efforts to impeach the validity of the last will and testament of a munificent Benefactor. It was in the power of this very thought that Paul so rebuked the disgraceful controversies in the Corinthian Church. "Let there be no divisions among you, for Christ is not divided. Let there be no self-glorying strifes among you, for all things are yours," *i. e.*, yours in common, left equally to you all by the dying Saviour, as an individual inheritance.

"*All things are yours.*" There is not a word in the whole dying testament of Christ about any special bequests to Presbyterians or Methodists or Episcopalians or Baptists. "*All things are yours.*" Yours in common. You are all only a beloved circle and family of relatives, left to dwell together for the present in the same old paternal mansion, heirs together of the same immense and ineffable inheritance. And surely in such conditions any individual, any congregation, any denomination of professing Christians, presuming to cherish animosities, or to put forth claims of supremacy, or in any way to promote dissension in the Body of Christ, is

simply a disgrace to the Church, yea, a disgrace to human nature. Oh that God would bring all His dear children under the power of this simple thought! You are all heirs together of the salvation procured by the dying Christ. He has left to you all in common His immense possessions. You are only one family, living together in the same house. Therefore, "*little children, love one another!*" Passing this, we have here,

Secondly, A lesson about love to Jesus. I do not know any emblem more powerful to quicken the affections than this in the text. The death of a testator. The decease of a near relative, who has left us in his will heirs to unbounded possessions. And this is just what Jesus seems to us to-day. He came into this world, and assumed our nature, atoned for our sins, paid all our enormous debts, just that we might become His kinsfolk and heirs, and He died, just that His last will and testament might go into effect, and we become possessed of His immense possessions, all the riches of His earthly grace, all the treasures of His heavenly glories. And who of us can fail to love the Redeemer now?

Everything we have on earth or in heaven we owe to His death. These homes, with their appliances of comfort and ministries of affection, are ours, because "the Son of Man had not where to lay His head." Our prepared palaces in heaven, wherein we are to reign forever as kings unto God, are ours, because He who from eternity lay in the bosom of the Father descended to ignominy and this death on the cross, that we might be received into glory, and sit with Him on His throne. Oh that God would bring this emblem of the text powerfully upon every heart! The blessed Saviour

died that He might leave us rich in the possession of His immense dominions. Where there is a testament there must be of necessity the death of the testator. But now, passing all these and many like truths suggested by this emblem, as only preparatory to the text's especial thought, let us learn here,

Thirdly, and chiefly, a lesson of grateful joy in view of our Christian immunities. We are here as the heirs, as near and dear kinsfolk, to open His last will and testament, and learn what He hath bequeathed us. Here it is, the precious document written by the Divine hand, signed by the beloved name, attested by the unimpeachable witness of all the Divine Persons, pronounced authentic and valid by the Supreme Tribunal of the universe.

Let us reverently, lovingly, loosen the scroll, and read out all its bequests and provisions. Of course we have to-night no space for details and items. We have just said, and on a former occasion enlarged upon the thought, that in this whole blessed sacrament there are no special bequests to any particular denomination of Christians. But we would not be understood that it contains no such bequest to individual believers; for, indeed, it abounds with them. For, to go no further, just remember how beautifully Paul puts this very thought, when he says that God's dear children "*inherit the promises.*"

And these promises are not so much a general bequest as special legacies; and it seems to me that in all human language there is nothing so touching as special legacies. Go read the last wills and testaments of the great men of all time, of those old heroes of Seventy-six, of the im-

mortal geniuses who preceded them, and you will find them filled with such loving words as these, "I give my dear son my portrait by a great artist. I give to my honored mother the old Bible she gave me when I was a child. I bequeath to my beloved daughter my old silver service. I give to my dear wife my household furniture and library." Oh! it is the small details of the testament that show how the faces and names of every relative had a tender place in the man's heart.

And so it is of God's special promises, as items in this otherwise general testament. They are all of them special. Draw near, ye kinsfolk of Jesus, while I read a few of them. Come, thou poor man, pressed down with temporal wants, here is a promise Christ has given you — "*The Lord is thy Shepherd; thou shalt not want.*" Is not that like an old signet ring? Come, you poor orphan-child, whose father and mother are in the grave, hearken to the Divine promise, "*I will be a Father to you.*" Is not that better than any golden ornament? Come, you mourners over some beloved grave, here is a precious promise for you, "*Your son, your parent, your brother, shall rise again.*" For how much will you sell that blessed promise? Come, every afflicted soul, here is your promise, "*Your light affliction is working out for you an eternal weight of glory.*" Does not that seem like a crown jewel? Come, every poor, conscience-stricken sinner, here is your promise, "*Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.*" Come, every distressed believer, here is your promise, "*My grace is sufficient for you.*" "*As your day is, so shall your strength be.*" Is not that more precious than a service of silver?

I have no time now for detail. Take your own Bible—God's testament to His children—and it reads just like the items of special bequests to the individual kinsfolk. "This old picture to my son; this bright jewel to my daughter; this cherished keep-sake to my mother." Thanks unto God for these special individual promises—promises meeting every Christian's want, planting blessings in anticipation, as tents of angels awaiting our coming, in every dark place or bright place to which our mortal feet shall come.

But we can not linger over them. We are concerned just now, not with these codicils of special legacies, but with the grand, general testament. And how like a will of human love it reads.

"All the rest and residue of my estate, real and personal, I leave undivided to my dear sons and daughters." Hark to the general item as found in Paul's copy (we explained it before). *"All things are yours."* Yes, absolutely all things—all things temporal, all things eternal, all things here, all things hereafter; all yours, yours, not this son's or that daughter's but yours, all in common. But mark! Though there is here no designation of the individual legatees, there is a comprehensive schedule of the glorious possessions which make up the common inheritance. Hark how Paul puts it, *"All things are yours"*—the world, *i. e.*, the present world, this revolving planet, wherein our dear Lord once lived; the very mansion in which He sojourned; and all things present, all the world's appliances and appointments, its rich furniture, its costly adornment, its mighty treasure-vaults, its grand art-galleries, its broad and lofty chambers, its magnificent pavilions, all the gardens and

orchards and vineyards which make up the homestead, all the boundless lands and vast cities which make up the kingdom. As if impatient of detail, like a royal testator, who, having itemized a few splendid bequests, conveys in a single sentence all the residue of his estate, so Christ here gathers all created things in one comprehensive devise—" *Yours is the world, with all its things present.*"

But this is not all. Indeed, as part of Christ's infinite legacy, even this seems as nothing, for love it is closing the ineffable inventory. "*Yours are all things to come,*" *i. e.*, all things that are out of and beyond and above these things seen and temporal. He does not tell what they are; for, indeed, so long as we remain mortal and sinful, we could not understand His words if He should. A schedule of the "things to come" could be written in the language of heaven and read by the tongues of angels, and even Paul could not understand them, for he tells us that in his rapture to glory "*He heard unspeakable words.*" He tells us that though mortal men have seen glorious visions, and human ears heard seraphic voices, and human genius imagined transcendent splendor, "Yet eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, the things to come which God hath prepared for them that love Him." And in his own effort to give his less-favored fellow-disciples some faint fore-shadowings of what they were, he could only speak of a "*far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*"

We can not understand it, yet here it is, engrossed in the testament. "*Yours,*" as part of God's undivided estate, are all things to come—yours and mine and all

Christians', as joint-heirs—all things which make up eternal life and glory, all those things which God hath made for His dear children, which we strive to conceive of under the poor, earthly images of crowns and thrones and kingdoms of immortality; yea, "all things which God shall yet make."

When going forth from that Divine Sabbath wherein He rested from His creative work, He shall still more wonderfully reveal His infinite wisdom and power and love in such forms and forces of natural and spiritual life as even an angel's eye hath not seen nor an angel's heart conceived. "*Things to come!*" To keep coming throughout the eternities which make up the Divine life. All these things are yours, as the children of His love, the heirs of His glory."

We pause here for the present, for it is not so much the immense value of this inheritance we are considering as its reality. It is because we do not consider this, that we so often go from this precious ordinance with little benefit and small comfort. Even if we love our Lord tenderly, yet we feel that we have been setting forth His painful death for our sins, and it seems inapt, yea, unfeeling, to go away joyful; and this is all wrong. We have, indeed, been to the grave of our dear Elder Brother, and yet even that grave should have no power to sadden us, for it was not a grave shadowy under cypresses where the Beloved lay buried. But it was a grave bright with the glory flung from angel wings, whence the living Christ had risen. But we have done more than go to His grave. We have come back to His old mansion, we have opened His precious testament, and learned how tenderly Christ hath remembered us.

What precious legacies He hath bequeathed us! How rich He has left us!

And now surely it becomes us to go forth comforted, even in the shadow of earth's pilgrimage to feel that its paths are greener and its loads less, and in regard of all the earthly blessings we enjoy to find in every one a new value in the thought that they are Christ's gifts to us. Oh, how this thought of a legacy makes common things precious!

Go out into yonder Centennial Exposition! See those carefully preserved relics of a former generation! Why do they seem precious to their owners? That faded garment, that tattered flag, that obsolete, coarsely-set jewel. Why are they so cared for and valued? Why, just because they are bequests. That old garment was folded a hundred years ago over a kindred-heart. That old jewel was worn by some ancestor when kings ruled over them. That torn flag floated over the old soldier as he followed George Washington. They are legacies of ancestry, mementos of affection.

And this same thought should endear all life's common blessings, as the bequests of Jesus. That daily bread on your board, oh! it is Christ's hand that hath provided it. That sweet flower you pluck, it is Christ's, who made it grow for you. That bright bird in the air, Christ sent it to sing for you. All these dear things present are yours only because Christ's tender hand wrote them down in His will.

But what is all this to the more enrapturing thought of the "*things to come*," which make up the immense and undivided possession bequeathed to us? Oh! men and brethren, come up to your privileges. Exult in

your all-glorious prerogatives. What reason, nay, what right has any Christian to depart from this sacrament troubled, distressed, sorrowful? If you are God's child, God's heir, then what would you have more? Who calls my brother here a poor man? Why, he is an heir of all things. Do you see yonder star shining up in Heaven? Well, that is his star. Does there come out to the eye of faith through this mortal haze the glory as of an eternal world? Well, that is his glory, his eternal world. Who calls our sister here a disconsolate mourner? Why, her beloved dead are waiting for her coming in their own prepared places in God's heavenly mansions. Who calls that dear child a friendless orphan? Why, its Heavenly Father keeps tender watch and ward over it, such as no mother ever kept over her sick or slumbering infant. Who says our honored and beloved father, lying yonder, helpless and suffering, yet smiling, as of old, into the dear faces that keep watch by his pillow; who says he is near unto death? No! no! no! He is only nearer than we unto the life everlasting. There at his door, even now, stands the chariot of fire, to bear him aloft to his heavenly palace and throne and kingdom.

Oh, God! give us more "faith," the "evidence of things unseen, the substance of things hoped for." Away with all tears, all complainings. Smiling looks of love, eyes flashing, hearts beating high, voices triumphantly singing, these, these, should be ours as we pass from this sacrament. We should go out to the world again, no matter how cloudy the sky or how dark the night, yet we should go as the disciples went from their Passover-table unto gloomy Gethsemane, filling

all the air with the great hallelujah of thanksgiving. The past may have been dark. Even the present may seem distressing and desolate, but the future is all glorious—not a cloud upon its sky, not an undertone in all its music. Oh! look upward, troubled soul. See how the radiant trains pass behind the thin veil and flash through the transparency! Hark how the heavenly voices whisper through the starry silence! “*All things are yours; all things are yours.*”

THE CONSCIENCE.

“ But herein do I exercise myself, always to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.”—ACTS XXIV. 16.

There are few subjects on which so much has been written with so small benefit as that brought before us in the text.

The conscience. Whether it be a *distinct faculty* of our nature, or merely the function of our intellect exercised upon moral questions ; whether it be a faculty at all, or only an act or a habit ; all such questions have been matters of dispute since the earliest philosophy, and all to so little practical purpose, that this very function or faculty or act or habit (call it what you will) has been working only evil, and, in different ages and countries, given its sanction to every vice and crime in the whole catalogue of transgression. The reason of this is, that conscience has been made rather an object of curious speculation than the subject of addresses. Men have written and spoken of it rather than to it.

And here, perhaps, is one secret of the small influence of modern moral and religious reform. Take any view of conscience you may, yet every man knows that within him there is either an element or movement of his moral nature convincing him of a difference between right and wrong, and impelling him to the right with the solemn sense of being himself a moral and accountable creature.

And to this moral sense, or conscience, all moral truth should be addressed. It bears to our moral

powers the same relation that pure reason does to the intellectual. It sits among them as a judge, it presides over them as rulers; and to it should be especially addressed the arguments and urged the appeals of the moral advocate. Of course all other human faculties are to be plied with true motives. But until the conscience is reached, no real good is accomplished. We may ply our intellectual batteries upon the portal of man's reason; we may approach with all charms of eloquence to the door of his imagination; we may force our way even into the deeper recesses of his emotions, and lay the hand upon the slumbering affections, and rouse into intense power his mightiest passions. Yet, advancing no further, we have but carried the out-posts of human nature, have gained access only to the Gentile courts of the spiritual temple. And still within, all unapproached, all undisturbed, this great moral arbiter and ruler may abide all unaffected in its decisions, all unchanged in its sovereignty. And therefore it is, that to this moral sense of man God always addresses His truth. Therefore it is, that Paul represents the grand design of the blood of Christ to be to purge the conscience from dead works. Therefore it is, that in the text Paul declares that in regard of his own religious experience the grand end and consummation of his spiritual exertion was "to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men."

There can be, therefore, no subject more important than that which the text presents. It leads us to two things,

I. The *nature*, and,

II. The *cultivation* of a good conscience. And,

First. Its nature. And here we omit all metaphysics. Whether it be a distinct faculty of the mind, or only the judgment (or, if you please, the undivided intellect) acting on moral questions, it matters not now. The word "conscience" is compounded of "*con*" and "*scientia*," and means joint-knowledge—not only what we know, but know with another; and the other knower must be God, and so implies both a knowledge of our own doings and of the Divine demands.

A good conscience is, therefore, one under whose decisions and authority our own doings and the Divine demands are brought and kept in harmony. It is more,

1. Than a mere natural conscience, for this we have seen in the fact that among men it has justified all iniquities, though it teaches us that there is a difference between right and wrong, yet neither accurately defining the domain of the right, nor constraining to abide in it. Meanwhile, it is distinguished from an ignorant conscience.

2. A moral sense, which, sharing in the general apostacy of our other faculties, needs regeneration and culture. Such a conscience as Saul of Tarsus had when conscientiously he persecuted the Church of God. Moreover,

3. It is opposed to a weak conscience. A moral sense, which, deciding wisely as a judge, fails in authority as a sovereign, pointing out the right way, but not constraining to walk in it. Of course,

4. It is the very opposite of an evil conscience, which is oppressed and tormented with a sense of ill-desert such as was experienced by Judas and Herod, by Nebuchadnezzar and Saul. It is opposed, as well,

5. To a hardened conscience. A moral sense, which,

like all senses, has through abuse lost sensibility, which the Bible speaks of as insensible, past feeling, seared, like flesh cauterized by a hot iron. And, above all, it is opposed,

6. To a defiled conscience. The moral sense corrupted, perverted, even in its office as judge, putting good for evil and evil for good.

We have already said, that conscience is to the moral nature what reason is to the intellectual. And in this last stage of its perversion it becomes moral insanity, and precisely as intellectual madness actually leads the man, all unconsciously, into all natural peril, so this spiritual or moral madness urges us to find delight in the awful ways of death. To all such perverted moral conditions is a good conscience opposed. Our text briefly describes it as "*a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.*" In regard of men, fulfilling the Divine law—"To love them in thought, word, and deed as we love ourselves." But, not satisfied with this man-ward morality, first and above all in regard of God, believing all that He has spoken, and doing all that He requires.

Second. And this leads us, as the more important and practical point, to consider, secondly, the cultivation of a good conscience. The Apostle speaks of it as a work, and a hard work. "*Herein do I exercise myself,*" *i. e.*, give myself to it as the athlete to the running. "*Exercise myself always,*" making it both my earnest care and my constant care—my work—feeling that this faculty, like all faculties, even after regeneration, demanded a most earnest and unremitting culture. In considering the means of the proper cultivation of the conscience, we observe,

First, That we must, as an incentive, entertain just notions of the importance of the faculty. As we have just said, it is to the moral faculty what reason is to the intellectual. It is the grand regulating power, preserving the desires and affections in harmony and order. As it is conscience, joint-knowledge, *i. e.*, what we know together with God, it may be regarded as that which modern theology calls the faith-faculty—that to which revelation is addressed, and by which its truths are apprehended; that which alone remains a faithful witness for God amid all the insurgent traitor faculties of our nature. And so it may be regarded as the soul's Holy of Holies—the deeper inner-sanctuary, where the Shekinah abides and the Divine oracles are uttered. And in having to do with it we should feel that we come more positively than elsewhere into the Divine presence, and that the cultivation of the reason and the memory and the imagination and the affections, important as they all are, hath really nothing of the tremendous moment of this discipline and development of a true religious conscience. And this sense of the incomparable worth of the faculty will lead us,

Secondly, to enlighten it. Even a sincere Christian's moral sense, while unenlightened, is sure to make one of the two great opposite mistakes—scrupulosity or recklessness, a too great or too little circumspection about little things.

(*a*). Some men have too little. They are careful to avoid only those things which the Word of God positively and pointedly declares to be evil. They ignore all consequences of acts. They care only to avoid absolute evil, and not, as well, the appearance of evil.

They are satisfied if only the bears and lions are kept out of God's husbandry, and forget that it is, after all, the little foxes which most injure the grapes.

(*b*). Meanwhile, they have too much scrupulosity. They are concerned mainly with the little things, like the Italian bandit, doing painful penance for a flesh-diet in Lent, but giving free course to all brutal and bloody passions in the carnival. They are sticklers for forms of baptism, ceremonies and formularies of worship, to a neglect of great doctrines and great duties. They are more concerned about popular amusements than inner spiritual emotions. They pay tithes of cummin, and forget God's great commandments. They strain at the gnat, and swallow the camel. And the remedy of all this is only such a thorough education of the conscience as renders it a nobly comprehensive and symmetrical faculty. This demands,

1. And above all, the careful study of God's Word as the great directory of life.

2. The study of all moral science. Having to do with all moral duties, the conscience must be instructed as to the real qualities of all things. A physician can not conscientiously prescribe for a disease which he does not understand. An artisan can not conscientiously build a house or fashion a garment if he be not thoroughly acquainted with forms and fabrics. There must, in short, be science before there can be conscience. And so to a thoroughly enlightened conscience there is positively necessary, not merely a knowledge of God's written Word, but of God's world as it is and man's nature as it is. Meanwhile, after the conscience is thus enlightened, we must,

Thirdly, never violate it. Wherever it fails to approve, we must hesitate; when it forbids, we must refrain; when it commands, we must obey. There must be admitted no pettifogger, with his labored special pleading, into this great spiritual Judgment Hall. Every wrong done to it is a terrific blow on its glorious frontlet, benumbing its sensibility and destroying its power. Therefore,

Fourthly. We must avoid things questionable. Not only "evil," but the "appearance of evil." I do not mean that we must conform our moral sense to every prejudice of the bigot or fanatic. A man who tries ethically to please everybody will have a hard time of it generally. Jesus came eating and drinking, according to the social customs of His day, and they called him a wine-bibber. John neither ate nor drank like other men, and they said he had a devil. The same men remain. The witnesses examined at the court of conscience must be of average understanding, and know and feel the nature and solemnity of an oath. The Pharisee, with his seive for the gnat, and the Sadducee, with his throat for the camel, are alike incompetent to give evidence in its assize.

Common-sense, calm reason, strong-hearted honesty, white-robed truth, these are to bear testimony; and when the verdict is rendered, we must accept and abide it. Meanwhile, and above all,

Fifthly. We must keep the conscience ever in intimate intercourse with God. For, we repeat it again, the very name of the faculty—this joint-scientia—demands it. It is, after all, no more than the soul's "Urim and Thummim," through whose jeweled breast-plate the Eternal

One speaks. And therefore, in another connection, Paul speaks of commending himself to the conscience, as in the sight of God, *i. e.*, as if in the immediate presence of the august and all-righteous Jehovah.

The court where conscience presides is the Holy of Holies, where, even above the mercy-seat, flames out the Shekinah. The question to be answered is, how should I act or feel or think if I saw the Omnipotent Eye fixed ever upon me? I must do my business, enjoy my pleasures, perform my religious duties, treat God and treat man as if, like Abraham, I were walking ever looking at the Celestial City, or with the prophet at Chebar, and saw visions of God.

This, in part, and briefly, is the regimen whereby our moral sense should be disciplined and developed. Thus, like Paul, must we exercise ourselves, *i. e.*, give ourselves to painstaking and perseverance; yea, exercise ourselves "*always,*" *i. e.*, not on Sabbath days and in sanctuaries, but everywhere and always "*To have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.*" And the motives to this duty are manifold and mighty.

First. Our spiritual life depends on it. We may ply all the other faculties with motors, launch our logic against the reason, our poetry upon the imagination, our pathos upon the emotions, our vehemence upon the passions, and yet, until we have reached this great master-faculty, we have only been doctoring symptoms, only driving in out-posts. And herein lies the terrible defect of our modern piety. It is a thing of reason, of taste, of emotion. The measure of our religious duties is the pleasure we take in them.

What we want is conscience—a sense of direct and

personal accountability to God, a power that takes hold of the hopes and fears of another and an endless life, and works through and with them as motives, which does not ask, What is pleasant? What for the present is even, profitable or philosophic? But what does God require of me? Which brings duty up from this dim moonshine of sentiment into the effulgent light that blazes from the eternal throne, until the soul sees that he who turns back from it is not fit for the kingdom of heaven, and for want of this much of modern piety is as practically worthless as shimmering moonlight on a frozen Lapland lake.

Our positive spiritual life depends on the conscience. While it sleeps undisturbed vain is all seamanship, and the imperiled bark will go down in the storm, and all the air be filled with the wild cry of the drowning soul unless he rush, as the Disciples, to the Master, crying, "Awake and save, or we perish!" Meanwhile,

Second. Our happiness depends on it. Conscience is the heart of true piety, that faculty that keeps us in direct connection with eternal things, and through which flows the hidden life in Christ into the human spirit. And what true life can there be where there is no vigorous heart-beat? If there be a pitiful and miserable creature on earth, it is what some one calls "a little bit of a Christian, with only just enough religion to keep a fire burning under his conscience." These puerile, suckling believers, who have been so bedrugged by these hand nurses of sensation, that their consciences can bear no stronger food than milk and water thrice diluted, and sweetened and imbibed from a spoon.

A good conscience has a two-fold office—that of an

adviser and of an avenger, to keep us from doing wrong and to punish us for doing wrong. And in the moral organization of these callow and half-fledged believers the conscience itself is like a nestling eaglet, with only a sharp beak to tear and torture and scream, and no pinions to fly. Its only functions are of the *a poste-facto* order—never awake until the evil is done, and then awake only as a ravenous avenger. And the man with such a conscience can not but be miserable. The conscience is not a guide leading in progress, but only a surly mastiff forever barking at his heels. As the regulating power of our moral nature the function of conscience is to act upon the desires and affections, and by bringing them into their just relation to God, the Great Moral Governor, to adjust them into correspondence and harmony in their places among themselves. Without this the moral man is like a poor, dismayed, dismantled wreck, rolling and moving on engulfing seas. With this he is like a glorious argosy, a gallant crew crowding her deck, and brave colors streaming from mast and peak, and all her canvas strained to the wind, walking the waters like a thing of life. Meanwhile, and above all,

Thirdly. Our future. Heaven depends on it. And on this point it matters not now what may be our notion of the sphere and condition of the future life. There may or may not be for the regenerated spirit palaces of beauty and robes of light, and for the impenitent and unpardoned sackcloth of hair and dark caverns of anguish. And yet the baldest literalist must see that, as set forth in the Bible, such things are regarded only as the accessories, and not the essential elements of retribution. Everywhere revelation affirms the same truth.

Thus heaven is essentially not a condition, but a character. The coming of Christ was to set up in the human heart the heavenly kingdom ; by reproducing the original purity and peace and joy to set again flowing all the streams, and blooming all the flowers, and singing all the birds of the blessed old Paradise.

And as the Bible everywhere is at one with our experience in the testimony that holiness is in itself bliss, and sin is in itself misery, so there can be no heaven to the impure and no hell to the sanctified. And it is in view of this fact that the cultivation of conscience assumes an importance awful and overwhelming. So long as it remains evil and tormenting, so long there is no power in conditions to relieve from anguish. Indeed, the fairer the circumstances, the more terrible the pangs.

Herod sat, a crowned king, at his voluptuous banquet, and they told him of a glorious Stranger walking the world only to bless and beautify, healing the sick and casting out devils. And that terrible power within transforms that palace into a hell, and that Heavenly Being into a tormenter ; and his eye blazed with the fire of the inner torment as he cried, "*It is John the Baptist risen from the dead!*"

And so take an unsanctified nature, even into heaven, even into the highest of all the prepared places in the house of many mansions, and it would walk there, as Nebuchadnezzar amid the glories of his own imperial Babylon, and the stone would cry out of the wall and the beam out of the timber would answer it, till from that terrible *woe ! woe ! woe !* it would rush away, like the frantic monarch, to find haunt and home with the beast. And would, oh, would I had only power to

open the eye of every impenitent man to this simple truth ! I do not ask you to read the Bible. I only ask you to study your own nature. You know, for you feel that you have a conscience. Reason in this false circle as you will, either that conscience produces religious fear or that such fears produce conscience. The great fact remains—a fact of simple consciousness—that there is in your nature a faculty that approves when you do right and condemns when you do wrong.

And all we ask is, that you should earnestly consider. Take a torch and walk through the chamber of your own spirit, through the grand portal of reason, through the art gallery of your imagination, through the banquet-hall of your passion, through the sweet-home-room of your affections, till you come to that mysterious inner-chamber which you yourself never enter. Lift that massive curtain, and there, cradled amid thick shadows, behold a sleeping babe. Note it well ; examine it carefully ; it is not like your other faculties. It remains the one sole witness for God among all your drugged and degraded impulses. It is not formed and fashioned like other passions. Its very seeming is of a creature mighty in its immortality.

Now, that awful faculty is the master of your after fate. If you give it an angel's culture, it will bless you as an angel. If you give it infernal culture, it will torture you as a fiend. Take care, then, that you so rock its cradle and cherish its liberty that its whole walk with you, side by side through the long journeyings of eternity, be with an angel's harp and song, and not a fiend's scream and lash of scorpions.

A HAPPY PEOPLE.

"Happy is that people whose God is the Lord."—PSALMS CXLIV. 15.

I shall not detain you a moment this morning with the text's primitive references. The Psalm seems to have been penned by David after the death of Absalom and the restoration of the kingdom to peace and tranquility. It is divided into three great parts—a thanksgiving, a petition, a discussion of those elements wherein happiness consists—and winds up with a pronouncement of Israel's happiness as possessed of all elements of social and national beatitudes, and, above all, as possessed of that far greater blessing—having Jehovah for their God—being happy because of their numerous agricultural and social and commercial advantages, but especially and emphatically happy because, as a people, their God was the Lord.

Now, the fitness of this text to our present circumstances will be apparent to you all. Without recurring to the remarkable resemblances between ourselves and the old Hebrew Commonwealth, which we have so often insisted on, there is enough in the peculiarities of our state just now to justify our selection.

We are here by the injunction of the Executive, to offer thanksgiving to God for our distinguishing mercies. The Divine benefactions adverted to in this proclamation are almost identical with those which the Psalmist enumerates. We, like Israel, have been delivered from the cost and the cruelties of an unnatural

and most unrighteous war ; and our garners, like theirs, are full, affording all manner of stores, and our cattle have brought forth thousands and tens of thousands, so that as to our external relations and our internal economy, of us, as of them, there is no complaining in the streets. And for these mercies, and mercies such as these, have our rulers called us together to our holy altars to offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving to the God who hath vouchsafed them.

And all this is well, and all these should most heartily be remembered in our festival praises. But yet than all this there is something better. Good as is peace and good as is prosperity, yet better even than they is the God who bestows them. And we rejoice before high heaven, and call ourselves of all kindred and people the most richly blessed, partly, indeed, because our husbandry hath been abundant and our commerce prosperous and our arms triumphant, and our sun of national glory still uneclipsed and ascendent. Yet as the favored recipients of that Gospel which is at once the guardian and guarantee of all these national beatitudes, most blessed of all do we regard ourselves, because "*Blessed is that people whose God is the Lord.*"

The thought, then, for our consideration to-day is, the value to us, as a nation, of the Gospel. And the form of its present discussion will be, the necessity, yea, the positive indispensableness of evangelical influences to our permanent prosperity as a people.

I. And in such a discussion our first business is to show you how all these influences and agencies wherein infidelity rules as political safe-guards are altogether in-

adequate to our national emergencies. Take a few of them as specimens.

1. Now, perhaps, the most common ground of reliance for the permanency of our free institutions, if examined carefully, will be found to be a kind of indefinite idea that our Government is the very perfection of political machinery, and contains within itself a kind of self-perpetuating power, so that you have only just to let it alone, and it will go on without modification or hindrance to eternity. In other words, men look to the Government itself as the guarantee of its own perpetuity. But the folly of all such trust will be sufficiently apparent if you just set one of these dreamers of dreams to tell you definitely what our Government is, and where our Government can be found. Perhaps such a question may startle them, yet press it nevertheless.

Where is the American Government that you speak of as powerful in itself to conserve its own existence? Why, you go to the capital of the nation, expecting to find it. You visit the Bureaus of the departments. You go to the halls of the Senate and Representatives; you address the generals of the army and the commodores of the navy; you go up to the President's house, and question its honored occupant, and every one of them will answer unhesitatingly, "Why, the Government is not here; the Government is not with us." It is easy enough to find the Governments of other countries. You will find it embodied and incarnate in the eminent monarch, hemmed in by ten thousand bayonets. But travel from "Dan to Beersheba" in the midst of this free people, and you can find nothing

pretending to be a Government. And the reason is most apparent. You are carrying the Government along with you. Americanism exists only in the warm hearts of living Americans. American laws are but the breath in American nostrils. American institutions are but the thoughts and desires that flit through American minds. And you might as well rely on the permanency of the winds of heaven as to rely on the self-sustaining power of free institutions.

2. Now, next to this most indistinct and unfounded idea, is, in point of prevalency, perhaps, the notion that education and general intelligence are to be the safeguards of our honored nationality. This, perhaps, was the theory of our worthy Governor when he penned this message, for he speaks here most emphatically of our eminent educational advantages; and yet with all our high regard for intellectual culture we should like of all things, to be told how mere human learning, irrespective of high moral culture, is to conserve and perpetuate free institutions. Americanism is simply self-government.

Now, does the mere education of the mind prepare a man for self-government? Does it diminish the power of his own passions? Does it increase his love for his fellow citizens? Does it make him a benevolent man, a self-regulating man? Alas! alas! the Cæsars and the Bonapartes of all time have been men sprung from the higher walks of cultivated genius. Discipline unto its highest power the intellect of a wicked man, and you have only put a two-edged sword into the hands of a maniac. Education without Christianity hath ever proved itself only a curse. And the bark of our lib-

erties may as well rot in the sea as to be driven by ambitious storms into dread shipwreck.

But, beside all this, where look you for the progress of this intellectual culture save in the prevalence of the Gospel? Why, the simple fact is, that if the great mass of the next generations are able to read the very votes they deposit in the ballot-box, they will learn it in the Sunday-school; and if the mind of that great host whereby we are to be ruled is educated sufficiently to discern between the ambitious demagogue and the honest man, it will be under the wide influences of evangelical truth, and amid the mighty play of evangelical operations.

3. And next to these we hear much of a noble patriotism as the safe-guard of our nationality. Now, advisedly do we say it, much as we dislike going abroad on fruitless travel, yet we would gladly go to the ends of the world to behold a specimen of pure patriotism that was absolutely without Godliness. What is an unevangelical patriotism? Why, it is a thing talked of on college rostrums and in political harangues. A love of all men in general and of no one man in particular, the very core and gall of the foulest of all bigotries, political sectarianism, a principle that will bluster in behalf of a government so long as its protection works the optimism of its own sectional interests. But the moment that my plantation proves profitless, or my particular manufacture becomes a commercial drug, blustering just as volubly. Now, down with the Union.

No, sir! There is no pure patriotism save that which springs immediately from the Cross of Christ. And even if there were! What then? Patriotism is merely

an end, not a means. It may make me love my country, but does not teach me how to perpetuate its freedom. Did patriotism save Greece? Did patriotism preserve Rome? Alas! it but weeps at the death-bed and chisels the urn.

4. Nor is there any more of conservative power in political sagacity and the wisdom of statesmanship; for, take this sagacity and wisdom in their very highest style and loftiest honesty, and having to do with human nature wherein a foul passion carries it often over all reason and judgment, the result is at best a magnificent conjecture; and he who trusts thereto for national safety would trust his bark to a blind man's guidance when the ocean was uncharted and the night all stormy. The younger Pitt, unrivaled in the arts of statesmanship, produces as the result of his mighty genius two gigantic coalitions to overthrow the Corsican, and the conqueror dashed them in pieces with his strong arm, and wielded their fragments as the sceptre of Pan. There are latent elements in the human mind eluding the keenest eye of political sagacity. And if there were really such a thing as an honest statesmanship, its very mightiest control over our gigantic population were but the smoking flax on the sinews of Samson.

But, then, where, tell me where you find even political sagacity unwedded to Godliness. Honestly analyze, and what, after all, is the whole staple of our national politics? Why, a mere strife and struggle for official emoluments. As the ostensible issue wherewith to gull the hearts, the demagogue statesman will vapor about the percentage of a tariff, or the morality of a war, or the area of slavery; but the only thing under heaven

for which his statesmanship careth a straw is the lion's part of the spoils, the honor of an office, the outfit of an embassy.

5. Nor—be it observed once more—nor is there any stronger reason to trust in that great law of progress, a movement of our race toward political and social perfection, which many men are vaunting as the guarantee of our national perpetuity. For the simple matter of fact is, that, separated from Christianity, there is no such onward tendency of our race toward a single thing that is praiseworthy; nay, further than this goes the truth, that, with all the savor of Godliness that is in the midst of us, even now, the fact of our social and civil progress is an unsolved problem. In some things there is unquestionably an onward movement. There is, at any rate, a vast physical progress. We travel faster; we multiply books more rapidly; we live in houses more luxuriantly furnished; we worship in temples of a loftier decoration. The old Puritan's library was a Bible and a Psalm-book. Four miles an hour was the maximum of his horse power. He lived in a log house, on boiled corn and bacon, and worshiped his God in the aisles of the wilderness. These things confessedly we do far better. Physically we are on the march to perfection, and in another generation may, for aught I know, drive the red lightnings in harness and live on ambrosia, like the old demi-gods. But even in all this we find not the indication of progressive humanity. As a specimen of the creature man the old Puritan towers above our later specimens, as Mont Blanc among mole hills; and if verily there be no true notion of social progress which does not rest upon the idea of the perfection of the indi-

vidual man in all the great features and elements of manhood, where, I pray you, find we the data for these declamations about social progress? Is it in the style and staple of our literature? Why, we have Dickens and Bulwer and Tupper's Proverbial Philosophy and Eugene Sue's novels as the veritable type of the seven plagues of the press that are in our kneading troughs and upon our beds. And men have poems by Milton, and Johnson and Shakespeare and Young and a host of stalwart old giants of Saxon learning; and if you call the change a progress, it is the progress of an avalanche from the top of the heaven-piercing Alps to a quagmire in Italy.

Or is there progress in our practical morality? Why, if you stood on Plymouth Rock to-day, and followed the horizon with your eye toward the northeast, where the land breaks the sea view, you would discover a small island; and that island will stand in the geography of the millenium with a halo of wonderful glory, as the spot where the old Pilgrims spent their first Sabbath. Yes, fatigued, worn out, well-nigh dead with their long sea-voyage, in full view of the land of their adoption, yea, within a half-hour's sail of the welcome coast. The Sabbath dawned upon them right abreast of this island, and because they would not let God's wind work for them unnecessarily on the Lord's day, they moored their bark there; and then, on that desolate island, frost-bound and homeless, under a snowy sky and freezing sleet, they remembered the Sabbath day and kept it holy.

And do you think we have outmarched them in progressive morality? Let the rush of ten thousand wheels

over God's mundane Sabbath be the mark and the measure. Or is it in the uprightness and integrity of the men who bear rule in the councils of the nation that we find proofs of our progress? Why, we had Benjamin Franklin and John Witherspoon and John Hancock, and we had George Washington. And now we have—we have—will you all know who we have?—God. And if it be a progress at all, it seems very much like the Irishman's "Hist" from the top of a great wall into the bottom of a great gutter. Nay, my hearers, without further witnessing we are utterly at a loss to discover in the midst of us any indication of that advance toward perfection whereon so many rely for the permanency of our freedom. Our only progress seems to be in the accidents, and not the elements of our noble species. Nay, further, had we the limits we might show most conclusively that apart from evangelical influences there hath never been and never will be a hair's breadth of human progress.

Were the Indians truly making progress in this continent when the Pilgrims found them? Has there been progress in Africa? Is Carthage or Numidia or Egypt in advance of their position in long antiquity? Has there for a long thousand years been a single advance in China or India or Hindoostan? No! no! my brethren, the grand lesson of the world's whole history is, that without God's quickening Spirit the progress of all social and civil manhood is only the progress of a lifeless body from corruption to corruption. And in respect of our own highly favored land God hath only just to remove the candle-stick of the Gospel; Jesus Christ hath only just to leave the political bark wherein, with His

Disciples, He is crossing the sea, and verily, with the wind dead ahead, we should be driven, stern foremost, into the blackness of night and the fragments of shipwreck.

Now, these are some of the things ; and I have given you the best of them all and in their wildest manifestation. These are some of the things whereon men rely for the progress and the permanency of our beloved institutions ; and with no other considerations than those whereon we have just dwelt, we speak it advisedly and fearless of question—that man who trusts Americanism to such conservative influences hath cast anchor for his bark in a quicksand and pitched tent for slumber in a volcano's grotto where the crater burns.

II. And by all this am I led to the second thing proposed—to show you as well as I can in my brief limits, how there is a power in the Gospel of Christ to preserve and perfect our peculiar institutions. And what I have to say on this topic may be embraced in two most simple considerations—the Gospel in its tendency, the Gospel in its results ; what the Gospel seems adapted to do, and what the Gospel positively has done.

1. Consider, then, first, the inherent fitness of the Gospel to our popular necessities, *i. e.*, consider how the Gospel seems adapted to overcome those evils whereby our nationality is put in jeopardy. Now, what are the evils the American fears when he thinks of our institutions ? Why, these are some of them in desultory order—

He fears a war spirit—a thirst for military glory or territorial conquests as a spirit utterly out of harmony with our peculiar institutions, and the mighty rock

whereon, in all time, republics have been shipwrecked. And appealing, as this spirit does, to all the principles of unsanctified carnality, there is no influence that can keep it down but the Gospel. And to keep it down is just the Gospel's tendency and the Gospel's triumph. It sets itself against all wars as against colossal forms of murder. It baptizes every American child in the cradle with its own blessed spirit of peace on earth and good will to men. It would send forth every American youth with an ambition higher than a conqueror's—not yearning to destroy men's bodies, but only yearning to save men's souls.

Another of these evils an American patriot fears is slavery. As existing in our midst, it makes exhibition of the anomaly of a despotism working within a republic; and they won't work well together. Just so sure as causes produce effects, our Union must get rid of slavery, or slavery will get rid of the Union. And there is nothing but the Gospel or God's sore judgments that can bring about its abolition. Political parties can not do it; for, mark me, the politician who blusters most loudly for freedom will lavish money like water in the bribery of an election. And the man who will buy a vote will buy a slave; and there is not a political demagogue in the midst of us who would not buy Africans to-morrow if he could make voters of them. Nor will abolition societies get rid of the evil. They did not, indeed, mean it, for there are many honest and beloved men in the midst of them; but the practical effects of their operations have been to unite every Southern faction with a mind more adamant. But the Gospel of Christ will do it. The Gospel of Christ hath come for that purpose; to preach

liberty to the captive is the glory of its mission. This blessed Bible an advocate for slavery! Why, as well might you prove there is no light by the blaze of yon sun, or make certain that there is no God by the fires of yon firmament.

Another of these great national evils is Romanism. And here I am speaking of it only politically. It is, in the whole working of its polity, essentially a despotism, yea, the most grinding and terrible of all manifestations of tyranny. It does worse, even, than the thralldom of feudal vassalage. It puts not merely the body of man in another's power; it puts into another's power man's beating heart, man's living conscience. Romanism, as a polity, is the very perfection of absolutism, and is essentially and utterly at war with popular liberty. And, laying claim, as its Divine attribute, to absolute infallibility, it is the same despotic thing to-day it was a thousand years ago, and is moving to-day in the midst of us, and breathing to-day the pure air of our heritage, the same intolerant and haughty spirit which hath ever despised human liberty, and bound men in chains and reared over every vestige of freedom the grim grandeur of a throne. One thing is just as certain as your being, that with the slaves of a Roman priesthood your national majority will be disregarded and your capitol will become another Vatican, and your children will be slaves.

Now, where in our political economy find we from all this a safe-guard? Do you say in popular education and intellectual progress? Why, sir, the very loftiest triumphs of the Papacy to-day have been won amid the classic shades of Britain's proudest university. Or do

you find this safe-guard in native American politics? Why, sir, there is not a thing out of heaven they pray for so earnestly at Rome as for civil proscription and political persecution toward American Romanists? Oh, no! no! there is but one social instrumentality in God's world that can avert from our land this terrible evil; and that instrumentality is the pure Gospel of Jesus, which hath proved itself in many a great strife almighty in the mastery; which has met Romanism an hundred times in its own mightiest power on its own loftiest vantage ground, and hath come forth from every encounter in magnificent triumph, as with a sling and a stone from the Valley of Elah.

Now, we can not pursue further this enumeration of evils which find their natural antagonist in the Gospel. We have dwelt on the sorest of them, and leave the consideration of others to your private meditation, because it will be seen by you all at a glance, that licentiousness and intemperance and ignorance and fanaticism and the palsy of a sectional selfishness and the power of a throne-building ambition, and all those multitudinous, though minor evils which threaten our nation, are ever in their operative influence inversely as the power of the Gospel.

And we go on to glance for a moment, in conclusion, at the Gospel in its results, and ask you to consider honestly what that Gospel has done for national welfare.

Look back to the history of the Jews, and behold what the worship of the true God did for that glorious people; and how every Sabbath of their record, from the exodus from Egypt to the hour of their judicial

abandonment amid the magnificent cities of Canaan, flings a halo of glorious exposition round the words of the text. Go back to the hour when Christianity, after three centuries of meek suffering and torture, sat, an enthroned thing, in the palace of the Cæsars; and in the effect so magnificently merciful produced upon Roman laws and Roman institutions, behold how every syllable of the record flings a glory round my text. Open to-day the book of the chronicles of the great Reformation, and behold how, after centuries of awful desecration, till Christianity had become impure and hideous as Paganism, a pure Gospel had only to utter her oracles among men, and the mind of half Europe stirred in the grave and woke to the power of a moral resurrection. Look abroad on the world to-day, among the Hottentots of South Africa, at Sierra Leone, at the Sandwich Islands, at England in contrast with Greek Russia and Catholic Ireland; yea, cast your eye on the world's great chart, and in the simple fact that wherever the Gospel hath been it colors it in beautiful light, as with a pencil of sunbeams; and wherever the Gospel hath not been, the color is stormy and black, as if a fiend's pinions were shadowing it. In this simple fact, I say, learn the glorious truth of the text, its noblest exposition.

Nor of this even is there necessity. You need not go forth abroad. Our Pilgrim Fathers came to this far-away land just for the privileges of a free Gospel; and our social and national prosperity to-day, our happy security in the midst of a heaving world and a broken-hearted humanity, are the evidences of what the Gospel does for the happiness of men. Oh! what hath not

God's blessed Word done for beloved America? Our national existence is a result of the Gospel.

The Genoese navigator and the German Reformer were rocked in the same cradle from children of evangelism. The sifting of all nations for God's chosen seed to scatter in glorious husbandry on this foreign soil was the Gospel winnowing. The glorious taste of faith and love that found earth's loftiest cities intolerable dungeons without a Bible, and could make a blessed home with the storm and the sea-eagle and a God to worship, was the inspiration of the Gospel. The patriotism and the courage and self-sacrificing love, which battled unto the death for the hearth-stone and the altar, were all up-shoots from the Gospel. The matchless wisdom of a Constitution whose great central truth of human equality was an antagonism to the whole spirit of the old dynasties, was a direct inspiration of the Gospel. And so all the subsequent blessings which, as if shed from an angel's wings, have been scattered along our pathway to national greatness. Our enlarging commerce, our vast increase of population, the glories of our educational systems, the magnificence of our practical charities, the reach and play in power and protection of our political machinery, the enticing beauty which our land bears to far-away nations amid the sobbing agonies of their down-trodden children, and the glory and the honor which a whole world accords to-day to the way of the American eagle in its flight through the skies. Oh! I say, in all these there is really outwritten my text's exposition. It is written, as it were, in the green of our fields and the deep blue of our firmament. And syllabled, as it were, by the sighing winds and sparkling

waters, and swells up in every heart this day as the inspiring thought of the happiest people the world ever knew. Righteousness! Righteousness exalteth a nation. "*Blessed is that people whose God is the Lord.*"

And now among the many reflections which press upon me, we have only limits for the briefest; and remembering that our business to-day is not exhortation, but thanksgiving, we will end as we began, by observing that as the grand source whence all our civil and social blessings spring, our loudest and largest acknowledgements are due to Jehovah, for the conservative influences in the midst of us of the Gospel of Christ Jesus. I think we are justified in adding one item to this utterance from the capital. I surely do not covet the honor of being private secretary to His Excellency the Governor, especially if that secretary's business be to transcribe and transmit all documents growing out of the prerogative of the Governor to pardon State's Prison convicts. But had it been our task to transcribe this Annual Proclamation, perhaps we should have ventured to suggest the incongruity of recommending a day of thanksgiving for plenteous harvests and productive labor, for restored peace and intellectual progress, without even a mention of those glorious religious privileges as an evangelical people, whereby all these temporal advantages have been procured and preserved. In its present form it does seem to us very much like the thanksgiving of the Society Islanders, who at each gathering of a rich harvest used to offer an ox in sacrifice, not to the good god who had sent the rice, but to the bad god, because he had not sent the locusts.

If, as we have been striving to show, we are to find in

the Gospel the very source and spring of all our national blessings, social and civil, then surely for that Gospel itself, more than for all other benefactions, are our thanks due unto Jehovah. Thanksgiving, indeed, becomes us, that our garnerers are filled with corn, and plenteousness and peace are in the midst of our habitation. But as that better gift, but for which this joyous day the Indian hunter had roamed on these hills, and the wild beast's howl rang loud over these waters. But for the Gospel—this blessed volume of good news from God—oh ! for this, more than all, should Americans be thankful.

And with this thought we would dismiss you. Go away to offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving for the Gospel of Jesus. Let us thank God for what it has already done for us ; for it has given you as a great people, being and nationality, and lifted us as a mighty rock amid billows, whereunto, in this day of popular convulsions, drowning men from every nation under heaven, are striking out and struggling from the shipwreck of old systems. And it has showered upon us, both as individuals and a people, as if from the wings of seraphim, blessings forever unmatched in all the long histories of the generations of a world. Yes, and more than all, thankful in the magnificent prospect of those things, greater and more glorious, which this Gospel shall yet do for us ; for sure as we prove not altogether recreant to our high national mission, it is yet in the sweep of God's immense purpose to make us such a trophy of the benign workings of Christ's glorious Gospel as no old Hebrew ever dreamed of in the loftiest raptures of prophecy. For the spectacle shall be unto all kindreds and tongues—of a nation stretching from ocean to ocean,

across this whole broad continent ; a nation of freemen, self-governed, governed by simple law, without a police or a soldiery ; a nation of five hundred millions of people, covering the sea with their fleets and the land with their great cities. First in arts and learning and every product of genius ; aye, and better than all, and higher and holier, a religious nation, luxuriant in the flower and the fruit of all Christian graces, the refuge of the oppressed, the protector of the down-trodden, the home of the exile, the terror of despotisms, the almoner of God's grace to the bleeding hearts of humanity, the beacon to a world of the disasters of ungodliness, the symbol to mankind of the endless power and conservative immortality of a righteous law and a Christian faith, the living, breathing, triumphing, everlasting exposition of God's great doctrine, that only righteousness exalteth a nation ; that "*Blessed is that people whose God is the Lord.*"

PURIFICATION.

“ Purifying their hearts by faith.”—ACTS xv. 9.

There is, we are assured, a great injury done to the cause of Christianity by the representation of all its operations upon the soul as mysteriously miraculous. Among the principles of our mental constitution there is an element of incredulity which predisposes us to look for deception where there is manifest concealment, and perceiving, as we do, in every other department of Divine operation a beautiful transparency, so that though from the budding of a flower to the revolutions of a firmament, they are in a sense all miraculous, yet everywhere is the miracle wrought through an instrumentality of means the most philosophic and adapted ; perceiving this, I say, we expect the same transparency of operation in the economy of salvation, and are predisposed to reject as false a religious system wherein God is represented as working either without means at all or through means absolutely arbitrary or of no apparent adaptation to the production of results. And thus it often happens that when questioned by a man of high intellect of our theories of regeneration and sanctification, if we tell him that we have no explanation to give of the philosophy of the marvel ; that God worketh here arbitrarily and with no manifest adaptation of means to ends ; that reason hath nothing to do amid the mysteries of God’s gracious economy ; yea, that a fool is better fitted to their comprehension than a wise man, for

God hath hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes; replying thus, I say, unto his inquiry, we ought to expect Him to turn away with contempt from our Christianity, inasmuch as by doing violence to all our experience of Divine operations, it is made to carry on its very front a denial of God. Now, the matter of fact is, practical Christianity, or the work of Divine grace upon the human spirit, though it be in every sense a miracle, yet is in every sense, as well, a miracle wrought by a philosophic instrumentality. The gospel is not only God's power, but the very wisdom of God unto salvation; and wisdom being nothing more than a practical application of knowledge, or the production of the best ends by the simplest means, it is a positive contradiction of terms to speak of the Gospel as producing salvation by processes in any sense arbitrary.

The two great processes in the Christian scheme are justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, and sanctification, rudimental and progressive, through the influences of the Divine Spirit. And of both these processes alike is it declared in the Bible, that they are wrought in respect of the redeemed spirit through the instrumentality of faith. And we declare, that so far from being arbitrary and unnatural, the working out of this effect through this instrumentality is most beautiful in its wisdom and most apparent in its philosophy.

In respect of the first of these processes, justification by faith, our text has nothing to do; and, indeed, so little is there of mystery about it, that a simple annunciation of the doctrine carries with it its most philosophic explanation. Justification is a forensic, a

law term, denoting not a change in a person's disposition, but a change of his state in relation to law. And the instrumentality of faith in this process consists only in the reception and application of Christ and His righteousness. Its whole philosophy is as apparent as the simplest principle of suretyship in human jurisprudence. Christ suffering the law penalty in the stead of the sinner, and the sinner appropriating this substitution by an act of faith. It is only with the second of these processes that our text has to do; and it is in respect of this especially that there seems so much of mystery in the human mind.

The thought for our consideration, therefore, to-day, is, *Faith an instrument of sanctification*. And our present object will be, therefore, to set forth as fully as we may faith's sanctifying operation. "*Purifying their hearts by faith.*"

Now, we are all aware how at a superficial glance the working of such an instrumentality would seem to be altogether different. The fact that we are not justified by the deeds of the law, but simply by the appropriation of another's righteousness, would seem to release us from all necessity for personal obedience. And the antinomian deduction would be a manifest *sequitur*. "Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound." Tell me that I am to stand at the Judgment seat condemned or acquitted, not on the ground of my own personal merits or personal character, but simply and solely on the ground of Immanuel's suretyship, and you would seem to release me at once from all motive to work out my own salvation with trembling and fear. And yet upon a closer inspection all this will be made manifest a false

seeming, and the truth, we think, will become beautifully apparent, how trust in Jesus leads to actual righteousness ; how the Holy Spirit works with a true philosophy when in the process of sanctification. He "*purifies the heart by faith.*"

Now, faith considered as an intellectual process is belief of a testimony, and though the process itself may be greatly varied by the character of its objects, yet, as felt by the Christian, it is ever essentially the same, viz., such a state of the mind that religious truths exert upon it the same power as if they were perceived by the senses.

Keeping this definition in mind, it is most easy to go on to the understanding of the efficacy of faith as a purifying principle. We will begin at the very lowest point in faith's influences and proceed in our consideration in the order of climax. Take faith first, as it has to do with the great doctrines of speculative religion. Imagine a community of human beings living in absolute ignorance of that great postulate of Christianity, a future state of being, and living, as they must live, only for the present moment, is it conceivable that they should not plunge at once into all the depths and degradation of licentiousness? Would these not be seen, in fact, to be the principles of the very truest philosophy in their epicurean tenet. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die?" And earthly pleasure, constituting, in fact, the great law of their being, how could they live otherwise than only for the present, since they had heard of no future of their being for which to live? But upon minds thus dwarfed under ignorance of futurity, pour suddenly the glorious revelation of the

life and the immortality. Let them understand how the relation of the present unto the life to come is at best the relation of infancy to manhood ; how earth is not to be looked upon as man's only or man's ultimate abiding-place ; how this mortal life is in no sense a state of fruition, but in every sense a state of preparation ; how that eye is yet to look upon visions of more glorious light, and that ear to listen to sounds more enrapturingly harmonious ; how the period hastens when the soul shall burst proudly away from this enthrallment of sensualism, and mount in ascending flight upward in great glory to the beatitudes of the spiritual. Cause this to be done, I say, and you will perceive how a purifying ministry hath begun already its influence upon the soul ; how earth's degrading pleasures lose their power under anticipations of pleasures to be eternal ; how with no higher reference than to a speculative belief the philosophy of the text is most true, and the heart is purified by faith.

But if to all this there should rise up the apparent objection that the belief of immortality has hardly been observed to operate thus in its influence upon the worshipers of false gods, then we have for this a twofold answer.

First, That the actual influence of the belief in this case can not be perceived, because they were never without this belief. The tribe or family hath never been lighted on in the adventure of man's mightiest travel whose established faith was not of some sort of a coming immortality. And you must destroy that faith, and take suddenly away from the mind all its motive power upon the spirit, ere you can understand how

more mightily deluded men were without it. And even such a faith is an instrument of purifying. But,

Secondly. I remark that this belief of the heathen world in a future state of being is not really to be called faith, but is rather to be called fancy. Faith is belief of a truth; and though the simple fact of the soul's immortality, even in their religion, was a great truth, yet all the conditions and circumstances of that immortality were so enormously false that the whole belief might better be called a fancy. Even under the purest forms of false worship, the notion of God and of the economy of spirits and of the doings and destiny of the immortal soul, were so unreal and so monstrous; the very deity they worshiped was so very a demon; the heaven to which they aspired was so very a pandemonium of licentiousness; this mortal was to put on an immortality so dissociated from all that was pure, so steeped in all that was polluted, that the mightiest yearning after immortality brought to the soul scarce a purifying ministry, since the purest preparation for their paradise was to wax mighty in the commission of crime and gigantic of stature in licentiousness. It is not, therefore, of such false notions of immortality we are speaking. It is of a pure faith in the economy of spirits as it is. And we say again, therefore, that you have only to beget this as a speculative belief in a poor, debased soul, theretofore ignorant of it, and as the thought of a heaven of exceeding blessedness and a God glorious in the garb of His everlasting purity, and a social system of sinless and rejoicing immortals; as these thoughts broke like the light of a new sun upon the dark night of his sensualism, you would see him

lifting himself to aspiration for holier companionships, and the practical workings of the revelation would be purifying the heart by faith.

But faith does more than fasten the eye of the soul on the grand truths of speculative Christianity. It brings them to the contemplative spirit in the form and with the power of most mighty motives. It not only reveals a heaven of purity, but it opens up before man the way whereby he may attain thereunto. And in this consists this second element we would have you consider, of the purifying power of faith. Christian faith not only reveals a heaven of glory, but a heaven accessible to human strivings. And herein, I say, consists another element of its power to purify. Did it merely tell me that there is a heaven ; did it merely reveal the majesty of its everlasting allotments ; did it merely give me even the power of vision to gaze upon the very conditions of blissfulness ; yea, did it merely realize the rapturing thought of the Revelator, and strengthen the spirit's eye to behold the descent of the New Jerusalem out of heaven, and make to pass before the sight the wonders of its everlasting glory, and make to fall upon the ear the outbursts of its everlasting music, why then, even then, it might put forth better strength of motive to urge the soul along the highway of holiness.

But it does more, vastly more. It tells me of a way of access unto heaven's beatitudes. It tells me of a propitiation for sin and a mediatorship unto the sinner, and how it is for the polluted soul only to give itself unto the obedience that is in Christ Jesus ; only to flee to the sprinkled blood of the great Atonement for a free pardon ; only to take up the Cross mightily in a path

of self-denial ; only to give itself strenuously to Gospel faith and Gospel obedience ; and that heaven shall wear no longer the aspects of a stranger land, but the highway of holiness opened, reaching even to its gates of pearl, and its portals flung open freely to a mortal's footstep, and its battlements thronged with glorious forms bending down to encourage me. Oh ! I say, heaven weareth no longer the aspect of a stranger land of inaccessible beauty, but it breaks out upon the gazer's eye in the lovelier aspects of a prize to be struggled for and a home to be found. And in all this, my hearers, do you not perceive how a heaven to be attained by the sanctified becomes a grand motive unto purity ? Heaven is a dwelling-place, and its palaces are to be reached only by vigorous journeyings along the highway of holiness. Heaven is a character, and its blissfulness within the soul is to be attained only by an upgrowing in sanctification ; so that, look upon Heaven in what aspect you will, it breaks out, ever unto the vision of faith, as the shining of a mighty reward unto a lifting fearlessly the Cross and a following faithfully the Master ; so that every bright thing heaven containeth hath the influence of a motive unto sin-subduing. And by all the splendors of its loving scenes, and all the triumphs of its gifted spirits, and all the gladness of its blissful immortality, is the truth of the text made most manifest, that God purifieth the heart by faith.

And yet to all this it may be objected, that the Christian's heaven is attained only as a free favor of grace, and not in any sense as the reward of creature obedience ; so that though a blissful eternity set forth as a reward might operate as a motive to cultivated purity, yet

if bestowed only as a purchase of another, and to be given without money and without price to him whose interest is in a Redeemer, then there seems to be in it no motive at all to a crucifixion of the flesh with its affections and lusts.

And this leads me to consider a third element of sanctifying power in faith. Not only does it contemplate heaven as accessible to creature strivings, but it regards it as rendered thus accessible through the sufferings of a Mediator. The truths which cluster around Calvary are the objects of a Christian faith. It keeps steadily upon the soul in all its resistless power of sin-subduing the majestic truth of an incarnate God. Evidence, as it is, of the things unseen, it keeps the eye fixed even on the unmeasured agonies of a dying Christ.

The Cross! The Cross is the object of faith; and though it be a cross whereon a Saviour died, that, irrespective of my own deeds, I might be justified through His righteousness; though the salvation it teaches be a salvation freely extended, without money or price, so that it is not through my prayers and it is not through my purity, but it is solely through the merits and mercy of another, that my sins are blotted out and my pardon secured; still, I say, the man who speaketh of the Cross as an encouragement to licentiousness; the man who does not regard the Cross; yea, who does not regard a simple faith in the Cross as a mighty instrumentality for sanctification, does foul injustice to all the principles of a human soul. It is not in man's heart, fallen, depraved as he may be; it is not amid the shattered portion of a nature noble in its ruins—such unmitigated selfishness that can ascend Calvary as a standpoint whence to plunge

more deeply into iniquity. The story of Christ crucified is the mightiest story God Himself can tell you in every element of sin-subduing.

The Cross ! Go plant it in the veriest hell of human outcasts, and you check their reveling. The Cross ! Go plant it in the darkness of the dwellings of the lost, and tears glitter in the eye and curses die upon the tongue. And oh then ! when the Cross rises up as the vision of faith in souls wherein Christ hath already been found the hope of glory, and as if it actually stood before us in the majesty of Immanuel's suffering, you gaze upon the agonies of the bleeding forehead and the breaking heart, then, I say, you can not but perceive how God worketh with the very finest philosophy when through faith as an instrument He sanctifieth the heart.

Is worldly-mindedness the sin of our nature you would rebuke and destroy ? Why, then, go to those scenes of the exchange or the market-place where Christian men are manifesting their idolatries, and just plant the Cross there ; and think ye the glitter of gold and the glories of merchandise will not loose their charm ? Is a love of pleasure the sin ye would have purified ? Why, then, go to those fashionable assemblies, miscalled Christian, where God's professing disciples sometimes meet with the dance and the song. Go, I say, and when voluptuous music is in its fullest strain, and the pulses are wild in the delirium of gladness, go plant ye the red Cross of Jesus in the midst of the revel ; and they will flee, every one of them, as at a vision of God's angels, and the spell of the enchantress will be beguiled of its power. Is it a want of entire consecration to Christ that is needed in the spirit ? Why, then, go to the dis-

ciple that makes reserve of anything in his Master's service; go to the man who hoards gold while the heathen are dying; go to the mother who can not give up her child in a missionary service; go to them as they resist your pleadings in the strength of foul covetousness or idolatrous love, and plant the Cross there. Let the ear listen to the fall of the blood drops. Let the eye gaze on the terrible agonies convulsing the framework. Let the soul feel all the power of that miracle of mercy wrought for itself, and I tell you! I tell you the smitten disciple will rise up in the strength of a deeper consecration, and the agonizing words of self-renunciation will be, "Yes, take it; take it. My time, my riches, my child, my life, take all, now and forever, Thou Son of God!"

And so I do not care what the sin may be whose influence in the soul ye would have weakened and destroyed, God can devise no mightier instrument of its subjugation than the Cross of the Crucified. And faith being the evidence of things unseen, and faith in the Mediatorship being, indeed, a spiritual vision of the scenes of the Sin Atoning, then the simple belief hath all the sanctifying power of the subduing vision. And the text's philosophy is apparent—how faith purifies the soul.

And then there is one other element in faith's power of purifying. It is not only the evidence of things unseen, but the substance of things hoped for. It is that principle of Divine implantation whereby things unseen and eternal produce upon the mind the very influence of things actually seen and present. In respect of the realities of the world to come, its actual instrumentality is the

same as would be a vision of God and heaven and the angels and the redeemed in glory and the harps of praise and the crowns of victory; and if such be its mysterious power, then how apparently must faith be a purifier. You are none of you ignorant of the influence of scenery and circumstances upon the human character. By the very laws of our being we become like our objects of contemplation. Even the aspects of external nature work mightily upon the observing spirit. The Scottish intellect hath waxed giant in strength amid the mountains of Scotland, and the Italian mind sunk into nerveless sentimentality amid the soft landscapes of Italy. The miners, whose home from year to year is in the caverns of the earth, are but little in intellect above the beasts that perish, while the old Indians of the East, dwelling on immense plains of an unbroken circle of horizon, and canopied by a perfect hemisphere of sparkling firmament, gazed up to the everlasting stars till the mind grew absolutely gigantic in the reach of a stupendous astronomy. And so it is ever. The great law of our being is assimilation. We become like what we behold; we become like what we contemplate.

Now let heaven, with its beatific realities, become the object of our constant thought, and who doubts the process of purifying? Suppose, instead of being faith, it were absolutely vision. Translate a man as Paul was, actually to Paradise. Let him hear the unspeakable words, and gaze on the inconceivable glories, and would not the influence be sanctifying? Take that covetuous Christian, who will hoard his gold while the world is perishing. Bear him up bodily to stand with Gabriel in the City of Holiness. Let him take measure and

dimensions of the heirship of immortality. And will he come back, think ye, as strongly enamored of the gems of earth? Take that pleasure-loving Christian, who delights in scenes of festivity and merriment. Rapture him suddenly away to the everlasting mansions. Give him eyes to see what John saw, and ears to hear what John heard. Let him go forth awhile by those living streams and recline with the blest in those gardens of gladness. And think you he will return again from that ravishing hour to delight himself in human habitations with dance and wine? Take the honor-seeking Christian, who longeth for human praise, and shrinks from the offence of the Cross, and will have the waving of palms and the outbursts of hosannas on his journeyings toward Zion. Send down the chariot of fire, and bear him up, body and spirit and soul, to the dwellings of glory; and there, standing in the midst of the pomps of immortality, cause to pass before his eye the majestic trains whose march was in the visions of the exile of Patmos. Let him understand what are the high things in the allotments of righteousness; how much brighter than earth's are the gems of the crown; wider than a king's is the sway of the sceptre; and then compel him back from that high exodus to the Egypt of life, and tell me, oh! tell me if he will thirst any longer for the laurels of earth or the hosannas of mortals.

And yet in all this you perceive how there is only an illustration of faith's sanctifying influence. Being, as it positively is, the substance of things hoped for, its influence is to bring down heaven itself with glorious joys as the operative antagonist of sensual gladness. It is as if one of the sunny islands wherein the blest

repose were suspended in open vision in the midst of you firmament, and from this low stand-point of earth you could gaze up to the beatitudes of its radiant scenes, and listen to the full swell of its surpassing harmonies. And therefore it is, that the text's philosophy is completely apparent. Faith's power is the power of a heaven revealed over the emotions of the faithful. And so it is that by all that maketh heaven attractive unto the spirit; by all the splendors of its living scenes and all the high intercourse of its living society and all the great triumphs of its gifted in spirit and all deep gladness of its blissful immortality; by all these, and things mightier immensely than these, is the truth made manifest, that the Gospel of Christ is a pure machinery of sanctification; that God worketh with all wisdom, purifying the heart by faith.

Now, though most abundant are the reflections which press upon us in conclusion, for one only have we the limits; and it is this: The subject furnishes a fine test for self-examination. Faith, in its very nature, has been seen to be a purifier. Therefore, if I am a Christian I am progressing in sanctification. I care not what other evidences you may have if this only be wanting. A Christian is a pilgrim journeying toward Zion, but heaven is a character as well as a locality, and a man is not journeying at all unless he be growing sanctified. Long prayers and loud praises and emotions of ecstatic joy and high yearnings after the boundless and everlasting—these may be the accessories of holiness, but they surely are not the elements of holiness. In the language of an eloquent man, "If I have been elected to obtain salvation in the next life, I have been

ected also to the practice of holiness in this life. Would I ascertain my election to the blessedness of eternity, it must be by practically demonstrating my election to newness of life. It is not by the rapture of feeling and by the luxuriance of thought and by the warmth of those desires which descriptions of heaven may stir up within me, that I can prove myself predestined to a glorious inheritance. The way to heaven is disclosed; am I walking in that way? It would be poor proof that I were on my voyage to India, that with glowing eloquence and thrilling poetry I could discourse on the palm groves and spice islands of the the East. Nay, am I on the waters? Is the sail hoisted to the wind; and the land of my birth, does it look blue and faint in the distance?"

This, this is the criterion of Godliness. Faith is God's instrument of sanctification, and the child of God must be under the sanctifying processes. Trust to any other evidence in God's great universe of resting-places and refuges; to anything in the tenor of a past experience; to anything in the blissfulness of present and operative emotions; trust to anything but a faith which is working out your sanctification, and verily ye are like the sailor who slept upon the sea, who was roused from sweet dreams of safe anchorage to find himself shipwrecked and lost! lost!

UNHEEDED WARNING.

“ He that being often reprovèd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”—PROVERBS XXIX. 1.

The great difficulty in preaching the Gospel is not so much to produce apprehension as self-application of the truth. I do not address an impenitent person to-day who does not know as well as I know, who does not know as well as he ever will know, the doctrines of the Bible fundamental to salvation. And yet I do address some to-day who in all human probability will at last be lost, just because they are not willing to apply unto themselves the great truths of the Bible. Charity is a glorious grace. It hopeth all things and endureth all things, and covers a multitude of sins, and maketh man an angel and this dark world heaven. And yet there is a species of charity which is a great curse; a species of charity, in the exercise of which many a precious soul will be lost. I mean the charity which giveth all the truths of a discourse to our neighbors, like the disciples in the wilderness, giving all the bread of heaven unto the surrounding multitude.

Now, beloved hearer, you have been guilty of this charity already too long, and I come to you this day praying you in Christ's stead, that you be selfish enough to reserve unto yourself that which is all your own. I come to whisper in your ear an awful truth of God. There is in this house an individual standing on the very border of a sudden and a remediless destruction,

like a blind man on the brow of a precipice, the lightnings above, the ocean beneath, and the storms all around. And, beloved hearers, I do not mean that open and abandoned sinner of whom you just now think. My brother, I mean you! My sister, I mean you! And call me not uncharitable in this. I speak only as moved to speak by the Holy Ghost. Surely God knoweth the position in which you stand. In the text He declares of some one, that "*he shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy;*" and our first business is, of course, to ascertain who can be the subject of this awful denunciation. Come, then, and look at signs whereby we are to distinguish him, and see whether we were uncharitable in declaring that it is of yourself he speaks. "*He hath been often reprov'd, yet he hardeneth his neck.*" This is the description of the individual. Oh! is it not fearfully applicable to yourself?

I. In the first place, am I mistaken in asserting that you "*have been often reprov'd ?*" Often! often! Oh! where shall I begin the dread arithmetic of the warnings that have met you on your way to death?

1. You have been reprov'd by the surrounding creation. In the ethics of theology is it a principle that the very possibility of a God, and by far much more, the probable evidence of a God, lays us under obligations to love and obey Him? So that on every material manifestation of the Divine being and the Divine perfections does there come to the observant creature a call unto religious reverence. How often, then, in the glories of the material world have you been warned and reprov'd in your course of sinful forgetfulness of God? The sun in his great journeyings and the stars in their watches,

how brilliantly have they syllabled Jehovah's name across yon vault of heaven! The thunder and the storm and the dash of ocean and the rush of the wild cataract, how as with the voice of many waters have they cried of God; yea, in the fall of the rain-drop, in the rustle of the green leaf, in the ripple of the bright stream, in the soft breath of summer winds, how beautiful hath come the voice of witness unto the Eternal One! Nor this alone. Not only of God, but of God *as God* have they given witness; of His majesty and His might and His goodness and His grandeur and His glory. And often, very often, as you stood breathing the air of heaven, amid a world of sunshine or beneath the sparkling canopy of night, have you felt the breathings of an invisible God around you, and felt the rebuke, even of the inanimate, that you had forgotten Him so long. And oh! when creatures without soul yielded unto Him their instinctive worship; when the flowers sent up their odor, and the wild birds uttered their glad songs, and wind and wave mingled their tones in thanksgiving, and the great world seemed a majestic temple, wherein every living thing brought its thank-offering of praise unto the God who made it, then, verily, how have you felt rebuked as the only thankless creatures in a rejoicing world, and bowed the head for a moment in shame, rebuked, tenderly and touchingly rebuked by the lilies of the field and the fowls of heaven.

II. Then, too, by the mercies of God to you ward have you been rebuked. Gratitude is an instinctive affection of our nature. By the strong ties of our moral economy do the receipt of benefits linked unto the return of love—gifts bestowed by an unknown bene-

factor, even by the principles of a barbarian morality—lay us under obligation to search him out and acknowledge the benefit. And when these gifts are constant and long-continued, and above all received from the hand of one perfectly known and everywhere recognized, how loudly does every added benefit rebuke our forgetfulness of the Benefactor. Think, then, to-day, beloved, of God's unnumbered blessings lavished upon you. The food you have eaten, the raiment you have put on, the waters of earth, the winds of heaven, the sweet home that hath sheltered you, the dear friends with whom you have taken sweet council, the father, the mother, the husband, the wife, the sister, the child, oh! they are all God's constant gifts unto you. And rushing on in that pathway of sin, which is nothing else in the world than a pathway of forgetfulness of your Heavenly Father's claims upon your gratefulness and love, how mighty, how continual, how, daily and hourly, yea, how, repeated a thousand times every day and every hour, have God's mercies met you with a reproof for the forgetfulness of such wonders of a Father's kindness and a Father's care.

III. Nor this only. Even as a God of providence hath Jehovah spoken unto you in sterner accents. He hath terrified you by His thunders, as well as wooed you by the sounds of harmony. Do you remember that hour when by fire and flood and the robber's violence and the falsehood of friends He took away your possessions, and left you on the border-line of very poverty? That hour when He stretched forth His hand and touched the dear one of your household, and great fear was upon you lest life's sunshine should all fade away

with the coming of the shadow over the beloved eye? That hour when under the pressure of strong disease you yourselves were brought unto the very border of eternity, and the spirit seemed about to pass the great line that lieth between the mortal and the unsheltered mysteries of the immortality? That hour when the dear friend died in your household, and you stood broken-hearted by the death-bed, and went out and looked down lonely and desolate into the dark grave, and felt in all its omnipotence that bountifully the Lord had given, yet bitterly again had the Lord taken away? Oh! do you remember all those hours? And do you not know that the great God who had so often spoken in tenderness was then speaking unto you in the accents of His unspeakable terribleness, and that just so often as there hath come over your earthly path a darkening shadow, have ye been met in that pathway by words of reproof?

IV. Then again have you been reprov'd by your own conscience—God's preacher within you. You remember that forbidden pleasure wherein you indulged. You remember that acknowledged duty from which you refrained. You remember that neighbor whom you wronged, that friend whom you abused, that dear father whose eye you caused to weep, that dear mother whose gentle heart you broke. You remember that sanctuary from which you refrained, that Sabbath whose hours you wasted, and whose opportunities you abused, and whose ordinances you slighted. You remember those bright mornings when you went forth to worldly toil thoughtless of God, and those starry nights when you pressed your pillows of slumber with a thankless heart. Yea,

you remember in ten thousand hours of life how there hath come mightily upon the soul a consciousness of ill-desert and a foreboding of God's anger and a fear of hell. And nothing else was it in the world than the voice of God's vicegerent within you, uttering with heavenly authority its stern reproof.

V. Yes, and more directly even than this, hath been the rebuke of the God of heaven in your wayward path. The Bible! Ah! therein hath He spoken audibly. It is the Word of God—Jehovah's breathing language. Ye may not have read it, but if it has been in your households, if it hath lain neglected on your shelves, yet have you never passed the spot where that abused Bible reposed, but there hath stolen up from its unopened pages the stern and startling words of its Divine reproof. And if you have opened it, oh! in every word you have read, from the first childhood's lesson at your mother's knee to the very portion which to-day has been read in your hearing, ye have heard nothing else than the voice of the great God breathed in loving whispers on your ear. It hath told you of a flood of waters round about a world, of a fire storm wasting into ashes the cities of the plain, of Mt. Sinai with its dark clouds and its deep thunders and its awful words, of Bethlehem's manger and Bethany's sepulchre and Gethsemane's olives and Calvary's Cross. It hath told you of death as appointed unto all men, of an immortality which shall pass unscathed the fires of the world's burning, of a sound of the archangel's trumpet over the sleeping dead, of a resurrection unto life and a resurrection unto damnation, of the vision of the throne and a gathering of the dead, small and great, before God, and the open-

ing of the Books, and of another Book, which was the Book of Life, of the judging of the dead out of the things written therein, according to their works. It hath told you of the beautiful words of welcome, sweeter than the words of an angel, when He shall say unto them on His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father." It hath told you of those terrible words of doom, when, forgetful, as it were, of all His tenderness, unto them on the left hand He shall say, "Depart, ye cursed." Yea, it hath flung the light of its inspired description over the wide realms which lie on the other side of the Judgment. It hath told of the blackness of darkness and the worm and the flame and the smoke of the torment and the sackcloth of hair and all the dread and desolate realities which constitute the eternity of the poor outcasts of condemnation. Yea, it hath told of heaven, of the gates of pearl, of the streets of gold, of the living water, of the trees of life, of those glorious mansions of that realm of rest. And, oh! in all these burning and resistless words have you heard nothing else than the living whisper of the great God uttering in your wild and wayward pathway His dread reproof?

VI. Then, too, by His ordinances. Oh, how many precious Sabbaths and sanctuary privileges have you enjoyed on earth! Go far back into childhood; call to mind all the wooing ministrations of heaven that have gathered around you; remember that dear father, how at morning and evening he knelt amid his household, and commended you to God; remember that dear mother, cold, it may be, in the grave to-day, how often she came to your bedside, and took your little hand in hers, and taught you to say, "Our Father who art in heaven;"

remember that Sabbath-school teacher, who never met you save tenderly to woo you to the Saviour ; remember that dear sister, an angel, it may be, in the skies to-day, who, loving you only as a sister can, thought most intently of your eternity, and besought you, as if her heart would break, that you would turn from your waywardness and trust in the dear Redeemer ; remember that man of God ; yea, remember all those men of God, who in all the Sabbaths of your long lives have stood up in the holy place, and warned and entreated and besought, by all the resistless motives of time and eternity besought, and with tears and suffering and anguish besought ; yea, in all the eager and earnest importunity of immortal love, as if the dear, bleeding, dying Lamb of God plead with you, in Christ's stead besought you to be reconciled to God. Oh ! remember all these tender messages of mercy, and know that in every one of them you heard nothing else than the breathing whisper of the Eternal One uttering in your dark and downward pathway its kind reproof.

VII. And most of all have you been reproved by the Spirit of God. There have been times, more in frequency than you can well remember, when the great truths of eternity seemed to press with new power upon the conscience. Go back and recall them now. That hour of solitude in the still midnight ; that night of vigil by the bed of death ; that season when under the influence of disease you felt yourselves very near unto the putting on the immortality ; that sudden impression of some long-forgotten Scripture upon the memory ; that season of solemn prayer in the household ; those tender and touching appeals from the sacred desk ; those

months of revival; when hardened consciences were moving all around you under the force of truth. Oh! you can remember a thousand hours to-day, wherein the pressure of mightier thoughts came down upon you, when earthly life seemed but a vapor, and mortal gold and gladness and glory seemed but childish toys, and death seemed an impending reality, and the Judgment a living scene to which you were hastening, and heaven a glorious home unto the risen spirit, and eternal things came pressing on you with all their mighty and momentous realities. And know you, oh! know you, that in all these hours of solemn thought ye were listening unto a voice of the great God whispering within you. The Holy Spirit was all mightily around you on invisible wings, and your soul was bowed unto the mastery of His stern reproof.

Now, time would fail us to pursue farther this mournful enumeration. Sit down candidly, beloved, and compute, as you can, the reproofs which so earnestly and so constantly, in different scenes and in different forms, have met you in life hitherto; and tell me honestly whether your own consciences do not witness that I speak of you truthfully, and not in unkindness, when I declare of every one of you out of Christ, that ye are of the class spoken of in the text as those who have been often, very often reproofed? And if you admit the application of the first part of the description, will you dare deny the application of the second point—that “ye have hardened the neck against such reproof?” Surely it needs not demonstration on such a point. Did time permit, we might dwell here at great length, and show how against God’s creation and Providence and

Word and ordinances and Spirit you had been, from the first dawn of your intelligence, hardening yourself in the language of the text. The metaphor is of a bullock in his untutored stubbornness, refusing to submit his neck to the yoke. And in its application to yourselves the meaning is, that you have not yielded your hearts and lives in ready obedience to the Divine will. You are walking to-day in the broad way to death, while all the tendency of God's reproofs has been to turn you into the narrow way which leadeth unto heaven. And how otherwise, if you have human hearts within you, can you have resisted all those tender reproofs, save by a voluntary hardening of your hearts? Oh! there has been might in the motives, and power and pathos in the persuasions, and deep love mingled in the entreaties, and a heavenly tenderness in all those appeals, which nothing but a hardened, and that, too, a voluntarily hardened conscience could resist so long. The question, then, to-day is simply this, Are you Christians to-day? Have you turned from the broad way? Are you walking in the narrow path? Have you repented of sin? Have you fled to the Saviour? Do you love God? Are you ready for heaven? Hereunto tended all the reproofs of heaven. If ye die not walking toward heaven, ye have not yielded unto them, yea, you have hardened yourselves against them. And therefore we judge not in unkindness; we speak not without charity; we do verily but repeat the burning words of the great God, who can not but understand the hastening destiny of every immortal soul. Of you, my brother, and you, my sister, we do solemnly declare, that ye "*shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*"

We have not time here to enter into what may be called the philosophy of the retributions of the lost. The destruction here spoken of is manifestly that everywhere referred to in Scripture as that terrible revelation of Divine anger taking vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the Gospel, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God and the glory of His power. And in proof that such destruction is impending over every hardened sinner to-day, we quote only the "sure word of Prophecy." If there be one here who trusts in impenitency to the belief that all men will be saved, we cut the matter short with this question: Who knoweth best—you or God? Dare you? Oh! dare you go on to the Judgment staking all the high destinies of your immortal soul on the awful probability that, after all, God may be mistaken in what shall constitute a spirit's eternity? Does not He who maketh the surge to toss itself, and the flames to play; does not He know what He meaneth by that awful word—"destruction?" And when He putteth His own tremendous exegesis on it, declaring that it is an everlasting destruction from the presence of God and the glory of His power, dare you? oh! dare you trust your salvation on the awful improbability that the great God speaketh falsely? Nay, let God be true and every man a liar; and if He is true, then I speak to no one of you to-day who hath been reprov'd often, and yet remained hardened against Him who standeth not this very moment on the border-line of a sudden and remediless destruction.

"*He shall be destroyed!*" "*He shall be destroyed!*" So saith Jehovah; and who can gainsay it? "*He shall*

be destroyed!" What meaneth it? Tell us, oh, ye lost, what mean these awful words—the worm and the flame and the smoke of the torment! "*He shall be destroyed, suddenly*"—*unexpectedly*, in a moment. As the fire-storm on the cities of the plain—out of a sky that was beautiful and glorious—so shall death come, suddenly, suddenly. Yea, and above all else, matchlessly, terrible in its revelation, "*Destroyed without remedy!*" The worm that dieth — when? Oh! that dieth not. The flames quenched—when? Oh! unquenchable. Death that hath its last rending agony—when? Nay, death that never, never dies. The smoke of the torment going up—how long? Oh! forever. Oh! forever and ever. The great dial-plate of that eternal realm of death to the meridian forever—one eternal noon of night. And the watchmen that walk amid its vast shadows, pausing now and then in their everlasting circles and sending the watchword abroad over all that realm of desolation—eternity! eternity!

"*He shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*" "He"—who? Oh! who is it standing thus, like the child on the ocean's verge or the dread abyss of death? Who? You, my dear hearer, you! you! My dear little child, to-day you have been in the Sabbath-school and heard of Christ; and if you do not love the precious Saviour, you have hardened yourself against Him; and this very night you may die. Beloved youth, again in God's house to-day have you been reproved. To-morrow you may be in that awful world where they have no Bible, and never, never hear of Christ again. And you who are of manly strength and manly stature, unbelieving, yet beloved men, again

now do I warn you, and the next Sabbath bell which summons us to worship may ring out above your grave. These are God's truths, my hearers ; and think you that, believing them as I do, that though my heart were a thousand times harder and more selfish than it is ; yea, though my heart was hard as the rocks and as pulseless as the sleeping tenants of the graves, I could look on you thus (if there be truth in all this fearful Book) on the brink of everlasting ruin, asleep upon the jutting verge of the precipice, out at sea upon a shattered bark in a night of storms, standing like the lone pillar in the wilderness, a mighty mark for all the lightnings of the skies, reposing on the slippery rock a single foot above the roaring billows, and the tide rising and the foothold gone, oh ! think you I can look on you thus, you unto whom in my short ministry my heart hath gone out tenderly, you whom I have learned to look for and love, whose names are on my tongue in many a prayer of midnight, and whose names will be found linked tenderly to my heart when that heart breaks. Oh ! can I look upon you thus, hardened against God, despisers of Jesus, trampling under foot of the precious blood, yea, accursed of God, brands awaiting the burning, for whom the flames kindle and the smoke ascends ; can I think of you thus, and not weep, and not plead, and not beseech with earnestness and agony and tears, that to-day ye will come unto the Saviour, for to-morrow ye may be lost forever ! Lost ! lost ! lost !

THE ONLY DELIVERER.

"Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

I thank God through Christ Jesus our Lord."—ROMANS VII.
24, 25.

More than once in this desk have we enlarged upon the thought that the very material of infidel cavil furnishes unto the redeemed polemic the richest matter of Christian advocacy. And we have illustrated it by the very cavil drawn from the text and its parallel connections—the recorded shortcomings of Christ's covenant disciples. You all know how frequently the imperfections and crimes of Bible saints are dwelt upon by the sceptic as an objection to the Bible's inspiration. But surely never was there a merer sophism. The record itself furnishes the very noblest argument for the Bible's honesty and the Bible's ingenuousness; and scarcely is there a point of area in which the tenderness of our Heavenly Father unto His beloved but imperfect children meets a nobler manifestation. For while a Christian takes no pleasure in the faults of others, and mourns as over the ruins of his own nature, that so much of imperfection should pertain to man's holiest exercises, yet feeling within himself constantly the emotions of unholiness, and knowing how in everything he cometh short daily, and in fear lest in all his strivings he should, after all, become a castaway. It is a satisfaction and greatly an encouragement, to know that his is the very

experience of all the redeemed who have gone before him ; that it was through a great warfare of temptation that they obtained the inheritance of the sanctified, and that, compassed about with infirmities, their sanctification was but rudimental on earth, so that then, at last perfected, salvation was all of God's mercy, yea, so as by fire.

Now, it will have already occurred to those of you who possess the very commonest acquaintance with the polemics of our distinctive communion ; that in speaking of this passage of Scripture as a record of the imperfections of a Christian on earth, we have placed ourselves on the border-line of a great and a growing controversy ; for the passage contains no such record if the Apostle Paul be not here describing his own personal experience after regeneration. And you are none of you ignorant that many dear brethren in Christ who maintain the perfectability of Christian character on earth most strenuously deny this. It is not, of course, our design in this connection to enter at any length into the polemics of this discussion. We think that so far as this text is concerned there has been on both sides a very great waste of words in the matter. We do not, indeed, see how with any justness the controversy can be made to hinge on the exposition you give to this passage. Grant that the writer is here speaking of himself—of himself, too, subsequent to his conversion—that the passage is descriptive of the inner experience, not of Saul of Tarsus, but of Paul the Apostle, and what does it prove ? That perfection is not attainable in this world ? No such thing. But that Paul did not attain unto it ; that is all. Our sympathies are, of

course, with those who in theory deny the positive perfectability of the species on earth, though we do think it a matter most strange and subversive of high attainments of piety to hold forth from the pulpit the doctrine that through some constitutional inabilities men are to be held excusable for the remains of indwelling sin. But be our sympathies as they may, we do not perceive how our text can be drawn or driven to take sides in the controversy. The most claimed for it is, that it speaks of the Apostle of the Gentiles as yet not entirely sanctified, and that the claims of attainment unto perfection must have far outstripped the converted Disciple of Gamaliel in the Christian race.

We have, then, nothing now to do with the creed of the perfectionist. Our text can be regarded only as a passage of the experience of a Christian still struggling with the remains of corruption. And yet you will perceive that in this reference the verse will profit us nothing unless it is regarded as spoken by Paul subsequent to his conversion, so that the great preliminary of the controversy just adverted to remains still to be adjusted. The previous question, then, for our settlement is, Did the Apostle in this passage speak of his own religious experience subsequent to regeneration? We answer that so it seems unto us for the following reasons :

First. Because the fore-front aspect of the passage favors this interpretation. The first person as well as the present tense runs through the whole connection. "I consent to the law that is good." "I delight in the law of God." "I see another law in my members." Yea, as if to meet the very objection, he adds, "So,

then, I myself serve the law of God." And all this profusion of personal diction burns upon his lip with Paul's sublimest ardor, as if wrung from him by the anxieties and agonies of intense personal experience. To suppose that here he but personates another—as some say, a Jew before the giving of the law, and then after it; or as others, a Gentile without the law, as opposed to a Jew under it; or as still others, an ordinary individual under the influences of a knowledge of the law, is at variance with the whole possibilities of the language and foreign to the whole spirit of the writer, and nothing better than a putting of God's truth to the rack and the thumbscrew to make it give evidence in favor of a preconceived thought.

Second. There is no necessity of this forced and unnatural construction of the language. There is not an expression from the beginning to the end which tells us not with the experience of the holiest man among you. "Sold under sin," by a forced and fanciful exegesis may mean something inconsistent with regenerating grace, but not as explained by the Apostle and limited by the context. Such exposition is not only gratuitous; it is absolutely uncalled for.

Third. This passage, while it contains nothing inconsistent with the experience of a real Christian, does positively contain much absolutely untrue if asserted in respect of any unrenewed man. An impenitent heart does not consent to the law of God; does not hate sin; does not struggle against sin; does not groan under it as a tyrant's yoke; does not delight in the law of God after the inner man. Verily it requires all the mighty torturing of the inquisition to render this passage

possible in its application to one altogether unregenerate.

Fourth. And especially, though upon the illustration of this point our limits forbid us to dwell. The whole tenor of the Apostle's argument seems absolutely to demand that we should understand him here as referring to Christian experience. For these and reasons like to these, the obvious sense of the passage seems the true sense; and he who by an unnatural violence wrests them from the lessons of a fair and a faithful exposition, seems to us, if nothing worse, at least guilty of handling the Word of God deceitfully. We question to no man the right of a personal and private interpretation, but we do question to any man, yea, we do deny to man or minister or angel the right of stretching the body of God's truth upon the rack of human opinion, that amid fierce torturing it may be made to give testimony in support of a lie. If there be any such thing as an obvious and unavoidable exegesis of Revelation, then does the Apostle Paul here, as in other passages, positively affirm that he had not yet attained unto a freedom from carnality, and that his whole life was one agonizing struggle with remaining sin.

Now, viewed as an expression of Paul's experience subsequent to conversion, the text sets forth in order these two things: The despondency and the triumphant exultation of a Christian in view of this indwelling corruption.

First, then, let us see how the text illustrates the despondency of a Christian in respect of his remaining corruptions.

“ Oh! wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me

from the body of this death?" Herein is most touchingly set forth two associated emotions. The first is the distress occasioned by this remaining corruption. "*Oh! wretched man that I am!*" It was no delight to Paul that a remaining corruption lingered amid the principles of his nature. Under the influences of the new creation of God had the immortality within him been winged for high flight through heaven, and better and more ennobling prospects had kindled in the soul. And oh! it seemed humbling unto his very nature. It seemed a degradation unto the destiny, a cloud upon the glory of redeemed man, this remnant of the old nature; this pride and passion and sloth and insensibility and uneven walking and strangeness to God and grieving of the Spirit, which rise up in vast strength amid the unsubdued carnality of his nature. It rendered mortal life a soreness and a degradation—this iron linking of a renewed soul unto the coarse and corrupt creations of a polluted heart. Yea, worse than this; it rendered his whole life a wasting and wearisome warfare as they rose up within him—those forms of rebellious principle and propensities working abomination.

The courage and championship of Paul kindled mightily in heart and bosom. He who had fought with beasts at Ephesus shrank not from the conflict with life's great monster—sin—and in the strength of a noble purpose and the might of an enlarged heart, wherein had been implanted the first great principles of holiness and heaven, he struggled with might and main with that ferocious enemy of his soul. And so long as he struggled successfully, and made staunch head against the onset of corruption, there was mingled with all the

weariness of the conflict the inspiration and triumph of a conflict as well. But, alas! not always; and herein consisted the agony of Paul's impassioned outcry. Not always from that terrible antagonism did he come off more than conqueror. Bitter, most bitter, was that dreadful experience of "a law in his members warring with the law of his mind," and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin. And therefore out springs the exclamation of the text. He sees himself under the figurative representations which had run through the whole preceding context, as a man overcome in the struggle, taken captive on the battle-field and despoiled of his armor and altogether at the disposal of his conqueror.

Yea, more than this even. Whatever may be our exegesis of the phrase "*body of death*" in the text; whether it mean this body which is subject to death, or whether, according to Hebrew idiom, it mean a body deadly in its tendency, *i. e.*, the heart's carnal affections which lead to death; at least of this there can be little doubt, that the language is figurative of a terrible custom under the ancient despotism.

A captive taken in war was brought forth to the market-place, and a punishment inflicted on him, compared with which roasting, racking, crucifying were regarded as merciful chastisements. They took a lifeless and loathsome human carcass, and, placing it upon the breathing captive, breast to breast and limb to limb and eye to eye and mouth to mouth, they bound them thus by indissoluble ligatures—the living and the dead—and sent them forth in awful brotherhood to lie down and rise up and walk abroad, the carrion and the captive.

Now, figurative of this custom is the Apostle's language. Sin, the foul tyrant, assails him, and after many strivings conquers him, and then sends him abroad to life's duties a living spirit bound unto a body of death. And who wonders at Paul's agonizing outcry? Though he had from the first, without complaint, endured a great fight of afflictions, and taken joyfully the spoiling of goods and the great perils in the shipwreck, and the loss of all things, yet who wonders that even Paul could not bear this estate of partial sanctification. But as he breathed the rank odor of the corrupting flesh, lifted up his voice in that cry of agony and anguish, "*Oh! wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" And this leads me to speak of the second emotion which, in view of his indwelling corruption, rose up in the Apostle's soul, namely, his despondency. "*Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" This is the language of the very strongest and most overwhelming doubt and despondency. So long as with success he struggled against the tyrant's assaults, then, notwithstanding all the urgency and ardor of the conflict, his heart might bound with high rapture. But now he is overcome of temptation; a remaining evil propensity hath proved too mighty for his weakness, and again is he in captivity to the law of sin. The fetter of the monster is upon life and limb, and whence can he look for deliverance? Can the law aid him? Nay, its very breathing is of condemnation. When the commandment came sin revived and I died. Can his fellow-men aid him? Nay, the whole race, like himself, are led captive of the enemy, unable alike to free themselves from the foul burden. Can he look forward to

mightier success in his own unaided struggles? Nay, he hath been conquered in fair fighting. The law of his members warring with the law of his mind, even against all his strugglings, hath gotten the mastery and brought him into captivity to the law of sin which was in his members; and can he hope hereafter better to resist? Why, look you! He is a captive, and at the disposal of the victor; yea, a bound captive, and in the forth-putting of that victor's malignity, bound like the barbarian bondman unto the body of death.

And what hope that in his own strength he shall hereafter be enabled to tear away the iron fetter, and cast away the carcass, and lay hold on the relinquished armor, and go forth again unto the conflict so staunchly that the conqueror shall become the captive, and the mighty law in the members be brought into captivity to the law of the mind? He goes forth under the terrible imagery of the text, a dead body bound to his body, brow to brow and limb to limb and lip to lip, and his strength is withered, and his muscles palsied, and his heart all faintness, and every breath he breathes thick with the damp odor of decay. And oh! whither can he look for deliverance? Unto what aid and what arm can he betake himself, that the fetters may be loosed and the dread load removed, and he stand erect again in the dignity of his immortal manhood? Who wonders that he stands still in the gloom of a deep despondency? Who wonders that there seems unto him no aid in all the services of creature championship? Who wonders that the cry of his agonized spirit is, "*Oh! wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*"

Now, this leads us to a consideration of the second great point of the passage—the triumphant exultation of the Christian, even under the oppressive weight of this indwelling corruption. So it was with Paul. For no sooner do you behold him crushed down to the dust under the burden of this terrible despondency than you behold him leaping again joyfully into the struggle with the destroyer with this exultant, “*Thanks be unto God through Christ Jesus our Lord.*” There are two ways of explaining this clause of the connection, as we adopt one or the other reading of the different manuscripts. The first is to suppose the sentence complete as it is. The passage “*I thank God*” being originally “*The Grace of God,*” the whole passage, then, standing thus, “*Who shall deliver me,*” etc., and the answer, “*The grace of God through Christ Jesus.*” The other is to suppose the sentence elliptical, which, if supplied, will read thus: “*I thank God, who delivers me through Christ Jesus my Lord.*” The meaning is not essentially different in either case, the context forming a joyous and triumphant answer to the almost despairing question of the last verse.

Now, you will perceive at once that it were foreign to the spirit of the connection to dwell at much length upon the philosophy of a salvation by grace from the bondage of sin. We say in passing, that God by the gift of His Son to die hath freed us from the condemnation of sin, and by the gift of the Spirit, itself a purchase of Christ’s death, He hath begun and will carry on unto perfecting the work of our freedom from all the pollution of sin. And thence forth whosoever by faith becomes interested in the Mediator is brought under the

influence of a scheme whose present tendency and whose perfected results shall be to render man not only a condition, but in character at perfect freedom from the law of sin. This, however, by the way. For it is not so much of the philosophy of the progression as of the certainty of the perfecting of this result that the Apostle speaks. In other connections Paul kindles into all his raptures over the *modus* of redemption. He tells us how the Son of God became flesh, laying aside the bright and blissful majesties of heaven, and putting on human nature as the instrumentality, or working-day apparel, and walking forth amid the busy scenes of earthly life as the great arena where the dread antagonism was to go on, dared gloriously the fellness of the whole conflict, wrestling not only with death, the monster-child, but with sin, the monster-mother ; that God cast on Him the tremendous burden of all our iniquities, and death wrapt Him in his icy arms and bound Him in the strongholds of his dungeon ; yet that in the might of the within Godhead did He triumph over them all, bearing a world's sin, yet Himself sinless, and tearing away death's sting just as it fixed itself within His bosom, and leaping forth from the grave's imprisonment in the power of high victory, and ascending up on high to receive gifts for the redeemed, and thus putting into mighty movement a great scheme whose outworkings here on earth are the justification and progressive sanctification of those who believe. This is the burden of Paul's glorying elsewhere. But in our text it is in view of another aspect of the great truth that he glories. It is of the hastening consummation of the work, not of what Christ hath done, but of what He shall do when

with the struggling soul in the dark hour of its earthly dissolution He shall come in the might of a conqueror, and laying an omnipotent finger on the links of bondage, loose the breathing captive from the corrupting burden, freeing us thenceforth and forever from the body of this death. And therefore was it, that, burdened and borne down with the weight of inherent corruption, Paul burst forth into this strong language of thanksgiving and joy. He lay upon the battle plain whereon he had been conquered, and this body of death was pressing heavily upon him, eye to eye and limb to limb and lip to lip. But there then, even then, rose in his breaking heart the immortal assurance of hope; and with a thought of Christ in his trophies of conquest, and death with its releasing agonies, and eternity with its high raptures of sinless bliss, he leaped upon his feet again with the loud outburst of victorious and exultant joy. And oh! who wonders? Dear brother in Christ, hard, very hard, is it to bear that constant warfare within you of the law of your members with the law of the mind. It gives unto this mortal life all the character of a soreness and a suffering and a barbarous and bloody conflict—that struggle of the renewed spirit against earth's giant lusts. And as the poor captive of the fierce despot, bound with the loathsome body, sickened of his very life, and longed and prayed and wept in agony to die, so to a Christian on earth there are times when it seems unto him too much to bear this high lashing of the immortal spirit against the corrupting flesh. But yet, dear blood-bought spirit, why doubt, why droop, why despond you? Behold! along the battle-plain whereon sin hath bound you unto that

terrific burden, behold there cometh a deliverer, mighty—monstrous, men call him. But oh! though mighty, not monstrous, for his name is Death. And soon, very soon, sooner than we believe, it may be before the autumnal hues vanish from the forests, for he comes with vast strides—that conqueror over conquerors. Soon, very soon, will he stand beside you, and his skeleton finger will loosen the bonds, and the foul body drop away from the living spirit, and ye stand up in God's glorious world redeemed, regenerated, disenthralled, an eternal freeman, whom Christ's blood makes free.

Oh! my brother, my sister, this glorious thought only, even amid all the low tendencies of earthly affections, maketh me sometimes, in the strength of a resistless agony, homesick for heaven. It is not for the living water; it is not for the fruitage of the tree of life; it is not for the breathing of the cloudless heavens; it is not for the swell of the angelic harmonies; it is not that I shall wear white raiment; it is not that I shall dwell in noble mansions; it is not that I shall place a crown upon my brow and my hand wield a sceptre; it is not that I shall sit down with the patriarchs; it is not that I shall rejoice in the fellowship of Apostles; it is not that God shall give me back to take again to this burning and breaking heart the beloved dead, whose voices breathe no more around me in this sad and stranger air; yea, and because without that other spiritual preparation God's brilliant glories would burn me into ashes; it is not because I shall see Jesus; it is not because I shall bow in glorious worship at the throne of God; not for these, oh! not for these, turneth my living heart for the distant murmur of the dark

river of separation to break at times upon my ear. But above all of it, for the glory of that nobler revelation that into heaven shall enter nothing that defileth or worketh abomination or maketh a lie. Oh the glorious hope of a perfected sanctification, the anticipation so full of the beatitudes of heaven, that noblest of all the anticipations of eternity, that I, so poor, so lost, so loathsome, that it seems as if God must look on me with abhorrence and that angels turn in sickening from my threshold; oh, the glorious hope that I, even I, shall be made meet for yon bright world, so pure, so perfect, so spotless in every impulse of my nature that I can come unblushingly to the high social circles of eternity, yea, come boldly and cast myself on Jesus' bosom, and repose in peace!

Oh! let death come in any other form, and I might tremble, though he loose me from human suffering, though he smoothe a pillow for the aching head, though he open the gates of an immortal world to a thirsting spirit, though he give me back in living beauty the beloved dead, though he come in the glorious promise of a resurrection unto life, this corruptible putting on its incorruption, this mortal putting on its immortality. And yet with it all (for there is something wild and awful in this shaking into dust this clay tabernacle), I might bid him from my threshold and long to live; but let him come as a purifyer, a bearer of white garments, a pourer of bright water to this immortal thirst, a freer of this living spirit from the corpse of sin; then, though he come in all the fearful fierceness of his iron nature, will I clasp him to my bosom with the joy of heaven.

THE LAMP OF LIFE.

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

PSALMS CXIX. 105.

In the history of every great enterprise there are two periods of superlative and absorbing interest to the philosophic observer. These two points are the commencement and the termination of the enterprise. To the first there attaches the interest of philosophic hope. To the second the interest of philosophic reflection. To the one we bring the calculation of the likelihoods of an untried experiment. To the other we bring the eye of philosophic consideration of the secrets of that success. In respect of the Sabbath-school enterprise we may be regarded to-day as standing in the latter of these positions. It is no longer an untried experiment. We have nothing more to do with considering the likelihood of its permanent establishment. It has succeeded. The voice of the whole Church is at one in the testimony that Sabbath-school instruction must henceforth be regarded as a distinguished means of grace. The history of its achievements is not yet fully written; but to-day is it in the full tide of successful experiment. It is pouring rich blessings upon man in all the positions and relations of life; as an individual, fitting him for usefulness in time and happiness in eternity; as a member of the social system, diffusing peace and purity over the domestic relationship; as a member of great national associations, imparting wisdom to the enactments of law

and vigor unto their execution ; as in fellowship with the Church catholic and universal, developing the grand principle of pre-millennial revivals, by bringing the Gospel in its purity and its power upon the softened heart of childhood.

Many years ago, on an occasion like the present, we should have felt called upon to advocate Sabbath-schools. To-day such advocacy were impertinent. The demonstration of their utility is found in the records of their past triumphs. And to-day we have nothing else to do than to reflect with what calmness we may upon the secrets of that success, the philosophy of those triumphs. What we have to say, then, at present will be in answer to the question why Sabbath-schools are proving themselves so rich a blessing to the race. And that answer, we think, will be found set forth just in this, that they bring the mind of our youth in direct and abundant contact with the Bible. In the consideration of this thought two topics of remark present themselves before us.

First. The excellencies of the Bible as a school-book.

Second. The advantages of its study in early childhood.

In considering the first of these topics the most wonderful thing is, that with regard to it there should ever have arisen a question in the observant mind, and especially that the first agitation of such a question should have been by the enlightened philosophy of this latter day. Among all the generations of our race, from the very farthest period of antiquity, hath it been a principle of education, settled and sanctified, that the princi-

ples of the dominant religion were to be the very earliest study of childhood. The sacred books of all heathen nations have been most carefully laid open to the young. The Koran of Mecca has been ever the first study of the Mohammedan. The popular religion of classic heathendom is so completely interwoven with the very texture of its popular and rich literature, that by the self-same process did the observant youth become a student and a Pagan. Yea, the Hebrew parent, by the express command of heaven, was bound so to indoctrinate his child in the Divine oracles, that he was positively certain to enter active life a Hebrew in faith and a Hebrew even in prejudices. The history of the early Church is full of the operation of this same principle. The history of early heresies from the pure faith are histories of false doctrine impressed upon the minds of the youthful. The successes of the great men of the Reformation were the successes of men educated and acting on the principle that the Bible is the best of all school-books; and if the time ever come when science will at best be but a curse, and education a mildew on the world's intellect, it will be under the efforts of that foul forth-putting of a latter-day scepticism to shut away the Book of God from the schools of youth.

Let us consider very cursorily—for a full examination would exhaust volumes—very rapidly let us attend to two or three points of excellency of the Bible as a school-book for the young. Now, on such a point we may safely declare that it contains the only complete system of education in the world; the only full compend of discipline, physical and mental and moral, for time and eternity, a careful attention unto whose rules

will render a man prepared for the stern duties of the world and meet for the glories of immortality.

I. Even that lowliest interest of education, the the training of man's physical nature, is cared for in the Bible. The three great bodily evils which beset our youth, the three grand tendencies to be guarded against in a course of physical culture, are impurity, intemperance, and idleness; and how noble in its warning does the Bible speak out on them all! Impurity! Oh! it is almost the master-demon of them all; and under the writhings of its serpent folds thousands of the bright and gifted are strangled forever. And yet scarcely do I know a treatise on physical culture that hath dared in its wondrous delicacy to whisper a word of warning but the Bible! Oh! how it speaks out in thunder tones! At the entrance of every pathway that leads downwards to its foul haunts hath it flung out the banner of warning, and the syllables traced in lightning are: "The way to hell." Intemperance! For how many a generation hath it dug the grave and wrapped the winding sheet of the bodies and souls of our youth of promise; yet how long and loud and ceaseless did the Bible ring out its alarm-cry over the place of its full ascendancy. Intemperance of any kind and on any occasion meets everywhere its withering anathema. Simplicity and moderation, even in the use of food, is enjoined by precept and enforced by example; and whatever may be our opinions with regard to the intoxicating qualities of the pure wines of Palestine, but a single opinion can be entertained of our Bible-enjoined duty with regard to that sparkling death-draught which, even while it gives out its red color in the cup, "biteth

like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." And not a doubt can be harbored of the regard which the spirit of inspiration entertains of that beautiful seduction, when its denunciations are of "woe and sorrow and contentions and babblings and wounds without cause unto him that under the beguilings of a pampered appetite sitteth long at the wine."

Then, too, idleness—a want of physical exercise—is a great curse of all modern systems of education. The process of culture hath been confined to the mind, with a complete forgetfulness of the requisite exercise of the body, so that at length it hath come to be regarded as a vital necessity that high mental power should be dissociated from high physical energy. Scholarship by a dread necessity seems predestined to be valetudinarian; and genius, to the fullest exercise of whose high powers great physical ability is indispensable, seems doomed, by the very condition of its culture, to a system of disorganized secretions and relaxed muscles and shattered nerves. And thus it is that manual labor, so fundamental a part of all symmetrical training, in its seeming dissociation from the height of mental culture, has come to be considered unfashionable. Pretensions to profound scholarship and elevated intellectual discipline are challenged at once if the claimant be a man of sturdy stature and well compact muscular fibre. Genius! Oh! what hath it to do with the implements of hardy and honest and out-of-door exercise? Nay, it must be a creature of the delicate frame-work and the unbronzed cheek and the lily fingers, and the winds of heaven must be shut away from the effeminate frame-work,

and it be handled softly, like an exhibition doll in the show-box of a milliner.

Now, the Bible's theory of human culture is at war with all this false and factitious opinion. It demands vigorous and continuous bodily labor. It leads the young scholar to the sheep-folds of Moses and the carpenter-toil of Jesus and the assiduous toil of Paul amid the tent-makers of Corinth; and understanding, as it does, how a vigorous body is indispensable to the highest efforts of a vigorous intellect, and how, like heavy ordnance, such an intellect will recoil on its mounting and shatter a puny frame-work, its very first business is to furnish forth unto the conflict the mind with a staunch equipment of compact tone and elastic muscle and healthful and hardy nervous economy.

II. But in its attention to the higher departments of education how complete and incomparable is the Bible. Volumes might be exhausted in illustrating this point. We may declare in general, that no mental faculty is left unprovided for in the Bible, considered as a school-book. Unlike all other compends of intellectual discipline, it does not take care of one species of faculties to the neglect of others. Its design and practical effect is to furnish forth the man with a symmetrical and justly balanced and impartial development of all the mental powers; and yet its tendency is to develop and discipline every one of these powers to their very highest perfection. Would you impart to a child in the briefest possible compass the most important lessons of every-day wisdom and strong, sound common-sense, let him study the Proverbs of Solomon. Would you in the shortest period of pupilage render a child clear-

sighted in his understanding of the very philosophy of law and the most subtle elements of practical jurisprudence, sit him down unto a careful study of the moral and political code of the Hebrews as embodied in the pages of the Pentateuch. Would you open unto a child's thought the very secrets of the wire-working of human nature as set forth in the records of human history? Why, in the Bible you place before his mind the safest, yea, the only compend of our world's annals through the largest, the longest, the most wonderful and sublime period of its continuance. Would you discipline into the very loftiest strength the highest faculties of the intellect? Then sit your child down to ponder the majestic and overpowering truths of the Bible—the immortality of the human spirit, the might and the ministrations of the loftier ranks and orders of created intelligence, the effects of unlimited progression in wisdom and power upon the march and the majesty of the mental faculties, the being and the duration and the unspeakable glories of a great God, whose dwelling-place is immensity and whose life-time eternity, and omnipotence is whose power, and omnipresence is the boundary of whose pervading essence. Would you refine into softest and truest sensibility the more delicate faculties of imagination and senses and taste, then sit the child down to ponder the high specimens of eloquence and poetry and inimitable, uncolored painting which, like stars in the breadth of heaven, are found everywhere within the pages of this Book of Life. Why, the great masters of the drama have borrowed character and inspiration from its burning pages, and the immortal lords of the pencil have arrayed the canvass in

greatest glory on Scriptural subjects. And where hath poetry ever kindled so majestically as from Isaiah's harp? And where hath eloquence so poured forth unto the full her might and her mastery as when Gamaliel's Disciple plead for Christ in bonds? Oh! on such themes time would fail us. The Bible may be termed emphatically the great text-book of the human intellect. It hath been alike written and studied by the greatest of all the world's poets and philosophers and moralists and conquerors. And the teacher who would develop into fullest proportion, and discipline into mightiest perfection the faculties of man's intellectual nature, will give him the Bible to refine his taste and the Bible to strengthen his understanding.

III. Not this alone. Not more with the mental than the moral culture of our race does this text-book concern itself. Herein is the great oversight of all other compends of systematic education. To omit in the treatment of the young all moral culture is, even in respect of time, to train but partially and imperfectly. In the economy of the human spirit the rudest understanding perceives two essentially distinct classes of emotion, which we term the intellectual and the moral emotions. And had we time, it might, we think, be shown clearly that to the latter class pertains the higher relative importance, and that as an instantaneous decision of the judgment a greater estimation is put upon qualities denoted by the terms good, generous, pure, peaceable, then upon those which we designate as beautiful, graceful, sublime, magnificent. We think that, even in respect of time, it might be shown that the moral faculties carry it very greatly over the intellectual.

But let their work of relative importance be what it may, a system of education neglectful of their cultivation is, of course, a partial system, as if the body were to be exercised and the mind neglected, or the mind disciplined and the body wasted in inactivity. Confessedly, education is not perfect if it reach not the moral capacities; and yet it is a truth undeniable, yea, undenied, that if you deliver the minds of our children from the study of the Bible, you do by that very act leave forever destitute of all adequate culture an important, if not *the* important department of their nature.

IV. And this leads me to the last thought in this connection, which is, that the Bible as a text-book educates not merely for time, but for eternity. Herein is a fundamental error in all other systems of human culture. They seek to fit man to act well his part in this infancy of being, and leave him all ignorant and unequipped for the high plans and purposes of the majestic maturity that towers beyond the grave. The end of their physical culture is to fit the body to move well and wisely along the low thoroughfare of life, and never to waste a thought on the race-running for the high awards of eternity.

Their mental discipline only contemplates the low wants and the petty anxieties and the groveling pursuits and a meetness for the paltry interests of this little world, and prepares for no duty and sits in Judgment on no interest of the majestic immortality that is to come.

But the Bible. Oh! it looks upon the wants of man as an immortal. It would train the body into stature and strength, not that it may walk in beauty and majesty

this busy world, but as that which, starting at the resurrection from the low grave, shall go forth in a walk of progressive glory along all the crowned heights of eternity. The soul. In all its complex character of the intellectual and moral emotions, it would subject it to the appliances of a careful culture, not that it may wisely grapple with the mysteries of earthly science, but as an immortal and enduring spirit, that shall not be hurt of the death-bed agonies, but, starting away from the throes of a convulsed frame-work, shall plume its flight on the dark waters, and on yon far-away shores of glory be gathered to the high fellowship of the blest, going forth unto their triumphs and their toils with capacities as vast and energies as unabating. And therefore, and for this, we tell you that the Bible is the great text Book of our race, the great school Book of an infancy of immortality, and declare that if you debar the human mind from its grand lessons you leave it in all ignorance of the very alphabet of science, stranded on the great shoals of eternity. Other systems may train the body for earthly toil. The Bible trains it also to wear becomingly the raiment of immortal triumph. Other discipline may strengthen the soul for the waste and weariness of temporal calculation, and imbue it with the spirit of short-sighted and temporal wisdom, but the Bible alone, in its at-once revelation of heaven's glories and its miraculous preparations for heaven's gladness, fitteth the soul to act well its part on that high theatre of being incomprehensible and eternal and beyond the skies.

Now, we have dwelt at such unexpected length on this thought, that it is but the very briefest considera-

tion we can give to the second proposed topic of remark, namely, the advantages of the study of the Bible in early childhood. Here, perhaps, is the grand secret of Sabbath-school success. It impresses revealed truth upon the mind in its earliest stage of comprehension. And on the advantages of such a practice why need we enlarge? No more philosophic is it to believe that spring-time is emphatically the seed-time in the material world than that childhood is the seed-time in the spiritual world. In the wisdom of all past time hath it been thought philosophically necessary to instruct children in religious tenets as the very basis of all other knowledge, and every heathen tribe that hath advanced to the possession of a written religion and places of childish training has appointed its national religion a fundamental study of its children. And all this has originated in a profound insight into the great elements of permanent impression. Who does not know that earliest impressions are the strongest? That the associations of thought formed in childhood are the most enduring? That the literature, whether secular or sacred, whose alphabet is only mastered in maturity, is never pursued with the assiduous and intense ardor of a passion? That the grand secret of that deep love and that untiring enthusiasm, with which, even under the chilling influences of Paganism, the devotee yields himself unto a religious ritualism, is found in the assiduous care wherewith the earliest associations were linked unto its temple service? And who, above all, fails to perceive how wisely in Sabbath-school instruction we lay hold of this beautiful principle to bring the young heart in its freshness to the Saviour's feet? By the spell of

earliest association we fasten upon the young spirit a love of the literature of heaven; we open the young ear unto the melody of angels; we unveil unto the young eye the magnificence of the destiny of the redeemed spirit; we set the young soul unto the pondering into a familiarity with those dazzling truths of eternity in that most sublime of all their modifications and aspects—the truth as it is in Jesus; we apply ourselves unto the culture in the youthful spirit of that boundless ambition which will satisfy itself with nothing less than the high awards of a radiant immortality; and thus in the use of a power which in all past time hath been perverted unto the worst of purposes, we fling around the realities of the unseen world the charm of an early acquaintanceship, and array the very mansions of the blest in the beautiful features of the soul's first dwelling-place, and link the deepest affections of the heart unto the living God as in fetters of iron and of adamant, by the strong impressions and thrilling remembrances and deathless associations of a child's beautiful and reposing love.

Herein, as far as our limits allow, have we striven to set forth the secret of Sabbath-school success; and we may not detain you longer than to offer the very briefest word of exhortation to the two classes of persons specially interested in the exercises of this afternoon.

1. The first is to the Sabbath-school teacher; and to you, dear hearers, as the whole subject, setting forth, as it does, the probabilities of success, hath been of encouragement, our exhortation shall be of warning. Your business is to impress Bible truths on the immortal young heart, to open the truths of this blessed volume

to the thought of childhood. And in the beautiful metaphor of the text wherein the Bible is denominated "*a lamp unto the feet and a light unto the path,*" most strikingly is there set forth before you the measure of your responsibility. Ponder for a moment the figurative language. These children are represented as children lost in a wilderness; and all before are dangerous precipices, and all around a night of storms. And you with the Bible, this light of eternity, this lamp of heaven, are represented as commissioned to go forth and seek them in that dark wilderness, and pouring the Divine radiance on the safe pathway to guide them home. Oh! look well, then, unto your guidance. Have you never read of the fatuous and false lights that flit sometimes in the dark night through the wilderness, whereon the poor traveler, bethinking him of his household lamp in his sweet home, fastens his eye and hurries on rejoicingly, and by and by plunges from the precipice, and is dashed to pieces on the rocks beneath? Oh, beware! beware! The wreckers that along the dangerous coast kindle signals and false fires to tempt vessels unto the shipwreck we call murderers. Look well to it, that in the great day of reckoning, through your unfaithfulness to these little ones, the skirts of your garments be not red with blood.

2. My other word of exhortation is to these dear children of the Sabbath-school. You are lifted to heaven in point of privilege. Be careful; oh! be careful that it be not from that height of glory to be cast down to hell. This dear Bible, it can make you rise unto salvation. It can teach you the song of angels and the great school lessons of eternity, and point you

the way unto the immortal mansions, and make you meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Beware; oh! beware lest in your neglect and disobedience of its precious instructions it may prove unto you "a savor of death unto death." Oh, how dreadful will be the doom of impenitent Sabbath-school children! How awful the eternity of a child whose condemnation it was, that light came into the world, and he loved darkness rather than light!

Dear children, I have read somewhere the account a great traveler gives us of a light-house reared by kindly hands far out on a rocky promontory, around which, when the storm is abroad, the waters murmur with a wrathful and a bitter cry, and flocks of sea-birds, driven by the tempests from their craggy nests, rush madly toward that beauteous light, and dash upon the mighty rocks, and are cast up dead along the shore. And oh! there is such a light kindled on the rocky shore of time, and there are such eyes dazzled by its beauty in this night of storms, and there are such dead things cast up forever by the heaving billows of eternity.

A ROYAL HIGHWAY.

“And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those—the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon; it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”—ISAIAH XXXV. 8, 10.

Dear children, at the request of your beloved superintendent I am going to preach to you this morning. If you sit still and listen, I will not preach a long sermon, and will strive to so speak that you can remember what I say and tell your father or mother something about it when you go home.

The text I have taken speaks about a highway to heaven. Last Sabbath morning I preached to your parents and teachers about striving to lead you in the Divine way to heaven; and now I am going to talk to you about that way, and urge you to walk in it.

Now, you all know what we mean by walking toward heaven. We mean being Christians; for every Christian is going to heaven. I suppose some of you think it is a gloomy thing to be a Christian. I remember when I was a little boy an old gentleman used to come to our house with a black coat and a long face, and he looked so sorrowful and spoke so sadly that we were all glad when he went away; and when they told me he was a Christian and was going to heaven, I thought, It

is not good to be a Christian, and the way to heaven can not be pleasant. Perhaps some of you feel so. But my text was written by God just to show you how good a thing it is to be a Christian, and what a pleasant way is the way to heaven.

Now, you all know what makes a road pleasant. If you were going to begin a journey into the country to-morrow, you would want several things to be sure about the road you were to travel, and I desire to show you how the text says every one of these things is true about this road to heaven. And,

First. If you were going on a journey, you would want a well-made road, or what we call a good road. When your parents crossed the isthmus years ago, they rode on mules, and there were no good roads; and in going down mountains they fell down; and in fording rivers they fell in; and the poor travelers got to Panama with their clothes all torn and muddy and wet. And it was a hard road to travel. But now men have built a great railroad there, and you can sit in a nice car and see beautiful trees and flowers, and there is no danger of falling down mountains or getting into water. And so we say it is a pleasant way because the way is good.

And this is just what our text says about the way to heaven. It calls it a highway, a way that God has made for little children to walk in. Christ Jesus came into the world to save little children. And He says, If you repent of your sins, and love and trust Jesus, and strive to be good children, you shall all go to heaven when you die. To be a Christian is, therefore, just to walk in this good way God has made. And so we call it a

pleasant journey, because it is along a well-made way, *i. e.*, a highway.

But, then, all highways are not pleasant. I went up to Lake Biglar last summer, and there was as fine a road over the mountains as ever I saw. The stones were all taken away, and the ground was made smooth and hard, and the horses galloped away, drawing the coach swiftly and easily. It was truly a good road, and yet it was not a pleasant one, because it was cut right along precipices, and sometimes the wheels went within two inches of the edge of abysses a thousand feet deep; and so we were all afraid of falling off. And some of the women in the coach were always crying out, "Oh! we shall be dashed in pieces;" and some of the men were as much scared as the women, and some children made as much noise as if their necks were surely to be broken. It was a very well built highway, but it was not pleasant. And what was quite as bad, they told us that sometimes the monstrous grizzly bears were found in the mountain, strong enough to carry away the horses and tear all the travelers to pieces. And so what with the precipices and the bears we can not say very much in favor of the highway to Washoe.

Now, all this shows you that to make a road pleasant it must be not only first a good road, but,

Secondly, It must be a safe way. And this is just what my text says about the Christian's way to heaven. "It is a safe way." So well guarded from precipices is it, that "*the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err,*" or fall away from it; and "*no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast go up therein; it shall not be found there.*"

When a child becomes a Christian—giving his heart to God, and loving and serving Him—then God declares that He will send angels to guard them from all danger, and that He Himself will be always by their side to guide and protect them. And though Satan, like a roaring lion, tempts and destroys wicked children, yet Christ, the blessed Saviour, who is stronger than Satan, has promised to bear the good little children as a shepherd bears the lamb safely along the precipices and away from the roaring lions. And therefore, we say, the way to heaven is a pleasant way because it is safe.

But, then, a road may be both a highway and a safe way, and yet not a pleasant way. One of the safest journeys I ever took was in a stage coach through a part of an Eastern State. It was over a great plain of sand, the road so heavy that the horses could not run away with us, and so perfectly level that the coach could not be turned over, and the region so barren that no wild beast could have been persuaded to live there. But when we looked out along the road side we could see nothing beautiful, no green fields, no waving trees, no bright brooks, no beautiful dwellings. But it was all a hot, desolate, miserable sand plain, make the best of it. And of all the many people who have traveled that road, I never heard one speak well of it.

Now, all this shows that beside being high and safe, if a way be pleasant, it must,

Thirdly, lie through a pleasant country. And this is what makes a Christian's way pleasant. I know that Christians talk about earth being a wilderness; and the road of which this Prophet was speaking was built in the great desert between Babylon and Judea. But if

you turn back a few verses in the chapter, you find the Prophet declares that, when crossed by these travelers to Zion, the wilderness and the solitary place should be glad, and the desert bud and blossom as the rose. And accordingly the Bible calls wisdom's ways, or the road to heaven, "ways of pleasantness," *i. e.*, ways pleasant in themselves and their prospects; for sweet streams of heavenly grace murmur by the wayside, and mountains of heavenly glory rise above the horizon. And no little child ever gave its heart to God, and loved and obeyed Him, that did not find God's Word true, that wisdom's ways were ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace.

Fourth. Meanwhile, something more than all this is necessary to make a journey pleasant. One of the most disagreeable rides I ever took was along a good road, and safe, through a delightful country. But what made it so unpleasant was the company that traveled with us. At one of the stopping-places about fifty men came aboard, who had been to a prize fight, and as you will suppose, they were most of them not very agreeable companions. Some of them were drunken, and some smoking, and some swearing, and presently some of them got into a fight among themselves, and though the cars were new and nice, and the road lay amid almost matchless scenery, green meadows and grand old forests and a noble river at the side, and glorious mountains beyond them, yet with a crowd of dirty, drunken and profane and quarreling men the ride itself was most painful.

And all this shows that to make any road pleasant you must have an agreeable company. If you were

going picnicing you would say, "I want papa and mamma to go, and little brother and sister, and my teacher, if he be pleasant, and Mary, because she is always so good-natured, and Harry, because he loves to play with me. But I do not want Mr. Smith to go, because he is so cross; nor Mrs. Jones, for she is always scolding; nor William, for he is always teasing me; nor Susan, who will never let me have what I want. If I can not have pleasant company I would rather stay at home."

Now this, dear children, is just what makes the road to heaven so pleasant. My text says not only that no lion or ravenous beast shall be there, but that the unclean, *i. e.*, all wicked persons, shall not pass over it.

Walking in the pleasant road to heaven, you never find robbers or murderers or thieves or drunken men. No boy who swears, and no girl who tells lies, and no children that quarrel and strike and fling stones, no such persons are walking the heavenly road. But as the text says, "*the redeemed shall walk there,*" *i. e.*, God's people, who love God and do good to men, good children, who try to make each other happy, and are kind and gentle like the blessed Saviour; aye, and better still, though we can not see their faces nor hear their voices, yet God tells us the shining angels walk by our side on the way to heaven. And sure we are God walks with us—our great Heavenly Father—leading us by the hand, that we fall into no danger; watching us ever, that we want no good thing.

To be a Christian is, therefore, to walk in the best company and have the most agreeable companions, and therefore we say the road to heaven is pleasant.

Fifth. But beside all this there is yet one other thing

necessary to make a way pleasant. I remember to have ridden once over a most charming road on a sweet summer day, when the air was all full of the fragrance of roses and violets and blossoming trees. Bright little brooks of water were sparkling amid the meadows, and wild birds singing in all the trees; and yet along that beautiful road we went sorrowful and weeping, because we were going to a funeral, to the grave of a dead relative and friend. And this shows you that to make a road pleasant it must,

Fifthly, have a pleasant end, *i. e.*, you must be passing over it to something you want to see very much or love very much—a splendid city or beautiful garden or happy home. And this, my dear children, is what, most of all, makes the text's way of holiness so unspeakably pleasant. The text says, "*The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion.*" Zion, you know, was the name of the highest hill in Jerusalem, from which, at length, the whole city was called Zion. As applied to the Jewish captives, it meant that the highway through the desert was delightful, because over it they were returning to their beloved homes in that splendid city—Jerusalem. But as applied to ourselves, Zion means the Heavenly Jerusalem. And so the text tells us that it is a happy thing to be a Christian, because a Christian is going to heaven.

Now, you all know where the impenitent and ungodly go; for God tells us they shall have their eternal abode in that dreadful place prepared for the devil and his angels. And no matter how charming the road is, it can not be pleasant to go over it. But the Christian is going to heaven. And oh, what a glorious place

heaven is! A city that shines like the sun, whose outer-walls are built of brilliant stones, such as rubies and sapphires; whose gates are each a great and precious pearl; whose houses are all palaces built of pure gold, through which flows a beautiful river of the water of life, clear as crystal, with its banks shaded by trees of life, which bear twelve kinds of fruit, and have ripe fruit every month, where Jesus dwells, and the shining angels, and our dear Christian friends and parents and brothers and sisters who are dead, wearing glistening raiment white as snow, and having golden harps in their hands and glorious crowns upon their heads; a world so beautiful that no painter ever painted and no child ever dreamed of anything so lovely. Heaven! Heaven! oh, what a glorious place it is! And therefore we say that a Christian walks a pleasant way, for it leads him to heaven.

And now we shall not preach to you much longer. These are the reasons why the road to heaven is pleasant. It is a good road, which God made for little children to walk in. It is a safe road. In it a little child will not fall off the precipices of sin, nor be torn in pieces by the roaring lions of Satan. It lies through a pleasant country; for though earth is a wilderness, God makes it to good children, as the text says, to bud and blossom as the rose. It is traveled in pleasant company, for all good people go in it and the shining angels go with them, to guide and guard them. And it leads to a blessed dwelling-place—a city with foundations, whose builder and maker is God. All these things would make any road pleasant; and so my text tells you that all who walk in this road are happy. “*The ransomed of the Lord*

shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads ; they shall have joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

And now, dear children, what I want you to do is to walk in this highway of holiness toward that glorious home, *i. e.*, we want you to be Christians, to repent of sin, to love and trust Jesus, and to be just such good children as God's Word describes. All Christians are going to heaven. I hope your father and mother and brothers and sisters are going there. Some of you, perhaps, have no father or mother. We hope they are there in heaven waiting for their dear children. And we are certain that if you give your hearts to God, and live and serve Him, you will go to Him ; and then life will be so pleasant, and its end so glorious. It will be just as my text describes it, like the return of the Jews from captivity. They have been exiles in that far country, far away from their beloved Jerusalem, and when God prepared a way for their return, then they went happily, with flashing eyes and bounding feet, filling the air with their singing voices. "*Returning to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.*" And when they reached the hills that surrounded Jerusalem, and looked down upon that most magnificent of landscapes, the whole multitude of pilgrims broke forth into song in some of their inspired Psalms. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God in the mountain of His holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mt. Zion, the city of the great king. Walk about Zion, mark her bulwarks, consider her palaces. Praise ye the Lord. Praise Him in His sanctuary. Praise Him in the

firmament of His power." Thus literally they did "*return to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.*" They did have "*joy and gladness,*" and "*sorrow and sighing*" did "*flee away.*"

And so will it be with you if you will go with us to Him. All the way through the wilderness you will be good, happy, singing children. Your life will be like John Bunyan's Christian in the "*Pilgrim's Progress.*" And he tells us his path lay along the Delectable Mountains, where were gardens and orchards and vineyards and fountains of water, and through the fair land of Beulah, where the sun shone day and night, and new flowers appeared every day on earth, and the sweet air was filled with the singing of birds, and Christian was joyous because of the presence of the shining ones and of the sight of the city which he saw builded of pearls and precious stones just beyond the dark river. Mt. Zion, the Heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable companies of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect," and whose journey ended most gloriously. For when he come to the gate of the city he was transfigured; his raiment shone like gold, and harps and crowns were given them. And when the gates opened to let them in, behold the city shone like the sun, and therein walked shining ones with palms in their hands, and there were those also which had wings, and cried, Holy! holy! holy is the Lord!

And as happy as Christian's will be your lives and your deaths if you go with us to heaven. And you will understand just what it means, this precious text of ours. And you will understand what this beautiful hymn means which your dear superintendent has had printed for you and we are now about to sing.

HEART ISSUES.

“Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.”—PROVERBS IV. 23.

We have here another of the marvelously terse, comprehensive, epigrammatic proverbs of that wisest of men, Solomon. There is in it material for a hundred discourses, and it can, of course, be considered only most cursorily and imperfectly in one. There are here three important things either expressed or implied.

I. A duty.

II. Its method, and,

III. Its motive. And,

First. Here is a duty enjoined, viz., a diligent keeping of the heart. The words Solomon here uses do themselves with sufficient clearness explain the duty. The Hebrews regarded the heart as the seat or centre not only of the physical, but as well of all intellectual, emotional, moral life—a palace wherein the soul, or self, sat enthroned over all its own passions and emotions and thoughts. The word “*keep*” implies both control and conservation. The inspired direction is to keep earnest watch and ward over those faculties of the understanding, affecting conscience and will, which make up human selfhood, and were regarded by the Hebrews as having their seat in the heart. The intellect must be kept in a state of constant discipline and development. The will must be kept in subjection to the reason. The affections must be guarded from all

unworthy or impure associations or contacts. The conscience must be kept ever both alert and enlightened. And, in short, intellect, will, affections, and conscience must all be docile as to a Heavenly Teacher, loyal as to a Divine Sovereign. Or, speaking of the synthesis of all these faculties or functions in a composite heart, that heart must be kept wakeful and active in life's true business, must be kept conscious of its own high destiny as essentially immortal, must be kept watchful and well armed as an immortal stronghold against all assaulting foes without it and all disguised traitors within, must be kept ever mindful of its own feebleness and danger, and therefore of its dependence upon Divine aid for happiness and life. This, simply and shortly, is the nature of the duty which Solomon enjoins in the comprehensive Hebrew proverb of "*keeping the heart.*"

But the exhortation goes farther. Not only must the heart be kept, but it must be kept "*with all diligence;*" or, as the Hebrew, "*Kept with all keeping,*" denoting an unintermitting, untiring, and intelligent circumspection and control. And this leads us to consider,

Secondly. The method of the duty. In order to any such wise and successful heart-keeping, there must be,

I. First of all, a thorough self-knowledge. If a man keeps a stronghold or city, he must understand well both its external dangers and internal resources and defences; and if one keep a heart, that heart must be an object of careful and constant study and inspection. The grand theme of all his thought, next to his Creator, must be himself. And yet it is amazing how little the great mass of mankind know of their own souls or selfhood.

So intensely, so almost exclusively hath this age become materialistic, that metaphysics is regarded as scarcely a living science, as, indeed, only a barbarous relic or effete fossil of the old scholasticism; and Phrenology or an outward examination or inward analysis of the material brain has taken very widely the place of true moral or mental Philosophy. The world is to-day more concerned with steam and electricity and magnetism than about the powers and processes of the human soul or spirit. The frivolous multitude understand far better the dress and adornments of the body and the edification and appointments of its dwelling-place than the mysterious powers and processes of the living spirit of which the body itself is only a living tabernacle; and the philosophic few are more concerned about Geologic-formations and Zoophytic developments than about the essence and operations of their own immortal souls. To the majority of men this day the veriest stranger in the world is their individual selfhood. And if by some spiritual magic the shadow, so to speak, of their own souls could be flung on some broad tablet or tapestry before them, it would fare with them as with the peasants of the Hartz Mountains, who, looking from the Brocken on the dark background of cloud, fled in terror from their own shadow, as from a monstrous spectre.

We know little of ourselves even mentally. If the atheistic scientist, who because of some physical resemblances argues man's con-naturality with the gorilla, could make excursion into the recesses of the human spirit, and study the essential and ineffable differences between the automatic material of instinct and the all-glorious spiritual construction and adjustments of intel-

lect, the mighty thought, the deathless affections, the ineffable aspirations which make up a living spirit, he would come forth at least with a self-respect, disclaiming all this relationship with the beast. I repeat it, men know little of themselves mentally, and even less of themselves morally. When the Prophet thought to foreshow unto Hazael the outworkings of his future life, the royal Syrian recoiled from the awful picture, and cried out indignantly, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do such things?" Alas! he knew not his own self. And, my brother, if I could take to-day a Divine lamp, and go down with you into the recesses of your own spirit, and show you, as in the light of God's countenance, the latent principles of evil that all unsuspected abide there; if I could walk with you through your own dark chambers of imagery, and fling a Divine illumination upon their furniture and adornments, upon the statuary that stand in their recesses and the pictures that are hung along their walls, then there is not one of you, the most outwardly moral and virtuous, who would not think himself wandering through some black cavern of demons, and flee from the awful revelation as from the terrible spectres of the dead.

Sure I am, that we are all lamentably deficient in self-knowledge; and sure I am, as well, that self-knowledge is the first necessity in a wise and thorough keeping of the heart. But important as it is, it is not the only thing, nor the main thing. It is, indeed, only preparatory to great active duty. Observe, therefore, that in order to any wise keeping of the heart, there must be,

Secondly. Vigorous and vigilant self-government. Having learned the power, propensities, and perils of

the soul, I must set myself with all the might that is in me, carefully to govern and guard it. I must watch it with all my might; and I must watch it always. Aware of traitorous impulses within, I must keep them in iron fetters. Aware of the tremendous adversaries without, I must meet them at every point and with invincible weapons. The man who thinks that these moral victories are to be won, like the guerdons of these holiday tournaments, without battle-axe or shield, and with ungrinded, pointless lances, egregiously mistakes the conditions of the combat. I have no space to set forth this thought fittingly, and I only advert to it thus briefly to show that without heavenly aid the thing is impossible. And therefore observe,

Thirdly. That he who would keep his own heart successfully and safely must seek for Divine succor and strength. And here you find the secret of the failure of all moral reforms that are without Godliness. They are attempts to keep fortresses wherein the very garrison are traitors, ever earnest and eager to admit the enemy, and they must fail, as they do, because success is simply impossible. The very self-knowledge and attempted self-control we have been considering are useful mainly as convincing us that the duty we are considering requires aid from on high. We must have God without us as One "in whom we live," and Christ formed within as the "Hope of Glory." And although when thus garrisoned and guarded, with the angels of God abiding in beauty and strength within the spiritual mansion, and chariots of fire, as around the old Prophet, filling all the mountains, then, I say, we can keep our own hearts, yet even then it must be done "*with all diligence.*" By

constant self-circumspection and self-control, the mind must be kept in a state of heavenly knowledge. The affections must be kept fixed on objects Divine and spiritual. The will must be kept humbly submissive to the Divine will. The conscience must be kept truthful and tender, as if in the very presence of God and in preparation for eternity. And thus, and thus only, active in our own work, yet depending on Omnipotence, not attempting to do God's part, nor expecting God to do ours, thus only can we hope to fulfill this inspired Proverb, and "*keep the heart diligently.*" And this brings us,

Thirdly and finally. To consider the great motive to the duty. "*For out of it are the issues of life.*" The language is metaphorical; the allusion is anatomically to the arteries in the body, which conduct the purified blood from the heart to the extremities, thus both preserving life and giving it strength to work out all its manifold ministries. And the point of the motive is, that, as thus considered, the heart is the fountain or mainspring of all moral action. Thoughts, purposes, words, actions, all originate in the heart, and to keep the heart right is to keep all life right, the whole world right.

It is impossible to exaggerate or over-color this solemn truth. Whatever evil there is in the universe is the result of sinful thought. It existed in the sinful heart before it took on its material form and was made manifest to the senses. And if you would understand what terrible things you are doing when, leaving your heart unkept, you seem to be doing nothing, then gather into some immense area all things that you call evil.

All those heathen temples, crowded with countless worshippers, screaming, frenzied, polluted, despairing, all dungeons of immorality, those dens of infamy, those hospitals of agony, those wheels and racks of inquisitorial torture, all those martyr stakes and flames, all those suicidal death-fires, that whole innumerable host of orphanage and widowhood, that hideous aggregate of want and wretchedness, that mortal ruin and immortal desolation, inspired by human cruelty, wrought out by human violence, those desolated cities and depopulated kingdoms and trampled and bloody battle-fields that have marked the track of the world's mighty conquerors; pile into one ghastly Golgotha all the throbbing hearts; gather into one horrible asphaltites all the blood and tears which man's wild passions have produced; bring up from the yawning grave all the bodies of earth's dead; bring back from the outer-darkness all the ghostly spirits of the self-destroyed; and over all that terrible panorama let God's tempests howl, and God's storm-clouds gather, and God's thunder-bolts flash; and as from some overhanging pinnacle you look down upon the scene, you will behold only the inspiration and issues of an unkept heart. All these things are but human thoughts revealed, only the out-flowing of black and bitter waters from the impure fountain within you. These all are the results of sin!

SIN!

But what is sin? A spiritual abstraction? Ah, no! no! no! Sin is but the quality of living creatures. What our philosophy speaks of as the grand, the sublime, the beautiful, the terrible, are not objective qualities of the material, but subjective qualities of the

spiritual. The grandeur of the mountain, the magnificence of ocean, the loveliness of landscape, the ineffable splendors of the firmament, are only emotions within the soul of the sentient spectator. The monstrous spirit of evil is not a fiery demon escaped from some far-away prison-house, but the evil thought of man issuing from his chambers of imagery. Imagine, then, this principle of evil, now unperceived, perhaps slumbering or latent within the heart of an infant, were to assume material form, and shut up in some great prison-house, and any one of you were appointed its keeper, the watch and ward of the demon that it should not go forth to work desolation and death through the universe, and would you dare to give sleep to your eyes or slumber to your eyelids? Would you not stand close up to the iron portal, your ear open to every sound from within, with strong right arm and unsheathed sword to drive back the escaping monster? Nay, distrustful of your strength, would you not summon mighty allies; yea, twelve legions of angels to aid your momentous watch? And yet in all this you would only be keeping an unsanctified human heart.

Nor, though the work be more grateful and joyous, yet not the less vigilant and earnest must be the keeping of the redeemed and sanctified spirit. While we remain in the flesh our experience be ever that of Paul—a law of the members warring with the law of the mind, and keeping us in captivity to the law of sin in the members. And our own work is to wrestle with it, “God, indeed, working within us both to will and to do.” Yet, on the whole, “with fear and trembling working out our own salvation.” Nor is it enough, for, indeed, it is not

anything to keep the outer man from overt evil. You may keep sleepless and strong watch over all your mortal members; you may keep the eye from sinful sights and your ear from syren voices; your hand from violence and your feet from falling; your tongue from idle words and all your outward life from infamy and pollution, and yet in all this you have not "*kept the heart with diligence.*" You have sweetened the stream, yet left the fountain bitter. You have shut the serpent closer in its den, and driven the lion farther into the desert, yet left them living monsters, as before—still lion and serpent. The heart, the whole living heart, the very indwelling soul, the immortal selfhood, this you may not be keeping; and verily this is a great work, and a glorious.

I have imagined you the keeper of the great principle of evil. Change the fancy again. Suppose God should create suddenly in the universe an infant archangel, and bringing it down to this world, appoint one of you its guardian, and He should say, "Behold here is a glorious creature essentially like Gabriel. Within that unfolding spirit are the burning affections, the ineffable energies, the all-glorious thoughts, the boundless aspirations, all the surpassing faculties and functions of archangelic life. Those pinions shall strengthen for as immense a flight; on that brow shall blaze as resplendent a diadem. Yonder in the metropolis of my universal kingdom await his coming. An archangel's palace and throne, an archangel's ministry and recompense of reward and tremendous responsibilities and stupendous destiny; and now into your hands I commit this young spirit, to be guided in safe paths and disciplined and developed for that grand and glorious future. Suppose God should

do that. Is there one of you; is there a mortal man on the earth who would dare accept the sacred charge and attempt the sacred culture? Would not your earnest cry be, "Oh, I cannot; I dare not. Who is sufficient for this great thing? Keep it. Keep it under Thine own sleepless eye, under the shadow of Thine own wings, oh, Lord God Almighty!" And yet this, just this, God does when he sets you to keep your own hearts. Yea, even more than this. "Know ye not," says Paul, "That ye shall judge angels?" Every redeemed man man is advancing to a destiny so surpassing all other created beings that the angels themselves are around him, guiding his footsteps, guarding his mid-day labors and his midnight slumbers, "bearing him up on their wings, lest he dash his foot against a stone," and presently carrying him, like the spirit of the poor man, from the rich man's gate to Abraham's bosom.

Oh thou redeemed one! Oh thou saved soul! Oh thou child of God! Oh thou joint-heir with Christ Jesus! have respect unto thyself. Who can tell you of the embryonic powers, faculties, affections, aspirations that are fast developing within thee? Of the mighty path you shall tread? Of the vast deeds you shall accomplish? Of the transcendent empires you shall rule "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality? Oh watchers over an immortal spirit! sleep not in the solemn watch. Oh guide and guard of a living soul! be faithful in your ministry. Oh redeemed disciple of Jesus! following His ascending footsteps unto heaven, "*Keep! keep! keep thy heart with diligence, for out of it, out of it, are the issues of life.*"

REAPING TARES.

"Didst thou not sow good seed? whence, then, hath it tares?"—
MATTHEW XIII. 27.

True religion is nothing more than sanctified common-sense. The wisest man who ever lived uses the word wisdom as a synonym for piety, and the Bible everywhere speaks of sin and error as identical, and calls a wicked man "a fool."

All that God requires of any man is to act in regard of spiritual things as common-sense would dictate in regard of natural things. And Christ was always insisting on this fact; every one of His parables teaches this. So in this parable its great point is, that good seed will produce good fruit. The servants of this householder were amazed beyond measure that this case seemed exceptional. Every thoughtful child knows that the fruit is always like the seed sown. And this is a truth just now which the world practically exhibits. Go into seed-stores, and you find them crowded with men anxiously enquiring about the best sorts of seeds for grains and grasses and fruits and flowers. Even little children are anxious about their flowers. And do not suppose for a moment that this is a truth which, even in its lowest literal application, does not concern you. If these men select bad seeds, every one of you will suffer. You will have bad bread, unwholesome vegetables, sour or bitter fruit, if these men are foolish. Certain we all are of the great truth that every seed

produces after its kind. All men of common-sense believe this and rejoice in it. The most ungodly man on earth is glad of it. If he should sow wheat in his field, and it produced tares ; if he should plant a lily-bulb, and it came up a cabbage ; if he were to set out a peach-tree, and the fruit were crab-apples, or even if the products were intrinsically better than the seed ; if desiring tobacco he should procure its seed, and the product be mignonette or honeysuckle ; if in need of acrid pepper he were to plant the most unsavory germ, and the growth prove delicious pine-apples, still the man in his disappointment would fill the air with angry expletives.

This development of seed after its kind is a great law of nature which common-sense delights in ; and yet it is just this law in relation to moral and spiritual things which the infidel and ungodly deny and even hate, and in this show their lack of common-sense, and prove themselves fools. If there be anything more than another which they abhor and execrate, it is the thought of a future retribution ; that God will reward every man according to his works. And yet, thoughtfully pondered, this whole thing is nothing else than this law of seed-growth carried into the sphere of the spiritual and immortal. The Scriptures everywhere represent future suffering, even carried to the extent of eternal punishment, not so much as an arbitrary infliction, but as a natural effect to evil-doers of a well-established law. It is simply leaving the soul in eternity to do what it everywhere is doing in time, "to eat of the fruit of its own way, and be filled with its own devices."

Now, I have just said that in regard of natural things men are glad of this law ; and even in regard of moral

and spiritual things in this world every man understands and acknowledges the justice and the wisdom, yea, the goodness of this law. It is obviously the grand ordinance of human life, under which all common-sense men work out their successes. They know that if a young man commit a single immoral act, he has begun a habit which will grow with his growth. He has sown an evil seed which will produce an evil harvest. They know that if by any wrong-doing to their neighbor they excite his indignation, they have planted a seed of hatred in a fruitful soil, that in the end will work them mischief. They know, in short, that every good emotion cherished in their own hearts, and every good deed exercised toward their neighbor, is the germ of a growth whose harvests will enrich them. And therefore in the spring-time and early summer of their life, with all the heedfulness of these men who select good seed for their gardens, they planted in their own moral nature germs of industry, frugality, temperance, fortitude, integrity, cheerfulness, courtesy, benignity; and now in the competency, respectability, peace, and gladness of a mature and successful life, they are only eating the fruits of their own doings, gathering the harvest of good seed producing its own kind.

Thus we all know and acknowledge the goodness of this law of development. We go forth in the world, instantly and almost instinctively acknowledging that all its good things and its evil things result from this law, as wheat and tares are the growth either of good seeds or of evil.

For generations, running back beyond all history, it may be to the Flood, tribes of men have lived here, and

thought and acted. But when discovered by the adventurous Genoese years ago, their moral and intellectual life had its true emblem in the monstrous growths of the inhospitable wildernesses and malarious jungles, upon which the eye of Columbus first looked. Wigwams and war-weapons, treachery, cruelty, savage manhood, enslaved womanhood, these were the foul, rank, horrible growths of thousands and thousands of years, just because evil giants of old time had sown tares in the field.

But then, thanks be to God, came an era of better culture. God's providence winnowed the garnerers of the old world for good seed, and shipped it in small vessels and little parcels over the unknown seas. William Penn came with the fine wheat to the Delaware; and Captain Newport landed with choice rice at Jamestown; and the weather-beaten Mayflower furnished the hardier grains on Plymouth Rock; and Hudson brought esculent plants into New York harbor. And the well-chosen seed fell into good ground, and brought forth good fruit. And though as we walk through the husbandry to-day we find in high places and in low, unseemly moral growths, which extort the very cry of the text, "*Didst thou not sow good seed in this ground? Whence, then, hath it tares?*"

Nevertheless, as we look on these growths of industry and enterprise and energy, these implements of peace which have supplanted the Indian war-clubs, and these fertile fields and beautiful homes and smiling hamlets and mighty cities, rising up where a century ago the red savage roamed and wallowed; we must see in it all only a grand illustration of the text's great law that

seeds produce after their kind, and rejoice that our earlier husbandmen sowed good seed in their fields.

I have no space to pursue further the illustration. Manifestly this is God's ordinance in the temporal. *We do reap as we sow.* And why, then, should we not expect it to be God's law, as well, in the spiritual and eternal? Certain we are, this is God's law of retribution; and while in respect to states and conditions of being the wicked and the good may receive different treatment, yet the very essence of the recompense will be ever the same. "They that sow to the flesh, reaping corruption. They that sow to the spirit, reaping life everlasting."

Now, what our text leads us to do is to accept this law as a settled, steadfast, inexorable ordinance of the Almighty God, and live under it as men of practical common-sense; to choose our seed well, in view of the fact that we must reap as we sow.

I. In regard of our natural harvests, which ripen every year, not to sow thistle-seed in our garden, nor plant wild-grapes in our vineyard. And as it takes no more labor to raise good than bad, to select the best.

II. In regard of our moral harvests, which come only once in a life-time, to take heed that in our individual acts, which become so soon settled habits, either habits of industry, economy, honesty, temperance, purity, benevolence, which render manhood respectable and old age happy; or habits of indolence, sensuality, dishonesty, malignity, which render the whole after-life only a trembling bondage to Satan, and in the end bring to want and infamy, a despairing death-bed and an execrated grave; in regard of all these temporal interests

we choose the germs which are to give shape and color to our whole earthly life with the common-sense of a gardener when he trades with these seed-merchants.

III. And above all, assured alike from philosophy and revelation that this great law of God must reach into higher and immortal spheres, and that eternal retribution is only the eating the fruits of our own earthly doings, and that throughout the immense cycles of the after life, "He that hath sown unto the flesh shall reap corruption, and he that hath sown unto the spirit shall reap life everlasting;" that, assured of this, I say, we choose wisely the seed we sow in our spiritual fields.

This, of course, is the main and momentous application of the text's great principle. Oh that God would give power to His own parable! Seeds! Seeds! ah, me! what wonderful things they are. That small, dark, insignificant grain which a butterfly's wing might sweep away from a lily's cup, yet embosoms a splendid flower, which puts to shame the imperial glory of Solomon. That brown acorn, which a spring-sparrow lifts in its little bill, becomes presently a giant oak; and the beasts and birds for generations build nests in its branches, and rejoice in its shadow.

Seeds! Seeds! Oh to a prescient eye what possibilities, what realities, what colors of beauty, what shapes of majesty, what glorious hopes, what ineffable fruitions, are embodied in a seed! And analogous to this, but immeasurably more wonderful, are the embryonic powers, which in the form of thoughts, emotions, passions, are embodied in the moral germs we are daily sowing in our own immortal souls.

And in this regard all this mortal life is spring-

time, and we are all alike sowers. There is a pitiful misrepresentation ; there is a foul slander ; nay, there is most cruel and destructive heresy in the popular pulpit declamation that these sinful men and women are living only for the passing moment, and that it is only the true Christian who lives for eternity. No ! no ! no ! We are all of us, and equally, living for eternity. The child amid flowers, the youth in the dance, the merchant on change, the sailor on the sea, the proud man walking scornfully through the crowd, the vain man riding in his blazing chariot, and the poor beggar who asks alms in the street, and the polluted outcast that wallows in kennels ; these as verily as God's angels are living and acting for eternity, all alike, as the husbandman in spring-time, selecting and sowing seed, seed.

We are all alike giving shape and character and condition to our whole immortal after-life. We are projecting the plan and working at the specifications and preparing the material of the houses that yonder in the spirit sphere we shall inhabit forever. Our earthly thoughts and imaginations and emotions are only the moral pictures we are working upon the canvass and the statuary we are chiseling out of the adamant, which either in horrible art shall deform or in heavenly beauty shall glorify our immortal chamber of imagery.

The impenitent and ungodly man, in the selfish, malignant, impure passions he is cherishing in his bosom, is rocking the cradle of foul fiends that forever stalk through the darkened and desolate palace of his soul, as the doleful creatures through death-caverns of Petra, only to terrify and torture ; while the contrite, penitent, believing soul that has taken Christ as its Saviour in all

those heavenly affections it is developing and strengthening, is giving culture and beauty and glory to the very angels of God that shall cross the threshold, and sit down at the banquet, and chant their hallelujahs, and fling out all their glories in those high places in the heavenly mansions which the triumphant Christ hath ascended to prepare for those who love Him !

This, then, is our text's practical truth. This is the great, solemn, reverseless law of life, which makes time a probation and eternity retribution ; and yet which to the wise man seems almost the most joyous of all Divine ordinances. It is this very law which renders the spring-time so hopeful and gladdening. True it is, it hath no hope, and should bring no rapture either to the indolent man who will not plow by reason of the cold, or to the insane man who will sow only tares in his field. But to the wise man, going forth with good seed, every wild bird that sings in the wood hath come as a visiting angel, promising opening flowers for every garden, ripe fruit for every field.

And so is it with every soul wise for eternity. This law of retribution makes earthly life most precious. It crowds into every fleeting moment possibility of ineffable goodness and grandeur. It is the spring-time of the immortal. And ready-furnished to our hands are God's good seeds of salvation and eternal life, which with wise husbandry will make even this earthly experience fragrant and beautiful with all flowers of grace, and the heavenly life rich beyond all the aims of avarice, or glorious beyond the dreams of ambition, rapturous with all the ripe fruits of glory.

Oh that with a common-sense as careful of the spirit-

ual as of the natural, we would take counsel of the great Husbandman, and look well to our seeds! That youth would select those sorts that bring forth lilies and roses, and manhood such as fill the vineyards with purple clusters and the fields with golden grain. For then we should all go forth to this short and sometimes sorrowful earthly life as men go afield in these chill, cloudy, changeful April days, with eyes sparkling and feet bounding in the joyous inspiration of the Divine Law of our text that we shall presently eat of the fruits of our own doings, and that he who soweth good seed shall not gather tares.

OMNIPRESENCE.

"Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord."—JEREMIAH
XXIII. 24.

There is, perhaps, nothing upon which, as at once the instrument and the occasion of eloquence, men have dwelt more eloquently than the power and the perfection of human language; and yet, having reference to the great purposes which that language was intended to supply, there is, perhaps, nothing so poor and imperfect in the whole range of Divine instrumentalities. Even in the common intercourse of life, who has not felt its powerlessness and poverty? In a description of the every-day things of materialism, who has failed to perceive the advantage which the painter possesses over the wielder of the pen? Even from what poetic page do the living scenes of nature flash upon the soul as from the colored canvass? And if you turn from material forms to mental phenomena, how much more manifest in respect of them is the weakness of articulate language. Who has not felt in his own experience the utter powerlessness of words to express feelings? In the rush of overmastering emotions, excited by some marvel of the mental or some majesty of the material world, who has not felt the heart almost breaking within him in the all-in-vain attempt to communicate those emotions? Indeed, eloquence itself, in these lofty outbursts almost omnipotent in their sway over multitudes, has been not so much the eloquence of spoken words as the eloquence

of occasion and association, the unwritten eloquence of an inflamed soul speaking not so much upon the tongue as from the eye and the feature and the intense energy wherewith passion finds utterance in every muscle and movement of the human frame. We say, even in respect of earthly things, language is comparatively poor and powerless. And, then, in the conveyance of any just ideas of heavenly things how utterly worthless is it.

We read of a poor girl born blind, who, being of a passionate and poetic temperament, had feasted her heart upon those high-wrought and glowing descriptions of external nature which abound among the exaggerations of Oriental song, till she could talk wisely and with apparent understanding of trees and flowers and forests and fountains, yea, could discourse rapturously of those great lineaments of the natural world which were gathered round about her. She had formed within her mind distinct ideas of all those objects of which men gifted with vision talked so delightedly, and verily believed that as perfectly as those that beheld them from day to day she understood the character and the beauty and the glory of God's handiwork in the material world. There came, though, at last, to her home a foreign operator of great skill, and promised at small expense of suffering to remove the obstructions to her vision. A few days after the operation, the girl was led out from her darkened chamber to one of the loveliest landscapes of the Oriental world, and the veil and the bandage at once removed from her eyes, and her vision rested for the first time on that prodigality of grace and glory wherewith a bounteous God has decked the dwellings of our race. She stood for a moment bowed and overcome by

the resplendent vision. Then, breaking forth in language of lofty petition, prayed that if she were dreaming she might dream forever. She thought she was on earth; this was heaven. She wondered what had become of the world in which she had dwelt. Then, falling on her face, she prayed God to take away a little of that wondrous loveliness; so much glory would kill her. She understood then how poor a medium language is for conveying ideas of living things unto the soul. And all this most fully illustrates the powerlessness of human words to convey impressions of heavenly things unto the soul. Who of us has not sympathized with Paul when, after his rapture into the third heaven, he could only say of the glories which gathered round him, that he heard unspeakable words. And to us infinitely more eloquent of heaven's matchless splendors than all the visions vouchsafed unto John, was the silence of the Gentile Apostle, who, though his pathway lay through all the fearfulness of a martyr's death, yet yearned constantly to depart and be with Christ. Human language, we say, is utterly powerless to convey ideas of spiritual things; and I doubt not the first feeling of the enraptured spirit as it finds itself ushered into the sparkling beatitudes beyond the grave is that of bewildering wonder at the feebleness, yea, the utter unlikeness of its earthly conceptions of heaven.

Now, it is this poverty and powerlessness of human language in respect of spiritual things which renders theology so difficult a study, and all attempts to speak intelligibly of some of the Divine attributes utterly futile. Take Divine power, for instance. When I speak of that attribute as it exists in finite manifesta-

tions, my ideas are of efficiency overcoming resistance, so that always in my mind the thought of power is associated with the thought of some opposing difficulty. But how unlike all this must be the Divine attribute of omnipotence—that efficiency doing all things without effort, having in all the breadth of its great operations never a difficulty to overcome, “speaking and it is done,” “commanding and it stands fast,” saying, “Let there be light and there is light.” Or you may take what is perhaps the most difficult of comprehension in all the wonders of Deity—that Divine attribute spoken of in the text—the omnipresence of God. And who at the very annunciation of the passage does not feel how utterly inadequate is language to a setting forth of the quality?

To be omnipresent is to be everywhere at once. Not to be in one part of the universe, however important may be that part, and to be absent in some other part comparatively insignificant; not to be in one part of that universe now, and the next moment in some other part, passing in the speed of mighty travel from star to star and from system to system, but to be, at this very instant of time, actually here and actually in the loneliest island of the far-away sea, and actually in the remotest star that twinkles in the remotest firmament of heaven; and yet not to be omnipresent in the sense in which an atmosphere is—a part of it here and a part of it in the cavern of some distant mountain, and a part of it traveling over the waters of some far-away sea; for to ascribe extension to the Divine essence would be to materialize Deity, for that which is extended has parts, and that which has parts is not spirit. But to be omni-

present in such a sense that with all His attributes and all His essence, indeed, with His whole person, God is here this moment as verily as I am here. And with all His essence God is this moment in the farthest point of our wide world; and with all His essence God is at this moment in the loftiest portion of the remotest heaven. Now what, I pray you, more than the veriest whisperings of idiocy can the loftiest language avail in an illustration of such an attribute? Indeed, imagination itself, in its mightiest graspings, can not overtake the vast thought; and where imagination is at fault what is all the power of language? Who, even in contemplation of the attribute, does not feel as he of Uz felt? Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come near unto His seat. But I go forward and He is not there, and backward, but I can not perceive Him. Therefore am I troubled at His presence; when I consider I am afraid of Him. And where lives the man, though he had an angel's vision and an angel's tongue, who in attempting to discourse upon Divine Immensity would not feel as David felt in a like endeavor, confessing his impotence, and at the same time putting upon the attribute its very finest illustration when he cried out in the depth of his humility, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high; I can not attain unto it."

We have seen that language can not embody many an idea in itself perfectly comprehensible by the intellect. And what, then, has language to do even in an attempted embodying of those thoughts that burden and overbear the mind of a finite in its struggles to comprehend the infinite. For ourselves, my brethren, we attempt no

such task to-day. The philosophy of the Divine Omnipresence we leave to be pondered in the broad pupilage of eternity. It is simply with the Divine Omnipresence as a theological fact that we would engage your attention this morning. There are several, and all in themselves satisfactory proofs of the omnipresence of God. Some of these are, indeed, of too subtle and metaphysical a character to be easily apprehended, though on this account they are in no degree less certain and convincing. We confine ourselves to two or three more common-place and of less difficult comprehension.

First. And first we infer the fact of the Divine Omnipresence from the perfections of the Divine Nature. The fundamental truth of theism is, that every conceivable perfection belongs to God. As Abraham said in reference to injustice, so Faith says of everything tending in the least to diminish the Divine glory—"This be far from thee." But we feel at once that that limitation of nature whereby a creature is confined to a certain place at a certain time is an imperfection. And of two creatures, in other respects equal, that is by far the most glorious the velocity of whose movements enable it to be in two different places at the slightest interval of time. So that you will never arrive at the idea of entire perfection on this point till you ascribe unto a Being the capacity of being everywhere at the same moment. And setting out with the assumption that God is a Being in respect of attribute and essence absolutely perfect, you cannot for one moment conceive Him as being separated from any part of the universe or any point of immensity. To regard His essence as circumscribed by any boundaries, however mighty, would be to

ascribe to Him in some degree creature imperfections. And thus from a simple consideration of the being of a God, the question of the text comes along with all the evidence of a felt fact. "*Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.*"

Secondly. Now, the same truth will be apparent, if instead of the Divine essence, which is but another name for the aggregate of the Divine attributes, you consider those attributes individually. Every consistent believer in the Divine existence regards every one of these attributes as absolutely infinite in perfection; so that in the opinion of sound theism to say that God is infinite in wisdom and holiness and justice and power is only to say that God is God. But to declare of the same Being, that He is infinite in perfections, yet finite in nature, involves a manifest contradiction and absurdity, since it is to suppose a person to be finite and infinite at the same time. And beside all this, infinity of essence is absolutely necessary to any efficient operation of the Divine attributes; for although it is not for man to understand the mode of the Divine existence, nor the method of Divine operations, yet it is a principle having in the human mind all the force of a felt truth, that nothing can operate where it does not exist. By a figure of speech I know that we may say of some master-mind, that it is influencing the world while itself confined to one place; or of some mechanical power, that, while applied only at one point, it is operative in every part of a complicated machinery; yet in neither case is our language strictly true. It is the product of the mind, and not mind itself, that is influential in the one case; and it is the transmission of the power, and not

the power itself, which is operative in the other case. And to suppose that Divine operations are carried on by means of any such borrowed or transmitted efficiency is manifestly to ascribe human imperfections to the character of God. To say, therefore, that God is infinitely wise and provident and powerful is to assert most clearly the infinite presence of God. That you may perceive more clearly the force of this argument we will apply it to a single Divine attribute, *e. g.*, the power of God, showing that if God be everywhere efficiently powerful, God must be everywhere essentially present.

Thirdly. We remark, then, in the third place, that the omnipresence of God may be proved from the works of God. Take, for instance, the work of Creation—the making of all things out of nothing instantaneously, so that at the breathing of a word in a moment there sprang into being all that stupendous system of worlds that move in the broad fields of immensity. These were all the at-once creation of Almighty power. But what is Almighty power? Not, surely, a mere quality of God distinct from the essence of God; but that essence itself in exercise. So that Divine omnipotence is nothing else than God Himself working. And therefore, as creation in its whole extent was an instantaneous production of God's power, God must at that very instant have been absolutely present at every point of that creation's amplitude.

Now, just the same force of argument under another aspect may be gathered from a consideration of the preservation or providential government of the universe subsequent to its creation. Reason and revelation alike teach us that the only efficient power whereby the great

movements of materialism are carried out and modified is Divine power. To suppose that after its creation the universe was left to take care of itself, and that all its multiform movements are nothing more than the results of its own inherent properties, is to contradict reason, which ascribes inertia, or utter powerlessness, as the substratum property of matter, and is to contradict the Bible, which everywhere ascribes providence to the alone agency of God, and is, verily, to utter the foulest blasphemy by supposing creation independent of its Creator, thus implying that were Deity actually annihilated, there would occur no interruption in the movements of materialism. The simple fact is, that what philosophy calls laws of nature are not powers in themselves operative, but simply processes of Divine operation. So that in whatever portion of the universe we discover proofs of an operative agency—as in the motion of the elements, in the growth of vegetables and animals, in any movement of materialism, yea, in any one of the ten thousand processes of mind—there do we perceive a direct and immediate forth-putting of the power of God. But no agent and no power of an agency can act where that agent is not; and therefore if God acts everywhere, the conclusion is unavoidable that God must be everywhere.

We have, then, in this point nothing more to do than to appeal to your own senses, remembering that wherever you see a process of nature you see a direct forth-putting of Divine power; so that in the growth and blossoming of every flower you behold the Eternal One just then actually busy with the implements of artisanship, hollowing its tubes and chiseling its stature and coloring with a magic pencil its enameled leaves; and whenever you

behold ocean rousing itself in awful grandeur you just then behold the Eternal One tossing the waters in His matchless strength ; and whenever you behold a cloud floating away in the upper heaven through the abysses of space, just then do you behold the God-guided chariot wherein the Eternal One rideth abroad ; yea, whenever you behold any movement of materialism, just then do you perceive a positive demonstration of the then and there absolute presence of the living God. Remembering this, we say, and you have but to look ever so carelessly abroad unto the world within or around or above you to perceive as a felt truth the Divine Omnipresence. For where, I pray you, in all the breadth of the universe, is the spot where as an operative agent God may not be found ? Go to the loneliest desert of the Eastern World, where vegetation lies withering under the consuming heat, yet in the sunbeams that break around and the reptile that crawls beneath and the clouds that wander through the heavens above you, ye behold the demonstration of the presence of God. Descend into those deepest caverns of earth, where geology has never ventured, and though for thousands of years not a living voice has startled the echoes of their awful vaults, yet in the water drop that oozes through the fissured rock and the crystal radiance of the jeweled roof you behold the living manifestation of a present God. Fathom the great depths of ocean—down, down, where the plummet sounds not and the light of day struggles with a faint and a ghastly gloom, and even there, in waters teeming with organic life, will you perceive the great God busy at His work. Go down into the awful receptacle of the dead, and the worm that feedeth on the fes-

tering lip whispers of God. Come up into the living and lovely world, and in everything that hath life or breath or motion you see God efficiently present. Lay your hand upon your heart; you perceive only the finger of God busy in its every pulse. Behold the sparkling of that sunbeam; God is just now busy with its beautiful materialism. Listen to that whisper of the wind; God is busy there. Look abroad over these hills; God is at work just now with their snowy garniture. Send up your vision to the heavens above. The great sun. Yesternight he went down pillowed amid golden clouds; and never had he risen again to his broad journeyings had not God been there to rouse him with His mighty voice, and gird him anew for his giant travel. The stars of heaven, so vast in their materialism and so innumerable in their multitudes and so fearful in their rushing velocity, yet each one rounded into beauty and guided in immense travel and preserved unharmed amid the vast mechanism of the heavens just because the Almighty God dwelleth there busy in all the assiduity of His unlimited love in the superintendence of its every process and its every power. And oh! if you could take the wings of the morning, and flee away through the depths of heaven unto those remoter firmaments, the starlight of whose richer glory has never struggled through the overwhelming intervals of separation unto the human eye; should you alight there on the feeblest star of the farthest constellation, and sit yourself down in the loneliest spot of the smallest and most desolate island that dots the expanse of its oceans, still there, even there, in the varied movements of materialism and the processes of organic life would you behold the visi-

ble workings of a present Deity. And if there be in that world, as in ours, spring-time, with its beautiful creations, then ever in that farthest point of creation's outskirts would you behold the Eternal One busy with all His omnipotence in rounding the dew-drops and penciling the lily's leaf and feathering the wing of the tiniest insect and gathering the lineaments of the radiant landscape into one glorious panorama of loveliness and life.

Where, then, we ask you again, where, I pray you, in all the breadth of the universe is the spot where as an operative agent God may not be found? Where is the solitude so lonely that no insect creeps there? Where is the desert so dreary that no green thing breathes there? Where is the depth so profound that therein nature has no processes? Where is the firmament so remote that no star sparkles there? Yet wherever you find these, there you find God. There is no solitude that He does not fill, and no creature that He does not sustain, and no movement that He does not originate, and no world that He does not control. * So that you have but to actualize the sublime conceptions of the Psalmist to ascend up into heaven, and make your bed in hell, and taking the wings of the morning dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; and finding, as you would find, in all the breadth of this mighty journeying no world so lost or no spot so lonely that therein you would not stand surrounded and overborne by the amazing witness unto a present God; and you will perceive how there goes along the force of a felt fact with the sublime questioning of God unto the Prophet—"Am I a God at hand? saith the Lord, and not a God afar

off? Can any one hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.”

Now, of the reflections, abundant and interesting, which press upon us in the winding-up of these remarks, we confine ourselves to two.

First. And we remark, in the first place, that the doctrine of Divine omnipresence is a doctrine fraught with the tenderest consolation unto the Christian. Through whatever scenes of grief or of gladness may lie his pathway, he is in the constant presence of a friend, yea, of a Father; and when he riseth at day-dawn, or slumbereth in the night watches, or standeth wearied in the market-place, or wandereth in loneliness apart in the wilderness, at home or abroad, at sea or on shore, he is side by side with his omnipotent Helper, and he can weep no tear that God sees not, and breathe no sigh that God hears not, and utter no prayer that God regards not; and though dangers may beset him and difficulties environ and darkneses envelop, still nothing can separate him from the love of God. He may be sorely beset with temptations, and his flesh and his heart may fail him, yet the Lord of hosts will stand at his right hand, a shield and a buckler. He may be in want, and his little ones may look up complainingly from their scanty raiment and their rude food, yet in all the glory of His radiant presence shall the Eternal One enter his lowly threshold and sit at his humble board, and those cottage walls shall so shine out with the resplendent visitations of Godhead, that out of that coarse bread and that cruse of water there shall be wrought the elements of a banquet of which the highest

archangel would rejoice to partake. Yea, and dangers mightier may environ him. God's enemies may gather in strength, and lord it over human destinies; and there may be the opening of dungeons, and the binding on of fetters, and the screwing of the enginery of torment, and the kindling up of the fires of martyrdom, yet as amid the fierce flames of the Babylonian death-fires there walked one in form like unto the Son of God, so there shall gather no danger around the believer which his Maker shall not share and soften. Let the tear start; a tender hand shall be there to wipe it. And let darkness gather; the "Light of the World" shall be there to irradiate. And let dungeons be opened, yet the God who feeds the raven will be there. And let the death-fires kindle, yet the God who clothes the lilies will be there.

Second. Our second remark is, that this doctrine is an awful doctrine unto the unbeliever. My beloved out of Christ, ye think thoughts and commit acts daily that ye would not for the world the dearest friend ye have on earth should know. Many an hour have you retired into your secret chambers, and drawn the curtains carefully to shut out human eyes, and there in the commission of secret sins, ye would have been fearfully terrified had ye heard the wing of a visiting angel on the air of that chamber, or a brother's footfall as it paused beside you. You thought yourselves alone. Oh! you were mistaken. God was there. Never have you so betaken yourself unto solitude, or enveloped yourselves in darkness, or gathered around you the sheltering of so deep a security, but there stood close by your side, girt about with the glory of omnipotence, the God

of heaven. Do what you will, and flee where you will, and shelter yourselves as you will, and rejoice, if you will, that in secrecy and in solitude you have shut out the eye of each human witness, yet be you certain as there is a heaven above you, that an omniscient eye will be on you. God rideth upon the wing of the wind ; He will overtake you. God hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm ; and mightily through barrier and bolt and bar He will force entrance into your solitude and sit down beside you, and fix His stern eye on you, and every action will He look upon, and every word will He hear, and every thought will He remember. If you had the wisdom of an archangel you could not baffle Him ; and if ye had the wing of an archangel you could not escape Him ; and if you had the might of an archangel you could not withstand Him.

“Ascend into heaven, He is there.” “Descend into hell, He is there.” Behold ! even now, right by your side standeth God. When you go away hard-hearted to-day, God will walk with you. When you lie down on your prayerless pillows to-night, God will be there by your bedside. He will be with you in life. He will be with you in death. He will be with you at the Judgment. He will be with you through eternity. Think of it ! Oh, think of it ! God everywhere a God ! Everywhere omnipotent, everywhere an enemy to the unbeliever.

OMNIPOTENCE.

"Be still, and know that I am God."—PSALM XLVI. 10.

Every truth has a twofold aspect, and is either alarming or consoling as we stand related to it. It is so of all natural truth. The law of gravitation, so rejoiced in by the wise man, who adjusts all his doings to its conditions as that which works out all the harmonies of the universe, becomes terrible to the foolish man, who stands carelessly in the path of the avalanche or sports on the crumbling verge of a precipice. The law of combustion, which so cheers and blesses us as we sit by pleasant firesides, startles and affrights when a midnight conflagration kindles in our dwelling. So of all truth in nature, and so, especially and more impressively, of every revealed truth. Every attribute of God is like the old Shekinah, having a side of glory and a side of gloom, a gladdening light unto obedient Israel, but a terrible darkness unto rebellious Egypt. And every utterance or oracle of the Divine Voice is alarming or encouraging according to the relation we sustain to God, either as His enemies or His children. So it is of our text. The grand truth it teaches has obviously in its connections this twofold application. This Forty-sixth Psalm is sublimely dramatic. It is one of those battle scenes which the heroic genius of the earlier Hebrew delighted to depict as best exhibiting the interposal of Jehovah in delivering His people. They represent all kingdoms of the world in terrible and over-

whelming array against Zion. "The heathen rage."
"The rulers take counsel, and kings set themselves
against the Lord and against His Anointed." "Israel
is in dismay." "The sorrows of death compass Zion."
"In her distress she calls upon her God and He hears
her cry."

Then comes the Divine interposal: "He bows the
heavens, and comes down, and darkness is under His
feet. Before Him goes the pestilence, and burning
coals break out at His feet. There goes up smoke out
of His nostrils, and fire out of His mouth devours. He
stands and measures the earth. He beholds and drives
asunder the nations. He dashes them in pieces as a
potter's vessel. The everlasting mountains are scattered,
the perpetual hills bow, the sun and moon stand still in
their habitation. He maketh wars to cease on the earth.
He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear insunder.
He burneth the chariot in the fire. He dashes them in
pieces as a potter's vessel. Such the stupendous mani-
festation in behalf of Zion.

And now over all that terrible scene flames out the
Divine glory. On the one hand, all the wreck of
ungodly nations, the shattered chariots, the trampled
armies, the disgraced banners, the awful carnage, the
waters roaring, the mountains shaking with the swelling
thereof, the earth melting. On the other, a river whose
bright and peaceful streams make glad the City of God
—the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.

And just at this point comes in the text. It is the
awful voice of God sounding out from the Throne.
"*Be still, and know that I am God.*" And I repeat it.
It has, like all appearances and utterances of God, a

twofold significance and seeming. To God's enemies in their dismay how terrible! "*Be still, and know that I am God.*" To God's people in their assured trust how tender! "*Be still, and know that I am God*"—your Omnipotent Saviour.

The great truth taught here is the power and presence and presidency of the infinite and everlasting God. And the thought we are considering, the different aspects of this truth as we stand related to it.

First. To the enemies of God it is simply terrible. For they stand, as these enemies of Zion, in actual rebellion against Him. This whole world of idolatrous and infidel ungodliness hates the high and holy Jehovah. They hate His righteous laws. They hate His hallowed ordinances. They hate His very being; and the cry of their rebellious heart is, "No God! no God!" Let anything else create and control it—chance, fate, necessity, cold natural law, tremendous physical force, any other form of resistless and despotic sovereignty; but we will not have God. So they are setting themselves to disprove His very being, to deny His providence. They will have natural powers to create, and terrible chance to control them. And if He should come forth from the thick clouds, and reveal His Omnipotent Kingship, then there would be war against Him on the earth, as there was war against Him in heaven, a rush on the bosses of His buckler, a gathering together to cast down His Throne.

But while God does not thus appear as visibly objective to His enemies, that enmity has been as positive and direct against His chosen people. The mightiest powers of this world have set themselves against His

Church. The Egyptians enslaved her. The Canaanites assaulted in the exodus. The Assyrians led her away captive. The Persians oppressed her. The Philistines sorely smote her. The Romans burned her glorious City, demolished her kingdom, and scattered her people over all the earth. And later, under her new Gospel dispensation, the world hath all along hated her, and still hates her without cause. Atheistic science and infidel philosophy are yet in angry league against God and His Anointed. Now, I say, it is in this direction and unto all this enmity that our text speaks terribly.

“Be still, and know that I am God.” “Be still.” “Be still.” Cease your warfare with Jehovah. Where? where are the powers that have in olden times hardened themselves against Him, and prospered? Where are Egypt and Assyria and Philistia and Persia and Babylon and Rome? Verily the Prophet-bard’s was a Psalm of truth. “Let the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things, and the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against God and against His Anointed, saying, We will break their bands asunder. We will cast away their cords from us.” “Yet He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh. He will break them with a rod of iron. He will dash them in pieces as a potter’s vessel. Verily if there be a truth written terribly in all the annals of the past, it is that none that set themselves against God have prospered.” And the same truth holds still. Sin in any form is a transgression of God’s law, and thus insures its own destruction.

Let a man or a school or a nation or a world be assured that they are doing a wrong thing, and they are

assured as well that they are in the way of destruction. The whole world may be with them, yet with God against them they are in the weakest minority. And a man flung from some lofty tower might as well struggle on the thin air against the law of gravitation, as one fighting against God hope to escape His righteous Judgments. This, I say, is the text's first application. It is a voice from heaven, ringing out over all this boastful array of sin and transgression as with a voice of many waters and mighty thunderings, "*Be still. Be still, and know that I am God. I am God. I will be exalted.*"

But, then, this is not its only meaning, nor, indeed, its chief meaning. This truth is more manifestly the more glorious significance of God's loving kindness. Therefore let us consider,

Secondly. Its application to the people of God. This is, indeed, the general design of this whole matchless Psalm. It is an exquisite, logical argument for the saint's confidence in God. It begins with a setting forth of the grounds of this confidence in the simple relation God has with His people. "The Lord is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble." Therefore "we will not fear" in any circumstances or conditions of affliction or adversity. "Though the mountains be carried into the sea, *i. e.*, in prophetic symbolism; though the greatest and strongest kingdoms be utterly overthrown; "though the waters roar and be troubled and the mountains shake at the swelling thereof," *i. e.*, though multitudes of all the people of the world set themselves in array against the Church, "yet just because God is in her she shall not be moved."

This is the first reason—an apriori—from God's relation to His people, "What He will probably do for them."

Meantime, his argument is amazingly strengthened by all the past records of what God has positively done. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease. He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder," *i. e.*, all this ruin He hath wrought in the ranks of iniquity for the deliverance of His people.

(a.) And from God's personal presence with His people.

(b.) From His relation to His people.

(c.) From His past interposal in behalf of His people, he exhorts unto exalting confidence in Jehovah, yea, presumes to speak as in the very person of Jehovah. "*Be still.*" Be calm, trustful, joyful. "*Be still, and know that I am God,*" *i. e.*, be calm, serene, trustful; tremble not, nor be disquieted, because believing, knowing, that "*I am God;*" that whatever happens to you, even of seeming evil, comes not as a matter of chance, but positively and more or less directly as a Divine dispensation. Some things in our experience may seem to us strange, unwise, yea, even unkind, but this is only because of our finitude.

(a.) We judge partially. We see only a single part of the mighty machinery of providence; and just as an insect on a chariot-wheel, constantly revolving, so that he finds himself now up in the bright sunshine, and then down in the mire of the road; cognizant only of the rotary motion, so frets and scolds, not perceiving how not only the Imperial rider, but himself as well, are the while in rapid progress on some high mission;

so we, incapable of seeing but part of God's ways, pitifully complain of them.

(b.) We judge prematurely. God works in long times and in circles of immense sweep; and we in our impatience judge of His half-accomplished purposes. As if a flower seed, conscious of the latent life within, which gave promise of development into a splendid blossom, when first cast into the dark ground, and decaying in its outer shell, should cry out, "Alas for this burial, even unto death under the clods of the valley!" So we, looking only at God's half-finished work, find fault with the process, and thus and otherwise partially, or prematurely, or from many stand-points, or most selfishly, misjudge and misinterpret and fail to see our Father's hidden purpose of love in our daily experience. And to us, therefore, in joyful consolation comes, as to the troubled Psalmist amid all the fierce assaults of enemies, and above all the awful clangor of the battle, yea, out of the very tempest that works the wild waters into wrath, and the earthquake that shakes down the mountains, that voice of tenderest love, "*Be still, Be still, and know that I am God.*"

Be assured that whatever happens to a true child of God is just the wisest and best thing that could possibly happen. The darkest and most direful dispensations of providence, the most tremendous upheavals of all civil and social life; as David puts it, "The mountains shaking, the waters roaring, yea, the earth removed, the mountains carried into the midst of the sea." Yet out of all the terrible chaos and convulsions breaks a Divine voice of tenderest consolation, and the heart finds in God "its refuge and strength, and rests joy-

fully, as in the City of God, ever made glad by the streams of a bright river," and lifting up ever faith's trustful cry, "Though the earth be removed, yet we will not fear," because knowing that even in this marching through the land in indignation God's going forth is only for the deliverance of His people. Who wonders that Luther in his hours of peril, facing death, would say, "Brother Melanchthon, let us read the Forty-sixth Psalm, and then earth and hell may do their worst with us.

This, I say, is the text's lesson of consolation unto all who trust God. Even these tremendous interposals of omnipotence "are for the deliverances of His people; as David puts it afterward, "Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him;" as Isaiah even more tenderly, "As one whom his mother comforts, so shall ye be comforted in Jerusalem." Oh matchless symbolism of love! The child sleeping in some solitary chamber is roused from his sweet dream to find the dwelling shaking around him in the terrible tempest. He is deafened by the crashing thunder, blinded by the glaring lightning, and cries out in fear. And now upon his quick ear a sound of gliding feet; and to his affrighted thought it must be the terrible spirit of the storm. Nearer and nearer those gliding footsteps; it seems young Eliphaz's experience—"A spirit passing before the face;" and he could not discern the form thereof. There was an image, and silence and fear came upon him, and trembling." But now close by that little trembler that footstep pauses, and now a voice is heard, not a spectre's ghostly voice, but a voice well-known and beloved in its tenderness. A father's

voice, a mother's voice, says cheerily, "*Be still.*" "Be not afraid. It is I. It is I." And what of the child now? Where is fear and anguish? Do not his eyes flash? his heart bound as he grasps that outstretched hand, springs to that loving bosom, and then, even amid the tempest, sinks again to repose?

And just so is it with the Eternal One. In this mortal life, in this dark earthly chamber, where I await the breaking of the immortal morning, thick shadows of the mortal night gather round me, tempests sometimes roar, lurid lightnings glare, and sometimes in distressing and disastrous providences I hear the foot-fall as of some Mighty One, and to me, too, as unto him in Teman, an awful spirit seems passing by, and I cry out with fear. But then out of the gloom and the turmoil of elements a voice sweet, gentle, well-known, beloved, "*Be still, my child; be not afraid. It is I. It is I.*" "*Be still, and know that I am God.*"

And now the gloom distresses me not, nor the wild war of elements, nor the fall of mighty footsteps walking on the wings of the wind. But I turn me to my rest again at the blessed utterance, "*Be still, and know that I am God.*"