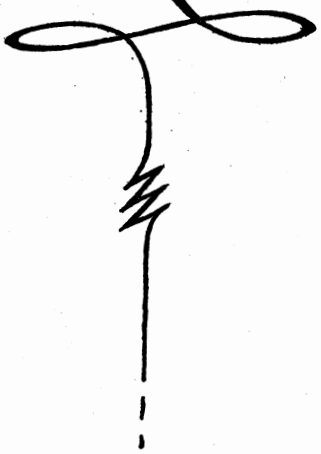
Some Writings of F. B. Robison



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by
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F. H. Robison

FOREWORD

THE ARTICLES herein presented are only a portion of those writings which the author would have published had life and opportunity been granted him. In giving them to the public in this form we are certain that we are in harmony with his wishes. Nevertheless, we keenly realize our inability to do the work as he would have done it. These writings cover a period of twenty-five or more years of his mature life, during which time his study of the Word of God led him to a clearer understanding of the purpose and ways of God. Could he have supervised their publication, doubtless, he would have revised some of his earlier utterances to bring them into conformity with his growing apprehension of Christ and the scope of His redemptive work.

Therefore, this booklet is not sent forth as a perfect representation of the views of the author in his later years, but because it was felt that no change could be made without doing violence to his treatment of the various subjects. Some have been greatly blessed in re-reading these articles and they are published with the prayer that they may reach many who will value them not only because of their esteem for the author, but for their own intrinsic worth.

Little need be said of his personality and devoted life, as probably most of those who will read these pages knew him well. For those who may not have had that privilege, we believe that what he has written speaks

for him in language better than ours. We would only add that no matter what his circumstances or trials, he always had a ready smile and word of cheer or comfort for those with whom he came in contact, because he lived very close to the Source of true love and joy and peace.

A reader says: "In his article on 'Love and Friendship' Brother Robison is describing an ideal which, by his natural endowment and spiritual vision, he was to a rare degree fitted to see and, best of all, an ideal to which he closely attained. Few have his large capacity for unaffected love and selfless friendship. I promise myself a frequent reading that I may feel, I will not say its humanizing, but its sweetening and gracious influence on my own mind and heart.

This influence is vitalized by my recollection of the writer as one of those too rare saints whose words are not belied by their deportment. The spirit of Christ was manifested by our brother even while he suffered at the hands of those he had long regarded as true friends. His heart was so "at leisure from itself" that he could speak with a kindly appreciation of the better qualities of those who misrepresented and injured him. Other articles presented in this volume reveal how clear to him was the distinction between the psychical and spiritual, between truth and its counterfeit, and especially between Christ and religion. Could Christless religionists face his presentation with candor, they would be well on their way to the knowledge of Christ. The love of which he wrote is able to dwell in the light of God where all that is evil is made manifest. Love which is of God is transfused with the light of God."

Among the manuscripts were found a few pithy sayings, some original, and some quoted because they were striking. A selection has been given from these.

Brother Walter H. Bundy writes: "My own spiritual life and understanding of the Scriptures were greatly enriched by the brotherly love and consideration of our

beloved brother F. H. Robison. He was personally known to me, and his deeply spiritual sermons and writings were a constant source of inspiration.

It was principally through his helpful suggestions that I came to appreciate the need and value of "rightly dividing the word of truth". We had both been intimately associated in the same Christian work, and when he began giving forth teachings that were new and startling my complete confidence in his Christian integrity induced me to seek his help that I might understand and possess the riches he had found. With what earnest love and patience he assisted me! While he was himself enduring much trial, he was a great comfort and assistance to others of his associates who knew he was guided by the Divine Word.

It is, therefore, with a sense of deep gratitude to the gracious Lord who so used our brother that I write these words of appreciation of his labor of love, and that I recommend a careful reading of the splendid articles that this book contains."

Is the love of God invincible, or does God love and make the greatest sacrifices for His humanity and yet lose some of them? Many such questions are answered in the article "Love Can Never Lose Its Own". Christ as God's alternative to the world's wisdom and religion is presented in "God's Wisdom and the Wisdom that Knows Not God" and "Christ and Religion". Two much-discussed Greek words, *philia* and *agapee*, are differentiated and illustrated in a heart-warming manner. Great friendships among psychical men are not uncommon. But the fruit of the spirit makes ideal friendship love possible to every one in Christ. "Marriage" is a fine study that would make an excellent bridal gift-book. "Invention and Discovery" exposes some of the most subtle snares set by the god of this eon to occupy earnest men with something other than God's salvation in Christ. One of the author's earlier articles is "Not as the World Giv-

eth''. Had he lived to revise it he doubtless would have brought it into complete harmony with his later views. Yet as it stands it is full of instruction and comfort. The primal grace of faith in its manifold activity and achievement is considered in ''Victory through Faith''. An examination of the origin and character of one of the rapidly spreading substitutes for God's revelation is made in ''New Thought and Hindooism'', and a fragment of a completer study is given in ''Worldliness and Otherworldliness''.

Grateful appreciation is expressed by Sister Robison to Pastor Geo. L. Rogers, who assisted in the selection and editing of the articles; to the author's life-long friend, Charlton E. Myers, who designed the title page; and to the Concordant Publishing Concern, who have coöperated in the preparation of this volume.

LOVE CAN NEVER LOSE ITS OWN

Most thinking is fathered by a wish and mothered by a fear. It is well, therefore, to look to our ruling desires and dominant fears if we would escape the natural prejudices which warp our thinking. This is true in respect to strictly mundane matters where we, in some measure, know our way around. But it is more notably the case in spiritual things, where we could know nothing at all except by revelation; and if our concepts of revelation be warped by pagan philosophy we shall understand God's purposes but poorly, indeed.

Paul, God's mouthpiece to the gentiles, says on this point: "Now the soulish man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually examined" (1 Cor. 2:14). A "soulish" man is simply one who relies on his senses to guide him in his conceptions of what God is like and of what he intends to do to and for the human race.

Would we show much love for our human friends if we never read the letters they take the trouble to write us about what they intend to do; or if we read them so superficially or with such cock-sureness of what we think they are going to say that what they do say makes no impression? And yet we do those very things with God's word.

He says: "In Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22), and we say, "Oh no: that means He is going to make some dead."

He says he is going to "head up the universe again in Christ, the things in the heavens as well as those on the earth" (Eph. 1:10), and we say, he will certainly scatter part of it.

When God gives us a glimpse into his purpose to "reconcile the universe unto him" (Col. 1:20), we object that he will forever antagonize some. We just know better than God does; that's all.

And when God's word tells us that "God is to be All in all' (1 Cor. 15:28), our prejudices tell us that he means only "All in some". We *feel* that God is not even God *over* all, to say nothing of being God *in* all. The majestic human will must be glorified at any cost.

But let's have done with human feelings as a guide to divine revelation. Our feelings vary greatly, affected, often, by the most trivial circumstances. "That which the eye perceived not, and the ear hears not, and to which the heart of man ascended not — whatever God makes ready for those who are loving him" — that which could not be known by sensuous perception, "God reveals it to us through his spirit" (1 Cor. 2:9, 10).

There you are: follow your natural judgment and miss the truth; give heed to the word of God and have a wisdom which comes from no other source. It all depends on what you want, divine truth or self flattery. The two things will not stay in the same heart at the same time.

When we read of the living God being "the Saviour of *all* men" (1 Tim. 4:10); when we learn that the Son of Man shall "draw *all* men unto him" as the universal center of gravity (John 12:32); when it is made plain to us that God our Saviour "wills *all* men to be saved and to come into a realization of truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), and that Christ Jesus is the one giving himself "a ransom [a commensurate ransom] for *all*" (1 Tim. 2:6)— the same all that God wills to be saved (2:4) and for whom believers should pray (2:1)—; when God's benevolent determination to "destroy the works of the devil"

(1 John 3:8) is revealed to us; when we are informed that "death shall be no more" (Rev. 21:4), it being the "last enemy to be destroyed" (1 Cor. 15:26), we, as believers, have no course open to us but to believe.

These are matters concerning which we could know nothing except as God tells us; and this is what God has told us. The slight difficulties which suggest themselves are practically all traceable to the presence of ecclesiastical philosophy in our minds or to faults in our English translations of the Sacred Scriptures.

God's word, being true, makes every man who does not speak in accord with it a liar (Rom. 3:4).

"But men make his love too narrow
By false limits of their own,
And they magnify his justice
With a zeal he will not own.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind."

One reason, probably the principal reason, why we are so slow to believe in the kindness of God's heart is our innate subconsciousness of sin and its attendant fear of the consequences. And there is no way to escape this fear except by repose in what God in Christ has done to rescue us. And there is no place to hear what God has done except in his word; for "faith is of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17).

Mind: our worst fears about sin and its deserts are well founded; and all that pagan religions (in whatever land) have done is to chafe the sore that is already there; all that human ethics and philosophies have done is to try to get people to forget without any authoritative ground for forgetting. All that pleasure seekers and jazz makers can do is to occupy the attention, to keep it away from the thought of sin.

But the honest truth is, we are in a bad way unless God has done something about it. And the pertinent

question is, Did Christ appear in order to put away sin once for all by the sacrifice of himself? If he did, the penalty not only was paid but *is* paid; and no one can be asked to suffer pain of any pitch, intensity, or duration *as a penalty* or be called upon to "satisfy" a justice which Christ himself has already fully vindicated. Is the grace, the undeserved kindness, of God to be thus frustrated by human additions? 'Not by me,' says Paul (Gal. 2:21).

Furthermore, is Christ Jesus, having begun the good work, unable to bring it to completion; is he unable to cope with sin so that it will never cease to be? Is the law and its death penalty to exist when 'there is no more death'? Are there to be tortured or even dead enemies when all things in heaven and earth are reconciled to God—brought into grateful, friendly appreciation of his loving kindness? Is God, with all power and wisdom concentrated in his risen Son, unable to bring to bear influences which will affect the motives, the inmost preferences of every individual, as he did with Abel, with Saul of Tarsus, and with everyone of us who believe, Is not Christ the "power of God" as well as the "wisdom of God"? (1 Cor. 1:24)

What say the Scriptures?

1 Jn. 3: 4 Sin is lawlessness.
Rom. 3:20 By the law is the recognition of sin.
7: 8 Apart from law sin is dead.

Sin, as a judicial technicality, is thus identified with laws. But what has been actually done about it?

Gal. 3:13 Christ redeems us from the curse of the law, becoming a curse for us.
John 1:29 Behold the Lamb of God that beareth away the the sin of the world.
Heb. 9:26 But now, once, hath he been manifested by the sacrifice of himself to put away sin at the consummation of the ages.
2 Co. 5:19 Not reckoning unto them [the unbelieving world] their trespasses.
1 Pet. 2:24 Who himself carried up our sins in his body on the tree.

'Tis done; the great transaction's done!

"Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When Christ, the mighty Maker, died
For man, the creature's sin."

And is Christ, this mighty Maker, so poor a workman that he will have to discard the most of his work? Or will he gather up the fragments that nothing be lost? What humanly conducted factory could rate for efficiency if it had to dump most, or even much, of its product into some hellhole or offal place of perdition?

Since, then, Christ has carried up our sins in his own body on the tree why is not that the end of the sin question as Christ is the end of the law? The answer is, It is, "to everyone that believeth" (Romans 10:4). Those who do not believe keep on scoffing or wishing or hoping or fearing, paddling around like blind pups in a mill-pond, going nowhere and getting there rapidly.

Of course there are parables and other statements, most of them applying to Christ's thousand-year reign as the Son of Man or to the immediate preparation for that reign, which speak in a different tone. And right here it is well to note that the greatest single cause of confusion in Scripture study consists in failure to discern correctly the times, seasons, dispensations, classes, etc., which are in God's plan. The thousand-year reign of Christ, often called the millennium, is something of a reversion, in that it goes back to law. It gives men the flawless rule, the righteous government which they think they need to have a fair "chance". It is given to them to prove that they need something more. The present dispensation, however, is one in which grace reigns and not law (Romans 5:21). The same will be true in the eon to follow the millennium. But even the judgments of Christ's reign are disciplinary rather than penal; for when the Lamb of God bore away the sin of the world he bore it all away, not our sins up to date with a run-

ning account thereafter — which would benefit us none, seeing we were born after his sacrifice was made.

No act of sin is now or will ever be the cause of condemnatory sentence or of penal suffering on the part of anybody. Thank God for that. There is discipline, however. But what a difference to the heart of faith!

The grand truth is that Christ was the head of the old creation, consisting of heavens and earth and all that in them is (Genesis 1:1). In this matter of creation he was not an outsider who finished something and stepped aside. He continued to uphold it (Hebrews 1:3); it all cohered in him (Colossians 1:17); and when he died the whole creation went into death with him because it was made in him (Colossians 1:16, Revised Version) and not merely by him (same verse, last part). And when he rose, ah, *when* he arose, it was as head of a new creation, which may be entered into and enjoyed by faith now (2 Corinthians 5:17) until he makes "all things new" (Revelation 21:5), "new heavens and a new earth" (Revelation 21:1; Isaiah 65:17; 66:22). "*I* am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25), the Master said.

"We thus judge that one died for all, *therefore all died*; and he died for all that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:14, 15).

The dying is finished. Sin is dealt with in its judicial aspects, though we still experience it for discipline of faith until our change come (Philippians 3:20, 21). The almighty Head of the New Creation is dealing now principally with IGNORANCE AND UNBELIEF. These obscure the light of the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ no less than SIN.

True, the unbeliever's conscience is uneasy and he just knows he has punishment to expect; but suppose this unbelieving sinner should believe that his sin penalty was all met before he was born, what then? Why,

just this; he would be saved. Isn't he saved anyway whether he believes or not? No. But he is *redeemed* whether he knows it or believes it, since Christ rose for our justification. Redemption relates to a fact; salvation has something to do with a feeling about that fact.

Redemption stands related to *sin* and its consequence, death. Salvation, or a sense of rescue and relief, stands related to *ignorance* and its foister, the devil, the slanderer. While reconciliation stands as the great antithesis of *unbelief*, self-will.

The rainbow throne of the millennial kingdom will dispel ignorance of God. There will be no ignorance, for "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9; Jeremiah 31:34; Isaiah 49:26). But will this knowledge lead to faith? In most cases not. Except for the favored, restored, and then indefectable nation of Israel, who share the kingly and priestly honors of that time with their Lord and Messiah, the millennium will not be notable for faith. It ends in the worst apostasy and rebellion against God that the world has ever known (Revelation 20:7-9).

Only a sense of one's own insufficiency-without-God-and-his-Christ can bring one to trust in that God and Christ. The churches are full of indoctrinated unbelievers. And as long as they think they are self-sufficient, in unit or in group, they are going to stay unbelievers, no matter what they know; because faith is trust in a Person. Until they can sing with sincerity, as well as with truth, "nothing in my hand I bring," there will be no reconciliation, no lively appreciation of the fact that his will is sweeter than our wish.

Saul of Tarsus was certainly no small sinner, foremost representative he calls himself (1 Timothy 1:15); he was ignorant and unbelieving (same 1:13); yet we see how the grace of God was shown to him. He was a calumniator, a persecutor, and an outrager or brutal person in his persecutions. It would be difficult to find a

harder case. Poor, drunken bums along the Bowery are nothing compared to him. But one glimpse of his glorified Lord and that stony heart was melted down like butter. One word from that gracious voice, which spake as never man spake, and his *ignorance* of God as he is began to be dispelled. A few words from a heaven-sent and heaven-instructed brother, and *unbelief* dissolved like discontent on the bosom of a great calm.

"Who art thou?" was his cry. 'I am Justice, whom thou disregardest.' Did the glorious One say that? Not being taught by the Pharisees, he did not. "I am Jesus" —Savior! How different. Not a condemner but a rescuer. The wrong-doer was *arrested* by love, and there broken, contrite he lay at the feet of his risen Lord.

And all this, Paul tells us, was in the nature of a pattern of what God intended to do to and for other unbelivers who were to come to believe (1 Timothy 1:16).

Saul was not punished for his iniquity. The one whom he persecuted had already paid the penalty for the sin of persecution in Saul. There was no penalty, but much discipline. There is not only no future punishment for sin but no punishment now. "Sin reigns in death" only (Romans 5:21). Sin has no resurrection. In the death of Christ sin came to an end and in the resurrection power of Christ "grace reigns through righteousness", superabundant above sin and its consequences by virtue of the headship of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Man's dread of a hell of torment* is taught by the precepts of men, of Dogmatic Dominies and pagan philosophers, and not by the Word of God. Read Romans 6:1-14 and see how simply the apostle presents the facts. Our horizon has been entirely filled by sin and sinners. It is like moaning over a debt that's paid. Christ, not sin, should have the preëminence in all things.

* See "The Exact Truth Concerning Hell," etc., Concordant Publising Concern; "The Truth About Hell," E. W. Bullinger, Boston, Mass.; "The Bible on Hell," Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, N. Y.

And know this: No sin however heinous, and no aggregation of sinners, however numerous or ignorant or willful, can bankrupt the riches of God's grace or undo what was done on Calvary's brow. If peace is not made by the blood of his cross then it will not be made by any effort or righteousness of our own. "But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

"Since mine eyes were fixed on Jesus
I've lost sight of all beside
So enchained my spirit's vision
Looking at the Crucified."

A knowledge of God's will means more than the knowledge that he has a will. It indicates an intimate acquaintanceship with and a deep appreciation of the motives of the Almighty. It means such an acquaintanceship with God's holy will as would lead us, if we had the power, position and authority of God, to do exactly the same things that he does, and which knowledge or acquaintanceship does lead us to do the same things that he does, in the measure that we have power, position and authority of any kind. . . . Wisdom is the discreet application of God's word to our own hearts and to our own life problems. It should dwell in us richly; for the discernment, the discretion which enables us to apply the Word to ourselves and ourselves to the Word, may be had for the trustful asking.

The truth is calm—
  Refuge and rock and tower;
The more of truth, the more of calm:
  Its calmness is its power.
Truth is not strife,
  Nor is to strife allied;
It is the error that is bred
  Of storm by rage and pride.
Calmness is truth,
  And truth is calmness still;
Truth lifts its forehead to the storm
  Like some eternal hill.—*Bonar.*

Light of truth is beneficial or detrimental according as it is cast on the path or flashed in the face. Light flashed in the face to show off is annoying and blinding. Light rightly applied helps one to know where to walk, how to progress.

It is a singular fact that the more moralistic and respectable people are the less likely are they to become, or having become, to remain followers of the Lord. For they have their own ideas of right and wrong so thoroughly entrenched that they are not likely to admit the possibility of an error and will be lacking in mercy toward those who do not conform to their views.

The more intimate and thorough one's acquaintance with God's Word the less boastful is that individual; while the more thorough one's acquaintance with any dogma, or system of interpretation or teaching, the more *dogmatic*, overbearing and dictatorial that one becomes.

A violin string yields music only when it is strained; so we without trial are only mediocre—toneless.

GOD'S WISDOM AND THE WISDOM THAT KNOWS NOT GOD

HUMAN REASON, like a shoe string, is often a useful thing; but it certainly has its limitations. Human reason is a process of comparing the less known with the better known; or, at all events, the less familiar with the more familiar. Human reason throughout all of human experience has been confronted with certain more or less definite questions of life, and human reason has sought to find their answers and to give expression to those answers. Man, however viewed, is a sufficient phenomenon to arouse wonderment as to his nature, origin, purpose, and destiny. What, Whence, Why, Whither are man's questions about himself and about the rest of the creation which he knows.

Grammar is not an arbitrary thing, but is an attempt to codify human customs of thought as expressed in speech. The cases of a noun constitute a skeleton of all human intellectual activity. The nominative (or subjective) case essays to answer the primary query about a thing, namely, What is it? The genitive (sometimes, though inadequately, called the possessive) implies the basic question, Where did it come from? and hence, Who does it belong to? The dative (not so clearly defined in English as it is in the more systematic languages, such as German and Greek) comes down to the field of *application* and *relationship* with, What is it for? Where does it stand in relation to us? The inquiries become more searchingly practical (which is usually a euphemism for selfish), passing in quick succession from curiosity to the realm of ownership, the desire for pos-

session: the accusative (or subjective) suggests the previously existing question, What is to be done to it or with it?

The answer to the first-case question calls for nouns, often adjectives. An attempt to answer the second discovers a need for verbs, adverbs, prepositions; while the third and fourth involves us in pronouns, much argumentation, research laboratories, factories, law courts, boards of trade, politics, and wars.

So much for *things*. But man's basic questions about himself are essentially the same; and his answers, or efforts at answer, comprehend all of human wisdom, that wisdom through which the world has not known God, nor will ever so know Him.

Culture is the silk purse distinguishing the Wise, the Wealthy, and the Good—the "best" people—from the sow's ear commoners. The sow's ears are the Dumb, the Dirty, and the Damned; not interested in the great questions of What, Whence, Why, Whither, but only in When do we eat? and Where do we go from here? For most of these latter, more leisure and more prosperity mean merely more dancing, more parties (and that word *covers* a great deal), more movies, more ready-made distractions in general. But enough, we are interested just now in the W. W. G.'s, who are the rulers of the people, regardless of the form of government.

This cultural gentry has almost a monoply on thinking, but they do not all think in the same field of interest. The Good tend to metaphysical and ecclesiastical subjects; the Wise to moralistic and humanitarian things; while the Wealthy, well, the wealthy go in for facts and *practical* affairs. Let these classes pursue their natural trend and we have our old friends, Ecclesiasticism, Scholasticism, and Business. Culture factories there are which produce all these commodities, but the great state universities cencentrate on high production at the terrestrial, the less etherial end of the Jacob's ladder.

The Good grope and grasp in the realms of theology and religion. The Wise piddle and palaver with philosophy and psychology. The Wealthy search and sweat in the fields of science and art. These six subjects may be said to take up the time and attention of nearly all thinking people. By them and in them they attempt to answer life's questions.

Each of these fields of interest is, indeed, a kind of reaction to some large challenge of life. The question which has given rise to theology is, What is God? The question which has fathered religion is, How to worship? Philosophy owes its existence to the query, What is truth? Psychology to, How do you get that way? What makes you do like you do do? Science's presumptive question is, What is fact? While art is, How do they do it? Art is not here limited to the so-called fine arts, but to the field of practical application of knowledge to any kind of need — practice as opposed to theory.

The first in each of these three groups tends to be analytical while the second is rather synthetic, or an adaptation of the facts presumably gathered before. Another grouping, a geographical one, suggests itself. Theology, religion, and philosophy are more prevalent in the oriental system of culture; psychology, science, and art in the occidental economy. But the ghastly shortcoming of them all is that they (as actually practiced) deal with *things*, whereas the true answer to them all is a Person, and that person is Christ.

Theology without Christ is blasphemy; religion without Christ is mockery; philosophy without Christ is a fraud; psychology without Christ is hypocrisy; science without Christ is a lie; art without Christ is folly. Culture without Christ is an illusion; it is darkness and not light. And all are without Christ who are not *in* Him.

Theology means, literally, 'a word about God,' the study of God; but all we know or can know about God is in Christ. The answer is not merely in Him: He *is* the

answer. He is God's Word. Christ is also the answer to the question from which religion has sprung. And as to worship: We cannot worship aright without Christ. He tells us we are to worship "in spirit and in truth", without any kind of inity, anity, ist, ite, or ism.

Philosophy is largely an attempt to do what God has left undone. The classic question of philosophy is, What is truth? and was voiced by Pilate in the presence of God's answer. It is not really a question of What is truth? but of Who is truth? Three thousand years of codified philosophy have not answered one deep question nor touched any of the central problems of life. It is still fumbling and mumbling with things which God's Word takes for granted. The Scriptures assume (1) that God is and (2) that all truth is in Him. From this the conclusion is drawn that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom". All man's boasted profundity has come nowhere near that truth. "Beware, that no one shall be despoiling you through philosophy and empty seduction, in accord with human tradition, in accord with the elements of the world, and not in accord with Christ" (Col. 2:8).

Logic is the private secretary, the yes-man, of philosophy. It is logic's business to agree and to make things so whether they are or not. Logic is a game of intellectual dominoes — putting the pieces together to make the best showing, yet being only reminiscent of the truth.

During the last thirty years business has reached up and laid hold on psychology, seeing in it a tool to greater "efficiency", and hence greater profits. Those employed in this field have been called "practical psychologists", and were for a time supposed to pump some kind of rejuvenating fluid into such business organizations as were suffering from various maladies. Maybe the tom-tom beating helped a little but there are not a few large employers who doubt if the incantations did any good—and especially after they saw the medicine man's bill.

But one feature of all the hullabaloo and industrial face lifting has been to introduce a clearer concept of what psychology is. Thirty years ago anyone who had dragged endocrinology, the study of the ductless glands of the body, into the subject of psychology would have been thought gross and vulgar. Yet the endocrine glands which function by sensation, in some degree even produce the sensation, emptying their secretions directly into the blood, are much nearer the "soul-of-all-flesh-is-in-the-blood" proposition of Scripture than were the intellectual gewgaws, the mental bric-a-brac which passed for psychology a generation ago.

But the answer to psychology is still a person. The true Soul Study is in Him Who "poured out His soul unto death", and on Whom all our sensations depend, for "what have we that we have not received?"

Notably in the last hundred years, since the introduction of mechanical means of transportation, theology religions, and philosophy have dropped below par, as realms of interest. In fact, they are in as ill repute as science was for centuries — good enough for the dotards; but for real he men, Bah!

In former centuries ecclesiasticism was the big business of the day; now it is commerce, manufacture, merchandising. Then politics was the fringe on the ecclesiastical garment. Now politics is the fuzz on the economic peach. Good men went long distances to sit in solemn councils; now they go even longer distances to sit in equally solemn conferences. Charges of heresy and punishment by excommunication were the order of that day; but the fear of being off color and of losing prestige are not less potent conforming influences today. The truth is that formalistic religion has given place to an economic brand. There is no need of tirades against those who then officiated. They were merely cogs in the wheel. And there is no use to wallow in a welter of cynicism now over men, either high or low. They know not what they

do. They think the world would go to pieces if they did not insist on a certain line of "development" and "progress". And perhaps it would, without Christ.

In older times philosophy was made use of to razzle dazzle the minds of the inquiring. Nice questions of casuistry were introduced to bolster up doctrinal tenets and decrees of councils. Now "science" is in the center of the stage, though the stage director is industry. Science has not come in answer to the cries of our hearts. It is a product of the machine shop. That is its church. It teaches us not how to live but only how to work.

Yet to doubt the omnipotence of science is impiety, nowadays. It even verges on impiety to make such inquiry about the new technology as might lead to doubt. Science has attained the state of an established system of faith, which is trusted in as devoutly as any monastic ever conned his creed till rote. Take any magazine of size and standing, turn through its advertising pages and see if the word "science" does not occur from one to six times on every page. What science has done, what science is doing, what it will do is extolled to the seventh heaven. 'Science will provide,' and on that technological breast we are asked to rest sweetly and in peace.

The psalmists of science wax eloquent in their devotion. 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the laboratories, whence cometh help: my help cometh from necessity, which made heaven and earth.' That is blasphemy, but it is heard in substance on every side in every day.

The saints of science are lauded and invoked. The achievements of science are made the personal triumphs of a series of great men; and so the human intellect is glorified. But the apostasy, any apostasy from Eden down, is putting the creature for the Creator, the thing made for the Maker, no matter whether that thing be an idol, a religious system, an oriental philosophy, a hard-boiled mess of assumptions called science, or just self in its more chummy aspects. The substitution is made.

God is not honored; His sovereignty is not acknowledged; His will is not done.

The devotees of science look down, not up. In the beginning is a machine, say they, which is alpha and omega. They aspire to be among those who apply science in the realm of practice. Those who have so applied it are not merely regarded for what they have done. They are worshipped and adored by the avenues of publicity which they quite naturally and unavoidably control. The panting cry of the lower-down is, 'Suffer me to come unto them, for of such is the chamber of commerce.'

But science without Christ is a lie. Why, you say? Because no one can understand any of the *facts* of life without knowing the central Fact. Without Him was not anything facted that was facted. But not only that: "In Him all things consist." He maintains the relationship of all that He has made; and to delve into facts without Him is like examining the ocean depths by running a butterfly net through the fog that hangs over the water's surface. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7).

Art is the lowest rung on the ladder of culture, the most mundane. It deals with *things;* and people are interested in things to a larger extent than ever before — not because the people are essentially different from those who have gone before, but because there are more things to be interested in than previously. Women have the franchise, but they are ten thousand times more interested in stockings than in statecraft, even when one takes into account the quantitative differences. Men have the responsibilities of husbandry, yet they are more interested in flivvers than in finance.

Art, that is, production, fabrication or making of things, is of necessity controlled by the ruling classes in society, and the ruling classes now happen to be industrialists. When the church was high up, the things of largest import which were made were things whose orig-

inal conception had found place in the mind of some ecclesiastic or ecclesiastical hanger-on. So now, art is impounded by industry. Industry now is largely mechanical, so that the man with machines can impose any form of art on the public he wishes to, and he naturally imposes the lowest form in order to assure himself of the largest market. The net result is that, while the things done are numerous and colossal, they are only *things.* They have no life and elicit no sentiment. However much an elegant machine may feed the vanity of the individual, it is hard to become attached to it as one would to a living creature. Standardization has its points, but it removes the novelty of specific difference. From architecture, man's glorified mud pies, to jazz, the musical jimson weed, all bears the stamp of machine, and none of it bears anything like the image of Christ.

The world still waits for its Sovereign, Who shall offer to man's original thirst for knowledge, science the most boundless and sublime; to his love of distinction, an eminence before which all the prizes of present fame are dust and air; and to his faith, his spiritual sense, an enlargement of faculty, a vividness of view, and an endless succession of experiences wholly beyond the contemplation of our minds.

"Does not God make stupid the wisdom of this world? For since, in fact, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom knew not God, it delights God through the stupidity of a proclamation to save those who are believing, since, in fact, Jews are requesting signs and Greeks are seeking wisdom, yet we are proclaiming Christ crucified, to Jews, indeed, a snare, and to the nations stupidity, yet to those who are called, Jews as well as Greeks, Christ the power of God and the *Wisdom of God,* seeing that the stupidity of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1:20-25).

CHRIST AND RELIGION

GETTING RELIGION, either experimentally or observationally, used to be one of the favorite indoor winter sports. It even had a vogue in the summer time, when the camp meeting came to town and social distractions were few.

The most unfortunate thing about "getting religion" is that it is nearly always expressive of a truth. The getters do not get Christ. In fact, nobody gets Christ. He gets us. He lays hold on us (Phil. 3:12).

There are several points on which Christ and religion differ. It is doubtful if even the term Christianity is scripturally correct, any more than is the term Christian. In 1 Corinthians 1:12 the apostle includes "of Christ" along with "of Cephas", "of Apollos," "of Paul," as a factional heading. Those who rejoice in the fact that they are *in* Christ do not need to use His name as a partisan rallying point — have no need to boast of being *of* Christ. Let nothing be done according to faction or according to empty glory.

Christ is a person; a religion is, at best, a system, at worst, a passing feeling. The two differ as to their commencement, their course, their character, their circumference, their cause, their center, their claims, their class, and their consummation.

Religion begins with the individual striving to discover God. And the reason the individual wishes to find God is to make of Him a powerful ally, with the coöperation of Whom he can save himself by religion. Its

object is the happiness of the individual. Superficially that sounds all right; but it is usually all wrong. To seek God in a worshipful sense is different. The happiness and comfort of the individual is not the motive in such case.

Christ is the Beginning from God. Whatever we ought to do, actually God seeks us, as He did the first human sinners in Eden. And the first effect of His voice is not to comfort or happify, but to convey conviction of sin. Christ starts from God, comes down from Him, catches hold on us and in due time raises us; and happiness is a by-product, but not an aim. The object of Christ is the glory of God.

Religion uses God as a means to an end. Christ uses man as a means to an end. Religion starts and stops with man, hence the discouragement following on reform. Christ starts and stops with God — for He does stop not as a person but as the Anointed, when all the work for which He was anointed shall have been done.

Christ and religion differ as to their course. Religion is purest at its beginning, but becomes increasingly corrupt as it progresses in its course, much as the stream may spring forth in comparative cleanness at the fountain but become defiled as it is borne along in its soiled banks. Time must bring out and manifest the essential corruption from which it started. But the life in Christ becomes purer as it goes on. The spirit, the power of God will develop in the heart until sins become more glaring and repugnant. Religion is the attempt of man to win back that which he is conscious of having lost. He doesn't know what he has lost, but he knows he has lost it. He hunts within the realm of his own power and must come to grief, because there is no power within that realm to meet his needs. Christ is the only way by which man can get that which is lost, and even that which has never been fully had. Man by seeking, alone, cannot find God.

The two differ as to their character. The character of religion is natural righteousness. The character of Christ is supernatural righteousness. Religion is man's best output. Christ is God's best input. Man does not attain. Perhaps it is too much even to say that he obtains. He receives. Religion is man's idea about God. Christ is the *truth* about God.

Again, there are marked differences as to circumference. The circumference of religion is world-wide. Some "form of godliness", some system of worship is present in every known tribe of earth. Christ, in any subjective sense, is confined to believers. Eventually the range of believers will be unspeakably vaster than now; but it will still be true that Christ is limited to believers. Religion has to do with man's interests. Christ has to do with God's interests.

The present civilization has not come as 'sidegleams from the lamp of truth', as it is said on July 4th when perspiring parsons purvey pious piffle. The present civilization came from Cain, through Ham, Cush, and Nimrod, and has been disseminated by Babylon, Egypt, Rome, and more or less unwittingly by smaller fry. In this civilization the devil is trying to establish a kingdom of the heavens *without the true King*, by legislation, by sanitation, by reform, by legalistic prohibition of this or that. And it must be admitted with shame that the great mass of the churches are coöperating with the devil in this respect. Nothing pleases the devil more than to have us fight sin, either in ourselves or others. There is only One to fight sin, and that is God, through His Christ. We are to ignore it, consider ourselves dead to it, dealing with the sinner but not with the sin. Religion ends in the lake of fire. The end of Christ is God.

Then there is the difference in cause. The cause of religion is man's wish for salvation. Christ is man's assurance of salvation. Religion is man seeking after

God. Christ is God revealing Himself to man. Religion is man's selfishness. Christ represents man's nothingness and God's allness. Religion is man's *fear* of God. Christ is man's *trust* in God.

The center of religion is man himself, his character, his work, his worth, his merit; it is I, I, I, myself from start to finish. The center of the life in Christ is the Lord Jesus Christ, His character, His work, His worth, His value; it is all Christ. Religion can and does exist without Christ; but the life in Christ cannot exist without Him.

All religion claims for the present is mere morality, reform. The claim of Christ is a *new* creation.

The class of religion embraces human betterment of all kinds, political, ecclesiastical, pedagogic, economic, hygienic. Christ is unique, singular. He has but one objective, and that is the glory of God. Religion is all kinds of forms of godliness; Christ is the fact of godliness.

Now as to their consummations. Religion will culminate in loss. It is at once the invention and deception of Satan. Christ is union with God; and to be in Him is to be hid with Him in God.

The word religion occurs four times in the Greek Scriptures, and never in very good company. Always it has the sense of ritual, never of deep spiritual life or experience. There is no such expression as "Christian religion", and certainly not "religion of Christ". There is no such thing mentioned because there is no such thing recommended. The two words "Christ" and "religion" are kept distinctly apart.

The word religious, as signifying that which is occupied with ritualistic observances, is used once. There we have a total of five times, against 555 occurrences of the title-name of Christ — 111 times as frequent!

In neither of the five instances of use is the word religion even intimated as being anything proper for the

believer of this dispensation. The first occurrence is in Acts 26:5, where Paul is before Agrippa and says "that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee". Let those who admire and emulate the Pharisees defend the word. I do not care to do so.

Next, in Colossians 2:18, the word is covered up in the King James version by the word "worshipping". "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and *religion* of angels." Let those who practise and approve of angelolatry, beguiling one of his reward, defend the use of the word religion as a thing connected with Christ. I cannot do so.

The remaining three uses are by James, that writer to the Circumcision — principally the apostate part of it — and these are all in the same passage, James 1:26, 27. "If anyone is presuming to be ritualistic, not bridling his tongue, but seducing his heart, the ritual of this one is vain, for clean ritual and undefiled with God, even the Father, is this, to be visiting the bereaved and widows in their affliction, to be keeping oneself unspotted from the world." In other words, charity and moral uprightness.

This was a broadside against those formalistic Jewish religionists who were very particular to tithe mint and cummin but at the same time to overlook the weightier matters of the law, to keep the sabbath, while on the morrow they devoured widows' houses, to *say* their prayers in public places and with the same tongue to undermine a brother's good name by innuendo or worse. His ritual was empty, hollow, sepulchral. Then follow words which would be incomprehensible to the set ritualist. If such a one wants the best religion possible, let him try the ritual of humanitarian interest in, sympathy for, and help of the unfortunate. To the ritualists, that is no ritual at all. But it is the best thing a man can do without Christ. All of this can be done without Christ. There is not a word of Christ in it. Such a ritual does

not win the condemnation of the world, as Christ does; often, indeed, it wins the world's plaudits.

The places in Galatians 1:13, 14, where religion occurs in the Common Perversion text do not hold that word in Greek, but merely "Judaism", a fair interpretation, but not an exact translation.

Christ sets aside man's pride, man's ability, man's righteousness, man's goodness, and holds up once and for all the God of all grace. It is not even best to look through the word of God to Christ, but through Christ, a person, a living person, to the word of God; for the "Bible" can be made a religion, a ritualistic subject and object, as well as anything else.

Not I, but Christ, be honored, loved, exalted;
Not I, but Christ, be seen, be known, be heard;
Not I, but Christ, in every look and action;
Not I, but Christ, in every thought and word.

Not I, but Christ, to gently soothe in sorrow;
Not I, but Christ, to wipe the falling tear;
Not I, but Christ, to lift the weary burden;
Not I, but Christ, to hush away all fear.

Not I, but Christ, in lowly, silent labor;
Not I, but Christ, in humble, earnest toil;
Christ, only Christ, no show, no ostentation;
Christ, only Christ, the gath'rer of the spoil.

Christ, only Christ, e'er long shall fill my vision;
Glory excelling soon, full soon, I'll see—
Christ, only Christ, my every wish fulfilling—
Christ, none but Christ, my All in all to be.

PHILIA AND *AGAPEE*, OR LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

PROLOGUE

THESE are elusive words to translate into English, but may be approximated by our terms, love and friendship. In languages older than our own, the distinction between the love that craves and the love that goes out uncravingly is indicated in equivalents of "love" and "friendship". Thus the Sanskrit — elder sister in our family of tongues — gives for "love *(lubh)* "covetousness" or "greed"; and for "friendship" *(pri)* "unselfish love". The Greek has *philia* for that love which goes out "lovingly" after its object, "an inclination prompted by sense and emotion"; while in the Septuagint and the New Testament it has *agapee*, "a love without desire". The Latin correspondingly has *amo* as representing the love that turns to another in the spirit of agreement and of longing; but, as an equivalent of *agapee*, it has *diligo* for the act of "a distinguishing love — without desire", a love that selects and rests on the one selected without asking any return.

Failing to preserve clearly the distinction between a love that instinctively grows out of a relationship, or that is based upon a natural desire for possession, and a voluntary and distinguishing love that goes out unselfishly and admiringly toward its chosen object, New Testament critics and commentators generally have been confused in their minds, while seeking to account for the apparent difference between the two words — *philia* and *agapee* —

employed in the sacred text for the designation of "love".

It is admitted by practically all that *philia* was a word in common use in New Testament times, as expressive of the love between parents and children, and brothers and sisters, and also of craving love between the sexes. It is also admitted that the word *agapee* comes into new prominence in New Testament use, as applicable to man's love to God, and to love that is otherwise peculiarly pure and sacred. But these two words seem at times to be employed interchangeably; and many an eminent scholar has confessed his inability to see the real difference between the words in their using, as accounting for the often indicated superiority of *agapee*, in spite of the greater warmth and intensity of *philia*.

Cramer, in his "Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek", covers the simple facts in the case when he says: "We find *agapee* used to designate a love unknown to writers outside of the New Testament — love in its fullest conceivable form; love as it is the distinguishing attribute in all humanity, but, in the strictest sense, of divinity". Trench, in seeking to differentiate the meaning of the two words *agapee* and *philia*, says: "The first expresses a more resting attachment, of choice and selection — *diligere, deligere* — from seeing in the object on which it is bestowed that which is worthy of regard; while the second, without being necessarily an unresting attachment, does yet oftentimes give less account of itself to itself; is more instinctive, has more of the feelings, implies more passion." Woolsey, after an exhaustive study of the histories of the two terms, says of Trench's definition: "We believe that this is a true statement of the difference between the two words and notions." And all this is in confirmation of the claim made here that *philia* represents a love that grows out of relationship or craving, while *agapee* represents a love that goes out voluntarily without any intermingling of

selfishness — the one being ordinary love, and the other the higher form of friendship love.

Men are said to love, or crave (*philein*), "the chief place at feasts" (Matthew 23:6), and "salutations in the market places" (Luke 20:46) and to have this self-interested love (*philein*), as growing out of relationship, for "father or mother", or for "son or daughter". (Matthew 10:37) On the other hand, the Roman centurion is said by the Jews to have had an unselfish, friendship love (*agapan*) for their nation, as evidenced by his building for them a synagogue. (Luke 7:5) God's children are commanded to have friendship love (*agapan*) for their "neighbors" (Matthew 5:43; Galatians 5:14), and for their "enemies" (Matthew 5:44), because love does not go out in those directions instinctively, but must be given unselfishly, and of deliberate choice.

The saints are enjoined to have a feeling of family love (*philein*) for their Lord (1 Corinthians 16:22) and for one another in the household of faith. (Titus 3:15) "The world" is said to give a selfish, interested love (*philein*) to "its own", because of the mutual relation between the two. (John 15:19) But Jesus is said to give a pure and unselfish friendship love (*agapan*) to Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus, in the home so dear to him at Bethany. (John 11:5) God is said to be governed by unselfish, friendship love (*agapan*) toward the world in the gift of his Son. (John 3:16) But Jesus says the Father loves as with a feeling of family love (*philein*) those who have come into his inner family circle through love for his Son (John 16:27) And many another passage seems to recognize and accentuate these distinctions in the force of the two words severally.

A striking illustration of the significant uses of the two words in the same conversation is found in the narrative of the interview of Jesus with Peter, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, after the resurrection. (John 21:15-19) Jesus asks Peter if he gives him friendship love

(*agapan*) more truly than the other disciples, as Peter had asserted that he was ready to do. Peter, remembering his denial of his Lord, replies that Jesus knows that he gives him longing love (*philein*). The second time Jesus asks Peter if he can claim to give him any measure of friendship love (*agapan*), apart from all comparison with others. Again, Peter affirms that the Lord knows that he gives him a longing love (*philein*). Then Jesus changes his form of question, and asks Peter if he is sure that he gives him even a longing love (*philein*). At this Peter is "grieved", not because the question is repeated a third time, but because in its third putting it seems to imply a doubt whether Peter has *any* love for his Lord, even on the lower plane, and his earnest answer is: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee" — with a longing love *(philein)*; and Jesus quietly goes on to say that he would have Peter bear himself toward his dear ones just as he would if he were a devoted friend above all the other disciples. Thus the way is opened for Jesus to tell Peter plainly of what is in store for him in his faithful service.

Only in the light of the distinction here pointed out is the full force of divine love to be comprehended.

It is friendship as a personal sentiment, not friendship as a mutual relation, that must be considered in order to an understanding of the term as a term. The primary question is not, What is the nature of that state or condition into which two friends are brought by the fact of their being mutual friends? but it is, What is that sentiment which actuates any person, who is truly a friend, toward the person to whom he is a friend? What is the distinguishing characteristic of the feeling or sentiment of friendship on the part of him who is a friend, apart from the question of any response to, or recognition of that feeling or sentiment, by him toward whom it goes out?

The more familiar a word, the greater its liability to vagueness in popular usage. And the deeper the underlying significance of a word, the rarer its recognition in any other than a superficial sense. "Friendship" is a word that encounters such hindrances to its comprehension. It is too familiar to be well understood by all. It means too much to have its full sense easily preserved.

Our English word "friend", in its Anglo-Saxon form, is *freond* — "one who loves". Etymologically, the words "friend" and "lover" are synonomous, as are the words "love" and "friendship". But in common usage, "love" and "friendship", as also "lover" and "friend", have very different measures of meaning, and are supposed to represent widely different grades of personal attachment. The question is, Wherein consists the true distinction between love that is friendship, and love that is only love?

"Love," as we commonly employ that term when we speak of love that is distinct from the love that is friendship, includes the idea of a reciprocal relation, *existing* or *desired*, between the one who loves and the one who is loved — the idea of possession, or of a possessory interest, secured or sought after. Thus the love of parent and child, of brother and sister, of husband and wife, is supposed to rest on the intimate, reciprocal relation existing between the two parties by the ties of nature or of conjugal compact; as, again, the love of "lovers" is recognized as growing out of, or as inevitably accomplished by, a desire for a reciprocal and possessory relation. Self-interest, is, in fact, a large element in ordinary human love.

"Friendship", on the other hand, does not of necessity include the idea of any mutual bond, or any self-benefiting relation, either attained or reached after, between the one who is a friend and the one to whom he is a friend. One's friendship is certainly not limited to one's relatives and family connections; nor yet, beyond

these, to one who is desired in marriage. In fact, the very suggestion of the attachment of friendship is commonly supposed to differentiate the affection which it represents from that which grows out of, or which tends toward, a possessory relation.

The common thought is that "love" and "friendship" merely differentiate *degrees* of affection; and that intensity and devotedness are the distinguishing characteristics of "love" in comparison with "friendship". But the place given in both sacred and classic story to the illustrations of self-sacrificing friendship proves that no lack of depth and fervor limits the force and sway of this expression of personal attachment. Greater love hath no man than that love which is shown in friendship at its best and truest manifestation. Not in its measure, but in its very nature, is an unselfish friendship distinguishable from a love which pivots on a reciprocal relation, secured or desired.

Friendship is love for another because of what that other is in himself or for that other's own sake, and not because of what that other is to the loved one. Friendship is love with the selfish element eliminated. It is an outgoing and ongoing affection, wholly and inherently disinterested, and in no sense contingent upon any reciprocal relation between its giver and its object. Friendship in short, is love apart from love's claim or love's craving.

This is friendship at its truest and best; and this it is that makes the best and truest friendship so rare, so difficult of conception, so liable to misconception. This also it is that multiplies the specious resemblances of friendship — in hearts that are incapable of comprehending its full reality; and that gives to those imperfect substitutes for its reality such a disappointing power.

In all holiest and most unselfish love, friendship is the purest element of the affection. No love in any relationship can be at its best if friendship be lacking.

And no love can transcend, in its possibilities of noble and ennobling exaltation, a love that is pure friendship.

LOVING, RATHER THAN BEING LOVED

Inasmuch as friendship is loving another for that other's own sake, and not for what that other is to the one who loves, friendship, by its very nature, consists in loving, rather than in being loved. In other words, friendship consists in being a friend, not in having a friend; in giving one's affection unselfishly and unswervingly to another, not in being the object of another's affection, or in reciprocating such an affection.

Love, it is true, may beget love; and, again, love is likely to be a result or an outgrowth of qualities in both the loved and the loving one which make affection reciprocal; hence friendship is often a mutual affection. In every such case, however, each friend is a friend in his loving, rather than in his being loved; and he would be just as truly a friend, and his friendship would be just as hearty and just as abiding, if he were not loved in return, or if his love were unrecognized.

Friendship may exist conjointly with other loves; again, the other loves may exist — they more commonly do — without the higher element of friendship. But "if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye; for do not even the publicans the same?"

LaBruyere, for example, who writes admirably on some phases of friendship, falls sadly short of the true standard, in saying: "When we have done all that we can for certain people in order to secure their friendship, and we find that we have been unsuccessful, there is still one resource left to us, which is — not to do anything more." Ay! and there is yet another and a better resource left to us, which is — to keep on doing. That is not real friendship which ceases its outgoing and its onflowing, when it finds that no return of its affection is a possibility or a hope.

But, says one, is that not a dreadfully impractical thing? Viewed from the standpoint of the commercial world, it would look at first impractical. But in the end it pays enormous dividends in richness and breadth of heart which could never be earned by any bartering or niggardly exchange. But whether it is a good investment or not would make no difference to those who love the Lord's will, if such a love can be found exemplified and approved by him who is the Author of love and who tells us: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The gentle-spirited Whittier brings out this truth in its richer significance in his words:

"Love is sweet in any guise;
But its best is sacrifice.
He who, giving, does not crave,
Likest is to Him Who gave
Life itself, the loved to save."

A more explicit, though perhaps not deeper, apprehension of the supremacy of self-abnegating love, shows itself in the words of Helen Hunt:

"When love is strong,
It never tarries to take heed,
Or know if its return exceed
Its gift; in its sweet haste no greed
No strifes belong.

"It hardly asks
If it be loved at all; to take
So barren seems, when it can make
Such bliss, for the beloved's sake,
Of bitter tasks."

This is the Bible view of friendship, both in the Old Testament and in the New. The divine pattern is a love that loves without any condition of love returned and that consists in loving, rather than in being loved. "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; but *because the Lord loved you,*" says Moses to Israel. It was not because of your loveableness, but because of God's lovingness, that God

loved you. "And *he will* love thee," adds Moses. He will keep on loving you.

"Ye did not choose me, but I chose you", says our Lord Jesus to those whom he calls his friends, "Herein is love" — herein is divine Love, divine friendship, says the disciple whom Jesus loved — "not that we loved God, but that he loved us;" *this* love consists in God's loving us, rather than in our loving God, for his is the truest, highest, purest love.

Only he who is unwilling to love without being loved, is likely to feel that there is no such thing as friendship in the world.

WHOLLY UNSELFISH

True friendship, being love without compact or condition, true friendship never pivots on an equivalent return of service or of affection. Its whole sweep is away from self and toward the loved one. Its *desire* is for the friend's welfare; its *joy* is in the friend's prosperity; its *sorrows* and *trials* are in the friend's misfortunes and griefs; its *pride* is in the friend's attainments and success; its constant *purpose* is of doing and enduring for the friend; and even its unrest, if unrest there be, is because of its never-satisfied endeavor to advantage and benefit the friend. This is ideal friendship; this is true friendship in actual attainment.

Take, for instance, that most beautiful of all illustrative friendships, the friendship of Jonathan for David in the Bible narrative — it was grandly, gloriously unselfish. Jonathan was a prince of the royal house, heir-apparent to the throne of a kingdom. He was himself a hero of high achievement, with a foremost place in the people's love and honor. His first glimpse was in the light of a successful rival. The stripling shepherd stood the new hero of the hour, brought into the presence of the king while the nation's praises were ringing in his ears because of the wonderful deliverance wrought by his

faith-filled daring. Looking then upon him in his loveliness of person and of character, Jonathan saw with prophetic ken the sure future of David as the coming king of Israel, as the one in whose glowing light his own star of earthly hope must pale.

But in the first flush of that discovery there was no shade of envy, nor yet the faintest trace of regret, in the more than royal heart of Jonathan. Joy in the recognition of so noble and loveable a character as David's, filled the whole being of the nobler and yet more loveable Jonathan. "And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." And from that time onward, every heart-throb of Jonathan's friendship for David was a heart-throb of unselfish devotedness to him to whom he was a friend. What wonder that David pronounced that friendship as "passing the love of woman"; passing all craving love, all selfish desire!

Similarly, the unselfish devotedness of Ruth to Naomi, gives her friendship a place in the sacred story, and marks the contrast of her love with Orpah's. The associations of a lifetime, the drawings of personal interest, of kindred, of patriotism, and of religion, combined for the attaching of the saddened daughter-in-law to Moab and its dwellers. Only a sacred friendship, a friendship which had its deepest roots in no obligations of blood or of marriage, could offer effectual resistance to these multiplying attractions in such an hour as that when Naomi and Ruth and Orpah wept together in the thought of their final parting on the boundary banks of the Jordan. Orpah loved her mother-in-law, and "clave unto her"—as friendship by its nature cleaves.

And the unselfish friendship of Ruth for Naomi spoke out then in that matchless asseveration of unswerving fidelity, which thrills through the ages in its tremulous tenderness of womanly affection:

"Entreat me not to leave thee,
And to return from following after thee;
For whither thou goest, I will go;
And where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people,
And thy God, my God;
Where thou diest, will I die,
And there will I be buried;
The Lord do so to me, and more also,
If aught but death part thee and me."

The very name "Ruth" means, in the Hebrew, "a friend"; as if the sacred story would make this record of devotedness an illustration of true friendship. The name may, indeed, have been given to this faithful friend *after* her beautiful exhibition of its meaning, it being her new name in Israel. It was through her exhibit of friendship that Ruth won a place in the ancestral line of the Friend of friends, in his human descent from Abraham, the friend of God.

A considerate friend is prompter to carry his friend's sorrow than to carry his sorrows to his friend. Sir Thomas Browne, who was ever ready to put his friend's welfare before his own, said, similarly: "Now, with my friend I desire not to share or to participate, but to engross, his sorrows." His friend's joys he would share, and his joys he would share with his friend; but his sorrows he would carry by himself, and his friend's sorrow he would carry also, if he might. Whether, indeed, one confide his griefs to his friend or conceal his griefs from his friend, he is moved by the thought of what will please or advantage his friend, rather than of what will please or advantage himself.

And this same view of a friend's duty of self-forgetfulness is in the mind of Goethe, when he says to his friend:

"Death 'tis to part;
'Tis twofold death
To part not hoping
Ever to meet again.

"Thou wouldst rejoice to leave
This hated land behind,
Wert thou not chained to me
With friendship's flowery chains.

"Break them! I'll not repine.
No noble friend
Would stay his fellow-captive,
If means of flight appear.

"The remembrance
Of his dear friend's freedom
Gives him freedom
In his dungeon."

Shakespeare goes one step further in illustration of the self-abnegation which is in the highest affection, in that series of sonnets which breathes throughout the sentiment of an absorbing friendship. He would not even be remembered after his death, if memory would be a grief to his surviving friend:

"No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly, sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot
If thinking on me then should cause you woe."

Nor is this high standard of unselfish personal friendship one which is never attained in this matter-of-fact world of ours. Friends have lived for each other. Friends have died for each other. Friends have endured far more than death in each other's behalf. Friends have given up home, and kindred, and property, and hope of gain, and even good name, at the call of friendship. And wherever there is a real friendship today, there is a readiness to do and to endure and to yield to the uttermost.

"The only perfect friendship subsists between those who resemble each other in virtue, because those who love their friends for their virtue, love them for what is not a temporary appendage, but a permanent essential in their character."

Friendship being in its very nature an unselfish love, all that savors of selfishness is necessarily excluded from its scope. It being an outgoing and ongoing love for one who is prized for his own sake, every added proof that the one loved is all that the loving one has seen him to be, or more, gives joy of heart, and not disturbance of mind, to him who is his friend. Neither envy, nor distrust—both of which have their centre in self-interest—can have any play against one who is loved unselfishly.

Unselfishness looks upward, as well as outward, and an unselfish love is sure to have a reverent, upward look in the contemplation of its object. This is a recognized truth of the ages.

Various reasons may operate to give this feeling of reverence for one who is loved, because he is what he is, as seen by him who loves him; but the effect of the reasons is practically the same in all cases. A man may be reverenced for the lofty ideal he holds before the one who loves him; or for the loftier ideal toward which he is manifestly striving; or for the undeveloped possibilities which are seen in him, or for him, by him who is his friend. He may be looked up to for what he is or for what he desires to be, or for what he might become; whatever the cause may be, the effect is much the same in the mind of the up-looker.

And here is a reason why we can never be jealous *of* one to whom we are a friend; although we are prone to be jealous *for* him. We love him and we look up to him for his own sake, and not for our sake; for what there is in him, or for what there is for him, and not for what he is toward us or in our behalf. We are glad when he shows himself at his best; and we are never troubled that his best outshines our best, even though we should be troubled if he fail to shine as he might, while we surpassed him.

If Jonathan had envied David when he saw that David was to have the throne which Jonathan was yield-

ing, without the credit of yielding, it would have evidenced a lack of surpassing friendship for David in the heart of Jonathan.

It was because John the Baptist was the friend of Jesus that John, at the very summit of his personal renown and of his commanding popular influence, could say, without a twinge of envious feeling: "In the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not, even he that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose." And when a little later, it was suggested to John that he was being transcended by Jesus, his glad answer was: "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy is therefore fulfilled. *He must increase, but I must decrease.*" Is it any wonder that our Lord honored him with the statement that "Of those born of woman, there is none greater than John the Baptist."—his love approached the angelic.

Tennyson testified of his unenvious pride in Arthur Hallam's recognized supremacy in the sphere of their common labors:

"On thee the loyal hearted hung,
The proud was half disarmed of pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

"The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school,
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was softened, and he knew not why.

"While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine;
And loved them more that they were thine,
The gracious tact, the Christian heart.

"Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will."

Envy is a selfish regret that another is in advance of us, while friendship is an unselfish affection for another because he is in advance of us—or ought to be, as we see it.

Nor, again, is distrust of a friend compatible with true friendship, any more than is envy. Distrust of another is the result of a watchful interest in one's own welfare; it is, in fact, a fear that one is to be a loser from his relationship to another; but friendship, by its very nature being forgetful of self in love for another, it carries with it supremacy of interest in the loved one and his welfare. How can a man be afraid for himself when he has forgotten himself? "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear," said the loved and loving friend of Jesus. "He that feareth is not made perfect in love." He who distrusts is not yet a true friend.

It is not that love for a friend will blind one to that friend's lack of attainments and capabilities, or to the possibility of his coming short of his ideal. But it is that friendship's love will make it impossible to question the fact that the friend is always himself, or to have any such fear of his action as comes from the selfish considering of possible consequences to the loving one through his being the other's friend unswervingly. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," is ever the loving cry of a child of God whose love for his Father is for what that Father is in himself, rather than for what that Father is to his loving child. "Perfect love"—that unalloyed love that friendship is—is never less trustful than this.

In friendship, in real friendship, "we walk by faith, not by sight"; and faith is better than sight. A heart that trusts is a safer guide than eyes that see. In the highest and holiest friendship it is divinely declared: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Conversely, in the best and truest human friendships, there is a blessing to him who will not believe his own eyes against the one whom he loves.

How can friendship find a place for distrust? An outgoing, limitless love forbids and bars an incoming, limiting doubt. The only unrest of a love that rests in the truth of one's truer other self, is the ceaseless craving to love more, and to be more true in loving. "The deepest hunger of a faithful heart is faithfulness."

TRANSCENDING ALL LOVES

One need not go outside of the Bible record for proof that friendship's love has a place above all other loves; although the concurrent testimony of the ages is to the same effect.

When Moses is warning the children of Israel of the temptations to idolatry which will beset them in the land of Canaan, he names the possible tempters to evil in the order of their relative importance, and to a friend he assigns the place highest of all. "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy *friend, which is as thine own life,* entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other Gods; . . . thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him." And everything in the Old Testament history and teachings would go to show that this was the true climax of affections from the earliest ages of the world—friendship transcending all loves; which is only another way of saying that a love which is absolutely and devotedly unselfish is superior to a love which has in it any measure or taint of self-interest.

The loves competing with friendship are conjugal and kinship love. David bore witness to a friend's love as "passing the love of woman"; and Solomon affirmed unhesitatingly, "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

It is a pregnant fact that in all the Old Testament stories only one human being is ever referred to as a "friend" of God. The Lord is referred to as "Father" of all, and as "Husband" of his entire people; but only

Abraham is designated as the Lord's "friend". From first to last, it is "Moses, my servant", of whom the Lord speaks.

True it is that, under the new dispensation, when Jesus would honor above all precedent the disciples who had trusted him unswervingly, he said as he was parting with them for a season: "No longer do I call you servants; . . . but I have called you friends." Friendship is the love of loves by the Bible standard.

It can hardly be supposed that it is of carelessness, or without intention, that in both the Old Testament and the New a distinction is repeatedly marked between the mere marriage tie and the highest attainment of friendship; whereby the former is counted of the flesh—and the life here in the flesh; while the latter is counted of the soul—the very life itself.

It is not that the ties of marriage or the ties of blood ought, in any case, to exist without the sentiment of friendship; but it is that those ties do not in and of themselves secure such an interunion of soul as is possible between those who are only friends. Friendship, without conjugal or kinship love, is a profounder and more sacred affection than conjugal or kinship love without friendship. Without this love, the other loves can never reach their highest and holiest possibilities, or be at their God-intended completion.

Thus always, from the earliest ages to the latest, in sacred writing and in secular, friendship finds its recognition as the pre-eminent and surpassing affection of the heart. The thought was sententiously expressed by both Publius Syrus and Seneca: "Friendship always benefits; but love also injures." Or, as Goethe expands the thought:

> "True *friendship* shows its worth in stern refusal
> At the right moment; and strong *love* sometimes
> Heaps the loved with ruin, when it serves
> The will more than the weal of who demands."

A love that is not conditional on reciprocity or recognition; a love that is unselfish, uncraving; a love that consists in loving rather than in being loved, and that is based on what the loved one is in himself, not on what he is to the one who loves—cannot be brought to an end by any act, or by any lack, of another than the one whose best personality it represents and exhibits; nor by him while he remains faithful. A true friend is changeless in all changes. He is like the sun, shining just as truly toward the earth while clouds are between it and our planet as when the atmosphere is clearest; not like the moon that shines only when it is shined upon.

> "Love is not love
> Which alters when it alteration finds,
> Or bends with the remover to remove;
> Oh, no! It is an ever fixed mark
> That looks on tempests, and is never shaken."

> "Those never love
> Who dream that they loved once."

because "love never faileth".

Wilhelm von Humboldt saw his friend Charlotte Diede for only three days, in his early manhood; but the friendship then awakened was maintained during twenty-six years of absence and of silence which followed that meeting. Even after that, when the intercourse of these two friends was renewed and was kept up by delightful correspondence for the twenty remaining years of his life—both being married, he happily and she well—they saw each other only twice in all that time. Yet this is one of the friendships of history; and its record is consistent with all that is known of the high possibilities of the changelessness in a friend, despite all changes in the *intercourse* of friendship.

David's heart-cry of sorrow and love for his dead friend was:

> "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan;
> Very pleasant hast thou been unto me;
> Thy love to me was wonderful,
> Passing the love of woman."

But David's friendship for Jonathan was not changed by the change that separated them thus suddenly. It was long years after this that David, finally settled in his established kingdom, asked of those about him, "Is there yet any left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" And when they told him of Mephibosheth, the crippled son of Jonathan, David brought that representative of his dead friend to his royal home, and gave him a place at the king's table. It is of the power over David of this changeless friendship that Cardinal Newman tells:

"O heart of fire! Misjudged by willful man,
Thou flower of Jesse's race!
What woe was thine, when thou and Jonathan
Last greeted face to face!
He doomed to die, thou soon thus to embrace
The portent of a blood-stained reign.

"Yet it was well: —for amid cares of rule
And crime's encircling tide,
A spell was o'er thee, zealous one, to cool
Thy joy and kingly pride;
With battle scene and pageant prompt to blend
The pale, calm spectre of a blameless friend."

But there are changes more trying than those of absence or of death. He who has won a friend's love may cease to be loving, or may cease to be true. Can a friendship be changeless in such changes as these?

The intimacies of friendship are one thing; but friendship itself is quite another thing. The intimacies depend on the reciprocal relations of the two friends; but the friendship of either is independent of the course or the attitude of the other. A friendship may be changeless while the intimacies of that friendship change greatly. Failure on the part of the one loved may sadden a friend's heart, or treachery may break it, but no such change as this can alter that heart's fidelity. In all the changes of that last night of our dear Lord's gloom, his friendship was changeless. The nearer one's friendship

approaches to the standard of Jesus, the surer it will be to remain true, despite every failure of the object of love.

"Unchanged within, to see all changed without
Is a blank lot, and hard to bear, no doubt.
Yet why at others' wanings shouldst thou fret?
Then only might'st thou feel a just regret,
Hadst thou withheld thy love or hid thy light
In selfish forethought of neglect and slight.

Oh, wiselier then, from feeble yearnings freed,
While and on whom thou mayest — Shine on! Nor heed
Whether the object by reflective light
Return thy radiance or absorb it quite:
And though thou notice from thy safe recess
Old friends burn dim, like lamps in noisome air,
Love them for what they are, nor love them less
Because to thee they are not what they were."

Again, from Coleridge:

"Each spoke words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted — ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining, —
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between —
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween
The marks of that which once hath been."

A changeless personality, that must unceasingly suffer from the changed relations of a once choice friendship, cannot be so untrue to itself as to be untrue to the memories, the inspirations, and the obligations of that friendship. At the very worst, its reverent cry will be:

"We that were friends, yet are not now,
We that must daily meet
With ready words and courteous bow,
Acquaintances of the street;
We must not scorn the holy past,
We must remember still
To honor feelings that outlast
The reason or the will."

While friendship is by its very nature unselfish and outgoing, friendship is also by its very nature a consistent gainer through its loving expenditures of self. It thrives by its outlay; it experiences "the giving that is gaining". In all holiest service of love the truth remains that "whosoever shall seek to gain his life shall lose it; but whoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." Friendship brings its lavish returns to him who asks no return, but who lavishly loves without a thought of gain.

"Grant unto us", asked two of the friends of Jesus, "that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus said to them, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink?" Many a longing one since the days of James and John has wished for the returns of a loving devotedness, without counting the countless cost of such devotion.

"All like the purchase; few the price will pay;
And this makes friends such miracles below."

The outlay in a real friendship's cause is threefold: An outlay in self-surrender; an outlay in suffering *for* one's friend; an outlay in suffering *from* one's friend; and these three items of outlay are expensive and remunerative in the order of their naming.

Only through an unfailing forgetfulness of self is friendship a possibility; and self-forgetfulness is an expensive virtue. Publius Syrus said: "Enmity costs less than affection."

He who is a friend suffers with his friend because he is his friend. No suffering on one's own account can, indeed, be such a grievous trial to a friend as the suffering he endures when the one whom he loves best is a sufferer. He inevitably shares the burden of that suffering, and he would be glad if he could bear it wholly. Now the sharing, or, what is more, the bearing and engrossing, another's griefs and trials, demands a larger outlay of sympathy and of strength than is called for in carrying

only one's personal sorrow; yet this very outlay is its own return, accordingly enlarging and strengthening the heart which it taxes.

This certainty of an increased outlay of heart's-blood through the demands of an unselfish affection it is that prompted the selfish maxim of the icy-hearted Buddha: "Let, therefore, no man love anything; loss of the beloved is evil. Those who love nothing and hate nothing have no fetters." And here is the rejoinder to this disloyal cry of the self-insulated soul:

> "I hold it true, whate'er befall;
> I feel it when I sorrow most;
> 'Tis better to have loved and lost
> Than never to have loved at all."

The uttermost outlay of an unselfish friendship is, however, liable to be in the loving endurance of suffering from a friend. And nothing better proves, or more surely advantages a true friendship than this willing outlay of self, when the need exists, under the infliction of pain—unkind, thoughtless or all unconscious as it may be—on the part of the loved one. The very capacity for an unselfish friendship includes a keen sensitiveness in the direction of that affection; and no love is more liable to misconception — *through its very absence of apparent motive*—than a love that is without limit or claim or craving. Hence no one can so deeply wound a true friend as the one to whom he is a friend.

"The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" tells of the side door of the heart which enters at once into the secret chambers of one's being, and of the peril of trusting a key to that door to any loved one. "Be very careful to whom you trust one of the keys of the side door," he says. "The fact of possessing one renders those even who are dear to you very terrible at times . . . Some of them have a scale of your whole nervous system, and can play all the gamut of your sensibilities in semitones—touching the naked nerve pulps as a pianist strikes his instrument.

No stranger can get a great many notes of torture out of a human soul; it takes one that knows it well."

That there is in the truest friendship a possible call to this outlay of suffering from a friend's fault or a friend's failure, or from some mutual misunderstanding, is obvious because of the human imperfectness of both the loving and the loved.

But what if one most generously give himself in love for his friend, in suffering with a friend, and in endurance from a friend?

> "A friend is worth all hazards we can run.
> Poor is the friendless master of a world:
> A world of a friend is gain."

LIMITATIONS AND IMITATIONS

An affection that transcends all loves, and that has ever commanded the highest honor before God and man, must, inevitably, have its limitations and imitations. Its limitations will be found in the restricted possibilities of the individual whom it sways, while its imitations are a result of the widespread desire for its supposed advantages.

He who is capable of friendship at its best cannot be a true friend alike to all. The very intensity of this sentiment demands a positive limit to the extension of its scope. The most unselfish and expensive of human affections cannot be for all, or from all, alike. Its exacting demands effect its limitations; its recognized attractiveness implies its imitations.

The devout Jeremy Taylor, while insisting that the New Testament idea of friendship is that "charity", or "love", which in its fullest exercise would take in all mankind, recognized the truth that in its practical application, within the sphere of our being, "this universal friendship . . . must be limited, because *we* are so;" and that while we should be "*friendly*" toward all, "all cannot be admitted to a special actual friendship" in our

affections. And his conclusion is that Christianity justifies the Christian in choosing as a friend "the bravest, the worthiest, and the most excellent person" to be found.

Our Lord's own example would seem to substantiate this view. In the very nature of things, a true man cannot give the homage of his truest self except to one who commands his love and confidence in a unique degree; and this fact marks both the limitation and the claim of the supremest friendship.

It is in this very limitation of the truest friendship that the truest friendship finds its transcendent and unique power. So it was that Tennyson, mourning his one friend, found himself wholly friend-bereft:

> "And unto me no second friend."

There is a popular tendency to confound "friendship" with "friendliness"; to think of that quality of friendliness which makes its possessor prompt to show a kindly, tender and sympathetic interest in his fellows generally, as in some way akin to, or a phase of, that unselfish outgoing of the whole soul to another, in a ceaseless and unswerving affection, which alone is worthy of the name of friendship. But friendliness and friendship are separate and distinct attitudes of being. Friendliness may be exercised by one person toward a hundred or a thousand others alike. Inspired wisdom is at one with poetic sentiment in recognition of the contrast between friendship in its limitations, and friendliness with its imitations of friendship. A corrected translation of Proverbs 18:24 reads:

> "He that seeketh many companions, doeth it to his own destruction;
> But there is a *friend* that sticketh closer than a brother."

In Psalms 38:11, David says: "My *friends* and my *neighbors* stand aloof from my plague." Job's three "friends", by the way, were "neighbors", not "friends".

But to love one truly does not mean that we either should be or will be cold toward the others. "Oh; love one heart purely and warmly," says Jean Paul Richter, "then thou lovest all hearts after it; and thy heart in its heaven sees, like the journeying sun, in all that it looks upon—from the dew-drop even to the ocean—nothing but mirrors which it warms and fills."

The *limitations* of friendship, then, lie in the ability of our nature to center our profoundest affections on an object that is capable of calling them forth at their best. The *imitations* of friendship are in those affiliations and alliances that depend upon personal interest or personal fancy, and that change with changes in the parties to them, as a true friendship does not.

While, as Solomon suggests, there is danger in an indiscriminate seeking of personal intimacies, there is a corresponding safe-guard in the affection of hearts won through an unfailing friendliness of spirit. "The more we love, the better we are," says Jeremy Taylor, "and the greater our friendships are, the dearer we are to God." And Wordsworth's counsel to a child is:

"Of humblest friends, bright creature! scorn not one."

There are hearts, however, which, while never realizing the highest friendship in its limitations, would never be satisfied with the imitations of friendship. We live in a world where not every precious seed comes to full fruition. Some falls where there is not much earth, and its upstarting blades wither away from lack of soul nourishment; some spring up only to have its new life choked out by the crowding thorns of an exacting world; yet other is trodden under foot by the careless passer along the way. And so it is that all the possibilities of a high and ennobling friendship are sometimes missed, through lack of opportunity of their fostering, through the crushing force of misunderstanding, or through the misrepresentations or interference of outside parties; causing

those who might have been the best and truest of friends to live without even the advantages of unbroken friendliness.

Yet no love is ever wasted; least of all can there be waste or loss in the love of an unselfish friendship. He whose heart swells or thrills with such a love, even while it aches with a sense of its misconception or its nonrecognition, is himself the sure and permanent gainer from his loving.

WHO CAN BE FRIENDS?

By whom are the privileges and possibilities of this highest and purest of human relations, this unselfish, outgoing, reverent and self-surrendering affection attainable? Must friends be only of the one sex, or only of the other? Or can they be of either or both? Is friendship at its highest necessarily limited to those who are not united by the ties of blood or marriage? Or can it coexist in its fullness with any and every sacred relation?

Since the truest friendship is the purest and most unselfish love, it follows that whoever is capable of such a love is capable of friendship. And those who love each other with such a love *are* friends, whatever be the barriers between them, or whatever human relation be a bond of their union.

Between man and man, all admit the possibility of the highest friendship. It is there that friendship has found its most notable historic and traditional illustrations. There is David and Jonathan, Jesus and John, Paul and Timothy, Orestis and Pylades, Damon and Pythias, Epaminondos and Pelopidas, Alexander and Hephæstian, Horace and Virgil, Pamphilus and Eusebius, Roland and Oliver, Godfrey and Lancred, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventura, Erasmus and Colet, Luther and Melancthon, Sir Philip Sydney and Lord Brooke, Hampden and Pym, Gœthe and Schiller, Alfred Tennyson and Arthur Hallam.

Few, again, would now question the reality of exalted and abiding friendship between woman and woman. Ruth and Naomi; and in many instances since their day, two women have been to each other dearer far than sisters. History has quoted such illustrious examples as Queen Philippa and Philippa Picard, Mary Queen of Scots and Mary Seton, Queen Anne and the Duchess of Marlborough, Mme. de Stael and Mme. Racaumier, Lady Sydney and Lady Murray, Catherine Talbot and Elizabeth Carter, and others also.

But because true friendship is love with the element of selfishness eliminated, because it is love apart from any relation which involves possession or the craving of possession, for that very reason friendship has found some of its choicest, its most refined, and its most unmistakable illustrations between two persons of opposite sexes. And just here the truth in its purity has had most difficulty of securing acceptance, in consequence of the weakness and follies and wickedness of the world. Yet ever and always at this point the truth has had its recognition and its inspiring power in the hearts of the noblest and the most nobly aspiring of the children of man.

Prominent in the records of the early Christian church stand out the hearty and devoted personal friendships of St. Jerome and Paula, St. Chrysostom and Olympias, of St. Ambrose and Monica, and of others hardly less illustrious. Later come St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare, Michael Angelo and Vittoria Colonna, John Locke and Lady Masham, Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale, William Cowper and Mary Unwin, Fenelon and Mme. Guyon, Humboldt and Charlotte Diede, and many like these in every land, which have furnished illustrations of the truth that no love is truer, and none more tender, more abiding, or more admirable, than a sacred and sexless friendship.

While friendship is not the love which is an immediate outgrowth, or which necessarily pivots on a relation

by kinship or marriage, such a relation is certainly no barrier to the existence of that unselfish and sexless love which is the essence of the truest and purest friendship. Brothers and sisters are not friends merely by loving each other as brothers and sisters; but they can be friends over and above, if not on account of their fraternal relationship. So with parents and children, with husbands and wives, with lovers and loved ones—friendship is possible between them; but that friendship must ever be a measure of love over and above that love which is of the relation that formally binds them to each other. No love can fairly be counted the love which is friendship, unless it could exist at its fullest and best either with or without the binding force of any other relation than simple friendship.

If a husband be truly the friend of his wife—as he ought to be—his love for her as a friend could be just as strong, just as tender, just as permanent and unswerving, if she were not his wife nor ever might be.

A gleam of such wedded friendship would seem to show itself in the records of Mausolus and Artemisia, of Shah Jahan and Nour Jehan, of Seneca and Paulina, Herder and his Caroline, Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett, of William Ewart Gladstone and Catherine Glynn, and of many another.

But few indeed have been able successfully and lastingly to bridge the chasm of conventionality and criticism which lies between kindred hearts, separated by matrimony on the one part or the other—or both. The instance already mentioned (see page 57) of Wilhelm von Humboldt and Charlotte Diede, gives one of the best examples of true and unfailing appreciation and attachment. His wife, Caroline von Docherodan, was herself noble and loving enough to wish him never to be untrue to any love; for if he could not be faithful in the sacred and eternal relationship of friend, how could he be in the less sacred and temporal relationship of husband?

Goethe, like all children of September, suffered most and caused most suffering from his own changeable feeling. But there were two who seemed to have the perseverence and the greatness of heart to inspire faithfulness even in him—Schiller and Frau von Stein. Of his friendship with Schiller all the world knows. It was also at Weimar that Goethe formed his life-shaping friendship with Charlotte von Stein, wife of the Master of the Horse. She was then thirty-three years old, some six years older than Goethe. She had been married eleven years, and was the mother of seven children. At once she won the admiration and confidence of Goethe, and from first to last she drew out his best impulses and aspirations. They became the best of friends. With her husband Goethe was also on excellent terms. "He was a sensible, practical person who did not interfere with his wife's friendships; and the idea that there was any reason why he should be jealous of Goethe seems never to have entered his mind." The influence of this friendship on the character and tastes of Goethe was most important.

Wilhelm Scherer says on this point: "Goethe's relation to Frau von Stein developed the tenderest side of his nature. She was open and sincere, not passionate, not enthusiastic, but full of intellectual ardor; a gentle seriousness dignified her demeanor; a pure, sound judgment united with a noble thirst for knowledge, rendered her capable of sharing all Goethe's poetic, scientific and human interests . . . The moral and religious forces of his nature were strengthened and elevated by Frau von Stein. Purity is the name he has for that nobler inward life which she awakened in him, and in which he seemed to rise more and more to the passionless wisdom of Spinoza . . . His poetry, too, at this time became a mirror of purity." This friendship of Goethe with Frau von Stein was so close for ten years that "he made her acquainted with every action, every thought of his mind,

all the working of his brain''; and though it was interrupted by his absence in Italy, the two were friends for fifty years, and she is said to have had more than a thousand letters from him.

Since the world began, unselfish love has been the highest outreaching of the human heart, and the heart's richest blessing. To be loved unselfishly is to be loved for one's own sake, and to be sure of such a love in spite of lacks and failures on one's own part, is a cause of unfailing joy to the gladdest soul or to the saddest. Our Lord's love for us is of just this nature. A consciousness of such love has lifted the lowliest peasant to a height that no throne of earth could secure to its possessor; and it has been more to the occupant of the loftiest throne than all his royal treasures and prerogatives. It has nerved the cowardly to acts of heroism, and has given added grace to the heroic daring of the bravest. It has won the selfish mind to a life of goodness, and has brought the purest hearted to a holier consecration of himself and all his powers to God. It has enabled the sufferer to endure, and the hopeless to hope. It has brought light into the gloom of the despairing, and has given to the sorrowing a foretaste of heavenly joy. Many beautiful examples of friendship are found on the plane of the soulish humanity.

Ideal friendship is in its very nature spiritual. It is such a love as God gives, and as man ought to give to God. It is such a love as man ought to give to his fellow man for God's sake. ''If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye?'' asks our Lord, for even sinners love those that love them.'' Friendship love is of God. Everyone that thus loves is begotten of God, for ''God is love; and he that abideth in him, abideth in God, and God abideth in him.''

MARRIAGE

Marriage is a divine institution; but it is not an ordinance of the church of Christ. Marriage is a fusion of the affections and interests of beings on the human plane. As the poet expresses it:

> "Nothing in the world is single;
> All things by a law divine
> In one another's being mingle."

There is a principle of duality that runs throughout all of God's creation, so far as we know it. Perhaps it would be truer to say that there are two principles, each complementary to the other; one gifted with energy to act, and the other with equal energy and aptitude to react. This is true alike in the vegetable as in the animal world. The fabric of nature, like its phenomena, is resolved everywhere into twos.

Sun and earth, land and water, male and female, the straight line and the curve, do but express pre-eminently a universal principle in this admirable adaptation of things to action and reaction.

No other source of phenomena, either in the animate or inanimate world, shows so distinctly the purpose of God the Creator as that man and woman should keep the equilibrium of life by being counterpart to each other. The entire brain and nervous system, with their wonderful appendages of muscles and bones, are alike on both sides of the body. In fact, it may be said that the anatomy of the human body is a sublime hymn in honor of its Creator.

The cap-sheaf of God's earthly creation was man, made in two organisms, each external to the other, each embodying all the mysteries of nature, and yet with their relative properties and affinities so proportioned that each should be the ideal, the life of the other. The union of these elements is the vital principle of creation, the secret cause why one thing coheres with another.

In human life either sex without the other would be incomplete. It will be noted that while both man and woman are bi-sexual in themselves, they are complementary in relation to each other. Man and woman are alike as far as basic powers are concerned, and differ mainly in quality, quantity, and proportion.

Man is strong, woman is elastic; man is thoughtful, woman is emotional; man is inventive; woman is intuitive; man is positive, woman is negative; man is firm, woman is tenacious; man is liberal, woman is kind; man loves power, woman loves admiration; man wishes to be looked up to, woman wishes to look up to; man is methodical, woman is tasteful; man thinks, woman considers; man respects, woman adores; man has pluck, woman has fortitude; man wholesales, woman retails; man has push, woman has patience; man rules by commands, woman rules by love; man is philanthropic, woman is sympathetic; man has judgment, woman has sagacity; man has talent, woman has tact; man takes the lead, woman guides; man conquers by force, woman conquers with smiles; man is dignified, woman is affable; man has passionate love, woman has conjugal love; man has a strong temper, woman has a quick temper; man speculates, woman calculates; man feels his superiority, woman feels her equality; woman can do man's work and adapt herself to his sphere in life, as well as he can do her work and adapt himself measurably to her sphere.

There is something in marriage of all the other fine relations of life. There is a certain element of brotherliness, as between the married pair; there is a certain

fatherly attitude in the husband's provision for the wife; there is a certain motherly brooding on the part of the wife over her husband; there is friendship, and an element of comradeship; and in every successful marriage there is always something more. It is something that is present in no other human relationship. It is just the feeling that as between husband and wife there shall be a total blending of mind with mind and heart with heart; that they shall touch not merely in one point as chance friends or companions do, but that they shall touch in all points. They are moved to have all interests in common, to pass through the vicissitudes of life together, to suffer with each other, to rejoice together, to con life's lessons together; to wish to confer propitious benefit each on the other.

It is true that man and woman fulfill each other's needs outside of marriage, too, only much less completely.

Marriage has suffered, along with all other relations, because of the presence of sin and imperfection in the world. Probably it has suffered more than any other relation because its interests are so comprehensive. It is not too much to say that nine-tenths of human experience is centered around this kinship. For these reasons marriage is now a relationship which in its very nature is capable of producing the most exquisite torture on the one hand and the most wonderful bliss on the other. There is need of the most extreme compassion and tenderness on both sides.

The New Testament instructions to husbands are: "Husbands, love your wives, as your own bodies"—and more, for he is to lay down his life for her "even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it".

To wives the apostle says: "Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, as unto the Lord." There is a principle of headship involved here which does not imply superiority and inferiority of person or even of sex, in the sense of one being more important than the other.

This principle of headship runs throughout all Jehovah's arrangements. God is the head of Christ; Christ is the head of the church; man is the head of woman; while man and woman constitute the head of the home—for while woman's relationship to man is feminine, her relation toward minor children is masculine.

While marriage is thus seen to be much more than an ordinary contract, it is nevertheless a contract, and that phase of it must not be overlooked.

The state has no power to marry people. The most it can do is to take and to record the declarations of the contracting parties. The form of ceremony is not a vital thing. This has differed widely at various times in earth's history and does even now differ widely in various parts of the world. We make use of a conventional form because it seems to answer the requirements of the law in a simple manner.

What God-made laws of attraction have joined, let not human meddling seek to put asunder.

Facts don't have much effect on people's thinking. Their thinking derives from and accords with their resident emotions.

Paul was not entertainingly eloquent as was Apollos (2 Corinthians 10), but he could tell about God's purposes (Ephesians 3), and declare the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). He was not what the world describes as brilliant, but he was what God describes as faithful (2 Timothy 4); he did not always win in a visible way, but he was always true; he did not always succeed, but he did always live up to the light he had.

INVENTION AND DISCOVERY

"Behold, this only have I found: that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."
Ecclesiastes 7:29

HONESTY is nothing more nor less than the disposition to face the facts. And of all the dispositions in the world this is surely one of the rarest. Our head text is authority for the belief that God made man perfect, and that the difficulties in human experience are due not to God's workmanship in creating man but to man's doings after he was created.

Man sought, almost at once, to devise new ways of making himself more wise and happy than God had made him. Of course, this disposition resulted from a lack of trust in the Creator's wisdom; and this lack of trust soon budded and blossomed into thoroughgoing self-conceit, pride.

So it is that just after Adam's transgression we read of man's inventing various contrivances wherewith he meant to enjoy life apart from God (Genesis 4). This spirit of "inventing evil things" had pervaded even unto the Apostle's day (Romans 1:30); and since he also told us that "evil men and seducers should wax worse and worse" in the "last days", we have reason to expect that this tendency to "provoke God to anger by inventions" (Psalm 106:29) would be found now in intensified form.

Mechanical inventions themselves may or may not be helpful; the principal concern is as to the object in the invention and as to the effect of inventions upon the individual's heart. By far the majority of human inventions have been devised with a view of forcing a blessing

out of life regardless of divine favor or disfavor. Inventions may help to distract the mind away from its wretched state; but they are powerless to create happiness. No more marked proof of this assertion is needed than a casual review of the world's present wonders. A writer in the Philadelphia *Public Ledger* recently said:

"I am writing this in the living room of my home, on a typewriter that weighs no more than a moderate sized book.

"Light is provided by a lamp in which burn two incandescent bulbs.

"In an adjoining room is a telephone from which I can talk to any city on the continent.

"On the wall is a thermostat which regulates the flow of gas in my furnace, and keeps the room at an even temperature of 70 degrees.

"A music cabinet contains records of the finest arias from the best operas, and selections by the greatest musicians in the world. I can hear this music, leaning back in a comfortable chair while I smoke a cigar and I don't have to defer to anyone in making up my program for the evening.

"Almost within arm's reach are several shelves of books filled with the most profound and beautifully expressed thoughts of the ages.

"The floors of my home are cleaned with a suction sweeper, while the clothes are put through an electric washer and ironed in an electrically driven mangle.

"My children attend a school where they are given a better education than the sons of kings could command a century ago.

"I go to work in a machine which some people call an automobile, and I travel a distance in three-quarters of an hour which would have been an all-day trip for my father a generation ago.

"I enjoy all these things and yet I am just an ordinary citizen living in an ordinary way. Tens of thousands have just as much as I—and more.

"And yet I kick and wonder what ails the world.

"Were the good things of life ever so easily at the command of the ordinary man as they are today? Don't we all do a lot of welching that we haven't any right to do? And if we aren't careful, isn't there danger that we will upset the greatest civilization the world has ever known."

This description fits not the exception but the rule in the upper and middle classes of this country. And are they happy? There was never so much unhappiness, never so much distress and perplexity. No; inventions

do not make happy. Happiness belongs only to the people who know the joyful sound and who walk in the light of the countenance of the God of heaven. It may be argued that these are not the inventions which the Lord through Solomon would remind us of. Was not he speaking of inventions of the mind, false philosophies, misleading and improperly named science, theories, teachings, isms? Very well: but every physical invention started with an idea, in fact, is an idea brought into concrete state.

The Lord's people are not so likely to become absorbed in material inventions (though that sometimes happens) as to become entrapped with some self-perfecting scheme or device whereby they can presumably make themselves more acceptable than they already are in the Beloved.

The danger of such a thing seems to be implied in some of the Apostle's words to the Corinthians: "Though we walk in the flesh we do not war according to the flesh [parenthetical clause]; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience when your obedience shall be made full" (2 Corinthians 10:4-6).

St. Paul is here boldly casting into the scales of his readers the weight of his own personality over against his calumniators at Corinth. They were sneering at him in his absence by making reference to his unassuming presence in their midst. He had written them a plain and bold letter before this, and these schismatics or divisionists had said: Oh yes: he is very bold when he is away; he writes a strong letter, but why didn't he show as much courage while he was here?

It was easy to criticize and misrepresent a depression of spirit and humility of demeanor, which were caused by a deep anxiety for the welfare of the Thessalonians,

before Silas and Timothy joined him bearing news of conditions in Thessalonica (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

But the Apostle is disposed to exhaust every peaceable means for stopping the difficulty in Corinth before he resorts to extreme measures. He beseeches the brethren as a whole, saying, 'I pray you that you may not make it necessary for me to show, when I am present that official peremptoriness which I am minded to show against those who charge me with unworthy motives. For though Timothy, Silas, Titus, and I are walking in the flesh, we are not walking *after* the flesh, and hence do not war as do weak human beings. The weapons which we have and which we are authorized to wield are not of human making: no, they are more powerful than that. And if I must come to you in this power I will show you its superiority over earthly military force in that, while that might subdue natural fastnesses and battlements this can (and will if you force me) pull down the imaginings of your mind, and every haughty sophistry among you, and like a vanquisher, lead away captive all your fine ideas, bringing them into the new stronghold where they will have to be subservient to Christ. After most of you have surrendered and thus fulfilled your obedience, some rebels may remain, and these will be punished.'

These Corinthian subverters were filled with inventions, imaginings, sophistries, while the Apostle had the advantage of revelations of God's will. Our part is not to invent anything whatever, but to give heed to what God has revealed or discovered to us, not merely about the matter immediately in hand in this second epistle to the Corinthians, but as respects every matter.

In every legitimate realm of human endeavor some need is had for the truth, for the facts. Those who are the sharpest and clearest in discerning the whole of any situation with which they have to do are those who go ahead. The scientific engineer is perhaps the most accustomed to dealing with facts. He can get nowhere at all

without them; and whatever may have been his natural proclivities, he must have learned that the situation must be looked at squarely in the face and that all the facts must be taken into consideration if he is to be successful in building a great bridge, in sinking a shaft, in constructing a power plant, or in erecting a massive edifice. He must acknowledge the reign of inevitable law. He must be honest. He must face the facts. He dare not fool himself. His attitude of mind must be that of a judge rather than that of a prosecuting attorney. Perhaps this is why few engineers contribute their efforts toward religious work, for religion is the field where facts are most generally discarded.

The truth is the only food for the mind. No progress can be made on self-devised imaginings. (To be sure, there is a legimate use of imagination in the sense of idealizing facts and planning actions; but that is not the use here.) Accordingly we learn that one of the first works of Messiah's kingdom will be to "sweep away the refuge of lies" (Isaiah 28:17), to dispel those habits and systems of thought which cause a person to think one thing and say another, and to fool himself in the doing of it.

The facts must be faced by all, though they are not complimentary to any; and this is the reason why the facts on the most important issues of life are deliberately sidestepped by the most of people. They do not like them.

But those who have become the Lord's have faced the facts sufficiently to acknowledge their own undone condition and to turn to the God of all grace for help. These, having seen the light, and having started with the support of the truth, ought not to become entangled with their own imagining or that of others, with their own inventions or those of others. Yet there is no tendency to which we are more prone. The flesh dislikes so to acknowledge its worthlessness. It yearns so for at least some of the honor and glory of salvation.

If we are not very watchful, self becomes the center and self the circumference of all our thoughts. Some imagine themselves to be some great one. Others, having less self-esteem but not less desire for attention and glory, imagine themselves to be in worse trouble than anybody else on earth—partly with a view to calling forth sympathy. Others imagine that somebody does not like them quite as cordially as they would like to be liked. And still others, whose selfishness takes a morbidly conscientious turn, imagine that they have incurred the second death, snatching the honor and responsibility of judgeship from Him who is Head and Determiner over all things to the church which is his body.

Now all of these things are usually inventions of the mind. The facts are that we are incapable of judging wisely in any matter on which we do not have specific guidance from above.

Many of the Lord's people, having had their larger hopes stimulated, are apt to be over sanguine in all matters. This trait has some advantages and is, on the whole, much better than moroseness; but it may be a disadvantage when it comes to such practical things as paying the rent. There the facts must be faced; there is nothing gained by deceiving one's self.

Approbativeness keeps many people from seeing and telling the truth. There is something about the facts which does not place them in an admirable light. They are looking for their own immediate interests; and immediate comfort does not lie in the direction of the truth; therefore they do not see the truth. And since all these tendencies are in men, it should not surprise us to find them constantly coming to the surface in ourselves.

In no field of Christian experience are these tendencies more frequently encountered than in that of sanctification, holiness, perfection. A certain amount of reverence is involved; idealism is involved; hope is involved; sublimity is involved; and conscience is involved. But

while it appears to be a complex problem, the Lord has not left us without chart, compass, or helm, but has given us revelation, lest we, having been dependent upon him for a start in the narrow way, become dependent upon our own selves, our own efforts, our own righteousness, our own inventions, for finishing it.

As to sanctification: this is one of the four things that God has made Christ to be to his people (1 Corinthians 1:30). Now sanctification includes both standing and walk in Christ Jesus. As far as the walk is concerned, there is progress; and for this progress we are given instructions in the Word of Truth (John 17:17). But as far as the subject touches standing, there is no progression in that.

The Scripture never speaks of a change of heart. That is a human invention. God speaks of a "new heart" being created; and that is a very different thing. In the coming day of blessing Israel will have an exchange of hearts. They will lose the stony heart and get a heart of flesh; but this is not a change of one into the other. The Lord never speaks of his work as being an improvement on the old man. On the contrary, he tells us that the old man is hostile to the things of God (Romans 8:7); and that he cannot get to know spiritual things; that they are foolishness to him (1 Corinthians 2:14).

The flesh is opposed to the spirit. The old disposition is opposed to the new, as is attested by Galatians 5:17. Conflict and warfare is not improvement. The spirit of God in its operations in us as new creatures is not improving that with which the warfare is carried on, any more than one side in the world war was "improving" the other side by fighting against it.

How subtle the flesh! If we do not watch we will be looking for a ground of peace in our "advanced" selves, instead of being occupied with that peace which has been made by the perfect sacrifice of Christ. Instead of being

occupied with Jesus' finished work for us, we incline to be taken up with an ever-unfinished work in us. It is a question of Christ or self. And the only reason why many Christians are occupied with "higher ground" standing is because it exalts self. "Eradication" and "advanced holiness" lift us up; whereas the work of the spirit is just the opposite: it glorifies Christ. "He shall glorify me" were the Saviour's words (John 16:14); and in them we have a standard by which we may test everything in us and around us. "Of him [God] are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us . . .. sanctification" (1 Corinthians 1:30). This is brought to us with Christ. First it is righteousness. How was this and when was it? Was it by works or anything that we could do? No; for righteousness is expressly declared to be "to him that worketh not" (Romans 4:5). It is just so with all we have in Christ—the same with sanctification as with righteousness. Righteousness is "without works", and we cannot have sanctification by works. Both righteousness and sanctification are put on precisely the same ground. We can no more work out a sanctification for ourselves (in the sense of standing) than we can work out a righteousness of our own. We must face the facts. We must be honest with ourselves.

When it is written of holiness that "without [it] no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14) it does not say: without a certain measure of holiness, but without the thing itself. And how do we get it? The answer is that we get it in just the same way that we get righteousness. It comes with Christ and is in Christ. We get Christ by gift, by grace, and by imputation, and it is all Christ from first to last. There is only one standing for everyone in Christ. We cannot grow in standing; for it is all in his perfection. It is perfect. Nothing can be put to it and nothing taken from it; though our knowledge of it and experience under it and our enjoyment of it may grow and will grow. But it is one standing and the

same standing for the weakest, the poorest, the youngest, the humblest child of God, as well as for the highest and most learned. It is not a question of knowledge but of life; and that life is Christ. In him we have a perfect righteousness by grace. In him also we have a perfect sanctification by grace. We are righteous before God as he is righteous; holy as he is holy; because Christ is "made" unto us both righteousness and sanctification. Both are perfect. Our standing is perfect.

Now our *walk* is marked by failures, and infirmities, and falls, and even sins. That is quite another matter. Our walk must not be confused with our standing.

The Apostle tells us that we have all been made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Perhaps we have inclined to read this as though it referred to some future attainment. But not so. The thing which makes us competent for an allotment among the saints in light is not our works, but is the spirit of sonship. And this we have already. A son is a fit subject for inheritance. And we cannot by straining become sons. We are already in the divine family. There is plenty of room for growth, but even growth does not come from overstraining—a rupture is more likely to result. Growth comes from normal activity. But even a grown son is no more a son than a child is a son. Both are members of the family.

This is surely the truth as to the present position of all who are in Christ as a result of his perfect work for us. And it is in occupation with him and with what God has made us to be in him that we are caused and enabled to "walk worthy of his calling".

We are to "walk worthily of the Lord" (Colossians 1:10). But this is not accomplished by occupation with our walk. It is accomplished by occupation with our Master and with the object of our walk.

We do not live by the study of biology; we do not breathe by the study of pneumatics; nor hear by the

study of acoustics; nor get warm by studying the theory of heat. Likewise, we cannot grow as new creatures (nor in our natural bodies either) by trying to add one cubit to our stature: nor add one year to our life by being anxious about it.

Our walk is made worthy of our calling only when the Word of Christ dwells in us richly: only when that word is applied to our hearts. Hence it is written: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). But the holy spirit makes it possible for this Word to be constantly applied to our hearts. For "God hath from the beginning chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

Thus occupied the new creature feeds and grows and becomes strong. There will be growth; but as to our standing, that is perfect. In Him we are righteous and holy in all His righteousness and holiness.

It is the work of the Lord's spirit to witness in our hearts of Christ, but the great tendency of the flesh is to occupy us with the spirit's witness within us, instead of with Christ's work for us, of whom and of which the spirit witnesses. Hence we are occupied with the means and miss the end, while we lose the very blessing which we seek. Hence the failure which is admitted and mourned over.

So long as this condition prevails our great enemy is well content. He knows (if we do not) that Christ is the source of all our strength and blessing. His one aim, therefore, is to keep the heart from being occupied with Christ. Any means will serve his purpose so long as this can be accomplished. Hence the devil will occupy (1) the sinner with his sins, (2) the penitent with his penitence, (3) the believer with his faith, (4) the student with his study, (5) the servant with his service, (6) and the saint with his holiness.

Anything, so long as it is not Christ.

Automobilists in California are all familiar with the highway that runs for several hundred miles through the state and which the frequent sign posts still call, in Spanish, El Camino Real, the Royal Road, the King's Highway. Is there such a royal road to holiness? There is.

Man is selfish according to his fallen propensities. And by selfish is meant inordinately self-centered, disproportionately interested in self and occupied with self. And even Christians, having still the fleshly bodies, are not free from this ever-present temptation.

This is bad enough in itself; and its results are bad. But when occupation with self is substituted for occupation with Christ, then a double evil results: the truth is forsaken and peace is lost; a false way is taken and misery is found.

The individual is deceived. Christ is not altogether left out; but he is brought in only to be mixed up with self, and is thus dishonored instead of glorified. He is not put first. It is a case of Self and Co. And Self must do something or else Christ is powerless to help. It is almighty Self instead of almighty God.

This is no royal road to holiness or happiness either one. Like all human remedies, the dose has to be repeated again and again, and then brings no cure for the real evil, but actually causes other complications.

There is only one remedy; only one way; only one royal road. And this is a very old one. "The old paths," God calls it. The secret of this royal road lies in the utter rejection and obliteration of self in all its ten thousand subtle forms, and the occupation of the heart wholly with God and his Christ. This is no new remedy for the inherent evil tendencies of the human frame. It is old as the Word of God itself.

"They looked unto him and were lightened", is the description of those who used the remedy which God himself has provided and pointed out (Psalm 34:5). And in the same book of Psalms he has given us two cases

of those who to their great sorrow tried other remedies.

These cases are found in two Psalms of Asaph. He, like many others, went wrong in this matter. He forsook the fountain of living water and hewed him out cisterns of his own devising, but they were dry, and the end of his experience is told for instruction. The new remedies nearly killed him. He tried two of them; and the second after he had proved the failure of the first! "So foolish was I (he said), and ignorant." It is the same today; and the probabilities are that it will be the same right along.

One of these cases is in the Seventy-seventh Psalm, where Asaph engages in a course of introspection. He is looking within; and makes a very thorough job of it:

1. "I cried unto God with *my* voice,
   Even unto God with *my* voice;
   And he gave ear unto *me.*
2. In the days of *my* trouble I sought the Lord:
   My sore ran in the night, and ceased not;
   My soul refused to be comforted.
3. I prayed God, and was troubled:
   I complained, and *my* spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.
4. Thou holdest *mine* eyes waking:
   I am so troubled that I cannot speak. . . .
   I commune with *mine own heart.*
   And *my* spirit made diligent search."

Could there be any other effect from this self-examination than misery? No: and Asaph was miserable; for he goes on to ask:

7. "Will the Lord cast off for ever?
   And will he be favorable no more?
8. Is his mercy clean gone for ever?
   Does his promise fail for ever more?
9. Hath God forgotten to be gracious?
   Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah."

Here we are pointed to the misery which results from beholding one's own self, the distress of mind caused by self-occupation. This lamentable condition is in need of both prevention and cure. The next verse gives them:

10. "And I said, this is *my* infirmity:
But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.
11. I will remember the work of Jehovah.
Surely I will remember *thy* wonders of old.
12. I will meditate also of all *thy* work,
And talk of *thy* doings.
13. *Thy* way, O God, is in the sanctuary:
Who is so great a God as our God.
14. Thou art the God that doeth wonders:
Thou hast declared *thy* strength among the peoples.
Thou hast with *thine* arm redeemed thy people,
The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah."

This is the royal road to peace and happiness. Misery was the result of Asaph's introspection: and it must ever be so. For there is nothing within any of us to cause the slightest satisfaction, except what God has done there. Only "his workmanship" (Ephesians 2:10), his new creation work, furnishes us with anything to be glad of.

We see the end of this first complaint: the effect of the wrong remedy; the miserable result; and the true recovery. The second case of the same Asaph is recorded in Psalm Seventy-three. Here the trouble is not introspection, not looking in at himself, but looking around. Asaph had found that looking at himself was a disease that needed to be cured by having his vision engrossed with the view of the Lord; but he had not yet learned that looking at other people is a disease equally disastrous and fatal. Looking at self, one is necessarily miserable; but looking at others, one is distracted. The Psalm begins:

1. "Truly God is good to Israel.
Even to such as are of clean heart."

Asaph is looking away from himself it is true. But note what the effect of this is. The inevitable result of looking at others, and especially at those others who seem to be "more advanced" is to bring us back to ourselves and to reasonings about ourselves:

2. "But as for *me*, *my* feet were almost gone;
My steps had well nigh slipped.

3. For I was envious at the *foolish*,
When I saw the prosperity of the *wicked*.
4. For there are no bands in *their* death;
But *their* strength is firm.
5. *They* are not in trouble as other men;
Neither are *they* plagued like other men. . . .
7. *Their* eyes stand out with fatness:
They have more than heart could wish. . . .
12. Behold, *these* are the ungodly, who prosper in the world;
They increase in riches."

What is the result of this kind of occupation. The result is that he looks around and sees the righteous suffering, and the ungodly prospering. He sees the apparently needed one taken, and the useless, helpless one left. Naturally he gets distracted; and he slips down into the muck again:

13. "Verily I have cleansed *my* heart in vain,
And washed *my* hands in innocency.
14. For all the day long have I been plagued,
And chastened every morning.
15. If I say, I will speak thus:
Behold, I should offend the generation of thy children."

This is the turning point; when he thinks of God's children *as* his children. This brings him back to the royal road, to the King's highway.

16. "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;
17. Until I went into the *sanctuary of God*;
Then understood I their end. . . .
21. Thus my heart was grieved,
And I was pricked in my reins.
22. So foolish was I, and ignorant,
I was as a beast before thee."

But even a beast can shuffle along through the grim, dark shadows of a wood and emerge into the clearing. So now with Asaph we come out into the light. In the sanctuary all is made clear—as it was before (Psalm 77:13). In the presence of God all is right, or rather his presence sets all right. When he looked unto God he was lightened. Now he is engaged with the One thing worth while and is able to say:

23. "Nevertheless I am continually with Thee:
Thou hast holden me by my right hand.
24. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,
And afterwards receive me to glory.
25. Whom have I in heaven but Thee?
And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.
26. My flesh and my heart faileth:
But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

This is a blessed height to reach. Having reached this royal road, Asaph travels on to the end; and he tells us of his blessed and happy experiences, which he sums up in these words:

28. "I have put my trust in the Lord God,
That I may declare all *thy* works."

This is the end of the whole matter as far as ways and means are concerned. There was nothing in himself or in others that helped one bit. His help was in God's excellency. So, if our hearts are occupied with God and with the standing he has given us in Christ, our walk will largely take care of itself. Whether our walk pleases us or not, it will be vastly better by this method of having our eyes fixed on the delectable mountains than by being engrossed with the pebbles, and weeds, and thorns in our way; to say nothing of the bad hips, the club feet, and the stone bruises of our own imperfections.

If there are already heaven-provided stepping stones over a rocky ravine, why should the traveler stop in his journey in an effort to build an ornate and costly bridge? He has not the engineering equipment necessary for such a feat, and why deceive himself into thinking that he has?

Summing up Asaph's experiences, then, we learn: Look in, and be miserable; look around, and be distracted; look up, and be happy. God's remedy is a specific which is sure to cure; man's is a nostrum which is sure to fail.

There are two inspired prayers in this connection which are worthy of the closest scrutiny, in view of the

statement that "We know not what to pray for as we ought." If the spirit has helped our infirmity, we ought, in courtesy, as well as in our need, to give heed to that help. We know not how to pray because we know neither the height of the Father's power and love nor the depth of our own need. But here we are prayed for. Reference is had to the prayers in Ephesians 1:15-23 and 3:14-21.

These two prayers are distinct. In the former it is Christ, and what God has made him to be unto his people; and in the latter it is Christ, and what God has made us to be in him. We in Christ; Christ in us. For the church all blessings are treasured up in the Head; and are ministered to the members according to their need, and according to his will.

Identification with Christ is the secret concerning the church of God. Association with Israel in blessing is the revelation concerning the gentiles. The former is heavenly, and in the heavenlies: the latter is earthly, and in the earth.

But the point in which we are just now interested is the relationship which these two prayers bear to our subject. The first prayer is addressed to God (1:17); and the second is addressed to the Father (3:14). In the first, all is power; in the second, all is love. The starting point of these prayers is the fact that we possess in Christ everything except glory.

God by his mighty power raised up Christ and gave him to his church; gave him, thus raised and exalted and glorified, to his redeemed as their Head; gave him, who is Head over all things to them, the church: which church is the body, for he is its Head; and from him comes all its life and all its blessing: which church is also the fullness of him that filleth all (the members of his body) with all (spiritual gifts and graces). The church, being the members, fills up and completes that body: and he, being the Head, fills up the members with life and power, and blessing.

And why is all this? "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

This is not some goal to which we are to attain. This is not some high standard which we are to reach. But this is where we start from as believers. This is the letter A in the alphabet of the child of God.

If we do not see and know this blessed truth as to the perfect standing of Christ's redeemed in him, we start far below our privileges; and with all our abortive straining we shall never attain to anything like this height of blessing.

For shame! For shame! We are so full of ourselves: and we are so prone to be occupied with only one of our blessings. There is no need to ask with a nervous anxiety (as some good Christian people do), "Have you got the blessing?" For the Bible answer to that question is: Certainly; indeed; we have "all spiritual blessings in Christ". Thousands of them. They could be neither counted nor weighed, but they are all there "in Christ". God has not trusted and could not trust us with these blessings, or we should lose them the first thing. We are not competent to handle them all now. But he has given us one great blessing, the supreme blessing: and that is the blessing of knowing that we are "complete" in Christ, and are all "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light". We are only waiting to enter that inheritance in God's good time.

The whole question is, Do we believe this? Do we trust God's revelation, or do we still lean to our own understanding and trust, our own or other people's inventions regarding "another Jesus . . . another spirit . . . another gospel? (2 Corinthians 11:4).

Surely we want nothing more than God's Word. Nothing that we can feel, or do, or be, or experience can make us more "meet"; or make his Word more true.

To occupy ourselves with our state is to shut out from

our view the standing which is already ours in Christ: and, as a result, instead of a life of "rejoicing" and "giving thanks" for what God has done, it becomes a life of disappointment and regrets for what we have not done, and could not possibly do.

Can we not rest in God's Word? Can we not believe him? Can we not give thanks to him because he has quickened us, raised us, and seated us with Christ?

Are these prayers by which the holy spirit helps our infirmities like our own? Indeed, they are not. Our prayers are full of ourselves and of our needs. These prayers for us are full of God's wisdom and gifts and power and love. Our prayers are full of what we want to do for the Lord: his are full of what he has done for us. Our prayers are all far below the level of that wondrous position in which grace has set us. Not only are our prayers below that level, but they drag our position down to that low level; instead of lifting us up above it.

We are full of our sins and their forgiveness; instead of praise for our divine meetness in Christ. We are praying for the spirit; when our very desires are proof that we already have the precious gifts thereof, manifested in our desire to pray. How could we pray for this blessing or that blessing or "the" blessing, if we once realized the truth of Ephesians 1:3 and began by praising God, because he "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ"?

How could we always be praying about nothing but the forgiveness of our sins if we were giving him thanks because we have "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7), and not merely according to the earnestness of our prayers or entreaties.

How could we be yearning to know or feel that we are the children of God, if we believed that he had "predestined us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will"?

All these blessings were sealed to us by the holy spirit when we believed (Ephesians 1:13), not after we believed, as the Authorized Version has it. There is no "after" in the Greek, which reads: "In whom ye also, on believing, were sealed". The Revised Version rendering it, "Having heard" and "Having also believed".

It would not be proper to think that we are never to confess our sins. Most certainly we are to confess them; but we can do this without lowering the position in which grace has set us. We can do this without using language which particularly denies the blessed assurance contained in the teaching on which this prayer in Ephesians is based; and of which it is the expression.

We are full of failure and infirmity. We are children; but we are sinful children (1 John 2:2).

Sin is not what many take it to be. It consists not merely in "overt acts", but goes in even to the thought or desire for sin. The divine definition is that "the thought of foolishness is sin" (Proverbs 24:9); that sin is within. Sin comes "out of the heart". This is the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 15:11-20; Mark 7:14-23), but it is not the teaching of man.

The truth of these prayers, the truth in Ephesians generally, lifts us far above all these questions that concern self. It is not that a Christian, in himself, is any better than others. It is not a question of what he has done, but of what God has done. It all turns on this. It is not a question of his ups and downs of walk: but it is a question of the immovability of the foundation on which God has set him; and of the standing which God has given him in Christ.

The Word soon settles the question as to what we are in ourselves. It assures us that there is "no good thing" in us, in our flesh. God has thought enough of the seriousness of sin to provide two advocates. One is in us, that we may not sin: and the other is with the Father, if we do sin. Christ Jesus is our Advocate with the Father,

looking to all our interests up there; and the holy spirit is with us, seeing to all our interests down here. The word in John 14:16, 26; 15:26; and 16:7 which in our Common Version is rendered 'comforter' is exactly the same Greek word as that rendered 'advocate' in 1 John 2:1.

But instead of looking away from ourselves and praising and blessing God for this wondrous provision, we incline to look after our own interests both in heaven and on earth, and are, naturally, overwhelmed with the magnitude of our task.

Instead of being occupied with ourselves shall we not the rather "consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus"? Think on him; gaze steadfastly on the Lord Jesus. Consider; ponder. Let our minds be filled with Christ. Let us not make even our walk in holiness the object of our continued contemplation, the theme of our meditation. Why not? Because we do not wish to ornament ourselves like the Queen of Sheba and thus come before our Lord in our own beauty. It is a flattering thought; but if we try it, 'there will be no more spirit left in us' for having attempted to vie with the beauty and grandeur of our King. Do we wish to say from time to time, I have made great progress; I have advanced many steps in my heavenward journey; I have gotten into the "higher-ground life", as people call it? Or do we wish to humble ourselves, face the facts, and ascribe glory unto the Lamb that was slain?

Why do we wish to be more righteous in ourselves? Is it to be worthy of more commendation? Is it to depend more on Christ or to be less dependent on Christ? Is it that we may be able to say, 'Something in my hand I bring' or that we may continue to say even more and more humbly:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling."

Shall we choose the path of invention, of what ap-

pears to be progress, victory, strength, and beauty? Or shall we say as God's true saints have always said: Christ must increase; I must decrease: Christ is comely; I am black: Christ is strength; I am weakness: in Christ is all good; in me, that is, in my flesh, there is nothing good?

The guilty is by no means cleared (Exodus 34:5-7). True: God will not forgive without a satisfactory adjustment with justice. He will be "faithful and just" in the forgiveness of sins (1 John 1:9). There can be no display of mercy at the expense of justice. And yet invention, the world's religion, is based on the very opposite of this fundamental truth of the gospel. The world believes that God will clear the guilty; that God is love, and God is merciful. This is the source of the delusion that the sinner can, by his own meritorious conduct and repentance and works, obtain this mercy. This is the cause of all the deceptive resting in ordinances that we see around us. This is only a half gospel. "The Lord is a man of war," revealing his wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness. But it is in Christ that he is seen as a God of peace, revealing his love by imputing the sins of his people to Christ. And when even Jesus was dealt with as the guilty, he was by no means cleared! He drank the bitter cup to the dregs. He paid the utmost. He endured the full penalty.

Sometimes when we see ourselves in the light which the Lord shines upon us and in us we feel: How can he ever clear me? I am all guilt. Even though his goodness has been leading and following me, how can he clear me? The answer of God's gospel (but not man's) comes to us and answers all our questions, removes all our doubts, calms all our fears. Jehovah transferred all my sins to Jesus and when they were laid upon him, he was not cleared. Therefore the penalty has been borne, the debt has been paid. He bore the wrath, he endured the curse, and the blessed consequence is that I stand before God without a spot, righteous in all Christ's righteousness;

acceptable in all his acceptableness; perfect in Christ Jesus, complete in him; yes, holy in all his holiness, and expecting to be glorified with his glory.

Will he never condemn me? The answer is: "No condemnation" (Romans 8:1).

How blessed the thought; yes, the fact, that we are not merely pardoned for having got into debt; but that the debt has been paid, and our liability cleared, and that a risen Christ is our receipt for payment in full. Not merely pardoned, but justified; not merely justified, but accepted; and accepted too in Christ as he is accepted with the Father, and have him not merely substituted for us but ourselves identified with him.

Is not God's revelation, as discovered to us by his goodness and his purposes, infinitely better than all the human inventions which we could think of? Man's religion always gives its votaries plenty to do, but very little to hope for. God's evangel is just the other way. Not that he counsels us to be idle; far from it. But our activities are not the means of our salvation. Our activities consist in being witnesses for him and not in saving ourselves or making ourselves righteous. To turn from God's provision to our own devices is as if a child should leave a well-filled table and run off into the calf pasture in search of food. The result must be hunger and disappointment. But if we take the Lord's way, then it will be true of us, as it is true of the written Word and of the New Jerusalem that

"The Lamb is the light thereof."

NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH

"Jehovah's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he compassed him about, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle that stirreth up her nest, that fluttereth over her young, he spread abroad his wings, he took them, he bore them on his pinions. Jehovah alone did lead him, and there was no foreign God with him" (Deuteronomy 32:9-12, R.V.).

THE venerable Moses, under the inspiration and guidance of the holy spirit, here gives us a picture of Jehovah's dealings with Israel, and, since Israel was "for a testimony of the things which were afterward to be spoken" (Hebrews 3:5), we may well and profitably apply the lessons, herein illustrated, to ourselves, trusting that we shall not "fall after the same example of disobedience".

In verse eight of the song Moses shows how God from the beginning had overruled the events of all nations in such a manner as to keep their expanse and growth subservient to the welfare of his coming people Israel. When the territories of the nations were divided by speech or climatic conditions, or whatever means the Lord employed therefor, Israel is described as falling to Jehovah, and as becoming his allotted portion (Deuteronomy 7:6).

Verses 10-12 show how Jehovah led and sustained the

infant nation in its wilderness experiences, both literal and figurative. As in tracing the course of a river, the skilled topographer pays no heed to the vast morasses and the great stagnant pools which may stretch out over the lowlands, but only to the moving water; so the skilled discerner of God's purposes in and among the nations of earth pays little heed to the vast and imposing stretches of ancient Egypt, Assyria, Nineveh, and Babylonia, but does observe with keenest interest every move of Israel, the tiny rivulet of humanity which was to move on until it should fulfill the purposes of him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will (Ephesians 1:11).

THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS

The experiences of the church in the wilderness (Acts 7:38) were doubtless given that all the blessings might be seen to be from divine and not from human sources; for there they had no union with any part of the outside world, with a view to securing either food or learning—Jehovah furnished it all. No foreign god, such as Baal or Ashtaroth, lent any help.

Moses proceeded to use an illustration which must have been familiar to him, that of a mother eagle in her treatment of her young. In verses ten and eleven two different phases of a mother eagle's activities are referred to. Jehovah is portrayed as the mother bird, first as warming, nourishing, and protecting his fledgling people, and second as taking that eaglet nation abroad, teaching it to fly, and guarding it against every mischance. It takes motherhood as well as fatherhood to illustrate Jehovah's relationship to his children; and this is one of the instances where that tender yet wise kinship is pictured.

Israel was *found* by Jehovah (compare the figure of the exposed child in Ezekiel 16:3-6) at a time when he was homeless and might have perished from want; Israel was tenderly taken charge of by him, and eventually

brought to a land abundantly provided for his needs (Jeremiah 2:6, 7).

The following clause depicts the perils of the wilderness—its barren desolation, and the howling beasts which frequented it (Deuteronomy 1:19). The word here rendered *waste* implies a wild and desolate expanse. (See Psalm 107:4) Furthermore the Lord surrounded or encompassed Israel; he encircled him with his protection (compare Psalm 32:10); as the apple, or pupil of his eye —figurative of what is tenderest and dearest—Jehovah guarded him with jealous care (Psalm 17:8).

TRAINING FOR FAITH

The word eagle in our common version Bibles is translated from the Hebrew word *nesher*, which really is not an eagle at all but a kind of vulture called the griffon vulture, which is very prevalent in Palestine, never being quite out of sight, whether on the mountains or on the plains. It is the largest and most magnificent of the vulture tribe, but since it is nearer to being an eagle than to being a vulture such as is generally known in the western hemisphere, the translators were probably justified in using the word eagle. It is the same bird, however, as mentioned by our Lord in Matthew 24:28; for an eagle is not a carrion bird.

The figure of Exodus 19:4 is here developed by Moses so as to illustrate Jehovah's paternal affection in training Israel to a faith that would not be dependent on any given set of circumstances, but on him alone. As a bird stirs up its nest, with the object of encouraging its young ones to flight, but at the same time hovers over them so as to be at hand to support them on its own wings, in case their strength fails and they are in danger of falling, so Jehovah had spread out his wings and borne Israel upon them until his infant people had its powers more matured, or at least had the opportunities for development.

The accuracy of this picture as it applies to either the vulture or the eagle is vouched for by several naturalists. One writer says: "When her young are old enough to fly, the eagle breaks her nest in pieces in order to compel [the young] to use their powers of flight, fluttering over them, that by imitation they may learn how to employ their wing; but, when unwilling to fly, spreading abroad her wings, she bears them upward in the air, and then shaking them off, compels them to use their own exertions."

THE EAGLE'S YOUNG

The naturalist, Davy, makes the following observations from the top of a mountain: "Two parent eagles on Ben Nevis were teaching their offspring, two young birds, the maneuvers of flight. They at first made small circles and the young imitated them; they paused on their wings, waiting until they had made their first flight, holding them on their expanded wings when they appeared exhausted, and then took a second and larger gyration, always rising toward the sun and enlarging their circle of flight, so as to make a great ascending spiral."

It will be noted that as there are four parts or courses in the elementary schooling of the Lord's people, (1) they are "found", (2) they are "encompassed", (3) they are "instructed" or cared for, and (4) "guarded", so there are four points in the more advanced course of instruction given; (1) the nest is stirred up, (2) the mother bird flutters over the young, (3) she spreads abroad her wings, and (4) she bears them on her wings. So the Lord in training his nestling people to fly nourished them tenderly and fed them until they were able to undergo more strenuous methods of instruction, something more of the divine discipline of life.

EARTH'S DESERT SOCIETY

The term "desert land" is suggestive of barrenness,

aridity, loneliness. A desert is a part of the earth which has been deprived of its water supply, and as the earth is a symbol of human society, so a desert is a symbol or picture of human society in its present state, with the refreshing and quickening waters of truth very hard to find. This barren and arid state is traceable to the influence of Satan in earth's affairs; for he "made the world as a wilderness" (Isaiah 14:17), by making it difficult for men to get hold on and to retain the truth.

Somewhere in this condition of estrangement from God, somewhere among those who suffer a dearth of fellowship, especially between themselves and Jehovah, all of the Lord's people in all ages have been found. We know too well the sad story of sin and condemnation and sorrow and suffering and death. And as a result the whole world is a wilderness, "the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19), all come short of the glory of, and hence full fellowship with, God the Father.

Not only is it a wilderness, but it is a waste howling wilderness; so intense is the lack of divine fellowship that thousands, yes millions—all—are dying, while doing the best they can to live by bread alone. How our hearts rejoice when we learn of the glad message that this desert shall not always be; for it is the same desert from which streams shall gush forth, as the Prophet, in a burst of joyous anticipation, tells us (Isaiah 35:6). The wilderness and the solitary place shall then be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. No more shall mankind wander about, famished for want of the water of truth and of the bread of life.

WISDOM AS INSTRUCTOR

The eagle is used in the Scriptures to represent the heavenly attribute of wisdom (Revelation 4:7). So here it may be understood that the eagle represents God's providential dealings, which are directed and planned by his wisdom. As the wings emanate from the body of the

bird, so there are special providential sustenances provided for us in times of greatest weakness.

The uniqueness of Jehovah's instructions on behalf of his people is clearly to be seen in his dealings with Israel. They were found in the desert land; they were compassed about; they were instructed and guarded, down in the Egyptian nest. There were pleasant and unpleasant experiences; there were feathers of divine favor and sticks of Egyptian persecution, but "the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew" (Exodus 1:12). And that was just the purpose of the Lord in having them in the nest. There they grew and developed nationally to a marvelous degree; in fact, the Scriptures intimate that their multiplication was well nigh miraculous.

Bye and bye divine wisdom saw that it was time for Israel to learn to fly, to cease to depend on the old set of circumstances which surrounded them in Egypt, and to learn that Jehovah is God entirely apart from environment, circumstances, position of birth, or aught else. So the Egyptian nest was broken up and the infant nation pushed out, not with a view to injuring it, but that its faith might be developed to a point which would have been impossible while merely growing and expanding.

EGYPTIAN NEST BROKEN UP

Israel was led out under Moses, as described in Exodus 19:4: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself." The Psalmist records that they derived only temporary benefit from this miraculous deliverance and says that they did not allow it to work in them the needed faith; as it is written: "He saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies; there was not one of them left. Then *believed* they his words; they sang his praise. [But] they soon

forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel; but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul" (Psalm 106:10-15).

By their conduct they said: We wish we were back in the Egyptian nest; we are tired of hopping about from one crag and one treetop to another. Why did God bring us up here, away from that homey nest, though it did have sticks in it? They leaned to their own understanding. They provoked God, and they became an example of murmuring and profitless eaglets. Israel never really learned the lesson of complete faith in Jehovah and what an opportunity they lost! Time after time they were borne on eagle's wings; time after time divine protecting care was manifested on their behalf, until they developed a full suit of feathers in the glory of Solomon's reign. But the nation had more feathers than strength, more show than faith, so that they were eventually found unworthy of continuance under the tutelage and guidance of heavenly wisdom.

THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH INSTRUCTED

The figure undoubtedly applies to Israel, but let us look at the experiences of the church of this dispensation, and see whether they had such instructions and guidance. The eagle egg had long been laid, the divine plan had long been expressed in the Abrahamic promise, and its incubation waited merely for the proper time and conditions.

For many centuries the egg had lain apparently sterile, showing no signs of life. Finally the promise concerning the seed hatched out, it gave signs of life, as respects the body of that seed, at the time of Pentecost. Thereupon the fledgling church was fed and cared for and trained as only a tender mother might, and all this in the Jewish nest, even as Israel had been raised to size and strength in the nest of Egypt.

Jerusalem and Judæa and the Jewish customs all constituted the nest, or condition of moral support, throughout the tender youth-time of the Pentecostal church. How would the early church have been sustained had it not been for the general belief in one God, for the general acceptance of the prophets, and for the presence of the Messianic hope among the Jewish people? The house of sons could hardly have survived had it been cast at once on the bare and rocky crags of paganism. Not too rudely nor too soon was the eaglet church pushed out of its surroundings. The space of time from Pentecost to the desolation of Jerusalem and Judæa furnished a grand opportunity for the bringing of apostolic food to the open mouths of early believers, that the church might have the time to assimilate their teachings and to realize that an absolute change of dispensation had come. Possibly this was the very reason for the holding together of the Jewish polity many years after special favor to the nation and to individuals had expired.

But it was not designed that the eaglet church remain always in the nest. The time came for experiences more vast; and when it had become sufficiently strong and developed to enter into those experiences with safety, the nest was stirred up. As in the literal case, the nest itself was not specially valuable. It was valuable only as it related to its purpose, and that purpose was to sustain and to furnish a basis of operations for the little eagles of the gospel era.

CHURCH PREPARED FOR FLIGHT

Had Jerusalem remained, we may safely suppose that God's plan for the scattering of the gospel and for the activities of the church in western countries would have been fulfilled in some other way. When the nest was torn to pieces by the beak and talons of the Roman army, then all believers were compelled to look more steadfastly to the heavenly Father. Truly it was a crisis. But did

the pentecostal church lose because it was compelled to forget the nest? Neither history nor the suggestion of our first text would indicate that it did.

The early church profited so fully by the words and spiritual assistance of the apostles that soon they were enabled to have the full use of their wings and to soar far above the dark clouds of turmoil and persecution and strife which covered the earth, and to reach into the pure ether of exceeding joy (1 Peter 1:8), like "an eagle in the air" (Proverbs 30:19). Later on, during the wilderness times in darkest days, the church will have use for these wings, for the special emanations of divine wisdom; for on them she could be sustained and borne to safety to the extent that she had made them hers and knew how to use them (Revelation 12:14).

Toward the latter end of the gospel era the church had forgotten her exalted mission; she had tired of soaring around in the pure air of spiritual hopes and aspirations, and had taken to roosting in the old nest of moralistic and humanitarian righteousness. She had and has been perching on the treetops and crags of "Christian citizenship"; and even walking boldly on the ground of her subtle enemy, and venturing dangerously near the snare of the fowler. Again the true church has been pushed out and helped to develop her strength of wings —her faith.

OUR NATURAL-BORN STATE

But however aptly our text applies to the Lord's dealings with his people collectively, it seems to suit our individual experiences even more plainly. Every one of us has been found in this desert condition of earth, under divine disfavor, without the moisture of truth, separated by "wicked works" from full fellowship with the Father (Colossians 1:21). But while in this desert condition, we came to be out of harmony with it. The experiences of life so reacted upon us that we ceased to admire and approve the glittering toys of earth. We came to the

point where we were seeking for springs of water (Acts 17:27) and for shelter from the burning sun of divine condemnation which came down upon us because we were members of Adam's race (Romans 5:18).

But, if the Lord is able to behold the evil and the good (Proverbs 15:3), and if there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight (Hebrews 4:13), how can it be said that he could ever *find* us? The answer is that we were not always there, as one of his people or even as those who were feeling after him. We were found very much as one might find a few heads of early ripe wheat. We pass through a field time after time on one day and find nothing, and on the next day find a few heads which in the meantime have turned. They were there as heads on the day before, but they were not there as *ripe* heads, and nothing but ripe heads were suited to our purpose. Because of the influences to which they had been subjected, they had been changed from the general unripe condition of the field to a condition in which they were attractive to us.

THE CALLED OF GOD

So Jehovah at one time looking over the earth may have seen us, but did not see that which he desired. Our hearts were not out of accord with the world and its ideals and in accord with righteousness. Subsequent influences and experiences changed this, however, and we committed ourselves to the Father's arrangements. Then he began to give us a series of blessed helps and lessons. He encompassed us with his benign arrangement for our justification in Christ Jesus; in fact, all of his kindnesses are extended to us through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 8:6). We were sheltered in "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isaiah 32:2); and the little moisture of truth there was appreciated by us and increased to us because of our relationship to Christ Jesus, the Rock. In that

moistened soil of the heart has fallen the good seed of the kingdom, from which the cheering and refreshing influences shall ultimately emanate for the blessing of the residue of men.

Oh, that we may do nothing to stunt the growth in this little oasis in the desert! Oh, that we may do everything to build one another up in the most holy faith, that we may not be found "springs without water"! (2 Peter 2:17)

INSTRUCTED AND GUARDED

Next the Lord in his goodness instructs us: he gives us enough knowledge to constrain us to full consecration, and then enough knowledge to enable us to be faithful in that consecration, even unto death. It is not likely he will give us much more, for knowledge is not dealt out merely to satisfy our curiosity.

He keeps, or guards us as the apple of his eye. The pupil of the eye is most remarkably shielded, to be an exposed and sensitive organ. Through that little orifice filters all the light which stimulates the sense of sight. It is covered with the tough but transparent cornea, and surrounded by a bony framework, which is double-arched and very strong. If an object of size approaches the eye, it must break this bony outer guard before it can injure the eye. If a small object approaches the eye and comes within the line of vision, the eye will automatically shut, so that it is protected in that manner. Evidently the Lord would have us believe that no circumstance can form so swiftly, no exigency of life can arise so suddenly, but that divine wisdom and divine power can ably divert or direct it in such a manner that no injury will come to the eternal interests of the new creature. We are assured that no temptation shall befall us but such as we shall be able to bear (1 Corinthians 10:13); and further, that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Thus far the Lord leads us and schools us with a view to helping us grow and be able to undergo a more advanced course of instruction—the school of aviation.

As an eagle, in training her young nestlings to fly, first stirs them up or rouses them from the nest, so the Lord stirs up the nest of our old conditions, habits, hopes, and ambitions, and pushes us out of those accustomed surroundings for our own benefit and instruction. When the mother eagle stirs up the nest with her talons and tears the sticks apart, the little ones cry and look pitifully at their mother. Hitherto she has seemed to them to be the embodiment of tenderness and considerateness; but her heart is now apparently of stone and she is deaf to their appealing cries. The little ones are forced out and, not knowing how to use their pinions, they begin to fall. But the mother bird swoops down and under them, bearing them on her back to give them assurance; then lets them drop off again, until the little birds discover the use of their wings and learn how to fly for themselves.

There are times when the flesh quails before the providences of the Lord. It says, as the eagles say in action: Oh, you will hurt me; here is where I have been brought up; here is where I am acquainted; I do not want to leave these nice sticks and feathers. You can sing to me and feed me, but don't, don't stir up the nest! How little do they realize that the very purpose of all their feeding was that they might become strong enough to undergo and to experience this very nest-stirring episode. So all the food and all the primary lessons which the Lord gives us are with the single view of strengthening us to the point where we are able to leave the old conditions of the world, the old environments and tendencies of our minds.

VARIOUS NESTS STIRRED UP

Perhaps it was a nest of preconceived and long-entertained ideas; perhaps it was special family ties, or a par-

ticular coterie of friends, which had to be stirred up in our case.

Perhaps the Lord had to push us out into some phase of his work. It may be that the circumstances were brought to our attention quite forcibly, and in such a manner as pleased the flesh not at all. The flesh registered its objections and refused to appreciate the project. But the young eagle quality, the new mind, the new will, gladly coöperates with the arrangements of divine wisdom.

At first we do not know how to live by faith, how to be sustained by the spirit of God's promises. We may feel ourselves falling. But specific promises are brought to our attention under the Lord's providence, and on these we rest until our assurance is restored. As we gain more and more of experience, the strength of the Word, its spirit, the truth, permeates our beings and our confidence grows stronger and stronger until it becomes customary and habitual with us, and we are not overcome with terror at any change that comes into our lives.

THE EVERLASTING ARMS

How would we ever know the full truth of his promises; how would we ever know that "underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:27) if we were never cast upon them to prove them; and how could we be cast upon them if we always abode in the nest, in a hazy, dreamy, lethargic state? Haze and dreams have their proper place, no doubt, but they have very small place in the mind of a footstep follower of the Lord. Thank God, there are enough glorious facts to dim the most untrammelled products of the imagination. How can we ever "mount up with wings as eagles" (Isaiah 40:31), how can we ever be delivered from "the snare of the fowler" (Psalm 91:3), if we cannot fly? How can we be gathered together where the carcase is (Matthew 24:28) if these nest-stirring, wing-developing experi-

ences had not taken place, if the Lord had not at some time or in some manner pushed us out of the old ruts of thought, or out of the old surroundings.

LESSONS IN PART BY OBSERVATION

As we observe examples of the Lord's instructive providences of his people, can we not learn something by observation? Can we not see and appreciate to some extent the wisdom of administering hardship as a factor in the development of character? Surely we can. All these examples are given us for our admonition (1 Corinthians 10:11; 1 Peter 1:10-12), as the apostles assure us. So we may be sure that when such experiences come, divine wisdom will be hovering over us to watch and to encourage our timid efforts; divine power will revive us when drooping, and carry us to ease us when weary and exhausted with unusual strain.

Shall we be instructed in part by the examples which the Lord has given us, and shall we be prepared to coöperate with the nest-stirring experiences when they come; or shall we be obliged to learn altogether by experience some things which we might have learned by humbly accepting the testimony which these examples bring to our minds?

As Abraham was faithful and profited by his experiences, shall we do less who have so much more of encouragement? And if the Jews failed to profit by their lesson, if they failed to learn how to depend in full confidence on Jehovah, we can at least hold them in mind as a warning example. "Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Hebrews 4:11).

A NOBLE EXAMPLE

In the New Testament we have the inspiring figure of the Apostle Paul. To what heights of sublime faith and trust he was able to soar! for he says: "Who shall sepa-

rate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35-39).

The Apostle was high above his daily experiences, though those experiences were such dramatic things as being imprisoned, being beaten with stripes, fighting with wild beasts, etc. Whether the incidents were pleasant to the flesh, he still had the same measure of faith and hope, of confidence and trust in the Lord. What a noble example!

What, then, shall we gather from all this? Manifestly this: That God expects us to be able to live under different and varying circumstances as he may see best for us, and expects that we learn to adhere to the glorious and basic principles to which he himself conforms, that we learn to be fastened to nothing save to that which is eternal. Thus and thus only can we be prepared for the greatest change of all, when we leave the earth in which we, as God's fledgling new creation, have been nurtured and fed, and when we shall be given a new and higher point of view from which we can know and minister to the needs of mankind.

FAITH VIEWING THE FUTURE

Only faith can grasp a vision of the grandeur of that time. What joy it will be when these rougher parts of our learning are over, and when we may join that resplendent pageant, that magnificent cavalcade, the most wonderful body that was ever assembled, sur-

rounded, perhaps, by myriads of angels who have been watching the progress of each one with interest and love! And as that heavenly train—every one of them a miracle of grace, every one a radiant jewel to reflect the exceeding riches of God's favor throughout all ages—as that train wends its way up past angels, principalities, and powers, past moon, sun, and stars, to the far-fixed throne of God and Christ, we shall know the full lesson of the eagle's flight.

"Father, forgive the heart that clings,
Thus trembling, to the things of time;
And bid my soul, on soaring wings,
Ascend into a purer clime."

The fruit of the spirit is never an outgrowth of any sensation of the flesh.

We are carnally minded if we allow our natural inclinations to govern us and to determine our course. . . . We are spiritually minded if we diligently apply our minds and hearts in appreciating and honestly practicing the noble attributes of the spirit shown to us in the Lord's Word.

VICTORY THROUGH FAITH

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

EVEN the word victory has an inspiring ring to the ear. As used in the world it conveys the picture of the victorious army returning from war and greeted with the huzzahs of an admiring multitude. But such victories as this are not the portion of the Lord's people now. When the Apostle says that faith is the victory, we are not to understand him to mean that nothing else remains to be done, after we have merely believed. Rather the thought must be that faith is the conquering power with which we are able to push aside the things which are seen, and to direct our course in life in harmony with things which are not seen, but which none the less are realities to us, because we can lay hold upon them with our minds.

Columbus was a man of faith when he believed, and acted upon the belief, that a western route could be taken for eastern ports. He had never gone far west and to the average mind the western waters were merely the lair of the hobgoblin and ogre. Every view previously held on the subject, everything, in fact, seemed to be against his theory of finding India by a western passage, *except* his own faith in the project. Now his faith, be it noted, was not a mere arbitrary decision on the subject apart from all known facts, but it was a rational conclusion arrived at after thoughtful consideration of other points already known. So the Christian's faith is not a conclusion reached out of the abundance of his imagination, but it is a conviction arrived at after the consideration of com-

petent evidence from an authoritative or reliable source.

The Christian's voyage has never been experienced by him before. The devil, as the great hobgoblin, seeks to discourage him from undertaking the journey, telling him that he had better remain where he is safe, on firm and known ground. He is confronted with the alluring suggestion that the way of the world must be the proper one, because every one has been going that way. Who would think of gaining anything worth while by self-denial; is self-denial not sailing directly away from success and happiness? Self-assertion is the only road to succeed, the world tells us.

True, Columbus might have made erroneous deductions with his imperfect human brain. And so might we if we were not helped. This contingency is provided for in that definite basic promises are made in God's Word as to what the reward of a life of faith shall be. It is important then to see that our faith is a correct faith; for if the faith be built on erroneous theories, inspiring false and delusive hopes, it will eventuate for its victim in shipwreck on the rocks.

It is because of this importance of faith, either for good or for evil, that the Apostle Paul was so solicitous for the continuance of the brethren in the proper faith (Colossians 1:23)—"the faith once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). He urged all to examine and to prove themselves to make sure they were in the faith, grounded and settled and not moved away from the hope of the gospel, but rooted and built up in Christ and established in him (Colossians 2:7). He was also deeply concerned that the faith of the church should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:5). He knew how vital a thing the matter of faith is, for it had been long time written: "The just shall *live* by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4). The sentiment of this text had been voiced by Moses of old in almost the last

words of that venerable patriarch when, reviewing the faith of Israel, he said: "It is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life" (Deuteronomy 32:47).

Faith, hope, and love, like the three primary colors in nature, may be combined in varying proportions to produce any other desired hue or tone of character. The color between blue and yellow, for instance, is green. Green has a restful effect on the system and has been designed by a beneficent Providence for that purpose. Likewise, the effect produced upon the life by the presence of faith and hope is *peace.* When we are justified by faith we have peace with God (Romans 5:1). Our doubts, fears and misgivings have given place to tranquillity of mind and heart on those points about which we have received information through the Bible, God's Word. The hope engendered by confidence in the fulfillment of those promises takes the keenness from our suffering, because we see that our suffering is not in vain and that there is to be a cessation of pain and tears.

Yellow and red combine to form orange, the warmest of colors. It is suggestive of a state of development and ripeness; the vivid autumn foliage, the golden grain, the luscious fruit all tell that nature has done her best. So too, when hope and love are strongly present in the heart, *joy* is the fruitage. We rejoice preëminently in hope (Romans 12:12).

Red and blue make violet, the varying tones of which add glory to the sunset and beauty to the modest flower. Likewise, when faith and love work together a noble, rare, and royal likeness of the Lord ensues. Love without faith depreciates into independable sentimentality.

Man's power to have faith lies in that he, made originally in the image of God, was given the ability to perceive the evidence of the invisible God. Some of that power of discernment remains in imperfect man. But faith includes the thought of dependence upon the verac-

ity of God, confidence in his integrity. Thus trust is a part of faith, because it relies upon the truth of a promise: and one is said to "keep faith" with another when he performs a promise which that other relies on. Accordingly, faith in God is a firm assent of the heart and mind to the things told us through divine revelation.

Effective faith receives Jesus as he is revealed in the Gospel. To such a one the life, words, works, suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ mean not merely an array of historical facts, but much more; they mean so much to the true believer that they inspire trust in and reliance upon Christ Jesus and his righteousness alone for justification as the basis for our salvation. Such a faith begets a sincere obedience in the life and conversation. It is not, therefore, an idle, unactive and inoperative grace, but shows itself by producing in us love for God and for our neighbor.

We must fight against that spirit of hauteur and worldly wisdom which spurns a careful inspection of the doctrines of God's Word, which alone can show whither we are going, and how, and why. The engineer must keep one eye ever on the track; the faster one is going, the more careful should the watch be. To be sure, he may catch a casual glimpse of the beautiful hills he passes; a gorgeous sunset may attract, but must not hold his vision. No, they are not for him. He has a work to do, a goal to reach and, nature-lover though he be, he cannot now *halt* to drink those beauties in.

Another thing is needful to an engine on a steep grade, and that is sand. Without it the wheels may spin around and still not make progress; the spinning will merely wear both track and wheels. The sand is no part of the wheel and no part of the track, but it constitutes a medium whereby the contact between those objects is maintained at the highest possible pitch. Such a medium to us is prayer. Without it, owing to the steepness of

the road, we are not safe. Our faith, though intact in our understanding, will not work effectively without this help. Even though love may be prompting us, if our faith is in poor contact with the promises, we will not go ahead. Prayer, possibly importunate prayer, is the need. Without it faith will be going around in the same old grind, and we shall be getting nowhere and accomplishing nothing except to wear out our own confidence. Add persistent, earnest prayer and see if we do not begin making progress from that very hour. Erstwhile dry and uninteresting things will take on a new meaning and a forward impetus is experienced.

On a steep grade a locomotive may even slip backwards without sand. So we too, without prayer, may slip entirely back to wreck and ruin. The steam plus the drive wheel plus vision will not take the engine on without proper contact. Love of righteousness, plus faith, plus hope, without prayer, if we could imagine such a condition, would still place us in a precarious position. Prayer enables us to make progress.

Faith is the conquering power that overcomes the world. Overcoming is suggestive of warfare, of conflict; and we should have clearly in mind *for* whom we are fighting and also *against* whom we are to direct our efforts (John 16:33; 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5).

Our text implies that the conquering power of faith is to be directed against the world—not against the inhabitants thereof, not against fellow creatures, but against the spirit of this present evil order of things, its disposition, the mind of the world, the motives which actuate the world, the pride of life and the deceitfulness of riches; in short, against sin and, indirectly, against Satan, whom we are to resist, steadfast in the faith.

Satan is represented as the god or mighty ruler of this world and his two powerful allies are the world and the flesh. Since the flesh in its present state partakes of the

same spirit and tendencies as the world, we may describe it as the world within us. The powerful tendency of the flesh is toward evil. It is a jumble of blinding influences, perverted tastes, desires, ambitions, hopes and loves, and mostly ignorance.

Satan's triple alliance (himself, the world, and the flesh of the new creature) is arrayed against faith, hope and love. On the side of the new creature faith marshalls the forces; hence it is called the fight of faith. On Satan's side the world is the most manifest and most easily recognized of the three; it stands in the vanguard, so to speak, of the hosts of evil; hence it is quite properly spoken of as a fight of *faith* against the *world.*

Now the spirit of the world manifests itself in many little mannerisms and practices which may not at first be recognized by the new creatures, so cleverly are they hidden in ambush. Pride, vain-glory, self-preferment, are some of the most commonly encountered manifestations of the spirit of the world. The world within us, the flesh, loves these things and uses every means to justify itself in seeking them. But faith, here too, is the conquering power to gain the victory. Just such a victory has already been gained when by faith we agreed to lose our lives to find them. When we considered the Master's call: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24), our faith trusted in the truthfulness of God's promise that such a course would not spell final loss to us, but would really work gain. Like Columbus, we started traveling over a way we had never gone before, but were convinced that its end would be glorious.

When we made our consecration war was declared on self. It now remains to be seen whether the matter will be carried out or whether faith will capitulate before the overtures of pride and self-advancement. A test of our faith comes when we find that through ignorance or weakness we have been unjust to another. Self-pride

would not acknowledge it; first, because it hurts, and secondly because, we argue, it will do no good. But we look to the instructions of the Master: "Confess thy fault" (Matthew 5:23, 24); and our confidence in the integrity of his character prompts us to humiliate ourselves, believing that he would give no command that would not be for our best. No matter if the offended one does not appreciate our conduct and our spirit in the matter (and he often will not): it is all the better for us that he does not. If we were sure to be always appreciated in such efforts, we might go with a measure of sham, partly to secure the commendation, mental or oral, of the offended. If one's apology is not appreciated, one is humiliated all the more and will next time be doubly careful. The thought should not be merely to reinstate one's self in the favor of the offended, but, by virtue of faith in God's commands, to gain the victory over the worldly pride residing in our flesh. If every day we are thus a victor, we shall unquestionably be a victor in the end (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

Our selfish preferences may not always have an ungracious tinge. Sometimes they are very genteel. Sometimes the flesh has a desire for the maintenance of a peaceful, serene, and respectable life, when service for the Lord would call us more directly into the current of annoying duties. The flesh would be very willing to serve the Lord if it could do so respectably and in comfort. It yearns:

Lord, let me tread the quiet paths,
Through woodland, dale and hill:
Yea, let me rove on heath and fen;
Or by the bick'ring rill
To dream of thee.

I'll build my shrine in stormless vale,
So tranquil, not a sigh
Shall mar my incense-laden lay
Of love to thee. Aye,
There let me be.

But if we follow the Lord faithfully we are very likely to find ourselves in the city's grime and noise, where some of the Lord's work is in need of being done.

Sometimes, the flesh argues, it would be easier to maintain a spirit of devotion if we had more quiet and time for meditation. Yet, faith answers, if duty calls to toil, amid commotion, is not that duty a voice telling us that perhaps something else is more necessary to be learned just at that time than meditation in quietness; or telling us that devotion must be put to the test to see how well it will last when the circumstances are anything but favorable. Victory over self in this connection often means for us to be associated with those whom we would not choose by nature, and not to be associated with those whom we would naturally select.

Even in the service of the Lord the flesh has the desire to be able to talk with ease or to prepare and deliver discourses which would stir their hearers to the very depths. But thoughts which stir are wrought only on the anvil of experience, and an idea expressed yet never experienced lacks that force which would make it a source of help to others. Faith thus tells us that, even if our present desires to help remain unfulfilled, we, by our puny efforts, are being prepared for a work of noblest future ministry, in which our every experience will doubtless be of use.

Faith thus overcomes the tendencies which the world has wrought in us; and while not condemning all of them as evil, it counsels us merely to disregard or push aside those which we cannot use in the narrow way. Worldly pride on the other hand bids us keep everything which would put self forward and advises us not to be too sure of the things which we cannot see. If such hints are hearkened to, doubt is bred and indifference ensues; discouragement, despondency and despair follow in its wake. We must remember: "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

There is another attack from the flesh against our faith which is more subtle than almost any other: it is the suggestion that the Lord's work in the world is in special need of our advice or knowledge or experience. It is one of the most difficult things to believe, not merely that God is good and that he has benevolent intentions and designs toward us, but to believe that work undertaken in the name of the Lord and in harmony with his Word will have his guidance, his approval, and his blessing. Indeed, some of the hottest battles in the contest of faith are fought on this very point, and, sad to say, the battles are not always won by faith.

There is another spirit of the world which faith can, must, and will overcome, and that is the partisan spirit, the disposition to be more loyal to persons than to principles. This party feeling, closely akin to tribal affection, is an affinity which holds one to those with whom he happens to be associated, often irrespective of their virtues or worthlessness. It may or may not be used for good. At any rate faith bids us to have our closest association with the Lord so that everything else will be subservient. Frequently our preference for family or for a circle of friends or acquaintances arises merely from the fact that they are tolerant of our weaknesses and failures, because they have the same or similar ones to ours. Our proper pride and modesty alike should forbid the encouragement of such attachments as tend toward failure.

The party spirit may easily merge into pride or glory in the "movement" with which we happen to be connected. We should remember that the very same influences are at work against us as have been against all other upward religious movements in the past. Certainly none would claim for a moment that we as individuals are better than they. Who can say that if we were to continue here for twenty-five years more, we, or those following us, would not be as thoroughly dyed-in-the-

wool sectarians as ever trod the globe? Who can boast? We, just as well as others, have to fight against these things; fight, not with fists, but with faith, faith that God will perform his own purposes, sometimes with and sometimes irrespective of our coöperation. Are we of Paul, or of Apollos, or of Cephas—or of *Christ*?

The spirit of the world comes out, too, in the spirit of criticism, or of unkind and often unjust censure of the conduct of others. Habitual criticism of men and things is a sign not of superior faculties and finer sensibilities, as the flesh suggests to us, but of actual moral and spiritual decrepitude, which, while seeking to justify itself by the thought of opposing the evil, really gloats over the unlovely traits thus held before the mind. "Love", on the contrary, "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth," with the spirit of righteousness, which abhors the thoughts of evil and does not even consider them, when possible to escape. Faith in God's word that "none [is] righteous, no, not one", should teach us not to expect perfection in any, nor even consistency of conduct, since that would imply perfection. It takes great faith to start out on a mental hunt for commendable points in a person whom we have been in the habit of looking on as the embodiment of undesirable traits.

Perhaps a brother seems harsh or unkind in his manner or utterances, uncouth or crude in his ways; perhaps he does not appeal to us. Faith would still tell us that there must be some lesson for us to learn there. Perhaps this is only the Lord's way of calling our attention to unloveliness in ourselves. But what about that brother? Never mind too much about that brother. The Lord will attend to him in his own way. Perhaps that brother does not need exactly the same lessons that we need; or maybe he will get them later; or maybe he has had them in the past and is carrying the scars from a field where we would have been vanquished.

It is true we could not admire any one *because* of his

imperfections, but we can admire him *in spite of* his imperfections, that is, for other qualities which he doubtless has. Thus faith, believing that God will deal with others in a righteous and suitable way without our attempting to hand out punishment, and believing that he will also teach us aright, gives us contentment even under galling circumstances—not contentment with imperfect qualities, in either ourselves or others, but contentment with the Lord's general providences which permit us to be in contact with others as imperfect as ourselves. Those who command our admiration in every particular appeal only to the gentler side of our character, and if our experiences were wholly with such we might not develop enough fibre and sinew. Then too, we often discover that our poor selves grate on others in much the same way that they do on us. It is no test of love when we admire a person or his doings. Wait until almost his every action seems perverse, or inconsistent, or even wrong, then see how much love is left.

The tendency to criticism on the part of our flesh may extend even to the manner used in preaching the Gospel. Of course, no one should think that he may not form mental opinions respecting the desirability or undesirability of a thing or act. That we, as rational creatures, are bound to do. But to criticise merely as a habit is what does us harm, if it does harm to none other. The *sound* of the gospel may or may not be pleasing to the flesh, depending on the language in which it is couched. It may be delivered in a rambling way and pain our sense of rhetoric or logic. Our fleshly judgment suggests the thought that such an exposition of the truth could never do any one any good. But wonder of wonders! some heart gives evidence of being comforted and helped. The Lord is not now teaching us logic and philosophy in the pure form, but is teaching us *faith*, and is seeking to inspire and to feed a *devotional* spirit in us that will draw us closer and closer to him and away from the

spirit of the world. Whoever is rich in love toward God and toward the brethren is rich indeed, and if he be faithful unto death he will have Christ, "in whom are hid *all* the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3; Revelation 2:10).

How subtle is the mind of the flesh! It seeks to judge and to decide everything according to the natural observation. When the natural observation suggests a thought which is contrary to love, love, if active, will repel that thought and faith will come forward and say: I believe there is some sterling quality in that brother, whether I can see it or not: I believe God made no mistake when he set his love there. "Faith" thus "worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6). Love prompts faith to gain the victory against injustice and unkindness. *According to our faith* is the only rule measuring the amount of power on which we can draw. Let us give ourselves wholly to it!

We need not be entirely discouraged if unlovable and unlovely qualities show themselves under stress. The refining work does this. The intended effect of the fire is to do this very thing—to show up the dross that it may be skimmed off as rapidly as seen. Our faithfulness is marked by the assiduity with which we submit ourselves to the refining and not merely by the outward graciousness of our conduct, desirable though that be.

The Father promises to give us of his heavenly wisdom, if we ask in faith, never wavering (James 1:6). Heavenly wisdom in sufficient measure would certainly enable us to direct all our affairs to the Lord's glory and thus to be faithful ambassadors. Also he gives us the holy spirit on the same condition. Who can doubt that the holy spirit in rich measure will work out such fruit of the spirit as will guarantee us an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? The wisdom then is sufficient for all the exigencies of our present trial time and the holy spirit prepares us

for the future. What more could be done for us? And all securable in proportion to our faith!

We are in the rear guard of a noble train of victors—Jesus, Paul, Peter, John, and many, many others. If God's Word was mighty to spur them on to victory; if it, and nothing else, was able to inspire in them a victorious faith, why may it not be so with us? The Lord will do his part. Will we do ours? The Lord's people should be ashamed to catch themselves at anything small or commonplace in thought. "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!" (2 Peter 3:11). The disposition to show ourselves worthy ambassadors is the germ of victory; victory over smallness, victory over self, victory over the world in our flesh; and it can be sustained only by faith.

"Unanswered yet? Faith cannot be unanswered;
Her feet are firmly planted on the rock:
Amid the wildest storms she stands undaunted,
Nor quails before the loudest thunder-shock.
She knows Omnipotence hath heard her prayer,
And cries, It shall be done, sometime, somewhere."

Joy is the most vivid sensation of the soul; the habitual temper and the inalienable right of the heart in harmony with God. It is various in its moods; *cheerfull* under stress or anguish; *pleased* by lesser and more ordinary favors; *glad* at relief from want and pain; and *joyful* at the gratifying things of greatest moment.

There are perplexing things in God's Word; but there are no dissatisfying things there.

Loneliness is the baggage, the impedimenta of truth; it is the poor relations that come traipsing along with the lovely young stranger. A law of compensation.

"We should seek to forget our failures and remember only the new wisdom they gave us."

"The love of Truth is the most noble quality of the human intellect, the most delightful in the interchange of confidence; yet of all qualities it is the most rare."

Noblesse oblige: True nobility is distinguished not by its exercise of prerogative, but by its considerate and obliging spirit.

Happiness is a sense of usefulness, tinged with emotion.

Look around—humanitarianism—be distracted.
Look in—moralism—be discouraged.
Look up—Christ—be happy.

All true education has for its goal the power to distinguish between the truth and a lie, enabling the truly educated person to determine values in whatever field engages his attention.

The richness and glory of life are due to its devotions and not to its treasons. Reforms are attractive because they promise to do away with evils.

Cynicism is the offspring of an impotent mind; the smoke screen which men lay down wherewith to conceal their own lack of valor.

"Higher criticism is often only lower unbelief."

NEW THOUGHT AND HINDOOISM

Question: Are the teachings of New Thought and Christian Science new, or are they traceable to older religious conceptions?

Answer: We cannot as a rule attempt to give the lineage of all the un-scriptural teachings in the world. To do so would be to take our time and attention away from the positive and edifying things of God's Word. But this question is worthy of a brief answer, because it proves that the Adversary merely plays from one hand into the other, and that these modern movements are modern in name only.

New Thought is identifiable with Hindooism on the broad basis of the fact that all heathen religions contain an esoteric (inner circle) philosophy, the knowledge of which was anciently confined to the priesthood and was sedulously concealed from the multitude of ignorant and superstitious worshipers. In India this once entirely esoteric philosophy first appears to have become popularized to some extent and to have spread among the masses. From India it was carried in recent years to western lands and adapted to occidental habits of thought as New Thought. There seems to be no room for doubt that both Theosophy and Christian Science are derived directly from Hindoo sources.

The Hindoo philosophy of existence is based on the *Upanishads*, which are classified into six *Sastras*, and variously interpreted by three schools of thought: the

Sankhya, the *Vedanta*, and the *Nyaya*. The Nyaya teaches that the chief end of man is deliverance from pain. This is attained by total cessation from all action, good or bad. Perfectly simple.

The Sankhya school declares that matter is self-existent and eternal — which our Western scientists also taught as an axiom until recent studies of radio-activity convinced them that the elements are not immutable and that there is a leakage of energy which cannot be accounted for. This Indian theory further teaches that the soul is distinct from matter, and is also eternal. (Practically all heathen creeds embody Satan's first lie.) When the soul attains true knowledge it is liberated from matter and from pain. (This smacks strongly of "Science and Health", with its "development of spiritual understanding" and the self cure of disease.) The same Sankhya school declares the existence of God unproved. How strongly this agrees with the average opinion of scientific man!

The philosophy of the Vedanta school is embodied in the "Vedanta Sara" treatise, which maintains that "the whole universe is God". (This is the "God mind" of Mrs. Eddy.) "God is existence, knowledge, and joy." Ignorance makes the soul imagine that it is different from God, that it is a distinct entity. To show how closely these oriental ideas are copied in modern healing cults we quote from page 184 of "Christian Healing":

"The purpose of this lesson is therefore to take as a workable principle the propostion that any ideal for the body or mind or the spiritual life, may be firmly held and steadily insisted upon, until it becomes a reality in the realm of things. To do this, we must first attain to the state of consciousness with the Absolute life. Let us accept fully and without question, the corollary that whatever belongs to the Divine nature is inherently in us, ready to move up to full expression just as soon as we attain Divine consciousness."

Ignorance, say the Vedantists, "projects the appearance of an external world". (Or, as Mrs. Eddy would say, "lack of spiritual understanding" and "wrong thinking" cause the soul to accept the "false testimony of matter".) Everything except God has only a seeming existence. (Mrs. Eddy again with her spiritual "oneness with God" and the "illusion" of the "carnal senses".) When he who is the First and the Last is discerned one's own acts are annihilated. Meditation without distinction of subject and object is the highest attainment of thought. (Concentration or semi-trance for the admission of spirit control.) It is considered a high attainment to say, "I am God," but the consummation is reached when thought exists without object — when you allow *something else* to use you as a medium for its thoughts! Indeed that seems to be the ultimate purpose of New Thought: spirit control.

Christ's teachings alone among religions inculcate real unselfishness. Buddhism ostensibly teaches it, but so exaggerates and perverts the meaning of it that it becomes preposterous. Hindooism incarnates selfishness as the rule of life, and New Thought tacitly accepts this rule. The Atman, or doctrine of self, teaches that there is one great pan-self present in all human minds, and that man, if he be awake to his supposed privileges, discovers his unity with this real or supreme self. In so doing he can justify his selfishness by reflecting that whatever he wills to do must be right, since he is part of God's will. This is a very subtile deception, containing a powerful appeal to certain instinctive human desires. Most human beings retain a latent sense of duty toward fellow creatures, a certain realization that the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is just and proper. But Buddhism explains benevolence as conferring benefits on dissociated fragments of one's self. So it justifies selfishness, calling altruism enlightened selfishness. This is Mrs. Eddy almost verbatim; and all New

Thought justifies selfishness and declares the unity of our selfhood with that of God.

The denominations of Christendom today teach Hindooism rather than the gospel of Christ; though in so doing they ought to include unexpurgated studies of Hindoo mythology, art, ceremonial and social customs, and laws.

Most heathen religions have their "holy trinities"; Babylon had its Anu, Ea, and Bel; Egypt its Osiris, Isis, and Horus; so the Vedic triad was Agni, Vayu, and Surya—fire, air, and sun; and later Hindooism had its Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, or the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer.

In the Paranas sacred books Vishnu is the most important deity of one sect. According to the doctrine of Avatara, Vishnu from time to time, through the ages, descends to earth and is incarnated in a human life. Krishna was one of these Avatars. He came to live on earth for the "preservation of righteousness and destruction of wickedness". Buddha, on the contrary, say the Hindoos, lives to promote the overthrow of religion and to lead humanity to destruction. Krishna's life was one of unmitigated lasciviousness, which his worshipers have thought well to emulate, according to his example; and they have commemorated these things in obscene pictures. Yet this is the good whose latest Avatar certain Theosophists pretended to discover in a Hindoo boy whom they brought to the United States a few years ago to be educated for his mission of the new Messiah!

Not only in the Krishna myth but throughout, Hindooism is polluted with unspeakable depravity. Indeed the Hindoo's moral sense appears to be atrophied; for, arguing that God is the source of every sin, he feels no sense of personal guilt, except in the case of ceremonial defilement, or in the infraction of some one of the myriad religious rites.

The Hindoo really worships self, and considers him-

self to be a detached part of God. In so doing he is, of course, bowing before Satan's master idea. That personage became puffed up with pride and considered himself worthy to determine his own course because he failed to give his due place to God. Like Mrs. Eddy, the Hindoo believes that matter is a reflection of thought, and he says: "Where there is faith there is God." So if you have faith in a stone it becomes God, veritably. So, having a superabundance of faith, he lavishes it upon three hundred and thirty million gods. His religion inspires and sanctions the most cruel and revolting customs. It is saturated with snake worship and all that that implies. Its keynote is *despair*. Yet from this, and its offshoot Buddhism, springs that pernicious system of error, New Thought, which, in one form or another, is virtually the religion of the present day.

The modern European applications of these ideas lead on toward spiritism. The celebrated Maeterlinck has published a lot of profound flummery about *od*, the "liquid of life", that magnetic vital fluid that is said to emanate from men and mice in uninterrupted waves; and not from animals only, but from vegetables and minerals. According to this theory, "holy water" is efficacious because it is water mesmerized by a priest possessed of psychic powers, who charges the water with curative suggestions. It is obvious where this twaddle leads to—even though there may be the weakest shimmer of truth in the odyllic theory.

These theories gently pave the way for spiritism; for it is alleged that the seven hundred authentic apparitions recorded by the Society for Psychical Research are merely "odyllic manifestations from beyond the grave". This is the Maeterlinck philosophy.

New Thought prepares the mind for spiritism. It also, by encouraging intense selfishness and "incarnating" the human will (that is, by letting the desires of the flesh be the determining factor in the life), leads to

universal jealousy, suspicion, hatred, and eventual anarchy. Myriads of people are shortsighted and never count the cost, but consult only the temporary and immediate gain. Flamboyant promises of "success", of "get what you want", of "power of will", and all the rest of their bespangled but morbid companions, are made to a curious, ambitious, and befuddled world, which does not realize that the greatest power on earth among men is not the power of the will but the power of *reality*. Absolute frankness of purpose and life is more potent than all the false psychology and semi-voodooism which could be crammed into a lifetime.

But to those who think differently New Thought appeals. They do not realize that in nature there are certain well defined laws which keep the world in order, standing as walls to separate the things of intrinsically different functions, and if these are broken down the result is chaos. This latter-day world is undermining its own mentality. Divine law limits man's activities according to a just appreciation of his capacities and welfare. It appreciates the fact that his meddling with certain occult mysteries will prove disastrous to him; but, disregarding this law, man is being permitted willfully to break down those walls which might protect him. It seems alluring to be admitted to the fellowship of those superhuman intelligences that urgently invite it. But they admit man not once as a guest of honor, but always as a victim. In former times these powers to work mischief were limited, but now they are being allowed to entangle themselves in a net of their own weaving, from which they cannot extricate themselves, or be extricated, save by divine power. Surely, in spite of all its boasted inventions, in spite of all its scientific wonders, the world of today is a terrible place to live in—not an unsafe place for the Lord's people in view of divine power, but an undesirable place from the standpoint of human happiness. It has become too complicated and too fantastic.

The insidious enemy has bewildered human understanding with subtile sophistries and ingenious delusions. He has undermined the human will, while persuading humanity that its own will is God. As for the Lord's people in the midst of this hubbub, they should properly take heed to the command: "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16).

Blessed hope! That we shall enjoy rest and peace and purity and sanity and honest brotherly love not only now in the midst of this turmoil, but fully when our glorious Master and King assumes His great power and reigns. This rest and peace and understanding will then come to fill all the earth. Where else is there any hope? What has Science, or New Thought, or Theosophy, or Hindooism in any form, to offer to those who have no hope—the vice-wrecked, the crippled, the blind, the incurably diseased, the spawn of the fetid slums, the bereaved parent or child? How can anyone reject the reasonable terms of the gospel to pin a faith in the vague and nightmare uncertainties of spiritism, with its proven lies and impositions, its weird and preposterous shadow world, its malicious and spiteful influences, its shuddery possibilities? On the one hand is the vision of a sane, decorous world, wherein exists justice, peace, and safety. On the other an Omorka abyss, peopled with irrational dreams and monstrosities. Should not anyone fear death, if it meant a plunge into this frightful unknown, populated with gibing, unrepentant evil spirits, and distinguished even more by conscious pains and terrors?

New Thought and Spiritism promise nothing really tangible in the way of hope and consolation. Only the message of present truth does that.

THE IDEAL CHRISTIAN is not an embodiment of unimpassioned propriety. His life is rich in varied emotions, and is marked by trials severe and joys sublime. Grief and gladness alternate in his experience like lights and shadows upon a landscape. Though he becomes sorrowful, he is always rejoicing. . . In the measure that we have come to know the Lord he inspires us with gladness, because of the beauty of his character and of the harmony with which all his cardinal principles work together. We see how his love is so great as to prompt his wisdom to devise a scheme whereby his justice can remain inviolate and his power at the same time perform the liberation of those who were justly condemned.

It takes great strength to live where you belong,
When other people think that you are wrong;
People you love, and who love you, and whose
Approval is a pleasure you would choose.
To bear this pressure, and succeed at length
In living your belief — well, it takes strength —
Courage, too. But what does courage mean
Save strength to help you face a pain foreseen:
Courage to undertake this life-long strain
Of setting yourself against your grandsire's brain:
Dangerous risk of walking alone and free,
Out of the easy paths that used to be;
And the fierce pain of hurting those we love,
When love meets truth, and truth must ride above!

WORLDLINESS AND OTHER-WORLDLINESS

"Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."—Romans 12:2

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE to force the standards and ideals of the world into likeness with those of the Bible, or those of the Bible into harmony with the standards of the world. The two are different; and the sooner we recognize this fact, and the more thoroughly we act upon our knowledge, the wiser we are.

Conformity to the world is the easiest thing for a Christian. All he needs to do is to abandon himself to the waves that are continually beating upon the rocks of his new resolve; influences which come to him from his fellow-workers in the office, shop, or street, and, what is more powerful yet, the long-cultivated habits, methods, and ideas which he finds within his own body.

There are desires for position, for society, for knowledge, for liberty and independence, for power and superiority. All these desires are God-given to man and it is neither wise nor just to look upon them as being wrong in themselves. The very power of their attractiveness lies in the fact that they are usually not wrong. The difficulty is that our bolies are imperfect and our mental balance deficient. These strong desires, therefore, demand an over-important part of the attention and, without scrupulous regulation in harmony with the divine instructions, they will determine the conduct. It is because these influences are too powerful for us to vanquish singlehanded that we are given the holy spirit, or power,

which may be drawn upon by faith to quicken our desires and inspire our determination toward those "things which are above", the heavenly things.

One mighty difference between the world and the church is that with the one class the emotions, sensations, and faculties of the body are often employed as *ends* or occasions of immediate enjoyment, overlooking the will and purpose of the Creator; whereas with the other class the emotions, sensations, and faculties of the body are used as *means*, and made subservient to the will of the Lord, as it is more and more clearly discerned, either to minister to or at least to be kept from interfering with the development of a character in harmony with the church's Lord and Head.

Though all people who live in the world are on either one side of the division line or the other, i. e., they are either of the church or of the world, still there are varying gradations, some being nearer the line on one side and some nearer the line on the other. In the world some are seeking after God, if haply they might find him and in the church some are drifting back toward the world, for self-will above God's will is the spirit of the world, to which conformity must be avoided.

The fact that the admonition of our text is addressed to new creatures plainly implies that they have much responsibility both as to watching themselves and as to actual performance in repelling the spirit of the world in themselves. How can it be done? We answer that the *will* is the determinate factor in this as in all matters intelligent. Not that the will itself has much power, but that the Lord has arranged to coöperate *with* us rather than to operate *upon* us. The Master said: "If any man *will* to do his will, he shall know the doctrine"—he shall have all the information and instruction necessary to the accomplishment of his holy determination and purpose.

This willing to do God's will is merely another statement of obedience to the Lord; for to will means more

than merely to desire. In giving ourselves to the Lord we will to take God's will as the only standard for our decisions and conduct. It is not that the Lord's people give up willing, or resign any property of their beings when their wills are made conformable to that of the Father; it is not that they become either the unwilling victims or the mere passive tools of another will, but that the whole strength and force of their wills are now turned in the direction of Jehovah instead of self.

Obedience begins when we present our bodies to the Lord. But persistence in it requires constant vigilance, because the Lord's will is so divergent from our natural inclinations. So firmly are the selfish penchants entrenched in our beings that self-love is a most elusive thing. It seems to be a matter of general experience that the large questions of life do not cause us so much trouble as the smaller things, in which our immediate comfort, or preference, or happiness seems likely to be disturbed, or overlooked, or marred.

The whole human race has sought happiness for six thousand years by the way of self-will; and with the examples of such colossal failure before our eyes it would be nothing short of conceit for us to think that *we* could gain happiness that way. But the herculean task of mortifying the deeds of the body, while not attained without the determination of the individual will, has at the same time the coöperation of all the divine power necessary to guarantee success, not to mention the moral encouragement of the Lord's interest and love and the legitimate hope of a noble reward.

The Apostle says: "If *ye* through the *spirit* do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13). Both "ye" and "the spirit" are indispensable items to victory. The railway engineer would properly feel discouraged if he had to draw the train or stop it by his own personal strength. He could not do it. But he does have the power, by exerting his will and by using a measure of

his own strength, to call upon the invisible forces of steam and compressed air to start and to stop the great train at will.

So with us, there is the restraining of the one thing and the pushing forward of the other. We are to be positively *transformed* as well as to be *not conformed* to the world. When we feel ourselves slipping and sliding in the direction of the world, if we have but faith to apply the mechanism, throwing into action not only the restrictive forces of our own being, but also those of the holy spirit, or power, a wreck can be surely averted. Likewise, what is still more difficult, if we are at a standstill we can again start off toward the transformation of our minds and toward preparation for the inheritance of the saints in light, which was the goal for which we first set out.

But suppose that when the engineer of the train wished to make a fresh start, or to put on more speed, he would merely look at his own arms and say: I can never do it; yes, I know there is a mechanism right in my hand which is said to make it possible for me to turn on an invisible force, and I know of plenty of instances in which it has succeeded, but *I* am doubtful, my superior endowment tells me that it can't be done. Or if the train were hurtling at a dangerous rate down a steep grade and the engineer knew there was a curve at the bottom and he would say to himself: I can't stop this train; I am not responsible for the law of gravitation; if we go to pieces we shall just have to go to pieces. I know there is the air-brake within my reach, but I doubt if it will work —such a man would be insane.

"God's commands are his enablements." His entreaty for our non-conformity to the world and our transformation is made to those for whom his power unto salvation avails.

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