

HIS FOOTSTEPS

Studies for Edification from the Life
of Christ

BY
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*"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also
suffered for us, leaving us for an example, that ye should
follow His steps."*—1 PETER 2, 21.



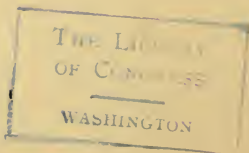
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HIS FOOTSTEPS

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN.

IN the footsteps of Christ, the Firstborn, we, His brethren, are to follow.

There was a wonderful similarity between God and man as first created, for man was made after the similitude and in the image of God. By creation God gave to man qualities similar to His own.

Man is still to a certain extent like God in that he is a personal being, possessing consciousness, intellect, reason, and will. He is a spirit with the powers and faculties peculiar to spirit-beings. In this he differs from all animal creatures, rising far above them; in this he ranks with the angels, the blessed spirits created to dwell in the glory of heaven before the face of God. Yet it can not be said that this exalted position of man in the world of created beings constitutes the image and likeness of God as the Scriptures speak of it and describe it. For then man would still be like God, now that he has fallen into sin; whereas the Scriptures tell us that the image of God has been lost by the fall. Man still has intellect, reason, consciousness, will, although impaired throughout by sin, nevertheless he is not like God. The devil too is a person with the same high faculties, and who would say that he possesses the sacred image. No, there must be something

more in man to make him truly like unto God. He must in very truth possess attributes and qualities of soul similar to those of God Himself.

Man's exalted position as a created spirit, man's intellect, reason, consciousness, and will, are only the basis for the Godlike qualities which were created in him. It is impossible for the animals to possess the divine image, the similitude of God's qualities and attributes; they were created without the spiritual faculties, in which alone these qualities can dwell, they stand on a lower plane, far beneath man. Only the angels and the spirit of man can possess likeness to God. But as they can possess God-likeness, so also they can be without it and lose it. And some are without it, some have lost it. The devils have lost it altogether and forever; and man too by the fall gave up his priceless treasure.

Man was originally like God, according to the Scriptures, not merely in being a spirit, as God is a Spirit, He the creating Spirit, and man the created spirit; but in this that man's spirit possessed qualities similar to those of God who is a Spirit. As God was holy and sinless, so man was created holy and sinless; as God was righteous and true, so man was created righteous and true; as God was wise and good, so man was created wise and good. To be sure, these exalted attributes of God inhere in the essence of God, and are the fountain of all that is like them in the creatures of God; whereas these attributes in the creature do not subsist apart from the Creator, but are the work and creation of God, wrought in the creature for the Creator's glory. This difference is expressed by the Scriptures when

they say, man was created *after* the image of God. He was not another God, nor another person of the God-head. Man is not the image itself of God; the image itself of the Father is the Son. Man is made after the image of God, he is a creature possessing not the actual qualities of God Himself, but qualities like these; qualities coming indeed from God, but not as though they were poured out from the fulness of God into man; qualities produced and wrought in him by God in the act of creation, when God breathed His spirit into man, and thereby created the creature spirit which is man.

From the very beginning God's intention with respect to man was that he should follow in the footsteps of his Creator, from whom his body, life, and spirit, together with all his godlike qualities, had come. His holy intellect was meant to know the things of God and the mind of God; his holy reason was to think the things of God for the purposes of God; his holy heart was meant to love and cherish the things of God and God Himself; his holy will was meant to will and do the things of God from godly motives for godly ends. Being God's in holiness and righteousness, he was to give himself to God by unfolding in a glorious life of holiness and righteousness the powers and possibilities God had placed in his being.

The animals could have no such task, for they were fitted out with different faculties, pointing to a far inferior end. The task of man in his original holy state was like that of the angels, but with a difference. They were to work theirs out merely as spirits in the celestial realms on high; man was to work his out as an embodied spirit in the terrestrial home given him of God.

As the link between the lower and the higher creation, man stood with his face turned upward to God, while his feet rested amid earthly surroundings. Thinking God's thoughts, loving God and the things of God, doing the will of God willingly and with joy, his body with all its members was to glorify God, in the unity of his spirit; and, ruling as the visible head of the creatures of earth, all beneath his hand was in its measure likewise to glorify the Creator. The mission of man, as set for him in the beauty of holiness, thus had its own peculiar sphere, and likewise its own peculiar exaltation. As one star differs in glory from another, so the stars of creation, angel and man, were to have each its own glory.

We may say in this connection that in a special way man, the holy, perfect creature of God, was from the beginning designed to follow in the footsteps of the Son of God, the Only-Begotten, the Firstborn of every creature. For the Son is the express image of God, as Paul writes, 2 Cor. 4, 4, "Christ, who is the image of God"; Col. 1, 15, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature"; likewise the letter to the Hebrews, 1, 3, "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power." Not that the Son is a creature like the angels or man, only higher, and that therefore we should follow His footsteps and be like Him. He is the Only-Begotten, of the same essence as the Father. In Him shine forth all the glorious and blessed attributes of God, and He is thus the essential image of God. And we are created after His image, that His glory might be reflected

in us. We were created for His glory, and therefore to be like Him. But He who is like the express image of God, like the Son of God in holiness and righteousness, will for this very reason bear the image of the Triune God. Yet when it comes to our unfolding the image of God created in us, it is not so much the Father nor the Spirit that is set before us, to whom we are to be conformed, as the Son, who is the express image of God; and our life when it unfolds in His likeness will be in the true likeness of Father, Son, and Spirit.

Yet all that should have been and could have been has not been because of sin. We who were created after the image of God have lost that image and have become like unto the enemy of God, Satan, who sinned from the beginning. The creature that once was holy is so no more, but has become unholy. The life that should have unfolded in the full glory of holiness has suffered a fearful blow, and now unfolds in sin and unholiness. The spirit of man turned from God, its Creator, and the Fountain of all its excellence and blessedness, and tried to stand by itself and to secure excellence and blessedness other than God has to give, and in ways other than God has designed. Man left the footsteps of the Only-Begotten Son of God and chose his own course, the path of sin and darkness and death.

Once the awful separation was made, there was no power in man himself to retrace his steps. The curse of God resting upon him he himself can not remove; the spirit of unholiness to which he surrendered he can not shake off. The purity of holiness and sinlessness he once possessed he can not now of himself regain.

He can not give himself what he has not; he can not lift himself from the quicksands into which he has fallen. Being without light, he can not relight the flame now extinguished. When in the state of holiness he had the fountain of all help in God alone and not in himself, now in the state of sin much more will he find no fountain of help in himself. He is lost, sold like a slave, and bound with the chains of hell.

This awful state of sin has affected man in every part. His spirit is corrupt and unholy; his soul is the seat of evil passions and desires, his body, once the pure and perfect instrument of a holy spirit, is now the tainted and corrupted instrument of sin. Even the rest of the creatures of earth, intended for the dominion of man's holy hand now rebel against him who sundered himself in sin from his Creator. The demand now for man to follow in the footsteps of God, is like bidding a bird with shattered wings to fly. How can we walk the angel paths of purity and light, when we are engulfed in the mire of sin? It would be vain to picture the shining heights of holiness in God to him who lies in the dreadful night of iniquity. The memory of what he once was, and what in consequence he should now be, can only crush man's soul the more, and sink him into the deadly depths of despair. Let it be understood, therefore, that these pages are written not for the natural man, with an expectation that he might find in himself any measure of power for realizing what is here portrayed. There is no walking in the footsteps of the divine Master for him who lies still beneath the curse and power of sin.

But for this very reason the present chapter has received the significant heading, "The Firstborn Among Many Brethren." The purpose of God in creation has been crossed indeed by sin, but has not been abandoned on the part of God as impossible of realization. Where sin entered grace followed. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 5, 20. 21. The Only-Begotten has become the Firstborn among many brethren. He who was the image of God, and after whose image we were created, that we might be like unto Him, has prepared ways and means that we, who have lost His image in sin, may again recover it, and rise to unfold it for His glory in never-ending blessedness. The Son became flesh and dwelt among us; He took our sin and the curse of the law upon Himself, and removed it by his blood; He took the burden of the law upon Himself and worked out for us a perfect righteousness. Jesus Christ stepped into the breach and checked the deadly work of sin. The power that we had not in ourselves He had in Himself, and exerted it mightily in our behalf. His life and death built the great bridge of redemption down from the shining heights of heaven and holiness into the darkness and death of this sinful earth. And now that the way is made for our return, the Son hath sent His Holy Spirit to lead us up on high.

As long as we remain what sin has made us, we can only walk in darkness, and sink down at last in eternal death. But the Spirit of God brings us Christ's re-

demption, removing our sin by His blood, clothing us in righteousness by His holy life. Thus we who turned from God, and forsook Him to seek the center of our being in ourselves and to go our own dark way, are brought back to God, justified, cleansed, adopted as His children, regenerated, and returned to communion with Him. Faith in Christ gives up self and sin, and opens the heart again unto God; and into the believing heart the Spirit of God pours out all that Christ has prepared for us. Washed in His blood, clothed in His purity, we are again like Him, and being like Him God is well pleased with us, and calls us sons. But as in Paradise man who had received the image of God was to unfold this image in a life of holiness for His glory, so now when man is justified and regenerated, when he returns to God through Christ, and the Spirit of God enters his heart to dwell therein, the great task set before him is that which was his in the beginning, the unfolding of the image of God in all his life here and hereafter for the glory of the Triune God. "Put off concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. 4, 24. "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." Col. 3, 9. 10.

The Scriptures abound in admonitions unto holiness; entire chapters are devoted to its elucidation and inculcation. But every single passage in these chap-

ters takes for granted the restoration of man in justification through faith to a position and condition in which he can again be and live holy. Not a single line presumes that the unchanged sinner is able to meet the demands of holiness. Nor do the Scriptures teach that all we need to be able again to conform our lives to the image of God's Son, is the mere act and fact of regeneration; and that when we are once justified and regenerated, we can take care of ourselves, and unfold by our own natural ability a life of holiness and purity. On the contrary, as we confess: I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Christ, so we must confess: I believe that I can not by my own reason or strength be conformed to Christ in holiness and walk in His footsteps. It is God which worketh in us both to will and to do; it is the Holy Spirit who must renew and sanctify us and lead us in the footsteps of the Firstborn. But He leads us as living members of Christ, as loving brethren of the Firstborn. As the flower unfolds beneath the sun's warm rays, so the Christian life unfolds beneath the quickening rays of God's Spirit shining into our hearts through the Word and Sacrament; as the fruit forms, develops, and ripens under the benign influence of nature's light and warmth and moisture, so the fruits of the Spirit grow and ripen under His gracious influences.

Our task, however, of following in Christ's footsteps as His brethren by His help is not now altogether identical with the task as set for man in Paradise. The circumstances and conditions have changed. We are now in a world of sin, and sin still has its seat within

us. Man as first created dwelt in a world of heavenly purity and beauty, and knew no sin. Sin with its temptation approached man in Eden from without, we have the temptation of the flesh, the devil, and the world about and within us. These are different circumstances and conditions, and in as far as they are taken into account our task has changed. But the change does not affect the essence of the matter. The end to be reached is still the same, that we may be conformed to the image of His Son; and although we must now work ourselves up through many difficulties and hindrances, the grace of God does not let us lack anything. From Him we may freely take grace for grace; when we stumble, He lifts us up; when we faint, He gives us strength. And He will bring us unto perfection at last.

It belongs to this all-sufficient grace of God, adapting itself to the changed circumstances in our position, that the image of His Son, to which we are to be conformed, is now for us, who are still in the midst of sin and in the vale of tears, not the merely divine image of the Son as the Only-Begotten of the Father. Our eyes are dark, our hearts are dull, our life of faith so weak and small. Heaven seems so high, its holiness so unattainable for us when viewed across the mighty expanse. But behold, the Only-Begotten has become the Firstborn among many brethren. He who is the express image of God has shown us this image in the form of man, in the life of a brother, who was tempted in all things as we are, who bore all our infirmities, who learned obedience down to the lowest possible humiliation. What infinite condescension that "Christ also

suffered for us leaving us an example that ye should follow in His steps." By living the earthly life He lived from the manger to the sepulchre, He provided not only redemption for us to embrace, but also a divine earthly pattern for us to follow. He has shown us in a living figure what our life should be on earth according to God's intention.

In addition to the life itself as thus set before us for us to follow as brethren of Christ, we have the stainless record of this life in the Word. The image of the Son shines no longer in the distant heavens, like a star too far away for sinful men to see clearly, nor is it seen through the ever-thickening clouds of mere human description and the imperfect portrayal of men long dead and gone; it unfolds all its mild radiance in our very presence, every beam unobscured, undimmed, in all its pristine perfection. The Firstborn is among His brethren to-day living and breathing in the Word. There we see His thoughts and hear His words and behold His deeds. Like a faultless flower His young life unfolds. With perfect devotion He yields Himself to His Father's business. With unflinching firmness He conquers the bitter foe. And thus step by step, till we reach the end, and see Him who is to lead many sons unto God bow his pale brow in death. What task can the Christian set for himself greater than this, to follow his Master step by step? Here the flesh, which we can not wholly shake off, will hinder full perfection; but the day approaches, when all Christ's brethren who have followed in His footsteps shall be made forever like Him in the full perfection of holiness.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHILD GREW — JESUS INCREASED.

AS the child Jesus grew from infancy to youth, and as the youth Jesus increased unto full manhood, in true human development of body, mind, and spirit, perfect and sinless throughout, so we are to grow and increase, and the spiritual life which Jesus gives us through His Spirit is to develop and unfold itself in the course of our earthly life, from the infancy of faith up to full manhood and conscious power. This development of the new man born in us is undoubtedly a following in the footsteps of the Firstborn.

Jesus was true man; as an infant, as a child, as a youth, as an adult, He was in all things like unto us, the only difference being that in Him there dwelt no sin. He possessed not merely a human body, or certain human faculties, but our entire human nature; He was as much a human child as any child that is born of woman. To be sure, He was sinless, and the effects of sin that deprave and mar our human nature, hurting our bodies, harming our minds and faculties, debasing our spirits, left Him untouched. But we dare not say that for this reason He is too exalted to be an example for us; on the contrary, if any measure of sin and sinful imperfection had been found in



*The child grew and waxed strong in spirit.—Luke 1, 80.
Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.—Luke 2, 52.*

Him, that would have been the very thing rendering Him unfit to be an example for others. For whatever of sin would have been found in Him would have been the thing we should not follow and copy in ourselves. And because sin cannot be confined in one corner of a person's nature, but like a deadly blight spreads at once over the whole and taints every part, therefore any blot of sin in Jesus would have dragged His entire person down from its lofty height, and He could not have been the Savior of man in any way, neither our substitute, nor our example. The very sinless perfection of Jesus makes Him the example in whose footsteps we are to follow.

Jesus, however, was not merely man, but the God-man, all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Him. The child whose perfect development is to be our pattern of growth was born not of the will of man, but conceived by the Holy Ghost. His human nature was therefore filled with all the excellence of the divine nature. He who was born of the virgin Mary was at the same time the eternal Son of the Father. And yet we dare not say that for this reason He is too far above us and too different from us to be our example, and that therefore it is useless to speak of our following in His footsteps. Man was originally created after His image; he was so constituted that his life should have been an unfolding of the divine image. The Son of God, the express image of God, in all the excellency of His divine qualities was the original example for man, the perfect creature, created after His image, to pattern after and copy in the measure rendered possible by his creation. That

purpose of God with regard to man remains unchanged to-day. Therefore, for us to say or to think that the God-man is too high for us, or too different from us, to be our example and pattern because He is God, is simply a refusal on our part to become and be what God intended.

But we must say more. Jesus, the God-man, exhibits Himself as our pattern, now that we have fallen into sin, not as a purely divine person, but as a divine person who is at the same time perfectly human. He walked the earth not in the majestic glory of divinity, but in the deep humility of the flesh. He was made like unto us, although He remained divine. The glory of the God-man is veiled in the flesh during the period of His voluntary humiliation; and not till His earthly life was finished was the veil removed and the majesty of divinity fully revealed. Therefore, if the Son as the Only-Begotten of the Father is already our pattern, much more then the Son as born of the virgin Mary. Now that He is our brother indeed, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, we dare not think Him too high and too different from us for us to follow in His steps. Such imagination would now be doubly sinful.

The Scriptures give us only a mere outline of the human development of the God-man; but there is enough for us to study reverently that we may copy after it. Nor need we go off into all sorts of speculations prompted by our own ambitious wisdom.

The child Jesus grew like a true human child. His little limbs became stronger day by day, His infant body developed all its members of flesh and blood. And as His body grew, so also His mind and spirit.

The senses unfolded their activity more fully day by day. The mind opened and began to perceive, to know, to think, to reason, to desire, to love, to choose, to will, to act. The spirit developed in like measure; Jesus "waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him." "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." He began to know Himself, the world about Him, the God above Him; and this knowledge of His spirit, as it unfolded and increased day by day, was true and pure and unclouded, every measure of it which He attained. He began to desire and love likewise, without a shadow of selfishness, His heavenly Father, His earthly parents, His neighbors and companions, and all the gifts and blessings and graces of God. He began to choose and to will, and this again in the same way, with the same purity and strength; His choosing was ever directed Godward, His willing ever in conformity with God's will. And thus His life unfolded in human action; at first the actions of a child, then those of youth, and finally those of full manhood; and every action was, from inception to completion, and in every stage of His earthly life, the unstained work of obedience to God.

We have no full and detailed record of the thoughts, words, and deeds of Christ to illustrate this gradual and flawless development of the child Jesus unto manhood. Only brief lines are furnished us to mark the progress, and they must suffice.

The stage of childhood is marked by growth in wisdom. The little one learned as children learn; and

doubtless this was like the learning of Timothy at his mother's and grandmother's knee. Jesus learned from His mother's lips what she could teach Him from the Scriptures. Into the pure, bright, young heart sank the everlasting truth of God, and the child's spirit was filled with heavenly wisdom.

The stage of boyhood is marked by a definite amount of wisdom, and by actions in accordance with this wisdom. We presume that the full meaning of the Jewish Easter festival was made known to the boy of twelve now if not already before, and with His penetrating eye He undoubtedly saw more in the festival than Mary or Joseph could see. The Bible account concerning the paschal lamb was full of the deepest meaning for Him. A peculiar fascination held the boy when at last He stood in the temple at Jerusalem. And the first words that we have from His lips declare His clear knowledge of God as His true Father, and of a peculiar "business" or work which His Father meant Him to perform, and to which He meant without question or hesitation to devote Himself. We are unable to trace the development that lay back of this utterance and action of Jesus, but there is no doubt as to the development itself and as to the degree of wisdom attained.

As we find a definite degree of wisdom at this stage, so also a definite course of action: "He was subject unto them." Not that Jesus had not been subject to Mary and Joseph heretofore. Concerning His previous life the holy record declared that He waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him. He therefore possessed the

wisdom of obedience befitting a child of His age, and for this very reason too the grace of God was upon Him. It could not have been otherwise. But when the child began to leave the days of childhood behind, when His wisdom began to know whence He was and what He had been sent for, His obedience to Mary and Joseph became more than it had been hitherto. He now submits and subjects Himself voluntarily to those of whom He knew that He was far above them. He calls God His Father about whose business He must be, and yet He obeys His mother and His foster-father in perfect love and submission. He executes that part of His Father's business which consisted in childlike obedience, and executes it with a fuller knowledge than hitherto of what this obedience means. This obedient subjection undoubtedly marks a stage in the development of the Son of man.

There is nothing to hinder us from presuming a like development for Jesus in other directions and relations. But the Scriptures say no more about His early years, and therefore we must refrain from attempting further portrayal.

We meet Christ again when He has grown to full manhood and is now thirty or nearly thirty years old. And again we see how His spirit has unfolded far beyond what once it saw and felt and did in Jerusalem and in Nazareth. He now knows the full truth in regard to His person and His work, and more than this, He knows that the great hour has arrived, and He goes forth from the quiet home in Nazareth to perform the mighty work of redemption. He stands on Jordan's banks; He goes out into the wilderness

alone; He returns to Galilee; He begins to preach, teach, and work miracles, to gather and train His little band of disciples; in a word, to do the mighty work that was finished on the cross. What a stupendous advance from the child and the boy of twelve. He has now grown and increased indeed and come to the full stature of manhood.

Such is a simple sketch of the human development of Jesus, and it is for us as His brethren to follow in His footsteps.

It needs no proof for those who are His brethren to show that our natural life under the power of sin could never follow in its development these progressing footsteps of Jesus. We might grow indeed in bodily stature, but, left to itself, the spirit of every human child will be fettered by sin and sink into ever deeper slavery, instead of waxing strong and increasing in knowledge and in favor with God and man.

The course of our development in the footsteps of Jesus begins and can begin only on the entrance of God's Spirit into our hearts through Baptism and by faith. The new man that is thus born in us may follow in the footsteps of the God-man; the sons of God may grow and increase in spiritual stature like the Son of God.

One of the great errors of to-day is that which denies to infancy and childhood the gift of regeneration and sonship, and desires to push the new birth and the subsequent development of the new life far back into life. The worst form of this pitiable error is the notion, that the child must become an adult before the new

life is brought near it, and that then it can choose for itself, whether it will have this life or not.

But either our children are already regenerated, when they are born into the world, or they are not. If they are, they need no regeneration, no conversion, their development can begin at once. But the Scriptures deny that we have the new life in us by nature. They declare that we are born spiritually dead, conceived and brought forth in sin, with an imagination evil from our youth up. Christ's own words are perfectly clear: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God; that which is born of the flesh is flesh." A new birth, therefore, is absolutely necessary, before the new life is ours and can start its spiritual growth. Consequently, to let our babes lie in their unregenerate state is a crime against their souls. We cannot too soon bring them to the blessed washing of regeneration in the Holy Ghost, to the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, by which through the power of the Spirit they are reborn and made children of God and co-heirs of Christ.

The devil does not wait till we reach years of so-called discretion before he begins his work in us and upon us; pray, why then should God and His Spirit wait? Shall we rest indolently till the field is one mass of weeds before we attempt to plant, or shall we take it while the seed of evil still slumbers and may be checked and displaced by the wheat? And will the young man and woman who are left to grow up as children of this world love anything but the world and indulge its lust when their years increase, and

will it not be only so much harder to win them for Christ after allowing them to become attached to the world? Can he who is chained fast in selfishness and worldliness still choose as though he were free? Or can he who is utterly blinded by the lies of the devil and the flesh see and desire the truth of God? No; if we are to lead our children in the footsteps of Jesus, we must bring them to Jesus and make them partakers of His life by Baptism in earliest infancy. The normal Christian life should follow Christ from babyhood on till the hour of death, whenever that may come.

Baptism is, therefore, the sacrament which bestows upon the child the new life that is to unfold in ever fuller development while man remains on earth. The Baptism of every child, therefore, takes for granted and demands the assurance that the new life implanted shall be fostered and cared for according to its need. There is a clear analogy between the newborn infant and the spiritually reborn infant. The little human life would soon perish if no motherly hand cherished and nourished it; the little spiritual life would likewise soon perish, if no motherly hand cherished and nourished it. The little human babe would suffer and become deformed and diseased, if not properly cared for by parental hands; the little babe of God would likewise suffer and become crippled and diseased spiritually, if not properly attended by parental care. To be sure, the natural life of the child is more manifest to our senses than the spiritual. And yet let us not forget that for months the natural life too was hidden in darkness, and its first beginning

was imperceptible. And even when the child is born, there are days and weeks when its life is hushed and veiled in slumber. After all, the dissimilarity is not so great. Only a little while and the little hands can be folded in prayer and the little lips lisp the name of Jesus.

To be sure, many are brought unto Baptism, and afterwards left to perish spiritually for want of spiritual food and care. And many are not cared for as they should be. Yet this neglect can never justify the additional neglect of Baptism. One wrong will never right another. The commission of one wrong cannot justify the commission of another. No, let the wrong that is wrong be righted, and not used as an aid for establishing another.

But all we have said so far already presupposes a difference between our development and that of the Son of man. In Him there was no sin at all, while in us there is sin from our conception on. In Him there was no conflict between the old and the new, in us the conflict remains while life lasts. In Him there was an unchecked, perfect, harmonious development from birth till death, in us there is a development that must fight its way against many obstacles, now checked, now thrown back, progressing unevenly and imperfectly at best. The development of Jesus is like the course of a straight line, while ours is wavering and crooked and sometimes broken. And yet it is not in vain to attempt the walk in Christ's footsteps. The knowledge of our imperfect and uneven growth, of our yielding and submitting to sin and its influence, may humble us, but blessed is the humiliation of

repentance. The faultiness of our spiritual life when compared with the faultlessness of Christ may fill us with grief, and yet life is better than death, and a life as much as possible like that of Christ better than one altogether unlike Him. And moreover, he alone who lives the life of God and follows Christ here shall reach the life of glorious perfection above. We cannot say that we have no sin, without deceiving ourselves, we cannot claim more than Paul, who admitted that he had not attained perfection; nevertheless, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, we can fight the fight of faith, strive after Christlikeness, and rejoice in the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain.

The spiritual development that should follow Baptism in the child must be like the growth of Jesus. "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him." The same should be true in a degree of every Christian child. We read in the Scriptures concerning Timothy: "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Here is Christlike development. Not that Timothy was a second Christ in perfection. None can be that. Yet here we have what is possible for those who are trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is not said that Timothy reached the highest height of spiritual development possible for a human child; suffice it to say that he grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was filled with wisdom to a notable degree. And did not the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth and

little Samuel of old follow in the same course? The Savior Himself bade little children to come unto Him, and they may and can come now. And who would forget the mighty word He spoke concerning "these little ones which believe in me"? Blessed are they whose infant feet follow in the footsteps of the child Jesus!

Of the child Jesus we read that He was filled with wisdom, of the boy Jesus that He increased in wisdom, and of Timothy, that the Holy Scriptures were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith. This then is the path for children in the footsteps of Jesus, increasing child-wisdom drawn from the Holy Scriptures. Let the child hear this wisdom from its earliest days on and see in the conduct of its parents and friends from the very beginning the reflection of this wisdom. Who is able to name the day when the first impression of this wisdom leaves its mark in the child-heart? Spiritual knowledge can be taught and received as early as any other.

By this reception of truth is not meant a mere learning by rote. The child is to become wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, not therefore through empty memory work under threat of punishment if it be dull, or for its own praise if it be bright. It is not quantity so much as quality of knowledge that is desired. Not a mass of separate Biblical facts to fill the little brain, but the one person of Jesus the Savior known to be loved and trusted in above all things. What a misunderstanding of this wisdom to boast of a child's ability to name in order all the books of the Bible, while that same child

cannot name what Christ has done for its salvation, and why it should love and trust in Him. What mis-directed zeal to let young children begin their attempts at learning God's saving wisdom by wrestling with the long chain of Old Testament histories, keeping the supreme history of Christ from them till the last. And finally what woful work to teach the history of Christ like a mere historical sum of facts, to be held only in the head, while the heart remains cold. To be sure, even these mistaken methods may produce some measure of true wisdom, yet how much more might be accomplished by a wiser course.

The child's development after the pattern of Jesus includes of necessity a knowledge of its Father's business and a fervent devotion in doing it. This business for the Christian child is chiefly prayer in Jesus' name and obedience for Jesus' sake. Not the empty formalism of prayer, the thoughtless, hasty repetitions with which so many are satisfied. Let not the little ones come to God with their lips while their hearts are far away. Nor should the outward act of obedience be considered enough, rendered unwillingly perhaps, or only from the motive of natural love to father and mother. Obedience must be for the sake of Christ who is ever present, a service of God who seeth in secret, and not merely of men who are easily deceived. Certainly, this aim is high. But if young Joseph in distant Egypt had God constantly before his eyes, our children as they grow in years can likewise be impressed with God's constant presence and the blessedness of serving Him in all things and in all places.

The beginnings that are thus made must reach some degree of completeness in early youth, corresponding to the attainments of Jesus at the age of twelve. Among Lutherans the day of confirmation is intended to mark this period. By that time the five chief parts of Christian knowledge, as given in Luther's Catechism, should have been carefully inculcated. The elements of Christian life and conduct should be mastered by the boy and girl of fourteen or fifteen. The blessings of the Christian state and life should now be prized and sought. The purpose of further growth in faith and holiness should be firmly formed and diligently and intelligently pursued. The young warrior of Christ should increase in strength daily and in ability to wield the weapons of his Master in fighting the foes that he and every one of his fellow-warriors must meet.

Shall we proceed to speak at length of the many hindrances that will rise to check this development? Who can name them all? Shall we try to sketch the further course of Christian progress in knowledge, faith, and conduct? That would include all the contents of the chapters that are to follow.

CHAPTER III.

HE CAME EATING AND DRINKING.

CHRIST came eating and drinking, a man among men, with a heart for everything human. Herein He is the example for us all.

From His youth on we see Christ entering completely into all our human relations with their joys and sorows, their labors and their pleasures. Although aware of His divine origin, He went up to Nazareth and took the place of a son beneath His parents' direction. He did not deem Himself too high and exalted to assume the burdens and the humble joys of a child's station. The child was father to the man; although He constantly demands of men that they receive Him as the Son of God, He comes eating and drinking, and delighting in the name, the Son of man.

We meet Christ amid the joys of the wedding feast at Cana. Perhaps the groom or the bride was a relative of His mother, and thus also of Himself, seeing that Mary was so concerned about the lack of wine. But whether such bonds of relationship dictated the invitation or not, the fact remains, that Jesus was present as a guest. And we must surely say He bore Himself on that joyful occasion not with cold austerity or distant chilling reserve. His table manners and table talk, as we know from other reports, were of the finest

and most fitting. He rejoiced at Cana with the joyful. Although none of His conversation is recorded for us, we are confident that it harmonized completely with the happy occasion, that far from lowering itself in the least to the commonplace, foolish, or vulgar, it gave in all simplicity a pure, elevated, spiritually delightful tone to all the festivities of the hour.

Jesus accepted many invitations to dine, even some that were extended with scant grace on the part of His enemies. In Capernaum we see Him at table with Matthew, whom He had just called to follow Him as a disciple. Matthew had made a great farewell feast to his friends. Being a publican himself, there were quite a number of these despised and detested individuals among the guests bidden to the feast. The pride and exclusiveness of the Pharisees could only condemn utterly any contact with men so sinful and depraved. But in Jesus we find nothing of this feeling. To Him they were poor sinners, longing with more or less earnestness for salvation. Therefore He is ready to meet them, to eat with them, to hold converse with them. By no word or act did He countenance any of their dishonesty or oppression; in no way did He lower Himself by accommodating His bearing or discourse to their sinfulness. But neither did He in any way cast them off. He used His friendly intercourse with them to turn them from their sin and to bring them unto salvation. The meeting of Christ at table with publicans and sinners was repeated on different occasions. Even on His last journey the house of Zacchæus, a chief of the publicans, was honored by the presence of Jesus. In this instance, recognizing the modesty and

reticence of Zacchæus, Jesus freely invited Himself, and His friendly advances were accepted with gratitude and joy. Zacchæus was a changed man after eating and drinking with the Son of man on that memorable day.

One of the earliest invitations to dine which we are told that Jesus accepted was that of Simon the Pharisee. As yet there was no decided enmity against Jesus, although, to be sure, there was also no friendship. Simon probably was induced to ask the Master to table from feelings of curiosity mingled with a desire to have the great Teacher enter his house; perhaps in a distant way Simon desired to express a certain degree of approval of something in Jesus. One thing is clear, the common acts of courtesy due an esteemed guest thus invited were studiously omitted on this occasion. There was not even water for the great Guest's dusty feet. Yet these intentional slights did not provoke Him who was come into the world to bear far greater wrongs. He had entered under Simon's roof not so much to be ministered unto as Himself to minister to His host. And an ever memorable occasion soon presented itself. A sinful woman came in among others.

“She sat and wept beside His feet; the weight
Of sin oppressed her heart; for all the blame
And the poor malice of the worldly shame,
To her were past, extinct, and out of date;
Only the sin remained—the leprous state.
She would be melted by the heat of love,
By fires far fiercer than are blown to prove
And purge the silver ore adulterate.

She sat and wept, and with her undressed hair,
Still wiped the feet she was so blessed to touch;
And He wiped off the soiling of despair
From her sweet soul, because she loved so much."

Simon and his fellow Pharisees were astounded that Jesus should suffer one so polluted to touch Him; they should have been astounded that Jesus suffered Himself to sit at table with people as polluted as they were by the stains of wicked pride and self-righteousness. With the gentleness of infinite love Christ accepted the repentant love of the woman and forgave her sins; with the gentleness of infinite love He rebuked the impenitence of Simon, and sought to lead his proud and cold heart to repentance, love and faith. It was for this that He had come to eat and drink with Simon, the Pharisee.

Opposition soon began to deepen, and the Pharisees had already sent spies to watch Jesus for some word or act which might be used against Him. They themselves used every means for bringing about His downfall. After accusing Him of casting out devils through the power of Beelzebub himself we are surprised to hear that "a certain Pharisee besought Him to dine with him." What prompted the invitation we are unable to say. It may have been malice aforethought, an attempt to take Jesus at disadvantage by having Him alone in the midst of His foes; yet it is just possible that the host on this occasion did not share the dislike of his sect against Jesus, and extended the invitation from some less sinister motive. But if the host himself lacked in evil design, his companions made up doubly for the lack. Jesus accepted the in-

vation. He entered in alone among that scowling, evil-minded company. But never for a moment did He attempt to act out a "false show of friendship" where there was nothing but bitter opposition to the end. Without washing He reclined upon the couch to partake of the refreshments served. This circumstance at once set the antagonism of the Pharisees ablaze. They marvelled, with deprecating gestures and scorn, "that He had not first washed before dinner." Attempts at conciliation would have appeared to them only as an acknowledgment that their phariseeism was in the right. Christ therefore administered a thorough rebuke. Though alone amid this hostile company He was in every way their master. "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness." And then followed the list of those awful woes, cutting into the very heart of their wickedness, revealing all the hidden depravity of their malice and hypocrisy. The fury of the company burst forth like fire long pent up. They pressed in upon the fearless speaker, they urged Him vehemently to say many things. The meal came quickly to an end, and Jesus left them to warn the waiting multitude without against the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

This indeed was a memorable meal. Christ would have been justified in rejecting an invitation with scarcely even the forms of courtesy in it, but He meant to break with His treacherous foes in a different way. He came as the Son of man, eating and drinking, even into their midst; calmly, without a sign of passion, He exposed all their hideous depravity and pronounced

the woe upon them which inevitably attached itself to their obstinate unbelief and inveterate malice. This settled His fate as far as the Pharisees were concerned.

On one other occasion, after Jesus had left for good the stirring scenes of His Galilean ministry, He went in somewhere in Peræa to dine with a Pharisee. Here again the Pharisees watched Him, with treachery in their hearts. A man afflicted with the dropsy stood by, and it was the Sabbath. Reading their evil designs, Jesus asked the company: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" They would not say yes, they dared not say no. And Jesus healed the man. Then He turned to those at table, if possible to heal them of a disease worse than dropsy. He revealed and rebuked their love of the world and of worldly honor: "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room." This is precisely what they attempted to do, as always, also on this occasion. Again Jesus told them: "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed; the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they can not recompense thee." And finally He spoke unto them the parable of the Great Supper, showing them how they who were called first, unless they would hasten to accept the invitation of God as now extended to them, would be excluded forever from the spiritual table of God, while the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, the despised among their own people and among the Gentiles would enter and taste of all the rich provisions of grace. Words better suited to the hour and the guests at meat could not have been spoken. But here again their saving power was resisted.

A more grateful scene is pictured for us in Bethany. Martha received into her house the Master, whom she as well as her sister and brother loved. Love impelled her to set out and prepare all that her larder afforded for the honored Guest. But, however much Jesus appreciated this busy love, He delighted still more in the quiet receptive love, which eats and drinks first of all at the table of His grace, and then, with a heart full of His blessed words, proceeds to set the hands in motion for His service. Eating and drinking is not the chief business of life; first comes the kingdom with its heavenly table and its divine food, then comes daily bread, and that properly sanctified and blessed. But those must have been moments unspeakably rich and sweet, when Jesus sat at meat in the house of His dearest friends.

A few days before the great passion the friends of Jesus in Bethany arranged a feast in His honor. It was in the house of one called Simon, the leper. Many conjectures have been made as to the identity of this Simon. Whether he was living at the time or already dead, we know not; nor whether he was in some way related to the family of Lazarus or not. It seems probable that Jesus had healed him of the disease of leprosy; it may even have been the very house of Lazarus himself and of his sisters which is here called, for some reason, the house of Simon. Martha, Mary, Lazarus, and the disciples were all present, the former two waiting at table. Lazarus had been raised from the dead only a few days before. There was but one man there to spoil the heavenly harmony, Judas the traitor. But the heart of Jesus is given so completely

to His friends, and their devotion is so full of gladness in having Him thus in their midst, that even the scowls of Judas are not allowed to cast a shadow over this feast of farewell. The exceeding love of Mary honors the Master to the fullest extent of her ability, with an almost intuitive perception of the meaning of this last feast. She pours precious spikenard upon the Savior's head and feet, anointing Him, as He declared, for His burial. To behold Him thus, at the very last, eating and drinking with His friends, must win our hearts and draw them to Him whose humanity drew Him so strongly to us.

At the feeding of the five thousand and again of the four thousand we see the manner of Christ's eating and drinking. He disregarded entirely the ceremonial washing of hands before and after eating, together with the peculiar movements of the hands considered necessary by the Pharisees in the act. Their washing of pots and dishes, couches and tables to avoid the possibility of defilement while eating was likewise set aside. Jesus proceeded in all simplicity as though these burdensome rabbinical regulations had never been prescribed. He took the bread and blessed it by a brief prayer and then broke it to be eaten. On the Sabbath day the disciples were free to still their hunger by plucking ears of corn, and the Jews dare not gainsay the liberty. The Son of man came eating and drinking, He did not fast nor require fasting. There were times indeed when no food passed His lips; the time when, for the great throngs about Him, He could not stop to refresh Himself, the time when He suffered untold tortures beneath the hands of His enemies. He

rejected the self-righteous and self-imposed fasts of the Pharisees, and their entire manner of fasting. "When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." While the disciples were with Jesus in those happy days of freest intercourse with Him, they needed not to fast; soon the Bridegroom would be taken from them, then the time to fast would come. Those who followed John, the preacher of repentance, might well bow in shame before God, and fast in sorrow of heart for their sins; but they who rejoiced in the bounteous grace and forgiveness of Jesus needed no symbols of sorrow, but only expressions of joy and gratitude.

And this is what we are to learn from the manner in which Jesus appeared among men, eating and drinking, mingling with them as one of them, their very brother, with a heart for all that touches our hearts. His holiness and purity had no peculiar, distant, exclusive, monkish form. He stood not on a pinnacle by Himself, but condescended to men of low degree. The exclusiveness of the Pharisees He repudiated altogether; the forms of their sham holiness and piety He rejected utterly. Even the godly austerity of John Baptist, which was meant to serve a special purpose and to fill a special hour, Christ did not assume. His life was to set before us more than some exception which might apply only to a certain time or peculiar

circumstances. His life exhibits an example perfect and complete. In its rounded whole all parts are found complete. Freely He gave Himself, heart and soul, unto men, and they who received Him, as some of the publicans, as His disciples, as the friends at Bethany and others, were made unspeakably rich by the gift.

As Christ bore Himself in what pertains to His eating and drinking in particular, so also in every other respect. He entered most completely into the thoughts and feelings of those who loved Him. The deep grief of Mary over the death of her brother moves Him even to tears. As He is not ashamed to eat with repentant publicans, so He is not ashamed to weep with those who in their sorrow put their trust in Him. He is indeed as He calls Himself, the Son of man.

Yet He is the sinless Son of man. However near He came to us, however freely He mingled with us, however much He was like unto us, and in fashion found as a man, He never defiled Himself with our sin. At Cana He created much wine, more than was needed for the hour, but not that men might over-drink themselves and abuse the gift of God. The Pharisees invited Him with hypocrisy; He entered among them freely, openly, with perfect uprightness of heart. He sat with publicans and sinners, but not one of them went away the least encouraged in the sins of his life. He accepted the kind hospitality of Martha, but never for a moment pretended to pronounce her much serving, while Mary sat and listened, well-pleasing to Him. In fact the more closely He united Himself to men, the more brightly His stainless purity shines out against their sin.

Our task in following the footsteps of Jesus is to come eating and drinking among our fellow men, both friends and foes, and to live the life of truth, love, and godliness in their midst. This task undoubtedly has its peculiar difficulties. Touching sinful, faulty men on every hand brings the evil influence of their sin and faultiness constantly to bear upon us, and tends to break down or to hinder our spiritual life and development. It is for this reason that the Romish seekers after piety have stopped eating and drinking among men, and walled themselves up in monasteries and cloisters. They have broken off common intercourse with men and cast the veil of seclusion about their persons to protect themselves as much as possible. But their efforts have been in vain. The more they have reduced temptation from without, the more temptation has raged within. The condition of many is pitiable in the extreme; for there are but few so constituted as to be able to live thus apart. It is a natural necessity for most men to live among their fellows. Moreover, Christian virtue was not meant to be hidden away in secluded walls. The followers of Christ are a city set on a hill, which can not be hid. The light of each disciple is not to be put beneath a bushel, but to be set upon a candle-stick, to shine before men. We are a salt that is not to be packed and stowed away in sacks, but to exert its saltiness among the corruptions of earth. Even John the Baptist, who dwelt in the wilderness apart from men, stood forth in their midst, when the hour came, and exerted a mighty influence. And the example of Christ shows us that we are called to show forth the works of God for the salvation of men.

When Christ came eating and drinking He frequently retired into solitude for prayer and prayerful meditation. The stream that flowed out among publicans and Pharisees had its own hidden sources. And so we are to seek the quiet of solitude and prayer, the secret closet for communion with God and for the strengthening of our spiritual life. But it would be abnormal to live altogether in such seclusion, or to draw forever from God without opening our hearts to give. If it is blessed to take, it is even more blessed to give after having taken. There is danger of spiritual selfishness. Moreover, we need the conflict that comes in our intercourse with men; by meeting it in the strength of Christ we secure the victory which makes us valiant and efficient men of God. If the apostles had shut themselves up in monastic walls, there would be no church to-day. They were sent out into all the world, like lambs among wolves; the world was not worthy of them, as it was not worthy of Christ who gave Himself freely unto men; yet they never lacked, for Christ was their shield and treasure, a protection and a source of supply better than can be found in any cloistral hall or monkish cell. Their names stand so high to-day because the Spirit of Christ dwelt within them, and they went forth among men as the Master did.

Christ's intercourse with sinful men and the Christian's going forth in the Master's footsteps among men equally sinful dare not be taken as a license or an excuse for entering among evil men when there is no call for us to take such a risk and to assume such responsibility. Peter ventured into temptation and

fell deeply. The continued influence of evil especially upon hearts untried and weak is almost sure to prove disastrous. Christ was careful to shield His disciples against the insidious attacks of the Pharisees, while their training was still incomplete. They had no call to go forth as sheep among wolves, before their preparation was sufficiently advanced. To rush foolishly into danger may tickle our own conceit, it will not honor Christ; to be found wanting in the conflict, to surrender in disgrace to the foe, will only provoke the derision of the world and give evil-minded men occasion to boast. To follow in the Master's footsteps is to keep first of all closely to His side and beneath His sheltering arm and draw abundantly from His strength; then, when He bids us, we may go forth as He did and honor Him with our steadfastness and diligence, with our ability to resist and overcome evil, and to win men from sin unto repentance and holiness.

When Christ came eating and drinking, He did not in the least allow His life to become meat and drink. Never for a moment was His calling forgotten, never for a moment was the spiritual life quenched or even repressed. He is everywhere and always most completely the Christ, the Savior of men. With us the danger is that we forget our calling, that we conform ourselves to the world and its worldliness, that in part or altogether our life becomes entangled and degraded in the things of earth. A feast like that at Cana is liable to carry away the weak into excesses. Even good women like Martha are apt to place preparations for a fine dinner before preparation of the heart

at the table of grace. When people treat us with a hypocritical show of mere outward courtesy, we are apt to taint our own openness and honesty with a similar sham courtesy. When men show their pride, arrogance, or other sins openly before us, the fear of men is liable to seal our lips and infect our souls with moral cowardice. When open slights and malicious neglect wounds us, we are inclined to resent it with a revengeful spirit, with a reply of open or secret spitefulness. When men love us and honor us, we become only the more prone to selfish, conceited, or ambitious pleasure through such favors and kindnesses. These are dangers to guard against when we mingle with men. The enemies of Christ slandered Him, as though He had succumbed to some of these dangers; because He came eating and drinking, they reviled Him as a glutton and wine-bibber. But no accusation was ever more false. And no accusation of this or similar kind should find us guilty.

The commonest acts of life, such as eating and drinking, Christ sanctified. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." He was holy in all He did; so we should be. He at all times sought to help, heal, uplift, purify, and save men; so should we. Therefore Christ never gave offense; and Paul bids us: "Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit

of many, that they may be saved." To be sure, the Pharisees were offended, most deeply and bitterly, when Christ ignored their self-righteous, slavish observances. But the fault was theirs, not Christ's. They took offense without cause. Sin is always offended at righteousness; self-righteousness can not admit true righteousness; moral slavishness will ever antagonize true Christian liberty. Christ came to loosen these chains, not to rivet them upon men, therefore they who were determined to retain the chains were offended at His efforts to free the souls of men. The same thing repeats itself to-day. But let us be sure that we follow indeed in the footsteps of Him whose word makes us truly free; let us put aside all seeking of our own profit, pleasure, indulgence. We dare give no man just cause of offense by word or deed. Woe unto the man, by whom offense comes. Some think themselves free and are still slaves of secret lusts, themselves taking offense at the true liberty, which freely foregoes many things, that it may prove helpful to the ignorant and weak. Then are we truly free, when we are complete masters of our appetites, and victors over the flesh; then do we follow Christ, Paul, and all true Christian exemplars, when we seek first of all and above all the salvation of men. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." The example of Christ was always helpful, and never hindered any man in the course of true righteousness. Paul followed Christ with wonderful success. We must follow both.

The little things of life are like the little leaves and fruit on a mighty tree. Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit in its season. Every good heart, rooted deeply in Christ, will abound in the common surroundings of life in little words and works thoroughly Christ-like.

CHAPTER IV.

NOT WHERE TO LAY HIS HEAD.

IN Christ we have the perfect example of a life as independent of the earthly possessions which the world considers indispensable, as it is possible for man still remaining on this earth to be. And this is the substance of the example of Christ's poverty for us, that we have whatever we have as though we had it not.

Jesus was always poor. He was born in a cavern stable, and humble swaddling clothes encased his infant limbs. His mother gave the offering of the poor at her purification in the temple. The flight into Egypt might have been very difficult, if it had not been for the gift of gold left by the Magi. In Nazareth Jesus lived as a poor boy, the foster-son of a humble carpenter. He Himself learned the trade (Mark 6, 3). "In the cities the carpenters would be Greeks, and skilled workmen; the carpenter of a provincial village can only have held a very humble position and secured a very moderate competence" (Farrar).

The last years of Jesus' life were passed in the same poverty. He had no place where to lay His head, no house or piece of land He could call His own. Capernaum was His own city, and He spent consid-



The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.—Matth. 8, 20.

erable time there, but only in the houses of His friends. "We never hear that any of the beggars, who in every Eastern country are so numerous and so importunate, asked Him for alms. Had they done so He might have answered with Peter, 'Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have that I give thee'" (Farrar). When the five thousand and when the four thousand were fed we catch a glimpse of His resources, five barley loaves and two fishes, two hundred pennies in the purse. When the temple tax was demanded at Capernaum, neither Christ nor Peter had the insignificant sum at hand. Jesus willingly accepted the ministrations of certain women who had received great blessings at His hand, Mary called Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and many others. Luke 8, 2. 3.

Those who followed Jesus and were trained to continue His work shared His poverty. Peter told the truth when he said, "Behold, we have forsaken all and followed Thee." Matt. 19, 27. It was not that they had given away all their earthly property, for John had a house at Jerusalem; but they had given up completely the enjoyment of the little property they possessed. They had forsaken it; it was as though they had it not. When Jesus sent out the twelve He ordered, "Provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves." They took only the clothes they had on; they could not have gone with less. To be sure, they had provisions which men saw not, the promise of Jesus, "The workman is worthy of His meat." And when they returned, they had to confess that in all their journeyings they

never suffered want. The seventy received the same commission, "Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes"; and this in spite of the fact that they were sent as sheep among wolves. The poverty in which the twelve and again the seventy were sent out to preach is undoubtedly a true picture of the poverty in which Jesus Himself traveled.

And yet the picture of His poverty dare not be overdrawn. Jesus was no pauper; the depressing and crushing squalor of poverty was not the lot He chose. His necessities were always provided for; only at rare intervals hospitality refused to entertain Him, more frequently the stress of the multitude gave Him not time to eat. The little band He led had at least a purse and a treasurer, and there must have been something in the purse, two hundred pennies at one time, something to give to the poor occasionally, something also for Judas, the treasurer, to steal from time to time. There was enough to provide the lamb and other necessities for the paschal feast, and very likely sufficient also to buy humble entertainment when travelling through Samaria. The poverty of Jesus was great, yet not excessive. He was no mendicant monk, no ragged and emaciated beggar.

Jesus voluntarily chose a life of poverty. Though He was rich, He became poor, and made Himself of no reputation, and walked as a servant, yea, allowed Himself at last to be sold for the price of a slave. The kingdom of God was His concern, and all else necessary for His earthly subsistence was added unto Him. We cannot understand the poverty of Jesus aright without taking account of its motive and of its

boundless secret resources. He became poor for our sake, because a life of poverty was the best for His work of redeeming our souls, because His independence of earthly possessions was the example we needed, because boundless reliance on God's provision was the true wealth for Himself as man and for us. Even the poorest may turn to Him who was born in a stable, who grew up in a carpenter's humble home, who afterward had not where to lay His head. Jesus, in all His poverty, never asked what He should eat or drink or wear on the morrow. No breath of anxious care disturbed His heart. When He was hungry after forty days of fasting amid temptation in the wilderness He knew and trusted perfectly that His Father would provide for Him, and He refused to doubt that Father's care by seeking bread miraculously. The Father never left Him alone, as He tells us; we see how the Father provided for Him after the victory over the tempter, when angels ministered unto His hunger. All the resources of heaven were open for the Son of man; one word of His perfect prayer could draw from all the infinite stores of Him who owns the cattle on a thousand hills. He was independent of all the things of earth, because He was absolutely dependent on the Father. This independence in dependence is the sum of His teaching for His disciples when they followed Him in His travels on earth, and for us when now we walk in His footsteps.

The gospels show with sufficient clearness that Christ does not teach or require absolute poverty for His followers. Zacchæus did not need to give up all

His earthly possessions when he received the Savior into his heart. It was sufficient for him to give up all that he had obtained wrongfully, to make amends for his extortions, and to rid his heart of every trace of greed and love of money. The women who followed Jesus and ministered unto Him, and finally provided spices and ointments for His burial, retained their wealth. His friends in Bethany kept their home and all their home comforts, and still they remained exceedingly dear to Him. Christ Himself in the parable of the pounds teaches that it is proper for us to have much when given us of God. Even the example of Christ shows Him submitting to be anointed with spikenard worth three hundred pence; and when He was buried, He received all the rich funeral provisions which love could supply.

There is no contradiction between all this and His utterances against the rich, and His treatment of the rich young ruler; just as there is no contradiction between St. Paul's words, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel," 1 Cor. 9, 14, and his own example, "Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me," Acts 20, 34, taking nothing from the people he ministered unto save a few gifts sent him by the Philippians. To kill the love of riches, and our dependence upon money, it may be necessary to take the heroic measure needful in the case of the rich young ruler, who was bidden to sell all that he had and give to the poor. It is better for a man to be borne aloft by angel-hands from poverty as distressing

as that of Lazarus, than to be cast into torment after dining and dying in surroundings as luxurious as those of Dives. How powerful and insidious is the love of earthly property we see in the case of the young man who sorrowfully went his way, because he could not and would not give up his great possessions. It is this attachment to wealth which makes it impossible to attach the heart to God in true faith and trust, and thus to enter into the kingdom of God. And this attachment is only too often found holding fast even those who are counted among the poor. Their lust after wealth, their envy and discontent blocks the entrance of true faith as effectually as the greatest love of wealth revelling in luxurious possession. The poor who are praised by Christ are people of a different sort; they may have much or little of earthly goods, their poverty is spiritual, a hunger after salvation. Those whose hearts hunger after wealth or are satiated by its fulness know nothing of the blessed poverty and hunger of the soul for the treasures of heaven. "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." — "But woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation." "Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled." — "Woe unto you that are full for ye shall hunger."

When the heart is attached only to God then the possession or non-possession of earthly wealth becomes a matter of altogether secondary consideration; then, like Christ, or like St. Paul, one may choose poverty, or prefer to work without payment, since such a course may suit one's aims best. The Christian

will be governed by his love for Christ and by the requirements of his service for Christ. When Christ bids, he will leave all, even what is more precious than money, and perform the Master's bidding in distant heathen lands. He will ever be ready to choose the profession in which he can serve his Savior best, without thinking of profit or loss. He will always prefer a location where he may enjoy the spiritual blessings of Christ, even though the temporal be diminished. In a word, when the heart is really independent of earthly possessions, it will freely follow the promptings and commands of God. The only trouble is that many seek to serve both God and mammon; but the attempt at such semi-independence on both sides has always resulted in complete dependence either upon the one or upon the other. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matt. 6, 24.

To be independent of earthly possessions, and to have the heart completely dependent on God, is to be free from the anxious cares connected otherwise with the ownership and management of earthly goods. It is pitiful slavery to be dominated by the things we ourselves should dominate. It is a grievous burden to fear thieves and the ravages of moth and rust and other forms of loss. Let heathens trouble themselves about what they shall eat and wear when pantry and purse are empty. Let the world, if it will, worry out its life in chasing the transient treasures of earth. "Ye lust and ye have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and

cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not; ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." James 4, 2. 3. Serene contentment is the blessing of him who fixes his heart on God; the Lord knows what things we have need of, He careth and provideth for us, and in answer to our believing prayers will feed and clothe us as perfectly for our need as He feeds the birds and clothes the lilies. "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us therewith be content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." 1 Tim. 6, 6-11. All true enjoyment of life and its earthly blessings is vitiated by discontent. An insatiable hunger will grow up by feeding covetousness full day by day. The more greed develops the more will the higher faculties of the soul lose vitality, and finally be completely atrophied. The miser starves at last amid his own millions. What never-failing joy and free delight to know that the hand of God is over us and gives us day by day whatever we need! All the millions of earth are too poor to buy the sweetness of Christlike contentment.

Only as we remain masters of our possessions and prevent them from overmastering us can we get out of our possessions what God would have us obtain. The Christian knows money only as a means, never as an end, only as a servant, never as a master. One only is his Master, namely Christ. Into His service the Christlike man puts the servant, money, and not into the service of his own lusts, or ambitions, or follies. Mammon is a poor paymaster, though he give us gold and silver in abundance, he sends us naked out of the world at last, poverty-stricken in soul and body forever. What does the hoarder of money gain? Nothing, absolutely nothing in the end! What does he gain who puts money into the service of his own flesh? Nothing, absolutely nothing in the end! "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

A wonderful blessing lies hidden in money, and the Christlike man learns constantly how to secure the blessing. "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness"; use it as a means to help the needy and to break the bread of life to the spiritually destitute, and your money will bring you glorious returns. Use it as an instrument whereby love may go out and bless, and the love of God will come in and dwell with you. "But whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" 1 John 3, 17. Be a faithful steward in administering the talents of earthly treasures committed to you, and far greater trust shall

be committed to you. There is no science so rich in new discoveries to be made day by day as the study of Christian stewardship; and no art so full of satisfaction and blessed returns as the Christian mastery of money. Many make money a rope whereby they let themselves down into the eternal abyss; we must make it a ladder whereby to lift ourselves and others upward toward heaven.

The self-righteous poverty of the many papal orders is just as un-Christlike as the self-righteous gifts among Romanists and Protestants. Gold and silver cannot do the least toward redeeming a sinful soul; nothing but Christ's blood suffices for that. But our souls are not perfectly free from the tyranny of sin, until the blood of Christ has bound us so completely to Him that all the ties of mammon are sundered.

CHAPTER V.

MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART.

THE supreme excellence of the God-man bore itself with supreme dignity, and yet this dignity was so totally free from haughtiness that some of its chief elements were meekness and lowliness of heart and a gracious condescension which turned not from the very lowest.

To see the meekness, the affability, and kindliness of Jesus in its true light the tremendous claims must be recalled which He made for Himself and in accord with which He ever bore Himself. To the woman at the well near Sychar Christ declared Himself openly as the Messiah: "I that speak unto thee am He." John 4, 26. The blind man who returned unto Jesus after having been examined and rebuked by the Pharisees, is asked: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" And when he asked: "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe on Him?" Jesus replied: "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." John 9, 37. And Jesus received his worship.

Again and again Jesus stated before His enemies that He was the Son of the Father in heaven. Into their very teeth He casts the declaration: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am." John 8, 58. The temple was almost idolized by the



Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. — Matth. 21, 5.

Jews, but Jesus asserts: "I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple." Matt. 12, 6. In answering the evil and adulterous generation that sought for nothing but signs, He made a like declaration: "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here." Matt. 12, 42. And when tried at last before the wicked Jewish Council He confirmed with an oath that He was indeed Christ, the Son of the living God.

The gospel accounts are full of the kingly utterances of Jesus. He taught as one having authority. "But I say unto you" comes from His lips repeatedly in the Sermon on the Mount, and all that He says strikes the heart with more than human power. "Verily, verily, I say unto you," ushering in so many of His mighty declarations, is full of kingly, yea divine authority. His decisions are not merely given in a tone that is final, but in themselves bear the mark of finality; His commands are royal, even the wind and the waters and all the forces of nature obey them, and the demons dare not disregard.

Jesus is never abashed, He never quails before men. He meets Nicodemus, one of the powerful members of the Jewish Council, with dignified calmness, and shrinks not from pointing out His lofty visitor's lamentable spiritual ignorance: "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" John 3, 10. In the midst of His enemies He calmly asserts His heavenly authority, and lays open their wickedness and relation to the devil. And even before Pilate in that last hour He proclaims Himself a matchless king and bears Himself as such. Herod, the tyrant, is treated by the great Sufferer as not worthy of a word.

Here indeed is supreme excellence and divine majesty clothed in human form with a dignity more than royal. But there is no shadow of haughtiness or selfish pride. Never by word or deed does Christ seek His own honor; when men dishonor Him it is not so much the dishonor to Himself, as the dishonor to the Father who has sent Him, which He resents. There is no outward adornment of majestic apparel, no train of servile followers, no hedge of official servants to guard approach to His person. Of all the countless forms and manifestations of human pride, not one is found in Christ.

He is ever meek and lowly in heart, a servant of servants, never seeking the ministrations of others, but ever ministering to those about Him. For every little favor He receives He gives favors and blessings a hundredfold greater. Men may freely slight Him and wound Him and heap shame upon Him; He never reviles again when reviled, nor threatens when He suffers. He is the Lamb that opens not its mouth when led to the slaughter. The union of royal and divine dignity with this untold meekness and lowliness in the person of our Example is a miracle that outshines every one of His separate miraculous deeds.

Proud kings sometimes affect humility and veil their haughtiness for selfish ends. But the lowliness of Jesus is untainted by even a shadow of affectation or hypocrisy. There is no false ring in the words from His own lips: "I am meek and lowly in heart." Matt. 11, 29. Though He knew Himself to be greater, and higher, and purer, and mightier than all men, even the King of kings whose exaltation was at the right

hand of eternal power, yet He yielded Himself in perfect obedience to the lowliness of the humblest service and the shame of the most humiliating death. The secret of this mystery of majesty in humility and humility in majesty is the love of Christ which passeth understanding.

The divine majesty which walked among men in such wondrous meekness was full of the kindest condescension. And this virtue of the Master is the greater "because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." John 2, 25. All the dark and devious ways of man's heart lay open before His eyes. He knew perfectly the selfish desires, the insincere subterfuges, the perverted blindness and boastful ignorance, the secret impurity, wickedness, and hardness of heart in man. It was for this reason that "Jesus did not commit Himself unto them," that began to believe in Him in Jerusalem. John 2, 24. They lacked both the nobility and the humility that could follow in His footsteps. Yet He did not turn from men because He knew all the dark and winding ways which their tainted hearts loved. He came to seek and to save the lost, and stooped down to meet them with His infinite love and kindness that He might save and purify and ennoble them. His perfect knowledge of His own pure love and of man's impure selfishness makes this condescension a miracle of mercy.

We find it shining in all His earthly life. It was surpassing condescension for the Son of God to walk as man among men, and for the sinless Son of man to mingle with sinners and outcasts of heaven. The

manger in Bethlehem, the humble home in Nazareth, the carpenter's tools and toils, the poverty that knew not where to lay His head, the dust of Gethsemane, the cross of Golgatha, and the sepulchre of Joseph's garden are all marks of His humiliation, that is of His voluntary loving stooping down to these deeps and utter depths of humility for our sake. Every kind and loving word from His lips, every gracious deed of His hands, from the humblest labors in the silence of Nazareth to the mighty miracles amid the throngs of Capernaum, are every one an exhibition of condescending love and lowly obedience to His Father. In some of the acts of Christ the meekness and lowliness of the greatest Lord and Master may appear more striking than in others; but while we dwell on these, the constant condescension that runs through all His life and stands ever beside His uninterrupted dignity dare not be lost sight of. With us dignity of action may alternate with condescension, nay the lack and loss of dignity and of condescension may alternate with imperfect returns to these qualities; but Christ is ever the same, never losing His pure kingliness of soul nor His loving lowliness of heart.

The conversation with the sinful woman at the well near Sychar shows us the perfection of this condescending kindness whose one aim is to save and purify. He knows what is in the impure woman's heart. With a kind and yet steady hand He lays bare the evil to which she has succumbed. He meets her every turn and twist with which she seeks to escape. Yea, it is this unknown and unnamed woman of the Samaritans to whom He makes the first categorical announcement

that He is the Messiah. Was there ever greater condescension?

The scene in the house of Simon the Pharisee reveals the same infinite condescension. The purest of the pure stoops to the vilest of the vile; and this before the eyes of the proudest of the proud in all the land. Jesus permits the woman who is known as a sinner in the whole town to bathe His feet with her tears and to wipe them with her hair. He accepts her repentance and justifies her trust by forgiving her sins. He takes the part of this social outcast against the supercilious self-righteousness and uncharitable condemnation of the host and guests with whom He sits at meat. He holds up her humble love in glaring contrast to the lovelessness of Simon: "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment." Luke 7, 44-46. Where shall we find such dignity clothed with such kindness and gracious love?

And this is no isolated instance. It is repeated again and again in Christ's treatment of publicans and sinners. "Verily, I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Matt. 21, 31. The Syro-Phenecian woman is not turned away, although esteemed a dog among the Jews. The repentant malefactor on the cross, suffering what his criminal deeds had deserved, is not

merely comforted, but received into Paradise with Abraham and the greatest saints. All the life of Christ is full of saving kindness toward sinners.

It was this same kindness of heart which sympathized with John in prison and sent Him an answer to strengthen his soul in the hour of trouble and for the hour of death. Its unfailing gentleness bore patiently all the foolish ignorance of the disciples and wearied not in steadily instructing them; which grew not discouraged at their persistent fleshly notions of the kingdom and their ambitious desires for a lofty place in that kingdom, but continued in the arduous task of planting spiritual conceptions into their hearts.

One of the most beautiful examples of the meekness of the God-man is His love for children. "He took a child and set him in the midst of the disciples, and when He had taken him in His arms, He said unto them: Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me." He stood in the midst of little ones, brought unto Him by loving mothers, and rebuked the disciples for seeking to prevent them, and blessed the little lads and maids, and invited them all to come unto Him. Children, with their loving, trustful hearts stand so high in His affection, that He makes childlike faith the model for adults, and shields them against the offenses of men by the awful threat: "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." The eternal Son of God condescends to babes and sucklings.

Perhaps the finest portrayal of all this loving, saving condescension of Jesus is found in His own parable concerning the lost sheep. The ninety and nine are left in the wilderness while the shepherd seeks the one that is lost. The length of the weary way, the steepes and cliffs, the brambles and thorns cannot keep Him back. And at last the torn and bruised and bleeding little lamb is lifted on His shoulders and borne back to the flock and the fold.

He who is full of such meekness and lowliness of heart is ever open and approachable even to the meekest, the most backward, and bashful. Any and all are free to come to Him. He repels no advance however humble; whoever comes to Him shall in no wise be cast out. There is no sorrow of heart which He does not understand and for which He has no healing balm. Even in the midst of His agony of suffering He forgets not Peter in the hour of his greatest weakness, nor His mother in the crushing distress of her grief. Here is the light of the glory of His condescending meekness and love. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden," holds good even on the way to Gethsemane and to Calvary.

The infinite compassion of the Son of God is equalled only by the perfect meekness and condescension of the Lord of lords in the form of a servant. And we are to follow in His footsteps.

"And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." And this was when they were gathered for the last supper. "And He said unto them: The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise

authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."

"So after He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, and was set down again, He said unto them: know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

The lowest is the highest; the humblest the greatest; self-forgetful service Christlike excellence; childlike meekness Christlike dignity; and shame among men glory before God. This is the law of the kingdom established by divine excellence in the form of lowliest condescension.

For the Son of God equality with God was no robbery; but the Son of man, the man Christ Jesus, who is our example, knew one greater than Himself, namely the Father in heaven, whose will and work He came to execute. As followers of Christ we are, like Him, to have but one master above us, Christ Jesus Himself, whose will and work is our only law. "Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ; * * * And call no man your father upon earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven; neither be ye called masters, for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall

be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Matt. 23, 8-12.

Christ, the perfect, sinless Son of man, was far above all men who dwelt on earth. "Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am." John 13, 13. And yet He who was the Head and King and Master of all made Himself of no reputation, became our brother, walked among us as one of us, yea humbled Himself, and with all His blessed gifts and abilities became the servant of all. There will always be a diversity among Christ's followers, some will be blessed with ten, some only with one or two talents. And yet "all ye are brethren." None may lord it over another because his gifts are greater or his earthly position higher. Brotherly love, brotherly service, equalizes all these differences. Christlike condescension abolishes pride, arrogance, self-willed and tyrannical presumption on the one hand, mean servility, slavish humiliation, beggarly cringing on the other hand. Every member has need of every other member in the holy body of Christ, and none dare despise or reject the other, lest the body be rent in twain and all the members suffer by the disruption. The greater the gifts, the greater the service due, and the meeker and lowlier he who renders that service.

Paul and Peter knew nothing of the popish spirit. "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." 2 Cor. 1, 24. The greatest of the apostles rendered the greatest service to the churches, and with all his strength he opposed the spirit that exalted one teacher over another and boasted of Paul over against Apollos and Cephas, or

of one of these over against Paul. "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." 1 Cor. 3, 4-7. Therefore: "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits." Rom. 12, 16.

The godly widow's contribution of her mite must not be ranked lower than the godly millionaire's contribution of a million. The repentant malefactor must be received equally with the repentant apostle. The black-skinned Ethiop is no less worthy of angel-service than the chosen sons of Abraham themselves. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3, 28. And because we are all one, let us in honor prefer one another, in lowliness and meekness serve one another.

The high and proud of the earth lift themselves up on lofty pedestals, and to approach them one must climb through entrance gates and ante-rooms and ranks of guards and lackeys. Christ gave Himself freely to all men; so must we to all who seek us in their need. The haughty of the earth shrink from touching the abased, lest they defile their hands. Christ condescended to help the lowliest and most despised among men. So must we who follow in

His steps. There is Christlike nobleness in the humblest service crowned by His love.

Christlike lowliness and condescension will be slandered and abused. The Pharisees heaped words of shame on Him who permitted a harlot to touch His feet and who sat at Levi's table. Because He served others and not Himself, they wagged their heads beneath the cross and reviled Him: "Himself He cannot help." But Christ's lowliness and condescension remained unchanged. He reviled not again, but simply said: The sick need a physician. Let Christian condescension bear as its crown and glory the slanders of men. "Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matt. 25, 40.

But as Christ lost none of His dignity when He kindly stooped down to men of low estate; so our true dignity as pure followers of Christ must be kept unsullied in all our intercourse with men whether high or low. The stains of the stained dare not be transferred to us in our dealings with them. The holy standards of truth and righteousness dare not be lowered for the accommodation of those who are below them. Christ yielded nothing to the ignorance of Nicodemus nor to the sins of Zacchæus; and neither dare we. He reached out the condescending hand of love to lift the one up to the height of saving truth and knowledge, and the other to the hill of holiness and righteousness in life; so may we reach out our hands to lift the ignorant and sinful, but dare not let them drag us down a single step into ignorance or sin.

Our dignity is our adoption as children of God in Christ Jesus, as sons of God through faith in the Son; our lowliness is love for the brethren and charity toward all men. The two are ever together as the sun and the rays of light it sends out.

The battle against the flesh will have to be fought daily by all who follow Christ in His meekness and lowliness of heart.



*I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day:
the night cometh, when no man can work.—John 9, 4.*

CHAPTER VI.

WHILE IT IS DAY.

THE day of Christ's work was brief, including only the last three years of His life on earth, but while this day lasted He wrought with tireless zeal, with unflagging energy, with marvellous diligence, and with secret but absolute success. "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord," must be our motto in the footsteps of the greatest and most diligent Servant of God.

The task confronting Jesus, when He left the quiet of Nazareth, was the preaching of the kingdom throughout the entire land of Judæa and Galilee, the training of twelve men to be His especial followers and His apostles after His own death, and the working of the promised miracles before the eyes of men everywhere for the substantiation of His claims as the Messiah. The time allotted to this work was brief, only about three years; and yet it was not too brief, it was just long enough. It is the divine way not to begin too soon, not to take more time than necessary, and to use unto perfection every moment with its golden opportunities. And yet sometimes it seems that God delays; but the trouble is with us who fail to comprehend His plans and workings. When a child looks at a watch, some wheels seem to be idle, and yet every

piece of the mechanism is doing its perfect part in marking the minute and the hour.

The four gospels give us little more than select and scattered incidents from the work-a-day life of Christ. And yet here and there we perceive how tremendously heavy was the burden of labor resting upon Christ. The mere physical exertion required was such that a common man would have been unable to stand the ceaseless strain. When then we add the taxing of the mental faculties, and the labors laid upon the soul in the ever-recurring, trying experiences with disciples and people and leaders of the people, it becomes clear that no man on earth ever undertook and executed such a stupendous amount of work as did the man Christ Jesus.

Mark describes a Sabbath day's work of Christ. Jesus and His followers came from the shores of the Sea of Galilee into Capernaum. It was on a Sabbath morning, and "straightway" Jesus wended His way to the synagogue. Here He taught the assembled multitude from the fulness of the truth that filled His heart, and all men were astonished. But amid the crowd in the synagogue there was a man with an unclean spirit. He soon raised a disturbance, crying out about Jesus; Christ rebuked and then healed him, and the people were amazed at what they saw in addition to what they had heard.

But this was only the beginning of Christ's labor for the day. "Forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue," Jesus accompanied Simon, Andrew, James, and John to Simon's house, where the mother-in-law of the latter lay sick of the fever. A second

miracle was wrought, and Jesus at last received something to refresh and nourish Him. The day was now nearly gone, but no sooner did the sun set, ending the Jewish Sabbath day proper, than the whole city began to stir. Every sick person and those who were possessed hastened to Simon's door. A pressing throng filled all the street, and Jesus went to work and healed "many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils." This must have gone on far into the night. At last, at a late hour, tired and spent, Jesus lay down to rest. But He did not sleep long; while the household was still locked in deepest slumber, while the strong fishermen were still lying prone, exhausted by the mighty experiences of the past day, Jesus, "rising up a great while before day, went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." The morning dawn did not find Him on a bed of ease, but drawing strength from on high for another day's work.

At last Simon and others found Jesus and told Him what was awaiting Him at the city: "All men seek for thee." Half the town was already before Simon's door. But Jesus refused to return: "Let us go into the next towns," was His answer, "that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth." The labors of the previous day were to be repeated day after day in town after town. "And He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee and cast out devils." And when a leper whom He had healed published the miracle and blazed it abroad, Jesus was so thronged that He could not enter the city, but had to spend day

and night in desert places, sleeping perhaps on the bare earth, "and they came to Him from every quarter."

This is a sample of Christ's work, the hardest, most taxing and trying work, and an endless amount of it.

In reading the gospel accounts of Christ's preaching, teaching, and healing we must not fail to note the brief phrases that open up for our eyes at every turn long vistas into His overwhelming labors. Every miracle must be multiplied a thousand fold; every incident repeated in manifold variations. As John tells us: "There are many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." John 21, 25.

Some days after the Sabbath described above Jesus entered Capernaum, "and straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door; and He preached the Word unto them," Mark 2, 2. "And He went forth again by the seaside, and all the multitude resorted unto Him, and He taught them." Mark 2, 13. "Jesus withdrew Himself with His disciples to the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judæa, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things He did, came unto Him. And He spake unto His disciples that a small ship should wait on Him because of the multitude, lest they should throng Him. For He had healed many, insomuch that they pressed upon Him for to touch Him, as many as had plagues. And unclean spirits, when they

saw Him, fell down before Him and cried, saying, "Thou art the Son of God." Mark 3, 7-11. "And they went into a house; and the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread." Yea, His friends and relatives became alarmed, they feared that the terrific strain of labor would crush Him; they said: "He is beside Himself." Mark 3, 19-21. In fact, the only way in which Jesus could preach to and teach this overwhelming throng was from a boat in the sea. Mark 4, 1. And to this labor of public speaking came the no less trying labor of privately "expounding all things to His disciples."

For days at a time it was almost impossible for Christ to be alone even with the disciples. "He said unto them" on one occasion, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while; for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." Mark 6, 31. And even these attempts to secure a little privacy, rest, and food, to say nothing of sleep, proved unavailing. "The people saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto Him." And when Jesus reached the place where He expected quiet, lo, He "saw much people," and His labors began afresh.

There was then no help for it, "He began to teach them many things" till the day was far spent," and the disciples begged Him to send the crowd away, for the place was desert. But Jesus forgot Himself and His weariness and need of food and rest. He went to work and fed their bodies as He had fed their souls, and as we may judge from the narrative, partook of a little

bread and fish Himself only after all the people had eaten.

We know how vital a thing it is, even for those who do only the commonest labor constantly, to be fed regularly and amply, and to sleep in restful homes and congenial surroundings. But again and again we are told, there was no time for Jesus even to eat. He snatched what He could here and there. Yea, He even put away food when hungry, that He might work. After a long tramp to the well near Sychar, Jesus conversed with the woman who came to draw water, and when His disciples returned with food from the city and begged Him, saying: "Master, eat," He answered: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." When the disciples wondered among themselves: "Hath any man brought Him aught to eat?" He replied: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." John 4, 34. Indeed, work was His daily bread, often the only bread He received.

Jesus knew no home life after His great work-day began. It is literally true, "He had not where to lay His head." His constant travels brought Him to a new place nearly every night. Only too often there was no restful place for sleep, only too often night found Him in the desert, on the mountain, away from the habitations of men. And even when near a town, He frequently did not enter because of His enemies, but slept outside. There was only too much necessity for the kind offices of the women of whom Luke writes that they followed Him and ministered unto His needs.

Never did man labor with such diligence, with such devotion, with such self-forgetfulness, and with such

absolute self-denial, as did this Master-workman, the Son of man. And the meaning of all this wonderful work for us who follow Christ's footsteps is even what He Himself tells us: "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Mark 10, 42-45.

We can not measure the full depth of self-sacrificing compassion with which Christ thus labored for the lost house of Israel. Nor can we fathom the trying sorrow that mingled with this love and its labors, when men rewarded it with ingratitude, as did nine of the ten healed lepers, or with hatred, as did the leaders of the people. Their bitter resentment, their constant dogging of His steps and attempts at catching Him in His speech placed a peculiarly distressing burden upon Him who already bore so much.

The joy of outwardly successful labor and its sweet, cheering, and uplifting fruit was not for Christ. He wept over Jerusalem for which He had labored so much; He pronounced a painful woe upon Capernaum and Bethsaida where many of His mightiest works had been wrought; He groaned in spirit at the grave of Lazarus where so many of His haters were assembled; He had the prospect of untold suffering and agony as the earthly outcome and end of His labors. Even in His disciples there was but little to cheer Him

in His work. We hear the complaint of His heart in the touching words: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" Again and again we are told, that they understood Him not, and Christ had to bear with them and their foolish ignorance, treading alone His laborious path.

And yet we would fail to understand the work of Jesus, if we should look only at its earthly side and at those circumstances which rendered it heavy, difficult, and depressing beyond measure. In fact, this work would have been an utter impossibility if its earthly side had been its only side. No; there is another side, there is an inward secret side which, when we behold it, shows us not only how it was possible, but also what was the true glory and divine excellence of this work.

Look at the wonderful unity of all the countless labors of the great Servant of God. There is one aim and one purpose in every word and deed from beginning to end. There is a divine perfection in every part of these marvellous labors, a perfection which no man could mar, however much he might try. Every word and deed was absolutely true to the one purpose that filled the heart of Jesus. And therefore, in spite of apparent outward failure, the work of Christ was ever absolutely successful. "It is finished," means more than that the attempts of Christ are ended, it is the seal of perfect completion, of absolute and eternal achievement. When Christ bowed His head in death, His work was complete, it lacked not one iota. As the work of creation produced a flawless result concerning which God could say in its totality and every detail:

"It is very good," so also is the work of redemption and all that the God-man wrought in His earthly life, all of it and every part of it, "very good."

And the secret of it all is the divine love with which Christ labored, a love which did the will of the Father in everything and absolutely, speaking only what it heard of the Father (Jno. 8, 26 and 28; 12, 49 and 50), and doing only what it saw the Father do (Jno. 5, 19). He who labored thus could indeed say at last with divine joy and satisfaction, contemplating what had been wrought: "Father, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." John 17, 4. In so far as any man really does the work which the Father has given him to do, in so far he is truly successful, in so far he may rejoice with abiding joy.

This secret of Christ's work and life is the vital thing for all who attempt to follow in His steps. Then and then only is our work Christlike, when it is filled with the love of Christ and the Father, and when it is controlled completely by the will of the Father, which is the will of Christ. When we do and say at all times what we have seen of the Master, then will all our work and words bear the imprint of Christ, and be both perfect and truly successful.

But here is the crucial point. Men put self where Christ put His Father. Men let the flesh and the desire of the flesh control their labor and their life, where Christ obeyed only the Father's will. Men work for their own pleasure, honor, enrichment, and selfish satisfaction where Christ wrought for the glory of the Father and ministered unto others. Work has been highly exalted in our day, but it sits on the throne of

self and rules with the scepter of self and knows no law and no crown but self.

Men still speak of "callings", but they seldom ask: For what has God fitted me, and what would God have me do? They let earthly gain call them, and shut their ears to the call of God. And yet God has a call for every man on earth, a place where He would have him stand, a work which He would give him to do, and a success which He would grant as the fruit of his faithful labors. As the God-man had His life's work planned by the Father, so every godly man has his life planned in the calling meant for him by the mind of God. To be sure, some are called for higher work and some for lower; the gifts of God differ greatly. But no man is overlooked or forgotten.

There is but one aim and end in all Christlike callings and labors, the glory of God in the service of men, Even servants and slaves, the lowliest of the low, are admonished: "Be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling and singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service as to the Lord and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." Eph. 6, 5-8. And there is no man so gifted or so high but that the same admonition applies to him. As all our calling should be chosen and performed for God's glory in man's service, so every part of it day by day.

There is much diligence in the world, an endless amount of zeal and enthusiasm. But none of it is Christlike, except that which looks to Christ for its inspiration, guidance, success, and reward. What a revolution would take place in the busy world of to-day, if this principle of Christlikeness would leaven it throughout. Like shadows of the night all the troubles of labor and capital and all the secret griefs and complaints of those who lie stricken beneath the blight of selfishness would disappear before this divine power, if once admitted into all the world of work.

But even though the world as such abides in godlessness, every worker who takes Christ into his heart and work will thereby be lifted Christward and crowned with a joy, a success, and reward which the world can never know, though its achievements rise a thousand times higher than the tower of Babel.

There is a success which looks like failure. Christ died having only a handful of scattered followers, and all His foes thought He had labored in vain. So we may die in the footsteps of Jesus without seeing the godly success of our Christlike work, but the day of eternal rewards will make it plain. No man can fail who keeps his eyes on the Master, and does what that Master gives him to do. Every man is bound to fail who shuts his eye to Christ, and works apart from Him. There is no success in heaven and earth except in Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VII.

THY WILL, NOT MINE.

ALL the chapters in the life of Jesus may be ranged under the heading: "Thy will be done." His will coincided absolutely with that of the Father, and so now should ours.

It is St. John especially who delineates this perfect submission of the will of Jesus to the will of the Father. Like a golden thread the thought runs through chapter after chapter of John's gospel. Although Christ's word concerning the business of His Father to which He must bend His will and life is not recorded by John, nor the repeated prayer of Christ in His agony in Gethsemane, there is so much of similar import in the fourth gospel, that many will be surprised when for the first time they pass it in review.

The fact, that Christ's will was ever in perfect harmony with the Father's has its deep foundation. "I and my Father are one," Christ declares unto the unbelieving Jews; and again: "The Father is in me, and I am in Him." The sense of these declarations is perfectly plain. For Christ asks the blind whom He had restored to sight, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" and replies to the question, "Who is He?" "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that



*O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:
nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.—Matth. 26, 39.*

talketh with thee." The divinity of Christ shines through the gospel of John like sunlight in fullest radiance. Because Jesus is the eternal Son of God, therefore, His will is the Father's will. "Ye shall know that I am in my Father," therefore there could be no conflict or disagreement between the two.

But we are led a step further. The Son who is 'one with the Father was sent of God into the world. This sending was realized in the incarnation. Yet the Son, when sent, was still the Son and none other; the Son, when clothed in flesh and rejected of men, was still one with the Father. Again and again Christ declares: "The Father hath sent me"; "The living Father hath sent me"; "I come in my Father's name"; "I am from Him, and He hath sent me"; "I proceeded forth and came from God, neither came I of myself, but He sent me"; I am He "whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world." He appeals to the testimony of the Baptist, to the mighty works He was doing, to the truth and the power of the doctrine He was teaching, in proof of His being sent by the Father. That men may know and believe that He is thus sent is the great object of His exertions. For "this is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." At Lazarus' grave He prays: "That they may believe that Thou hast sent me." For "this is life eternal that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent." And Christ's heart is full of praise that His disciples "have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send me." And His heart longs and prays in that last hour: "That

the world may believe that Thou hast sent me"; "and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me."

Tremendous stress is laid by Christ on the fact, that the Father has sent Him. And this stress is not for naught, it is the very rock of the whole work of salvation; it is at once the cause of all that Christ did, and the guarantee and proof of its absolute agreement with the will of God. He came not of Himself; and God Himself testified thrice from heaven that He was well-pleased with Him whom He had sent.

A third step takes us still further. The Son, who was one with the Father, and sent by the Father, had all things placed at His disposal by the Father. "The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hands." "All things that the Father hath are mine." Notable parts of this gift are especially referred to: "As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." The reason for this transfer of all things into the hands of Christ is the mission for which He was sent. Heaven and earth were placed at His disposal to do with as He willed. Twelve legions of angels stood prepared to hasten down at His beck; the stones lay ready to cry out, if He should desire. Disease, death and demons obeyed His slightest word. There is no check or restraint anywhere — "all things" precludes excep-

tion. But this fact, which John's gospel especially keeps bringing up again and again before our eyes, gives wonderful emphasis to the unity of will between Christ and the Father. All things in Christ's hand — the Father knew absolutely that His will would be done. All things in Christ's hand — but no thought in Christ's heart with reference to the slightest thing apart from the Father's will.

He who was one with the Father, sent by the Father, and placed over all things by the Father, does nothing of His own accord or for His own separate pleasure. "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day." His works He does "in His Father's name," not in His own. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth." And in Gethsemane we hear the prayer, Father, not my will but Thine be done. Thus with great fulness the absolute harmony between the will of Christ and of the Father is declared. The Son cannot do anything of Himself as separate from the Father's will; He looks ever to the Father, and does only what the Father shows and bids Him. Therefore too, Christ is not alone: The Father is with me, I

in Him and He in me, in spite of the veil of flesh and the shadow of humiliation.

As with the doing so with the saying. Christ calls Himself "a man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God." "I speak that which I have seen with my Father." "I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that this commandment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." And when Christ has nearly finished His speaking on earth He turns to the Father: "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest me"; "I have given them Thy word." And even in the promise of the Comforter Christ tells His disciples: "He shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you"; but straightway adds: "All things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I that He shall take of mine and shall shew it unto you." As in His works so in His words He who is one with the Father shows that His will is one with that of the Father.

The idea of deviating in the least from the Father's will is therefore instantly and peremptorily rejected by Christ. When the tempter showed Christ a different course from that of the Father's will, a course without the cross, with all the world at His feet, the answer comes indignantly: Get thee behind me, Satan. When Peter at Christ's announcement of the coming passion takes Him aside and urges upon Him: "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee!" we hear the same reply: "Get thee behind me,

Satan; thou art an offense unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Whenever His one work of doing His Father's business and will is interfered with, He asks full of reproach: "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled?" "Shall I not drink the cup of my heavenly Father?" in other words: Shall I not do my Father's will? And though that will required the most painful sacrifice at Christ's hands, the Son, obedient even unto death, did not falter for an instant. Though drops of blood were pressed from His agonized brow, though soul and body quivered on the verge of death, the prayer is ever the same: "Not my will, but thine be done!" And without a single lapse it was done, and the work triumphantly completed which the Father had given the Son to do.

He who never even harbored the thought of deviating from the Father's will, was so devoted to the doing of that will with all His soul and strength that everywhere and at all times He sought not His own glory and advancement, but only the glory of the Father. "I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth," He tells the Jews. And at last in words of prayer He declares: "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." And this mighty purpose of glorifying none but the Father by His every word and deed, makes the submission of Christ's will to the Father's complete. There is no shadow of selfish desire or longing; there is not the slightest trace of compulsion or unwillingness; there is nothing but absolute love and devotion, rendered with the most

perfect freedom, joy, and rapture. Not that the Son should not be glorified in turn; only this, no glorification while in His humiliation; He made Himself of no reputation while He bore the burden of our sin. While He dwelt in lowliness, His yielding of all glory was His glory. When at last the hour of "It is finished" drew nigh, the moment of glorification came: "O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted (glorified) Him and given Him a name which is above every name." Now the God-man dwells in everlasting joy: and soon all eyes shall behold His majestic throne.

As the needle ever points northward, so the soul of Christ looks ever to the Father's will. That will is the one purpose of His life, so supreme that none other is found beside it. Behold, the servant faithful in all things, He hath left nothing undone that He should have done and did nothing that He should not have done. Follow ye in His footsteps.

For us thus to pursue the submission of Christ's will to that of the Father clear back to His essential oneness with the Father and onward unto the glory He now holds with the Father, may seem irrelevant when the chief object of study is our imitation of Christ's submission. And yet we have not gone too far, for the submission and obedience of our will must rest on a like foundation and proceed to a like end.

If our will is to coincide with that of Christ, we and He must be one, as He and the Father were one. They were essentially one, we must be one by faith

and love. "I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you," are Christ's own words concerning this oneness; and again we hear them from His lips: "As Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us"; "I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." The carnal mind will ever be at enmity with God, setting its will against that of Christ. The unregenerate will is a slave of sin and in complete bondage, when it comes to doing the will of God. It is God, therefore, who worketh in us to will in accord with His will. When the Spirit of God enters our hearts and removes sin's curse and power, and gives new life and a renewed will, and makes our heart one with Christ by the faith which embraces Him and all His gifts and by the love which lays itself and all it has at His feet, then indeed we will do the will of Christ, as He did the Father's will.

But this leads us on to say respecting ourselves, that Christ sends us who are one with Him, even as the Father sent Him. "As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." And again: "As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you." The latter passage refers especially to the apostolic mission of the disciples, but the former plainly includes a mission for all who are one with Christ and prepared to do His will. Christ prayed not for the twelve alone, but for all who shall believe on Him through their word. All followers of Christ are sent to be in the world; and they are sent for a purpose, to testify in word and deed of Christ, to proclaim and honor Christ before the eyes of the world, to let their light of Christlike obedience shine before

the eyes of men "that the world may know and believe that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved me." Just because our will is one with Christ's will, we are sent of Him and placed in the world, that we may work the works of the Christ-like will, and perform our Father's business, each in his proper sphere, as Christ did in His.

And in a manner our will is placed in a position similar to that of Christ's. When He was sent to do the Father's will, all things were given into His hand; now that we are sent and set to do the will of Christ, all things are placed at our disposal according to His will by prayer. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you." "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us." All the divine promises of God for prayer might be quoted here. Not that we may do what we please or will of ourselves. "Without me ye can do nothing." But as long as our will coincides with Christ's, He heareth us, and all things must work together in our favor at His command. And when Christ is in us and we in Him, how should God refuse to give us freely all things? The mystery is great, and yet the exaltation of those whose will is one with Christ's is clearly revealed, although the world knows it not.

There is, however, in us what was not in Christ, the will of the flesh, or, more properly, the flesh with its lusts, desires, and passions, attempting to wrest the will away from the control of Christ and His Spirit, to make it will what is contrary to Christ. Paul there-

fore, urges us: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." And the apostle pictures the conflict that takes place in the heart, when the flesh wars against the spirit and seeks to master the will as before: "That which I do I allow not: for what I would that I do not; but what I hate, that I do. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. * * * I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 7, 15, etc. In Christ there was no sin at all, in us sin still remains; Christ's will was perfect in God, ours is still hampered by the flesh. But as long as our will is in Christ, it will overcome the fleshly desires; and though momentarily overcome by them, will quickly return to the mastery. But while we carry about with us the body of this death, even our most perfect willing and doing in Christ will be in some measure corrupted and tainted by the flesh. The more completely our will rests in that of Christ, the less this taint will be, and the more may we sing in triumph

with St. Paul: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Evidently then, we must tread in Christ's footsteps and say with Him: "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father"; "not my will, but thine be done." Self and all that surrounds self, centers in self, or adheres to self, or proceeds from self, must be merged in Christ: "Thy will be done", and none but thine. In Paul's words: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." Christ in us must gain complete control, so that He shines forth in all our words and deeds, while the carnal self is dead and buried. We have the pattern for this in Christ, whose will and work was the Father's to such an extent that He could answer Philip's request: "Lord show us the Father", by the statement: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Then will we follow in Christ's footsteps indeed when Christ shines forth in all our works to such an extent that self, inasmuch as it would differ from Christ, is lost and gone.

And this complete subjugation of our will to Christ is its true liberation. Sin is slavery, the flesh a chain, the world a prison-house, the devil a keeper and tyrant. Holiness is freedom, the new life a free life, the kingdom of God the spiritual land of liberty, and Christ the blessed liberator. Then are we free when our will is able to do that for which it was created; then are we slaves when our will is hindered from doing that which God meant it to do. But the will f

God is that we will what He wills, and therefore this is our liberty, which the world cannot understand. There was never a freer man than Christ, and our freedom is Christlikeness. "If ye continue in my Word", if we do His will, "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8, 33.

Christ did His Father's will by doing the works which His Father had given Him to do, and by drinking the cup of suffering which His Father gave Him to drink. And we are to follow in these His footsteps. This is the will of God that we believe on His Son; and again, this is His will that we may be conformed to the image of His Son, even our sanctification. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love." It must suffice here to refer to the Ten Commandments as the sum of God's holy will. In these the will of faith must show its Christlikeness. And they already include for us the drinking of the bitter cup with humble submission in Christian hope.

When the will of Christ is our will, every attempt to draw our will aside must be resented and overcome, as Christ overcame the tempter who would lead Him astray. "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me and a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers." Faith is the victory that overcometh the world in the strength of Christ who dwells in the heart. But our following Christ in the midst of temptation must be reserved for another chapter.

It remains to show that the will whose Master is Christ seeks no glory but that of Christ, as Christ sought no glory but that of the Father; and when we glorify Christ we at the same time glorify Him whom Christ glorified. John 15, 8; John 17, 10. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." This glorification of God in all that we will and do is our own greatest glory. By thus giving up ourselves completely unto Christ we will be among the many sons whom He leads unto glory, and in whom His prayer shall be fulfilled: "The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them"; "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me." And at last Christ's glory shall be fully revealed in us whose will is the will of Christ glorified.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEHOLD, HE PRAYETH.

CHRIST led a life of prayer; He was ever in perfect communication with the Father whose will He had come to do. And His example is for us to follow.

It will not be amiss for us to review the recorded instances of Christ's praying. When He stood in the waters of Jordan about to receive Baptism and the Holy Spirit, we are told that He was "praying." After a day's consuming work and a brief night's rest, "in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed," till Simon and others sought and found Him. When His fame blazed abroad, we hear that "He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed." The choice of the apostles is preceded by His going "out into a mountain to pray, and (He) continued all night in prayer to God." While alone on the way with His disciples, before He asked them the great question concerning Himself, we read that He was "alone praying, His disciples with Him." The transfiguration is ushered in by Christ's "taking Peter and John and James and going up into a mountain to pray." And "as He prayed" the heavenly glory overspread His countenance and glistened in His raiment. The mem-

orable request of the disciples: "Lord, teach us to pray," was made by them when "He was praying in a certain place." And He who had induced the request by His own example answered it and added precious instructions in regard to prayer. The miracles of the multiplied loaves are ushered in by Christ's giving of thanks. The voice from heaven comes in the temple in answer to prayer. The raising of Lazarus is preceded by an audible thanksgiving. Peter's faith is kept from perishing utterly by Christ's intercession. The Lord's Supper is instituted with prayer. It is followed soon by the great highpriestly prayer with its wonderful utterances. The great agony is borne and overcome by prayer. The unbounded possibilities which prayer may unlock are in Jesus' mind when He declares that one word of petition would bring twelve legions of angels down. The first word on the cross is prayer; and Christ dies commending His Spirit into His Father's hands.

This is a wonderful record. For we must remember the exceeding brevity of the gospel accounts and that in their brevity they do not dwell on the subject, bringing for the most part only casual references to Christ's praying. His parables are gathered in groups, His miracles are set before us in select array, but His prayers are recorded only in rare instances. And yet so much is clearly told us, that we can readily infer all else that we need know. He who spent entire nights in prayer; whose every act of special importance is ushered in by prayer; whose fervor of prayer kindled the flame of prayer on the altar of His disciples' hearts; whose model prayer stands forever matchless; whose

highpriestly prayer is far above any voice ever heard among men; whose suffering and death are marked by the purest and most perfect prayers—He was indeed a man of prayer, and lived and moved in the atmosphere of prayer.

Christ ever walked in the midst of spiritual realities. As the material world about Him was real, so no less the spiritual world. His eyes never for a moment lost sight of His heavenly Father, of the exalted kingdom and its angelic inhabitants, of the spiritual kingdom of grace on earth and all that was and would be connected therewith. He sees all the vanity and the transitoriness of the world, the desperate wickedness of the prince of this world and His evil helpers working in the darkness and for the darkness. He never for an instant loses sight of the divine work laid upon Him and the spiritual objects of His kingdom, and the triumphant end that will come at last. And because He lived such a life, His soul was ever full of prayer.

Perhaps it will help us, who are to follow in His steps, if we direct our attention to some of the features of Christ praying and prayer.

He prayed, as we may infer from the Sacred Record, oftentimes in silence, for instance at His baptism, possibly at the transfiguration, and very likely in the mountain solitudes. He prayed at times in public, as when the miracle of the loaves was wrought and that of raising Lazarus. He prayed oftener still in the presence of His disciples, for instance when the Lord's Prayer was given, when the highpriestly prayer was spoken, when the prayer in His agony in Gethsemane was uttered. And we are constrained to think that

He prayed oftenest in solitude, in the stillness of the mountain wilderness and in the sacred chamber of His own soul. Again and again we read of His retiring to pray alone; and He Himself tells how He prayed for Peter when that disciple knew it not.

It is instructive to note for whom Christ's prayers were made. He prays for Himself, that the Father may glorify Him, that the bitter hour and cup may pass by. He prays for the disciples whom the Father had given Him, collectively and individually, and for all who shall believe on Him through their word. He prays for His kingdom and the great objects of this kingdom, for the special works which He performs for this kingdom, and for the special gifts He bestows upon it. He prays for His enemies on the cross, although He does not pray for the world, for those who harden themselves in opposition to His grace. The scope of Christ's prayer is in perfect accord with His divine person, character and mission.

It is scarcely necessary to add that the prayers of Jesus were answered in every instance. He willed and desired and requested only what the Father Himself willed and wished and was ready to do and to give. He came ever as the Son to the Father with whom He was perfectly one, and therefore His prayer could not go unanswered. When He prayed: "Father, glorify Thy name," at once the reply came in a voice from heaven: "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." At the grave of Lazarus Christ Himself, lifting up His eyes in prayer, declared: "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. And I know that Thou hearest me always." John 11, 41. In Geth-

semane the threefold prayer of agony found its glorious answer. Here, if anywhere, we see Him "touched with the feeling of our infirmity," His poor human heart sorrowful even unto death, and crying: "If it be possible, take this cup away." We must note that He did not ask the Father to take the cup away and to remove His suffering and death at all hazard, even dropping the work of redemption. His determination was unshaken even in that hour, that none but the Father's gracious will should be done, that the world should be redeemed. His prayer in agony only asked, if it were possible to save the world without the bitter cup, that then God should take it from Him; thus clearly implying that if it were impossible, as it was indeed, the Father's will should be done, and He would drink the cup. For this reason Heb. 5, 7, declares that Christ "in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, was heard in that He feared." He was heard in that the angel came and strengthened Him, in that God made His heart strong and firm and removed all the agony that rent it, and in that God led Him to the glorious completion of the work of redemption on the cross. Christ never prayed amiss, therefore His prayers were never without their complete answer. And indeed, if even one of His prayers had been rejected as unworthy of answer, what awful results would have followed.

The divinity of Christ and the divine excellence and efficacy of His prayers might at first thought discourage us in following His high example of prayer. He

was the Son Himself, and we are only poor sinful creatures; every prayer of His was divinely perfect, and our best prayers are so full of fault; He had every claim upon God whose Son He was and whose will He did perfectly, while we have lost all claim upon God by our disobedience and sin. And yet this discouraging comparison fades like a shadow in the light when we remember the effect of faith.

If Christ may go freely to the Father and ask and receive whatsoever He desires, because He is the Son of God Himself, then we may come likewise, with the same freedom and assurance, for by faith we too are sons, yea, by faith we put on Christ and are so joined to the Son that the Father receives and hears us as He does the Son Himself. To be sure, Christ is the essential Son of God, and we are sons only by adoption through faith in Christ; but as regards prayer there is no difference, for the rights of Christ are our rights through faith, and the privileges of Christ are transferred to us. We come praying in Christ's name, covered with the glory of that name, and we receive all that His name can claim: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name He will give it you." Yea, when Christ dwells in us by faith, God receives our prayer as He does Christ's own: "At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God."

Nor need the imperfection and faultiness of our prayers discourage us when compared with the divine utterances of the Son. The sons of God are not left

comfortless, the Spirit of prayer is in their hearts, and He "helpeth our infirmities." We admit that our prayers of heart and lips are full of faults, "for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which can not be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Left to ourselves, our prayers would indeed be worthless, but now the Spirit makes them excellent and acceptable to God. Woe then to those who grieve the Spirit; their cries shall be in vain in the last dark hour.

The memory of sin will always lie heavy on the Christian's heart when he draws nigh to the throne of holiness. But by faith we may come as freely and as confidently to God as the Son Himself, for the merits of Christ are our own by faith. Could Christ pray so confidently because there was no sin in Him, then we can pray likewise because there is no sin in us, Christ's blood having removed it all; could Christ pray so joyfully because He had rendered God perfect obedience, then we can pray likewise because we have rendered the very same obedience unto God, all the merit of Christ being set down to our account in justification through faith. Yea, to follow in the footsteps of Jesus is blessedness indeed. He so covers us with the brightness of His purity and excellence that the Father in heaven sees nothing more of our sin or lack of righteousness, nothing more of us and the things that are ours, but only the perfection of Christ covering us, and the beauty of His name and merit.

And besides this, Christ Himself ever liveth to make intercession for us. When we are so crushed that we can scarcely groan or sigh in prayer, the Spirit groans for us; and when our prayers and the Spirit's groanings rise on high the Son takes them up and makes them His own before the Father's throne and adds His divine intercession to them. Where now are all discouragements? Only ignorance or wicked perversity could hold them fast.

But all this that is given us through faith in Christ dare not make us dilatory and careless in our praying. The duty remains that we should be diligent in prayer and copy after Christ our example in prayer. The high gifts and blessings which our faith may claim must ever serve to stimulate us, that we may learn of Christ how to pray, and that we may exercise ourselves in the work of prayer. He who grows listless, thinking that Christ and the Spirit will do everything for him, will awake at last and find his faith dead, and Christ and the Spirit of Christ departed from him.

As Christ, therefore, our example, walked ever in the midst of spiritual realities, so must we following His steps. Father, Son, and Spirit must ever be present to our souls; their love and grace must ever be the greatest treasure in our possession. The kingdom above and the kingdom about us must be real to our hearts, and all the things pertaining to the heavenly kingdom of grace and glory must be the chief things for our thought and labor. In the same way the kingdom of darkness, with its wicked powers, and its warfare against Christ and our souls, must be a dread reality for our hearts. As our natural eye sees the

material world, so our spiritual eye must see the immaterial, spiritual world. And in accord with all this, the true nature of the transitory things of our temporal life must be clear to our souls. We are only pilgrims on earth, and as we have brought nothing into this world so we shall take nothing out; we live here for a time, and receive of God what is needful for our life in time, not to attach our souls to earthly possessions which will fade like the flower, but to sanctify every bodily gift by thanksgiving and prayer and by use in the service of God. When thus for us to live is Christ and to die gain, our hearts will be ready to pray as Christ prayed.

And first in our prayers as in our labors will be the glory of God, as this was chief in the prayers and labors of Christ. "Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done." And that his triple petition may be fulfilled, Give us our daily bread; forgive us our sins, protect and keep us in temptation, and deliver us from all evil. And for all the blessings of God the ascription of praise, the glorification of worship, and the thanksgivings of gratitude will come from our lips and hearts: "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen."

As Christ prayed in silence and solitude so will our believing hearts follow His bidding: "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Again as we have no record of Christ praying anywhere or at any time in public before He assumed His divine office, so we will not open our lips

without the call of God for public ministration, but confine ourselves to private prayer, and leave the public function to those who are called as was Christ in the three last years of His earthly life. But those who are set as shepherds by the great Shephérd Christ will model their prayers after His, so as to voice the petitions of their flock unto the throne of grace.

If the Savior prayed for Himself, then, surely, we must do likewise. If the more important acts of His life are marked by special prayers, we, in whose lives the breath of prayer should ever stir, will also cry with especial earnestness unto God when we have special need of His blessings. If Christ humbled Himself into the dust in the hour of agony, we who must suffer and grieve so often will likewise bow down and seek in prayer the strength and comfort we need. If Christ gave His soul in prayer to God beneath the shadow of death, we likewise will face death with prayer in our hearts.

Christ prayed for His disciples, His friends, His brethren, as He called them, and for all who would yet believe on Him. We must do likewise. He prayed for Peter especially when Satan threatened him; and here is another example for us. Christ prayed for His enemies; and we too must pray for those who spitefully entreat us. Christ prayed not for the world, for those who hardened themselves in lasting enmity against Him; and it is told us: "There is a sin unto death, I do not say that ye shall pray for it." 1 John 5, 16.

Christ sought and loved the "house of prayer," and was zealous that nothing should enter there to disturb the worship of prayer. Let us not forsake the assem-

bling of ourselves together for prayer, but remember that if two or more of us agree on earth as touching anything that we shall ask, it shall be done for us of our Father which is in heaven. As we are singly bound to Christ, so let us pray in silence and in solitude; and as we are jointly bound to Him, so let us also pray jointly, each little family circle led by the father, each congregation led by its pastor.

As Christ was heard so shall we be who follow His footsteps in prayer.

CHAPTER IX.

MINE HOUR.

AS Christ had His hour, so the Christian has his hour; and the Christian's hour is the hour of Christ.

A wonderful calmness pervades and exalts the entire life of Christ; His every act proceeds with divine steadiness, poise, and deliberation. We never hear that Christ hurries; He goes in time and He comes in time, never too early and never too late. His soul is free from anxious, vexing care and troubled, worrying thought; He is ever sure of Himself and sure of everything else, because sure of His Father in heaven.

When twelve years old Christ knew His Father and had begun to understand His Father's business to which He was called. Yet for eighteen years after the event at Jerusalem Christ remained in obscurity in Nazareth. Day by day the youth who had been so deeply impressed at Jerusalem grew in the knowledge of His Father, and of His own person as the Son of God and the Son of man, whom the Father had sent into the flesh to fulfill the great prophecies of the Old Testament, to save His people Israel and with them the whole world. Year after year passed by, and still He remained quiet and silent in Nazareth, while the burden of sin and misery about Him grew ever more



Now is my soul troubled ; and what shall I say ? Father, save me from this hour : but for this cause came I unto this hour. — John 12, 27.

crushing and desperate. Not till the hour was come did Christ step forth and assume the office and begin His public career. Not till the voice in the wilderness proclaimed at God's command: The kingdom of heaven is at hand! did the Mediator show Himself. And even then He began not at once to preach and teach and use His power in Nazareth or Jerusalem. He went to the Jordan as one among the multitude to be baptized of John, and began His own labors only after receiving the anointing of the Spirit and the declaration from the skies.

There is in this silent waiting of Christ something like the waiting of God for the fulness of time. As God waited for centuries before sending His Son, so the Son waits for years before assuming His work. There is no shadow of fear that by this waiting anything will be missed or lost; there is no chafing and complaining about the burden of inactivity, no restlessness and burning desire to shake off the yoke of silence. No; the very waiting is taken as a part of the business which His Father had laid upon Him. As at last when Christ spoke He spoke at the Father's bidding, so at first He was silent because of the Father's will; as afterwards Christ healed and helped and showed His divine power in obedience to the Father's call, so before the hour came He possessed His power without once exerting it, in the very same obedience. As He was ready to step into public activity when the moment arrived, so He was ready to abide in inactivity while the time for waiting was still passing. Those eighteen long years at Nazareth show forth a glorious part of Christ's divine excellence.

The apochryphal gospels were written by men who could not understand the hour of God. Men are nearly always over-anxious to begin their work or dilatory when the hour arrives. So these man-made accounts tell us that Jesus astonished the people of Nazareth in His childhood and youth by prodigious deeds of miraculous power and astonishing displays of human wisdom. These childish accounts show us how foolishly their writers would have acted in Christ's place, how little they would have understood and obeyed the Father's will, how completely they would have lacked the calmness and deliberateness of Christ, how they would have spoiled the work by their sinful haste and missed the divine hour by their sinful eagerness and impatience. By this complete lack of the wisdom of God the apocryphal gospels show that they are the work of man's foolish wisdom and not the work of divine inspiration. They are far below the divine accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and therefore the Church has never accepted these idle inventions.

The life that began with such perfect calmness and patience preserved these godlike features to the very end; and in several striking instances this waiting for the hour of God is set before us in the work of the God-man.

At Cana there was lack of wine. Undoubtedly Christ knew of the lack before His mother reported the fact; and undoubtedly Christ could have relieved the want long before He did. And yet He waited. Even when the want of wine became known and began to trouble those who managed the feast, Christ is in no hurry.

When Mary at last, other expedients having failed, as we may assume, comes to her Son for aid, He sends her away with a mild rebuke: "Mine hour is not yet come." Her foolish wisdom would have counseled haste. Christ's divine deliberation knows nothing of such haste, will not be driven and drawn even by a mother's request, but waits till the moment for action arrives. Then, when the hour came, the work was done and done to perfection.

We see the same calm and deliberate waiting when Lazarus lay sick. Christ knew when His friend was laid low, and yet He remains away; Christ could have healed His friend at once as He had healed even strangers before. And yet He delays. The anxious hearts of Martha and Mary are overcome by this seeming neglect, this apparently unfriendly delay. They send the message: "He whom Thou lovest is sick"; they would hasten Christ by this appeal to His love. But Christ is not hastened. Lazarus dies, and Christ tells His disciples that he is dead indeed. Then at last, when to men it seems too late, Christ goes to Bethany. For four days the dead man has already lain. Christ waits till the hour has fully come. And then we hear from His lips the mighty word: "Lazarus, come forth!"

There is much in the gospels similar to these two incidents. When the brethren of Christ attempt to urge Him forward that He may "show Himself to the world," Christ refuses to yield to their ambition and to the haste of human eagerness, telling His brethren: "My time is not yet come." John 7, 6. When afterwards Christ's mother and kinsmen would draw Him

away from His work by their fears and pleadings, He meets their proposals with the same calm refusal. He shrinks not from the hour when it comes, whatever the danger it may bring.

As Christ bides His time in all He does, according to the Father's will, so He rests secure in the hour that His Father has set in regard to His suffering. No man could hasten this hour, and no man could delay it. When the first burst of anger at Nazareth (Luke 4 36) blazed forth and would have slain Jesus, He passed unharmed from the hands of His haters, for His hour had not yet come. Again, when the Pharisees were aroused and sought to kill Him, their attempt proved abortive. "They sought to take Him; but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come." John 7, 30. The same thing is recorded when a few days later the Jews would have slain Christ: "No man laid hands on Him, for His hour was not yet come." John 8, 20. And when they would have stoned Him for declaring Himself older than Abraham and the Son of God, He again passed through their midst unharmed. He whose whole life hung upon God, watching ever for the Father's hour to do the Father's work, could not have His life and work spoiled by the angry haste of men.

Over against the hours of man's passionate haste stands the hour of God's calm deliberation. The waves may foam and beat upon the rock with all their might, ever immovable the rock rears its head on high. As the hour of birth in the divine life of Christ was fixed, so also the hour of suffering and death. In the temple, when certain Greeks had come to Jesus, the

forerunners of the many who would come to sit down with Abraham in his kingdom, Christ beheld the approaching hour and said to those about Him: "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." John 12, 23. That hour, of which Christ speaks, was indeed an hour of bitterest anguish, and yet an hour full of glory, the hour of victory over all the foes of hell, the hour therefore that would bring forth years of never-ending blessedness for His disciples. The approach of that hour cast a deep shadow over Christ's heart. As He stood in the temple He declared: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?" But no, Christ Himself desires the hour and will submit to it with all its bitterness and anguish. "But for this cause came I unto this hour," He tells Himself and us, and therefore lifting His eyes toward heaven, this is His prayer: "Father, glorify Thy name." It is the same prayer that burst from the anguished heart in Gethsemane: Thy will be done, not mine.

Again and again we are told of the hour of passion and its arrival. When the little band is gathered for the last supper we read that "Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father." In the counsel of God all was fixed, and no man could alter the decision. "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone." A little while after the words were fulfilled, for the hour had indeed come. Jesus knew its arrival. He told His disciples that it was at hand, and in His high-priestly prayer He speaks of it to the Father: "Father,

the hour is come; glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." And when the hour was upon Him, and all that cup of gall put to Christ's lips, He rebels not, though His soul is on the very brink of death; His own prayer is: "Thy will be done." Freely Christ entered that hour from which He could have fled. No man forced Him, He gave Himself into death. As He stands in the midst of His captors He tells them: "This is your hour and the power of darkness." Now His foes are free to act, who have been restrained so long in their wicked haste by the hand of God; and Christ gives Himself into their power, because the hour has come.

The great Sanhedrin had resolved that Jesus should not be captured and put to death at the passover festival. "They consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty and kill Him; but they said: Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people." But even while this resolution was taken, Christ was telling His disciples: "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified." The wickedness of God's greatest foes is in His hands to guide it according to His will. They who will not yield to His grace must submit to His power. At God's own time God's Son is put into the power of His foes, and their wickedness runs on unbidden, runs by its own impetus to slay Him, not at their own hour, but at the hour God gave them for their deed of darkness. The Lamb of God was sacrificed, as God had foreseen and determined, at the time of the passover sacrifice, when the countless

lambs that prefigured Christ's great sacrifice shed their blood at the altar.

It could not be otherwise. There could be no play of chance in the life of the Son of man. He had a given hour for every portion of His work; and He takes each hour as it is given, and performs and suffers in each hour what that hour requires according to His Father's will. What is told us so plainly in reference to some portions of His life shows us with equal plainness what lay at the bottom of the entire course of His life. This is the blessed mystery of His hour which was always the hour of God.

There is indication enough in what is said of Christ's hour to show us that we who follow in His footsteps have likewise a given hour. For us too it is the hour of God, and we too should recognize it as such and yield ourselves to it accordingly. At Cana Mary is told to bide the hour of Christ; at Bethany Martha and her sister are taught the same lesson. And in the shadow of the cross the disciples learn that their hour draweth nigh likewise, the hour when they shall be troubled while the world rejoices, when they shall be scattered while their foes assemble about the lonely Son of man.

The notion of mere chance is deeply rooted in the minds of men; they speak constantly of good luck or good fortune and again of bad luck and mishaps. The opposite extreme is the notion of fate and its inevitable power in fixing what shall take place. Both notions are false and are contradicted by the life of Christ, and by the life of every one who follows in His footsteps.

The notion of chance and luck presumes that things may take place without any will to cause, direct, control them. Blind chance it is called. The notion of fatality presumes that some impersonal or perhaps some personal will has fixed all that shall be and take place, without regard to man's will. But the Word of God, which shows us the hour of God so plainly in the life of Christ, denies that anything may come to pass entirely of itself without a will to cause and govern it; and likewise denies that either a personal or an impersonal power has inevitably fixed all that shall be. The Scriptures show us a personal God and a personal creature man; they show us a divine will moving and controlling the affairs of nature and man on earth, and a human will coinciding and assenting to the divine will, or contradicting and rebelling against its arrangements.

In Christ's life we see the hour of God provided and guided by God, and recognized and utilized perfectly by the God-man. There is no chance and no fate; there is perfect freedom on the part of God as well as on the part of Christ. Both, however, are in perfect harmony, and so there is never a clash. And this perfect harmony should be reflected in every follower of Christ. Each gracious hour as God gives it, each gracious purpose as God reveals it, hour by hour in our lives, should be recognized, accepted, and utilized by us. This is true Christlikeness.

The hour of God with its gracious gifts and blessings and purposes may be unperceived and left utilized by us through our blindness and sin. We are free to act contrary to God's proposing and disposing. Then

indeed we must suffer the lamentable results. But these results are neither the product of chance nor of fate, they are the fruit of our own choosing and doing. To be sure, when once we have chosen there seems to be an inevitableness in the result from which we can not escape. He who rejects and neglects the day of grace falls inevitably into the hour of judgment and condemnation. "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." Death is linked inseparably to sin. And yet not by chance nor by fate. It is God whose supreme will has so arranged the two. And we fall into the pit only when we choose the way that leads thither and reject the hand that would save us. Man's condemnation is the result of his own evil choosing and doing. And this will be one of the worst tortures of the lost, they will know and tell themselves that they could have been in bliss, if they had not wilfully chosen the sin that leads to doom.

In every hour of Christ's life He obeyed the purpose of God who gave the hour; so should we in every hour of our lives. We confine ourselves here to a sketch of the more prominent hours which God sends us, just as we followed the Scriptures in speaking of certain hours in Christ's life which are marked with special emphasis.

In the sinner's life there is an hour of grace for which Christ's life furnishes no exact parallel, as He was without sin. It dare not be forgotten that Christ is our example only when we are His followers, not when we are yet sinners without sonship. And yet in a gen-

eral way we may say that even on the threshold of sonship, when the grace of God comes to save and regenerate us, we should recognize the hour and yield to the blessed purpose of God, as Christ always recognized God's time and God's purpose in every portion of His life. There can be no likeness between our sinful state and the sinless state of Christ; indeed, this difference runs through our whole discussion of Christ-likeness, its very purpose being the removal of every feature of unlikeness. When then the hour of grace comes, there can be likeness between us and Christ only in so far as we see and use this hour of God as Christ saw and used every hour of God.

"To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Now is the accepted time, the hour of grace; wait not for a more convenient season, which may never come. As there is a tide in the earthly affairs of men which taken at the full leads on to success, but if missed leaves men to their folly and misery, so also there is a tide of grace, an hour of salvation, in which our hearts stand before the door of the kingdom, and the hand of Christ touches our hand to lead us in; and if that hour is recognized we become sons of God through faith in Christ, but if it is passed by in blindness and perversity, we remain sons of Satan, and sink more deeply into his power.

When once we are brethren of Christ through faith there will be special hours of golden opportunities in His service. Like the hour in Cana for Christ, and like the hour at Bethany before the tomb, so there will come hours like gifts of God when Christ stands before us in His brethren seeking our love and help. Now

He will be an hungred or athirst, now a stranger or naked, now languishing in sickness, or bound in prison. And in such hours of special opportunity, whatsoever we do to one of the least of Christ's brethren we do unto Him, and the very least of such deeds will not go unremembered; and if we must call these hours blessed when the bodily wants of Christ's brethren present glorious opportunities for Christ's service in Christlike action, then much more must we prize the hour when the spiritual need of Christ's brethren, or of those who may yet become His brethren, appeals to us and gives us opportunities for the highest type of Christlike work, namely the labor of strengthening weak faith, and of kindling faith in sinners' hearts. Every hour should be God's in our whole lives, even when we eat, or drink, or play, or sleep; but these special hours for special service should be His in a special sense. They form the heights of our constant service, the mountain-peaks that rise above the plain of common constant devotion.

Again there is an hour of trial in every Christlike life, when our strength is tested beyond the common routine of duty. As in the wilderness of the temptation and in the garden of the agony the fiery hour of trial came for Christ, so for us there will be hours of battle and hours of anguish. There is but one road to heaven and that leads through dark passes and narrow valleys. Temptations and trials, therefore, do not come by chance; as Christ knew what awaited Him on the way He had chosen, and as He foretold His disciples what lay on the way they were pursuing in His footsteps, so He has already announced to us also that

we cannot expect ease and pleasure in the midst of foes and in the vale of tears. The devil, the world, and the flesh are here, and they have their hour while we are on our pilgrimage. Yet we shall not be tempted above our strength; for every conflict the Lord offers to prepare us; in every temptation He would be at our side; by every test of faith He would lift us higher and make us purer. And then do we follow in His footsteps when we trample the foe beneath us as did the Victor who went before.

The hour of suffering and grief serves the same end. In our weakness Christ would be our strength. In our tears He would be our joy. In our losses He would be our great treasure and possession. In our friendlessness He would be our friend of friends. In our mourning He would be our consolation. In our death He would be our life. And then are we truly Christlike when He fills our hearts completely, when we brave every storm as He did, with His strength. So shall all things work for our good, even the bitterest experience of life; and so shall no power of earth or hell separate us from Him and His love.

The special hours to which we have thus drawn attention must remind us that in every hour at every turn of our life we should look up to see that we keep in Christ's footsteps. Business, marriage, friendship, change of abode, daily occupation, amusement, yea, every word and thought, must be "according to His will" hour by hour. Looking ever to Jesus every hour of our lives will be under His guidance and blessing. And when the course of life is run, and the hour

of death arrives, we may enter it with steadfast hearts, and find the last hour the best of all. Life's labor finished, our spirit commended to God, we may then step across the threshold of death into the joy of eternal blessedness.

CHAPTER X.

IT IS WRITTEN.

IN studying the person of our Savior, His knowledge of the Scriptures must impress us especially. Again and again He declared: "It is written!" and His admonition to us: "Search the Scriptures", binds us to follow His footsteps in this regard.

The brief gospel history of Jesus is full of instances showing Christ's full knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures. He meets the scriptural quotations of Satan in the great temptation with counter quotations: "Again it is written." He speaks of John the Baptist declaring: "This is he of whom it is written: Behold I send my messenger before Thy face which shall prepare Thy way before Thee." And again: "I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed"; and the disciples understood that He spoke of John the Baptist. At various times Christ quotes the commandments: Thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; honor thy father and thy mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Again He gives the sum of all the commandments, the Law and the Prophets, combining Old Testament passages: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul

and with all thy mind — Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

The preaching of Jesus is full of Old Testament references. In the Sermon on the Mount He gives an incomparable exposition of various commandments: “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time”, — exposing by His true interpretation the false views of the rabbis. In a striking manner He shows how the Pharisees and scribes make the Fourth Commandment of none effect by their traditions. Matth. 15, 3. The Old Testament teaching regarding the Sabbath and its observance is a theme to which Christ refers again and again. He knows what is written and what the Law of God bids and forbids, and He uses such knowledge with mighty effect against the foolish and hurtful notions of the Jews. In His Sermon at Nazareth Christ Himself reads the gospel prophecy of Isaiah, and in His discourse on the text interprets the beautiful promises and shows their fulfillment in Himself.

With powerful effect Jesus employs the Scriptures in overthrowing His enemies who knew not the Scriptures. When the Jews cried out upon the unlawfulness of His disciples plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath, He refers them to the Scriptures: “Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God and did eat the shewbread which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the Law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are blame-

less?" And in the same strain He continues: "But if ye had known what this meaneth: I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." Matth. 12, 3, etc. In the same overwhelming way Christ uses the Scriptures to smite the freethinking Sadducees who made bold to deny the resurrection. The Old Testament does not say very much directly on this subject, and yet it says enough for those who search and are ready to believe. When the Sadducees came with the quibble, which they thought unanswerable, about the woman and the seven brothers, Christ answered them: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures." And then He led them into the Scriptures: "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying: I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead but of the living." And with this simple interpretation He confounded them utterly.

And in the same way He made the Pharisees feel the keenness of the two-edged Sword of the Spirit, asking them the question from the 110th Psalm: If Christ is David's son, "how then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying: The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit Thou on my right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how can He be his son?" And again His foes were vanquished.

Christ's incomparable wealth of Scripture knowledge appears at every turn. At one time He makes a powerful comparison regarding the judgment between Capernaum and Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon; at

another He likens the people at the judgment to those of the days of Noe. We hear the prophecies of Isaiah on His lips: "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand" — "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth"; the word of David: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise"; the prophecy of Daniel concerning the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place. With lifted hand and indignant voice He clears the temple, declaring: "It is written: My house shall be called a house of prayer." With deepest sorrow He points the unbelieving people of Nazareth to the widow of Sarepta and to Naaman the Syrian. And if we could enter in detail all the words that the gospels record, we would find besides these open references many covert and less pronounced. The parables treating the vine and the vineyard, those of the wedding feast and its bounties prepared for the guests, take up and elaborate prominent Old Testament thoughts.

One of the most important lines of Scripture references in the words of Christ is that interpreting the prophecies written concerning Himself. The first word we have from His lips indicates that thus early He knew of whom these prophecies spoke. He openly proclaims at Nazareth, after reading the messianic prophecy of Isaiah: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." The mystery of David's son and David's Lord in Psalm 110 may puzzle the masters in Israel, it can not puzzle Him in whom this mystery stands revealed.

In due time Christ proceeds to tell His disciples openly: "How it is written of the Son of Man that

He must suffer many things, and be set at naught." He takes the twelve and declares unto them: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished; for He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles and shall be mocked and spitefully entreated and spitted on, and they shall scourge Him and put Him to death; and the third day He shall rise again." On the eve of His suffering and death He points out several prophecies especially: "I say unto you that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me: And He was reckoned among the transgressors." And a second: "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written: I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." And in the Garden, when Peter tried to interfere, we hear the same tone: "But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" — "All this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

Christ's knowledge of the Scriptures was unique. Although He undoubtedly learned them part by part and penetrated their words by degrees, He of whom all the Scriptures and the prophets testify, the divine God-man in whom the Spirit dwelt as in none else, knew the Scriptures with a divine perfection of knowledge, which no man is able to attain. In fact, in speaking of His knowledge of the Old Testament we must not for a moment think that He was limited to these Scriptures alone in His knowledge of divine things. He Himself came from the bosom of the Father; and He tells us plainly: "Neither knoweth

any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him"; "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father." Therefore He declares: "I speak that which I have seen with my Father" — "He gave me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak" — "Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." Christ not only knew perfectly all that the Old Testament contained, but knew and declared unto us far more. Yea, the revelation begun in the Old Testament is continued and completed by Christ in the New. After Christ ceased His personal preaching and teaching He sent His Spirit upon the apostles, and that Spirit recalled to their minds what Jesus had taught them, and led them into all the fulness of His teaching, taking the things of Christ and showing them unto the disciples. Christ was the Prophet of prophets, the everlasting truth itself, and the perfect revelation of that truth unto men in His person, word, and work. All this dare not be overlooked when we take Christ's "It is written" for our example.

It might appear as though these considerations would effectually prevent our imitation of Christ in this line. He knew not only the Old Testament, but the New with divine knowledge and far more than even the New contains; He not only knew, but was Himself the fountain of knowledge, the light of revelation. And it is simply impossible for us to become like Him in this respect. We can never ourselves become a source of knowledge or produce a revelation by our own wisdom. Moreover, the position of Jesus as the Prophet of prophets seems to place Him and

His knowledge apart as not meant for general imitation. Surely, the simple Christian in his lowly round of daily duty cannot expect to model after the divine God-man whose position and work transcends every other.

And yet it would be wrong for us for such reasons to turn our backs upon the Scriptures and imagine that we are not to follow Christ's footsteps in learning and using them. There will always be differences between Jesus and ourselves, which must be kept in mind lest we degrade Him and exalt ourselves, and yet there will always be enough of brotherly similarity to demand that we be conformed to His image.

If the fact be made prominent, that He is the source of revelation and the Teacher of teachers sent of God, then our following in His footsteps will consist in this: as He received of the Father to give unto us, so we must receive of Him for ourselves and to give in our measure unto others. As the Son dwelt in the bosom of the Father and knew all things, so we must pillow our hearts on the bosom of the Word which was in the beginning with God, and from the word of the Word learn all things for our salvation.

And yet we may well descend from such heights of comparison. Christ became acquainted with the Scriptures in a human way, He read and learned them, and when a boy of twelve is shown us as asking astonishing questions concerning them. Here is the example for us to follow in all simplicity. Christ used the Scriptures in a human way. We are not referring to His added revelations. We simply take the instances in which He handled Old Testament passages.

He understood and expressed their simple true meaning; He employed them in defense against error; He used them in the way of earnest admonition; He took them as the unquestioned basis of faith and guide of conduct; He submitted Himself to their declarations and rested secure on their prophecies and promises. And surely herein there is enough for us to follow.

But, first of all we must note that the Scriptures are not dark nor their meaning doubtful. It does not require a God-man or an angel or a savant to understand them, only a simple believing heart. How simply were the Sadducees routed with all their fine-spun reasoning in unbelief concerning the resurrection — the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Yet it will ever remain true that he who has no eyes will not see; the carnal man receiveth not the spiritual things of the Spirit; as long as he is carnal all appears foolishness, which when his spiritual eyes are opened will be the highest, holiest, and most blessed wisdom. The quibbles and objections of unbelievers are only an evidence of the lack of eyes to see, never a reason for us who do see to shut our eyes or put out our eyesight and reject the everlasting light.

The Scriptures are never ambiguous and never themselves furnish cause for dispute and difference of creed. The truth they utter is one truth, perfect and absolute, and the language they use is a faultless vehicle for the expression of that truth. This lifts the inspired Word infinitely above the word of men, which may be wholly or partly false or only a more or less

perfect approach to truth, and this expressed in more or less adequate and perfect language.

Now men may take up the one perfect and absolute truth of God as it lies before them in the clear and perfect expression of the Scriptures, and they may differ in their apprehension of this truth. But the fault is theirs always. The starry heavens are ever the same, but men see them differently, their eyes are not alike. Some are dim, but because the heavens appear dimly to them they are not dim. Some are oblique, but because the heavens appear altered, they are not really so, but ever the same in perfection. Some take their stand in the fog or beneath clouds, and the heavens seem faded or clouded, but the stars above shine ever the same. The differences are all in the men who look up and in the positions they take. So with the heavenly word of revelation.

The spiritual eye may be dim or oblique, befogged, or overclouded. No wonder then that men differ in what they see in the Scriptures. Clouds of human ignorance or imagination overspread and hid away from the disciples and all the Jewish people the shining truth regarding the humiliation and suffering of the Savior, and it took Jesus a long while to disperse those clouds. Clouds still darken the vision of many, but the truth is there none the less, and those who step out from beneath the clouds see it clearly. The human reason of men often makes their spiritual eyes oblique, so that they see the truth with parts disproportionate, twisted and turned and disharmonious; and because of this alteration made by their eyes they speak falsely and fall into error concerning the change-

less, perfect, divinely harmonious truth of God. The Judaizers in Paul's day reasoned that the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament were still binding upon the Christian church, and by their oblique vision of the Scriptures failed to see the proper place of faith and justification and works and the freedom of the justified in Christ. Preconceived notions of human reason act in the same way to-day, shutting out like clouds some portion of the truth, or darkening the eye and producing partial vision, thus leaving the rest strangely altered; twisting the eyes and thus spoiling the harmony seen. Imperfect, perverted, or false apprehension of the truth always has its cause in man. The truth as set forth by the Scriptures is ever the same, faultless, perfect, unambiguous, clear, and divinely harmonious.

In all this we can learn of Christ. As He saw so we should see. The eyes of His Spirit were clear, unclouded, and perfect in vision. When He began to look into the Scriptures He saw the truth they contained and uttered, all of it, every part of it, in all its perfection, harmony, and depth. When the tempter sought to pervert His vision, He answered by an unperverted statement of the truth; when Sadducee and Pharisee came in their blundering blindness He met them with the clear words of God; when His disciples were troubled and puzzled because they could not harmonize certain notions of reason with certain portions of the truth, He put truth in place of reason's notions and made all clear and harmonious. O for a like perfection of spiritual eye-sight! The prayer is

not vain, for Christ promises us His Spirit to lead us into all truth.

Among men there will always be a difference in the degree of their knowledge. Some will know more, some less. All vessels are not of equal size, yet if only each be full of crystal liquid and free from impurities, the difference in size will matter little. There may be a considerable difference as to amount of Scripture knowledge between the learned theologian and the unlearned mechanic, yet there need be no difference in the purity of their knowledge, nor in the strength of their faith. Christ praises childlike faith, and reveals His wisdom unto babes. The childlike disposition, the purity, simplicity, and integrity of heart must therefore stand first, and secondly the amount of knowledge according to the measure of intellectual and spiritual ability bestowed upon us by God.

There is a vital difference between the common knowledge of earthly wisdom and the true knowledge of the Wisdom of the Word. To know the Scriptures, and to know about the Scriptures, are two different things. There are many learned critics who treat the Scriptures as they would any other ancient book; they study it to know all about it, filling their heads with a vast mass of facts, surmises, and conclusions, yet leaving their hearts empty of the real everlasting truth. Theirs is not the Christlike knowledge we should seek. Lesser minds are frequently led in the same path, troubling to learn many things concerning the sacred Book, neglecting the one thing needful. The rabbis, in Christ's time, were experts in this outward knowledge of Holy Writ, but how lamentable

their inward knowledge when tested by Christ. Then have we searched the Scriptures aright when we have found in them gold tried in the fire, white raiment for our clothing, and eyesalve to heal our blindness. All other knowledge of the precious pages must be secondary and subservient to this which is vital and absolutely indispensable to those treading in Christ's footsteps.

At best, however, we cannot expect to see the truth of salvation with the divine clearness of Jesus; because of the flesh which still hampers us we will see through a glass darkly, knowing only in part and prophesying in part; but as in other features of our growing Christlikeness, the time of perfection shall arrive at last, when we shall see face to face and know even as we are known.

The reception of Scripture knowledge must be followed by its proper use after the example of Christ. Without question we must trust the Word we have received. Christ Himself placed implicit faith in every statement of the Scriptures. If ever a man dwelt on earth who was able to criticize either the record as written, or the contents of that record, that man was Christ. Yet we find Him doing neither. To say that He did neither, because He accommodated Himself to the ideas and opinions of the men among whom He lived, is to degrade Christ, to undermine all His teaching, and thus to make havoc of all Christian truth. He who relentlessly attacked the traditions of the elders, the perversions of Mosaic doctrine in every form that met Him, would not have credited the books of Moses to Moses, if Moses had not written

them. He who proclaimed Himself the Son of God, and yielded His life for the proclamation, would not have admitted and taught the doctrine of hell and Satan, if either or both had been false and mere remnants of pagan superstition. "It is written," in every instance settles the matter for Him; on the Word as it stands He relies, on it He builds His own teaching, to it He binds all His followers. And he who follows in His footsteps must make the Word as "it is written" the one and only foundation of his faith. No alleged results of science, no demands of reason, no traditions of men dare interfere.

"The Word they shall let stand,
And no thank have for it."

Heaven and earth may pass away, science climb ever so high and boast ever so loud, reason argue ever so subtly, God's Word, like a mighty rock amid the crashing billows, shall stand unmoved and imperturbable. The God-man, whose life is a fulfillment of what Moses and the prophets have written, is a safer guide and example than the men who refuse to submit to the word, "It is written."

At Nazareth Christ presented the word of the prophet Isaiah to His hearers as the divine foundation of saving faith. The Scriptures testify of Him, and it is for us to receive their testimony with grateful and believing hearts. The Word brings us the blessed treasures of salvation, the love and mercy of God, the merits of our Savior's life and death, the forgiveness of our guilt and the righteousness that avails before God, the saving power and efficacy of God's Holy

Spirit, and all that our poor hearts need to reach the Paradise whence we have fallen. To bestow these invaluable treasures upon men Christ constantly employed the Old Testament, and all the revelations which He Himself brought, and which are now set down for us in the New Testament. To proclaim this saving Gospel to all the world the disciples were trained and commissioned; they preached and wrote "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name." "It is written" is therefore the rock of our salvation, the everlasting foundation of our faith, trust, confidence, and assurance, that we have been received as children of God and heirs of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. If the Gospel be not for us the power of God unto salvation, though it be a thousand other things, we shall perish. What would all knowledge, all power, all eminence, all happiness profit us, as long as we escape not damnation?

"It is written," Jesus makes the rule and guide for our conduct. Again and again He repeats the commandments of God, and declares that He has not come to overthrow but to fulfill and establish the Law. The Sermon on the Mount shows us a full elaboration of this conduct according to the Word. Nor did He, like the Pharisees, lay heavy burdens upon others leaving them untouched Himself. The requirements of the Word are all fulfilled in His stainless conduct, that His righteousness might be our gift through faith, and our example in the conduct that flows from faith. He, the Master, washes the

feet of the disciples, that they may follow Him in the humble service of love. And the power of His Spirit dwelling in our hearts makes His yoke easy for us and His commandment sweet and not grievous.

In a special way Jesus uses the sword, "it is written," against the foe. He takes no other weapon who had every other weapon. The arguments of reason, the appeals of emotion, the shafts of ridicule are too slight for the battle against error, He takes the invincible and ever-effective artillery of the Word. His method of warfare is exceedingly simple: He places the mighty truth of God in square opposition to the errors of men. Sometimes it is with a simple enunciation of the truth, as in the great temptation; or in the form of a question from which there is no escape. Sometimes it is with elaborate argument to shatter error and show its falseness, and thus to convince the heart and turn the will; or with loving admonition and earnest warning to win the soul from danger and destruction. Nor does He shrink in false effeminacy from giving the friends of error their proper name, when they decide against the truth. Men may choose error rather than truth, but if Jesus cannot win them He always vanquishes them. And He has given us an example that we should follow in His footsteps.

One more use Jesus made of what is written for our learning. He refers to Sodom, to Nineveh, to Noe, to the Queen of Sheba, to Abraham, to Lot's wife, to Isaiah, to Daniel, in admonition, exhortation, and warning. To follow in Christ's footsteps here is not merely to employ the riches of the Scriptures in

working upon others, but first of all in making our own hearts and lives rich from the inexhaustible fund that has been treasured for our learning first of all and for our preaching in the second place. He that is of God heareth God's word, as "it is written."

CHAPTER XI.

IN ALL POINTS TEMPTED.

JESUS "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin; let us therefore", following in His footsteps through this world so full of temptation, "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

We may take it for granted that the sacred record does not describe all the temptations through which Jesus passed. When He went out into the wilderness of Judæa for the very purpose of submitting Himself to the treacherous wiles of Satan, we are told that He was tempted of the devil for forty days. Luke 4, 2. What this long continued temptation was we do not know, the Scriptures do not tell us. It may well have been that already before this, during the long sojourn in Nazareth, temptation of one kind or another approached Jesus. It would not be strange that Satan should suggest to Him who knew His divine origin and mission so well, to break the long delay and to hasten His efforts before the appointed hour. Israel was sorely oppressed, the spiritual distress of the chosen people was lamentable indeed. Why then should Jesus with all His power to rescue and to save remain inactive so long? He was the Son of God

and possessed divine power for working miracles. Why should He leave this power unemployed for so many years, when on every hand there appeared occasions inviting its exhibition?

Certainly, the elements of temptation were present, and although the Scriptures pass over this long period in silence, we may well be permitted to assume that in one way or another He who was so severely tempted afterwards, found Himself assailed by Satan's wiles during the long years prior to His public ministry.

The entire life of Jesus as recorded by the Evangelists, was exposed to temptation. Jesus Himself indicated as much when, on the night before His death, He said of His disciples: "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations." They had not been with their Master at the triple temptation in the wilderness, but they had bravely held out at His side during the long warfare that followed, after they had become His disciples. Every attempt on the part of the Jews to draw Christ away from the path of humility and suffering set before Him by the Father's will, was certainly a renewal of the temptation of the wilderness. Every bit of the opposition, hatred, and fierce rejection Christ met at the hands of the chosen people, when He refused to live up to their ideal of the Messiah, was a repetition of this temptation in different form. Aside from single well-marked instances, there was thus a constant cloud of temptation about the head of the Son of God who had come as the Son of man. In ever varied form came the insidious voice: Why adhere to this road of humility,

suffering, and death? Why not cast off the mantle of lowliness, and step forth in glory and majesty as the King of Thy people and of all the earth?

We know that the disciples felt the constant pressure of this temptation surrounding Christ. They were only too ready to yield to its power. Up to the very ascension of their Master they held fast the vision of an earthly restoration of the kingdom of Israel with Christ as the glorious Sovereign. Acts 1, 6. They shrank with dismay from the course of suffering that ended in crucifixion. On the Mount of glorification Peter seems to have no ear for the conversation of Moses and Elias with Christ concerning "His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem"; his thoughts are bent chiefly on remaining amid the glory and beauty that surrounded him. Thus the disciples helped to increase the burden of temptation for Jesus. Instead of bravely supporting His firm determination to bide in the Father's path, they too tugged at His heart to choose a pleasanter road.

The tremendous force of the temptation brought to bear upon Jesus is scarcely appreciated by us. In our lives we are bound to reckon on more or less of suffering; our glorious and pleasurable days are never one unbroken series, and we do not expect them to be. But Christ was the Son of God Himself; all the glories of heaven were completely His own. Suffering and pain could not touch His body or soul without His freely submitting Himself thereto; every part of the humiliation was something extraneous and foreign to the sinless, spotless nature of the Son of man, something He must freely submit to that it might

touch Him. The suggestion, therefore, for Him to avoid the path of bitterness and death was only an appeal for Him to take and use what was perfectly His own, and to put away what in its very nature was foreign to Him. He abhorred sin and the curse of sin — why then should He load Himself down with the awful burden, why should He touch at all the bitter cup? We can only in a manner appreciate the power of this constant temptation for Christ.

Very likely the forty days in the wilderness were filled with thoughts of this kind for Him who had just been consecrated to the greatest work of God. The three tests to which He was put at the end of those forty days by the great tempter in person were all in line with such suggestions. He had just received the Father's testimony: This is my beloved Son. Why then should He refrain from using His divine power in stilling His hunger by turning the stones of the desert into bread? He had come to win His people Israel for His kingdom, and being the Son of God and trusting the Word of His Father, that angel hands should bear Him up, why should He not by one overwhelming and stupendous display of His power, for instance, as Satan suggested, by leaping down from the very pinnacle of the temple into the midst of the astounded multitude, draw all men into admiration and worship of His heavenly power? Again, He had come to be the King of all nations; why then should He choose the thorny path of suffering and death to reach the throne, why should He not at once accept the sweeping offer of the tempter, and by one brief act of humiliation win the dominion held

out to Him? Subtle indeed were these temptations, framed with masterly cunning to apply powerfully to the heart of Jesus. The first Adam had fallen beneath such a treacherous attack, but the second Adam withstood them like an invincible rock.

In Gethsemane the same temptation recurred, intensified by the immediate prospect of measureless suffering and death. He who had remained true to the Father's will, who had steadfastly set His face toward Jerusalem to undergo there all that the prophets had foretold, was now confronted by the indescribable agonies that awaited Him. What He had borne hitherto was only a foretaste of what was now to be laid upon Him. With overwhelming vividness all the tortures of the coming hours rose before His mind. All the curse of the world's sin, making Him a curse for us, all the deadly wrath of God and all the fury of hell stood before the pure and innocent soul of Jesus. Should He pass through it all? Should He plunge headlong into this deadly abyss? Soul and body recoiled. All that was human in Jesus shrank back like flesh from the fiery blast. Being in agony He prayed that, if it were possible, the cup might pass from Him. Our imagination fails to picture the full depth of the conflict in the heart of the Savior. If it had been possible to save us without drinking down to the last drop this awful cup of suffering and death, Jesus would have embraced that possibility. But there was no other way. His determination to save us even at this cost stood divinely firm. Here too the tempter failed. Christ endured even the cross.

Two other temptations, somewhat similar to the

one in the desert and the one in Gethsemane, are recorded in the gospels. The first came through Peter when Jesus foretold His suffering. Taking the Master aside, the apostle began to rebuke Him, saying, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee." Here already the tempter tried to repel Christ by the awful prospect of suffering which at last was set before His soul with such power in Gethsemane. But the first battle was lost like the last. "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." This was the answer of Jesus. Unwittingly Peter had lent his thoughts and lips to be the tools of the tempter.

At another time, when Christ had fed the multitude with bread miraculously multiplied, they would have taken Him and made Him king. As in the desert, so here on the hills of Galilee, the tempter came with the alluring prospect of earthly power and dominion, if possible to turn Christ from the path appointed by the Father. And here again the disciples, it seems, were only too ready to second the tempting proposal. But Christ made haste to send them away in a boat across the lake, while He withdrew from the eager multitude and went up into the mountain alone. Once already and once for all the dangerous thought of an earthly crown and an illusive earthly dominion over men had been put away by Christ, and all the further machinations of the tempter were of no avail.

A whole list of secondary temptations is scattered throughout the gospel records. Again and again the enemies of Christ sought to entangle Him in His

words. They brought to Him a woman taken in adultery, with the question: "Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned: but what sayest Thou?" Again a certain lawyer, tempting Him, inquired: "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The Pharisees came with the difficult question of divorce, and at another time with the treacherous question of tribute to Cæsar. The Sadducees tried their skill with the query concerning the woman who had married seven brothers in turn; and following them, the Pharisees with the inquiry regarding the great commandment in the law. At the instigation of the arch-tempter his emissaries exhausted their wicked ingenuity in efforts at bringing Christ into conflict with Moses, the prophets, and God Himself. But in every single case they failed utterly. He whose will was so completely one with that of the Father that neither the fairest promises nor the most threatening dangers could turn His heart in the least, was not to be set at variance with His Father from the mighty task assigned Him on any question of lesser import. In every temptation the Son of man stood firm and victorious.

And indeed the God-man could not fall; it was absolutely impossible for Him to sink in temptation and to sin. We must not lose sight of His divinity in looking at His humanity. If He had been only man, however perfect, the tempter might have vanquished Him; there would have been at least the possibility of defeat. But being the Son of God, there was not even the shadow of possible failure on His

part. His victory and our salvation were absolutely sure from the beginning.

The divinity of Jesus, however, and the impossibility of His falling in temptation does not annul the reality of the temptation through which He passed. Because Christ was surely God He could not fall; but because Christ was also truly man He could be tempted. The temptations of Jesus were much like His sufferings in this respect; both were real, neither a mere appearance; both came upon Him from without, neither was due to any taint of sin in Him. When the tempter approached the God-man he had the very same power as when he approached Eve, and used it to the fullest possible extent. The terrors he set before the imagination of Christ were no empty pictures, they were dread realities, and Christ knew and felt their reality only too well. One glance at the prostrate form in the garden of agonies settles this question forever. In the same way, when the tempter tried to induce Jesus to make use of His divine power in establishing a kingdom without suffering, the power to which he appealed was real, and no one knew its reality and the possible results of its exercise so well as did Christ Himself. To be sure, the reason for which Satan tried to dissuade Christ from suffering, and to prompt His employment of power in building a kingdom, was utterly illusive. Redemption and the kingdom of the redeemed could not become a fact without the cross. Satan's lie was the suggestion that the terrors of the cross might be omitted, and yet the kingdom of Christ be established. Every temptation contains a lie. But it was impos-

sible to deceive Christ in any way. He saw the lie in every instance, no matter how dexterously it was veiled and decked out with truth. The very heart of our joy is that the Father sent us a Savior who could be tempted indeed, but never deceived, and never overcome in temptation.

In regard to the minor temptations of Christ we must likewise admit, that the difficulties they present are indeed real for man. And if Christ had been only man, it is certainly possible that some of the difficulties thus presented might have proved too hard for Him to solve, and might have accomplished Satan's purpose in really entangling Him. But the mind of the God-man at once pierced through every difficulty, however impossible its solution might appear to men. The shadows, being only shadows, could not but vanish before the sunlight of truth; and all the efforts of the prince of darkness were brought to nought.

There is certainly a difference between the God-man and His followers as far as temptation is concerned. Even sinless Adam was not wholly like Christ, for Adam could sin, Christ could not. Likewise the angels in heaven, who withstood the tempter when he and his hosts fell from God, who are now confirmed in holiness so that all possibility of their ever falling is forever removed, are not altogether in the same state as was Christ. In Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead; from the very moment of His earthly birth He was beyond the possibility of falling in temptation. The state reached by the angels of heaven after passing the test of temptation, the state Adam like the angels might have reached, had he used

the gifts of God aright, Christ had by virtue of His divine Sonship. We who have fallen and become subject to sin have ever in our own depraved hearts an ally of the tempter, the voice of our lustful flesh. In the heart of the ungodly this ally is complete master, leading them like helpless slaves to do the evil bidding of the devil. When there is no light and strength of God in the heart it is like a helmless, mastless vessel, ready to be tossed and driven by every wind and wave. When Judas inwardly rejected Christ he was utterly helpless to repel the delusions by which Satan drew him to betray his Master. But even when the heart is enlightened and led by God, the tempter's wiles still find a response in the flesh that remains. For us there is in every temptation a conflict between the flesh and the spirit, the former stimulated and re-enforced by Satan and his helpers, the latter strengthened and fortified by Christ and His Spirit. All this was different in Christ, since there was no shadow of evil in Him. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. The tempter could never secure the slightest hold within his heart. He could marshal his powers without and dash himself with all his impetuosity against the impenetrable walls; no hand within the fortress was raised to aid him, no voice inside cried out to cheer him on. The battle-ground was never within, as it always is more or less with us.

In spite of these differences Christ fought and vanquished the tempter with the very weapons now placed in the hands of His followers. With omnipotent power He might have restrained Satan and driven him from His presence, but instead of thus shielding

Himself He allowed Himself to be led by the Spirit into the fiercest heat of temptation. Satan was permitted to do his utmost, even to take the Son of God upon the pinnacle of the temple and to place Him upon a high mountain. Yet in thus entering the fiercest temptation there is no sign of rashness, no trace of vainglorious daring in Christ. He was called of God to fight all the power the foe might bring against Him, that thus he might be vanquished for us. In the battle, however, Christ grasped nothing but the Sword of the Spirit, the invincible Word of God. "It is written", is the one victorious reply. Reason with its ingenious human arguments is altogether discarded as wholly insufficient for the fray. There is no attempt at evasion, no sign of compromise, none of the subterfuges of human wisdom and expediency. The blow delivered by the Word of God ever strikes home; the victory is always complete and fully decisive.

When now we attempt to follow in the victorious footsteps of Jesus, we must remember, for one thing, that we fight against a vanquished foe, for another, that Christ fights at our side, and for a third that we are not to fight the mighty battle of Christ over again, but only so much of the war with the routed foe as Christ, our Captain, allots to us. If then, with sin clinging to us, we are not to be compared in strength with the God-man, neither is the conflict to which we are called such as to require on our part the strength of the Son of God. "God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape,

that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. 10, 13. Under the hand of Jesus, temptation has lost its terrors for Christ's followers. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience." James 1, 2. The tempter's power is broken for those who share the victory of Christ. He can go only as far as his chain permits; he can strike only with the little strength left in his broken arm. "Resist the tempter and he will flee from you." There is always a way of escape for us; there is always help more than sufficient awaiting our call in prayer; there is always victory and the blessed fruit of victory prepared for us under the leadership of Christ. If we to-day were set in Christ's stead to fight unaided in our weakness the unbroken power of the arch-enemy, we might well despair; but now our hearts should ring with joy.

Although our temptations are not to be compared in severity with those of Jesus, they are fierce and dangerous enough. The weaker our faith and the stronger our flesh, the greater the danger of our falling. And yet they who are deeply rooted and grounded in Christ, who are far advanced in knowledge, diligent and fervent in Christian obedience, are, for this very reason, liable to some of the most insidious attacks of the tempter. Using their strong faith he tries to mislead it as in the first and second temptation of Christ in the desert, employing the Word of God itself for his unholy purposes. By his cunning arts he tries to make us mistake the voice of our own wisdom for that of God, our own selfish satisfaction, advantage, and glory for the purpose and

will of God. The more Christian knowledge we possess, the more difficult and trying the problems Satan seeks to set before us for our entanglement. The greater our piety and obedience, the more cunning the evil one's attempts at filling us with pride, secret self-righteousness, and neglect of true humility and repentance. Thus the higher we stand the more deeply we may fall. The ways of providence are full of mystery. Godly Job could not understand why he should be so severely afflicted. The dealings of God in the kingdom of grace are often beyond our comprehension. St. John the Baptist could not understand why Christ should delay His mighty judgments over His enemies. The problem of the cross often troubles the Christian heart sorely; likewise the condition of the visible church on earth, in the midst of battles and trials, hampered by weakness and imperfection, and harrassed by opposition from without and treachery from within, often puts our hearts to the severest tests. And many fall, when, instead of turning to Christ and His Word, as did the Baptist, they listen to the voice of the world's wisdom or to the folly of their own thoughts.

Moreover, however well fortified a Christian heart may be in some things, certain weak spots always remain. We are never wholly free from error and prejudice. Some are especially inclined to pride, some to despondency, doubt, fear, some to avarice, some to fleshly lusts, some to anger and undue severity, some to false ease and carelessness. And Satan knows only too well how to strike us where we are least able to resist. He leads Peter into rashness; John and James,

the sons of thunder, into the desire of calling down fire upon the heads of the inhospitable Samaritans; and Judas into hypocrisy, theft, and treacherous revenge. In addition to the faults that still beset us, there are evil hours, when our personal condition and the circumstances that surround us afford peculiar advantages for the tempter's power. When Christ was hungry after a fast of forty days, the tempter drew nigh. When body and mind are weak, when friends turn from us and life grows dark, the tempter is ready to begin his attack. He loves to strike a deadly blow when we are down.

Satan seldom fights with an open face, he prefers disguise and ambush. Moreover, he leads us on into evil step by step. Pretending to be an angel of light he often veils his treacherous suggestions behind the Word of God itself. The Scriptures warn us especially against "the wiles of the devil" and "the deceitfulness of sin." We are told of "the deceitfulness of riches" and of "the deceivableness of all unrighteousness." The cup of pleasure is sweet and alluring till we have swallowed the poisonous dregs. "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Prov. 23, 31. 32. Satan ever tries to conjure up pleasures, profits, and advantages before our ready imagination. "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." Gen. 3,

6. By dexterously veiling the beginnings of sin beneath a show of innocence or permissibility, the great deceiver has lured many over the brink of the precipice. "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James 1, 15. Small beginnings, to which we give an unwitting consent, sometimes lead to dreadful catastrophes. Once fairly launched upon the inclined plane there is no avoiding the inevitable downward plunge. Resist dangerous and doubtful beginnings.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word." Ps. 119, 9. The one invincible weapon against the tempter is the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

"This world's prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none,
For he is judged—undone;
One little Word o'erthrows him."

By keeping in the path of God's commandments we will avoid hundreds of temptations that would fall upon us if we dared to deviate to the right or to the left. Moreover, the Word of God is full of light, showing us the treachery of Satan and laying bare his guile. The blind fall into the ditch, but not they whose eyes are anointed with the Word of truth. Hundreds of sore perplexities are unraveled by the testimonies of the Lord, when like David we take them for our counsellors. The Scriptures solve the mystery of the cross; enlighten us concerning the hidden ways of Providence which makes all things work together for our eternal good; lead us safely out of

all the mazes of error and deceit, give to our faith an anchor in the wounds of Christ from which no tempter shall drive us. The Word of God is the power of God to make our weak hearts strong against the world and the flesh. By the Word of God the Spirit of God, together with Father and the Son, enters our hearts to support us in every trial. We cannot fail when God is with us. The Word of God is the arsenal of prayer, and the artillery of prayer shatters the machinations of Satan. Therefore arm thyself with the Word; be ready with the answer: "It is written"; flee beneath its shield, behind its walls, back of its armament in every hour of danger; follow its counsels and commands, watch and pray in its strength.

The divine Word is our salvation in temptation and our hope when we fall. Peter fell; he that standeth let him take heed lest he fall. But the moment a fallen follower of Christ goes back to the Word, he will be led to repent, he will find forgiveness, he will be re-instated in grace as was Peter, the fallen and re-instated apostle. Satan's victory is not won until we give up the Word, forget to repent, and reject forgiveness.

Christ was tempted, and so will they be who follow His footsteps. Under the guidance of God temptation will serve to exercise and increase our strength, to call out our prayer, to arm ourselves fully with the Word of God, and to look with sympathy and charity upon our fellow-Christians. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same



Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.—Matth. 6, 28-29.

CHAPTER XII.

BEHOLD THE LILIES OF THE FIELD.

JESUS is our model in understanding and utilizing the great kingdom of nature in the midst of which we are placed.

Jesus had an eye for all the world of nature about Him. The little gnat, the worthless sparrow, the hair falling unheeded from man's head were heeded by the Son of man. The lilies in their beauty, the sky with its ruddy evening tints, and man in his festive joy found a response in the heart of Him who had dwelt amid the glories of heaven. The silent motion of the wheat germ in the hidden earth, the mysterious movements of the finny tribe in the watery deep, all the secret stirrings of thought, affection, and will in the human king of creatures were like an open book to the master mind that stood above them all.

Everywhere the eye of Jesus beheld the hand of God in nature. When a sparrow falls from the roof it is not an empty chance, an impersonal law, but the will of God that He perceives. The lilies growing in silent beauty are clothed not by the independent hidden forces of nature, but by the bounteous hand of nature's God. The king ruling over his subjects, the slave toiling at his tasks, the children at their play are not the idle evolutions of natural laws, but the works of a

divine Creator and God. It is He who made them all, who upholds and governs them all, who works out His infinite purposes in the lowest as well as in the highest of these His creatures.

The discords and strifes in nature are likewise seen by the Master's eye, and their deepest cause is plain to His vision. The tares that infest the field, the stones that hinder its fruitfulness, the storms that beat upon the house, the tower that falls upon the unwary and crushes them, the disease that preys upon man's body, death with its grief and pain, the wrongs that pierce the life of man with their bitter cruelty—He knew them one and all. "An enemy hath done this," He tells us, and that enemy is the devil. The reason for his ability to produce such clashing where all should be harmony and joy is man's yielding to the enemy, man's sin.

There is no man who does not to a greater or less extent, like Jesus, behold the things of the natural world; and to all who are not totally blind the hand of God will also be visible in His works, and besides His hand the finger of the enemy introducing discord and evil. But however perfect our vision may be, we must still confess: "Now we see through a glass, darkly—now I know in part." Our knowledge is like a caged bird, on every side, as we strive to fly, we strike the bars of ignorance and are constrained to confess, I do not know. For Jesus these bars do not exist, His insight and comprehension of nature in all its departments is complete and perfect. It is His divinity that transcends infinitely in its knowledge and wisdom all that our intelligence is able to understand. We see its limitless reach of knowledge in every prophetic utter-

ance from the Savior's lips. He who beheld the great consummation, and drew its details for us with a master hand, was not confined in power of perception, when the little things of nature were presented to His view. And it would certainly have been marvellous, had the God-man known the greatest things of the kingdom of heaven, and not the little things of the kingdom of earth.

In considering the Master's knowledge of earth we must not assume the perverted standpoint of science falsely so-called. Nowhere does Jesus attempt to reveal to us the secrets of nature. He was the Savior of men, not a teacher of natural science. God gave man natural faculties, that for himself he might discover the wonderful mysteries of earth and air and sky. Long centuries of time were given him in which to prosecute his investigations and gather his results. Moreover, the success of man in gathering and utilizing the knowledge of nature for the purpose of earthly science is altogether of secondary importance. This knowledge is like money-wealth; man can live and reach the divinely appointed goal of his life with a small amount of it just as well as with a larger. It was, therefore, altogether unnecessary for Jesus to offer man any assistance in scientific attainments. His purpose could not be to unveil the wonders of astronomy, the marvels of chemistry, the intricacies of mathematics, the heights and depths of biology, or of any natural science. All these departments of knowledge are valuable indeed, and meant for man's enrichment, but they are not necessary for man's salvation. The aim of Christ in all His teaching and work was to help man

where above all else he needed help and could not help himself, namely in obtaining salvation for his sinful and condemned soul.

If then we look in vain for glowing displays of scientific knowledge in the utterances of Jesus, we can only recognize and adore His wisdom in making all His words subservient to a higher purpose. Nevertheless, the things of nature encompassing us on every side were most truly and perfectly known to Christ. And "most truly and perfectly" here means more than is found in the exactest and completest science among men. The truth and perfection of Christ's knowledge of earthly things appears in that inwardness of knowledge of which man in his fallen condition knows next to nothing. By laborious efforts we approach the objects of our studies from without, picking up a fact here and a fact there, and piecing the fragments together as best we can, till at last in some measure our generalizations and conclusions approach the reality. Not so Christ with His mind undarkened by sin. His knowledge of earth and its objects was like that of the first man when he named all the animals that God led before him, recognizing at a glance and without effort or error the true inward thought of the Creator in each of His animal creatures. We might call this knowledge intuitive, and yet the term does not say enough. It is that perfect knowledge which at once seizes the heart of all it perceives, which almost without effort comprehends the essentials in every creature, in every circumstance and situation.

A fine exhibition of this true and perfect knowledge of Christ, and of its unerring penetration to the very

center of the subjects contemplated, is set before us in Christ's answers to the insidious questions of His foes. The outward film of circumstance, the puzzling difficulties of situation, the treachery of phrase and expression never troubled Him in the least; He grasps the heart of the matter at once, and scatters the difficulties that would entangle us, if we were to face the question, like so much chaff to the wind. Therefore the answers of Christ are always final; He touches the very bottom, and no man can go deeper; He reveals the very truth itself, and no man can do more. And if Christ was able to do this on the lofty plane of spiritual truth, it is evident the perfection and truth of His knowledge could not be less in the plane of nature. Here we find the same unerring penetration, the same perfection of insight and comprehension. It may seem strange to us that Christ does not proceed according to our imperfect fashion, that He does not labor with the outward crust of appearance and fact, and gradually work His way in till He touches the truth. In His comparisons and elucidation we may miss the inductions and deductions which we admire in man's thinking and writing; but never for a moment should this difference mislead us in estimating Christ's perfect knowledge aright.

Because Christ sees through the surface veil upon which our eyes are commonly fixed, He sees the things of earth in a light altogether different from that of the material eye. We have already stated that Christ beholds everywhere the hand of God. Earth and air and sky and all that they contain are freighted with the thoughts of God. "The heavens declare the glory of

God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." Ps. 19, 1-3. The true language of nature was understood by Christ to the last letter. The marvels of nature's harmonies and discords, its sublime majesties and microscopic combinations, were to the mind of Christ more than natural science has been able to make of them; His eyes read everywhere the hand-writing of God. In the incomparable parables of the divine Teacher we have the finished interpretation of this hand-writing of God in nature. Sin has spoiled the perfect works of God, but even the discords and clashings of the natural world, lamentable though they be, speak through the lips of Christ in spiritual tones for our enlightenment and warning. Because sin has harmed us and placed us on the verge of death, the workings of evil in the world about us have their peculiar use in leading us upward to God and salvation.

The robing of the lilies, the clothing of the grass tells us of the provident care of God. The dying sparrow and the falling hair from our heads proclaim God's infinite will without which even these could not lose their life and place. The bread and the fish in the child's hand, instead of the stone and the serpent, are types of the good gifts, even of the gift of gifts, which the Father in heaven gives to His children. The grapes that grow not upon thorns, the figs that are not produced by thistles tell of the true Teacher, who is known, like the false, by His fruits. The narrow gate and pathway, as distinguished from the wide gate and spacious

road, are the reflection of the true way of salvation. The house standing on the safe rock amid the raging floods and howling winds, is the emblem of the wise heart building itself firmly upon the everlasting truth of God; while the shattered building, swept away from its sandy base by the tempest and the wave, is the emblem of the fool building his life upon his own conceit.

The harvest ripe for the sickle is like the world of humankind waiting for the reapers of salvation. The sheep lost and bruised and nigh unto death is like the soul of the sinner on the verge of destruction; the shepherd that leaves the ninety and nine and seeks the lost is like Christ Himself; and the woman that searches for her lost coin with candle and broom like the church in its efforts to save the fallen. The mustard seed, so small, and still producing so great a plant, is like the kingdom of grace in its marvellous growth from a little seed. The handful of leaven in its hidden work is like the secret power and influence of the kingdom from on high. The table set for the king's marriage feast is like the full provision of God's grace for man's salvation. The seed cast upon the ground, now choked, not crushed, now burned out by the sun, now finding proper soil, is like the Word cast into the hearts of men. The prodigal son returning to his father is like the sinner in his repentance. The tares amid the wheat are like the false Christians amid the true. The servants entrusted with the pounds by their master are like the followers of Christ set to serve Him with their gifts and at last receiving their gracious reward. The fig tree spared for another year is like the heart resisting the grace of God, while the time of grace draws

to a close. The beggar carried aloft by angel hands, and the rich man awaking in torment are types of the fate of the faithful and of the unfaithful. The opening beauties of spring are an emblem of the day of salvation at the end of the world. These are samples of Christ's teaching; here we see how He viewed the things about Him, and how He made use of what He saw.

There is great danger of misunderstanding altogether this use which Christ made of earthly things for heavenly ends. The danger is, that we lose the real substance and retain only empty shadows. Because all language is full of figurative expressions, more or less apt, we might think the language of Christ with its wealth of parables and comparisons is altogether on the same level. And since Orientals are generally extravagant in their use of symbols and pictures, the very abundance of parables in Christ's teaching might lead us to estimate it falsely on this account. They who doubt or deny the divinity of Christ are especially tempted to see in the imagery of Christ's teaching little more than fine flights of a fanciful imagination. When He speaks of heavenly things using earthly images, they refuse to believe that the reflection of the heavenly in the earthly is true and real; they will not admit that the mirror of nature gives a true picture of the things that are above nature. They shrink back from any testimony of earth to heaven, of nature to the supernatural. Choosing the theory of unbelief, they shut their eyes to the facts of faith, lest their own foolishness and ignorant perversity be rebuked. They are sure that the deft pencil of Christ's

imagination has painted on the glass what seems to be a rejection from its crystal surface. But all such theories are both shallow and false.

“The lover of truth which shall be loftier than himself will not be moved from his faith—that these characters of nature which everywhere meet the eye are not a common but a sacred writing, that they are hieroglyphics of God; and he counts this his blessedness, that having these round about him, he is therefore never without admonition and teaching.” “The entire moral and visible world from first to last, with its kings and its subjects, its parents and its children, its sun and its moon, its sowing and its harvest, its light and its darkness, its sleeping and its waking, its birth and its death, is from beginning to end a mighty parable, a great teaching of supersensuous truth, a help at once to our faith and to our understanding.” (Trench.) To follow in the footsteps of Christ at all includes of necessity a Christlike view of the things presented to our senses. Faith can not but see that the creation of God is not a haphazard work thrown together arbitrarily without inward correspondence to God and to the higher things of God. Earth and heaven, the natural and the spiritual, belong together; they flow from one divine wisdom, and the lower always points upward to the higher.

Christ's use of the things of nature in His teaching corresponds to His power over the whole range of nature. It is impossible that He whose divinity could multiply the bread and the wine; smoothen the waters and walk on the liquid surface, give back health when lost and even life to man, and compel obedience from

the spirits of another world, should not comprehend completely the true inwardness of what was thus subject to His mastery. Only inasmuch as man knows nature can he make nature render him service. Nature's obedience to Christ as its divine Master is a perfect testimony to His divine knowledge of nature. The obedience of evil to His divine commands is a like testimony to His divine knowledge of the powers of evil disturbing nature and hurting man. And therefore even the tares of the field, the thistles and hardness that hinder the seed, and all the manifestations of sin in man must yield instruction, admonition, and warning to man through the teaching of Christ. Verily, never man spake like this Man, because never man possessed such insight and knowledge, such power and perfect mastery, as did this Man who was more than man.

In attempting to follow the footsteps of Christ we can not think of rivalling His knowledge by independent exertions of our own. Yet we can learn from Him, and teach our hearts and eyes to see the things about us in the true light in which He saw them and set them before us. With the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, something of the true wisdom must enlighten our hearts. The flowers of earth must speak of Him who clothed them so wondrously; the birds of the air must tell of their great Provider. The shepherd and his flock, the vine with its branches pruned and fruit-laden, the trees putting forth bud and bloom in spring-time will surely tell their story of the kingdom of grace and its consummation in the kingdom of glory. Nor will the Christlike heart need the special education of

the scientist or artist for the attainment and enjoyment of this Christlike wisdom. Such is the wonderful character of the wisdom born of God that even the simplest heart is able to possess it. Nevertheless, the most refined culture may be combined with the wisdom of simplicity in reading God's handwriting everywhere. The astronomer studying the wonders of the starry constellations, the chemist with his mysterious experiments in the laboratory, the artist wielding pencil, brush, and chisel, the musician amid the harmonies of sound and the instruments for their production, the poet thrilled with the spirit of song and swept away by the stream of his own great utterances, if treading in the footsteps of the Son of man, will ever be led upward and moved to lead others likewise.

To be sure, for us who are born of earth, still tainted and surrounded by the influence of the world, there will ever be danger of going astray. Science is full of unbelief, the artist world pursues so many fleshly ideals, philosophy and poetry so often seek to advance man's glory more than God's. The antagonism has become so marked, that some of Christ's followers have come to think that human learning and culture is in itself a corrupt thing. Some churches have banished almost all forms of art from their worship, refusing to beautify their houses of worship with painting or sculpture and their services with uninspired poetry and instrumental music. It can not be denied that the theater panders in the grossest manner to the flesh and has become utterly corrupt; the novel is far oftener a cup of poison than a chalice of purity and truth. And yet the culture of earth is no more tainted than the indus-

try and business of earth; the work of sin is simply everywhere, degrading every human relation and occupation. But it would be wrong to flee out of the world, to break away altogether from the relations and occupations of earth, to discard wholly every form of human culture. Christ's followers are set to be the salt of the earth, a light amid the darkness of the world. By the aid of Christ's Spirit they are to substitute everywhere and always for that which is base and sinful that which is Christlike and godly. Science and art are ours to put into the service of the Savior; all forms of culture are so many vessels for us to fill with godly contents. With Christ in the heart all our senses will be sanctified, our intelligence, affections, and will, our tongues, our hands, and every bodily member set against sin and devoted to righteousness, purity, and truth. The Christlike man is not to shun the things of nature, but to handle them indeed, after the example of Christ.

And what wonderful service nature may be made to render man in Christ's footsteps! In the special work of Christ as a teacher of God, we see the dust of the earthly turned into imperishable fine gold by the touch of His divine hand. If Christ had discarded in His work the things He saw in nature and in man, many of the most glorious passages of the New Testament would never have been spoken and written. But now our hearts rejoice to read of the little mustard seed and the sprouting grain of wheat; and the story of the prodigal son has been made to tell us the very heart of the Gospel message. Something of this wonderful alchemy will reappear beneath the hands of

every follower of Christ when biding in His footsteps. Even when no special knowledge is ours, the Spirit of Christ will help us reap a precious harvest from the rich fields of nature on every side. The pearls of higher truth lie about in such abundance that Christian eyes can not help but see some of them, and Christian hands with little effort are able to gather a plentiful store for themselves and for others. Likewise when a true Christian heart touches any of the sciences or any of the fine arts, nature will be ready to yield its highest and noblest service. How the heavens will declare the glory of God to the Christlike astronomer, and the deeps of earth to the Christlike geologists, and the beauties of the animal and plant world to the Christlike naturalist! The student of history, the man of letters, the painter of pictures, the writer of prose and verse, the lover of philosophy, each in his own field, will find his material like pliant clay willing to be moulded to the honor of God by hands that are godly indeed. Imperfections and faults there will always be, since no man is perfect and faultless as was Christ. Yet the fact remains, that to him alone who keeps in Jesus' footsteps the world about him will give its best and fairest service, and will give it in the measure of his own Christlikeness.

They who are base would wrest all things into the service of their baseness for their own debasement and destruction. The followers of Christ lift all things into the service of their Master for their own elevation and blessedness. "All things are yours; and ye are Christ's."

CHAPTER XIII.

AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH.

CHRIST'S relation to the church is our example in all that pertains to the married state. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it." "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord."

The example of Christ which we, His disciples, are to follow, would not be complete, if it did not cover also the married state and all that is peculiar to it. Marriage is not an accidental feature of life, it is altogether essential and of vital importance. The field embraced by marriage is so wide and extensive, that it exceeds some of the other normal conditions of human life, to all of which the example of Christ is plainly applicable. There would be a vacuum, therefore, in the pattern left us by Christ for our life on earth, if His own life presented nothing in the nature of a model for the relation between man and wife.

The married state is not a result of sin or a concomitant of the fallen condition of man. Adam and Eve were joined in holy wedlock before the gates of Eden closed behind them. Marriage in itself is not necessarily sinful, any more than any other state of man; it stands on a plane with childhood, youth,

manhood, old age, and with the many legitimate relations of man to his fellows in this earthly life, in work, business, government, pleasure, sorrow. When the Scriptures speak of husbands and wives, they frequently continue in exhortation also to masters and servants, rulers and subjects. Married life, too, has certainly been tainted by sin, and the results of sin have worked themselves out in their own lamentable way in this estate. But we find the same taint of sin in every human relation, each with its own deplorable peculiarities. As the child and as the man is sinful, so also is the husband and the wife; as the master and the servant are gone out of the way, so also the two who are one flesh. Yet for this very reason marriage also enjoys the fruits of Christ's redemption. It is no more debarred from the purifying and sanctifying power of Christ than is any other natural human condition. As the child, the youth, the man must become Christlike in the very elements which are essential to childhood, youth and manhood, so are also the husband and the wife to become Christlike, not merely in what pertains separately to manhood and to womanhood, but also and particularly in what pertains to the marital union and life. Christ has left us an example, that we who are husbands and wives should, as such, and in the very things that pertain to us as such, follow in His footsteps. The divine image can be and ought to be realized also in the essentials of the Christian married life.

Rome casts a halo of sanctity about celibacy, and yet it makes marriage a sacrament. Neither is cor-

rect. Peter was not less holy than Paul although the former had a wife and the latter none; there was nothing in the estate of either to hinder them from being equally Christlike. Marriage is marriage even among unbelievers, and there is nothing sacramental about it, no visible sign, and no gift of divine grace, no promise of the Gospel. The true Christian dignity of marriage is found not in some sacramental feature in the ceremony which unites man and wife for life, but in the similiarity of the entire married state of Christians to the far loftier and holier union between Christ and the church. And when this true dignity and glory of Christian matrimony is recognized, all the dreams of monks and nuns concerning the special sanctity of celibacy will vanish like shadows.

When it is said that Christ is our example in the married state, we must be careful especially to hold fast one of the essential features of the example of Christ. We have more than a mere human pattern of flawless excellence in Christ; Christ is more, infinitely more, than an ideal of human perfection. He is the God-man, and His example is the divine image to which we are to be conformed. To be sure, this image appears in human form; Christ was made in the likeness of men, and found in fashion as a man. But that dare not render His example a mere human pattern of perfection, any more than it renders His sacrifice a mere human offering of a mere human person. Both the sacrifice and the obedience, which also serves as our example, are the work of the God-man, human indeed, and yet far above humanity, truly divine and the work of the Son.

If Christ's example, as left for us to follow, were only a pattern of human ideal perfection, then we might think it indispensable for the application of this example to us in marriage that He Himself should have entered and lived in this estate. But we have a far higher model in Christ, in what He was, and in what He did. We have the divine image itself in all its heavenly exaltation and glory, although clothed in the humility of humanity. And therefore it is not at all necessary for Christ to have passed through marriage Himself to be our example for the married state. Aside from the fact, that He was the God-man, and that there was no second of His kind, to whom He could have been joined, the pattern to which we are to be conformed, and which Christ has set for us, is no mere human model, however perfect and ideal, but a divine model, transcending everything merely of earth. This holds good for every side of Christ's life, and of our own inasmuch as it is to be a following in His footsteps, and therefore also of the relation of man and wife in marriage.

The model for us to copy is therefore not a human marriage of Christ. Our model is the exalted relation between Christ and the church. At the first glance the disparity between this heavenly relation and our lowly earthly relation may seem too great for the one to be in any way conformed to the image of the other. But Trench says well of the lovers of truth: "To them the things on earth are copies of the things in heaven. They know that the earthly tabernacle is made after the pattern of things seen in the Mount (Ex. 25, 40; 1 Chron. 28, 11. 12); and the question suggested

by the angel in Milton is often forced upon their meditations, —

‘What if earth

Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein

Each to the other like, more than on earth is thought?’

For it is a great misunderstanding of the matter to think of these as happily, but yet arbitrarily, chosen illustrations, taken with a skillful selection from the great stock and storehouse of unappropriated images; from whence it would have been possible that the same skill might have selected others as good, or nearly as good. Rather they belong to one another, the type and the things typified, by an inward necessity; they are linked together long before by the law of a secret affinity. It is not a happy accident which has yielded so wondrous an analogy as that of husband and wife, to set forth the mystery of Christ’s relation to His elect Church. There is far more in it than this: the earthly relation is indeed but a lower form of the heavenly, on which it rests, and of which it is the utterance.” We are not dealing with shadowy mysticisms when we make Christ’s union with the church a model for the earthly marital union of Christians. However high the one may seem and however far beneath it the other, the two are essentially alike. The church is in very truth and reality the bride and wife of the Lamb. Sin has debased marriage indeed, and yet the relation of the Christian man and wife is capable of being freed from this degradation of sin, and of being conformed to its exalted prototype and pattern, the marriage of Christ and the church.

When we come to examine the Scriptures on this point, we must marvel at the fulness and clearness of its utterances. The Old Testament is full of passages treating of the church as the daughter, the virgin, the betrothed, the bride, the wife, and of God as bound by the marriage tie to this His church. The New Testament takes up these thoughts of the Old Testament, and lends them new force and beauty through the love of the Lamb and the Lamb's sacrificial death. Compare on the Old Testament Is. 37, 22; Cant. 7, 1; Jer. 31, 4; Lam. 2, 13; Amos 5, 2; Zechariah 9, 9. On the New, 2 Cor. 11, 2; Rev. 12; 19, 7; 21, 17.

It is not a mere figure, it is the fullest, deepest, heavenliest reality, when God declared to the church: "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord." Hos. 2, 19. 20. David in the 45th Psalm has glorified this heavenly betrothal and marriage by the the sacred melody of song and music. And Solomon has pictured all the love of the divine bridegroom, all the longing and the beauty of the heavenly bride in words of such purity and exaltation that nothing has ever exceeded them. Jesus calls Himself the Bridegroom and His disciples the friends of the Bridegroom. In two parables He treats of His marriage to the church. Paul calls Jerusalem which is above the mother of us all. And the New Testament vies with the Old in the terrible-ness of its denunciation of the unfaithfulness of the church, when this heavenly marriage tie is broken.

Infidelity, idolatry, apostasy are characterized as in truth the most shameful adultery.

To be sure, it requires an effort for us who live amid sin and sin's doings to free our thoughts from all that mars our ideas of human marriage, and to rise to the truth and beauty of this relation as it binds Christ and the church in the transcendent purity of heaven. But the very effort of picturing this blessed "mystery" to our minds with the Spirit's help is already an elevation of our conception of the marriage state of God's children. St. Paul, in the classical passage, Eph. 5, 22-33, has made fullest use of this divine pattern of Christ's connection with the church in showing what our marriage bond should be. Let it be noted that the apostle does not take human marriage as only a figure for elucidating and picturing Christ and His union with the church. He does the very opposite; he is giving practical admonitions to wives, husbands, children, masters, and servants; and for the proper enforcement of these admonitions to husbands and wives directs their attention to the great model set before them in Christ and the church. "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it." "As the church is subject unto Christ, so let wives be to their own husbands in everything." Here is no mere analogy, here is true likeness. Our marriage is a human copy of Christ's relation to the church, as Moses' tabernacle was a copy of that on the Mount. For this very reason a number of the deepest, truest, and loftiest admonitions follow.

It is wonderful what a firm and solid basis we have when we keep to the Word of Him who made human marriage after the heavenly image, and when we seek out His intentions and purposes as He Himself declares them. As long as we follow the *ignis fatuus* of our own imaginary wisdom in dealing with the marriage question and its branches in the woman question and questions, we flounder and grope about in the dark. Some have thus condemned marriage and advocated the rankest form of fornication. Some have fallen back on mere natural laws and bounded their highest conceptions of the tie between man and wife by notions only a few degrees higher than those pertaining to the animal world. Some have perverted the divine gifts of manhood or of womanhood, of husbandhood or wife and motherhood, debasing the one by falsely exalting the other, harming and hindering both in their true functions and divinely intended blessedness by misjudging their proper relation and misconceiving their divine intention. Man can only guess at false analogies when the true model and the divine pattern is lost. But the moment we find that heavenly pattern and read it with enlightened eyes, our errors disappear, and each item of the problem that has vexed us falls into its proper harmonious place.

The model as Paul outlines it is as follows: as Christ is the head of the church, so the husband is the head of the wife; as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, so must men love their wives; as the church is the body of Christ, so the wife is the body of her head the husband; as Christ, the head of

the church, nourishes and cherishes the church, His body, so the husband, the head of the wife, must nourish and cherish his wife, who is his body, his other self, his own flesh; as the church recognizes Christ, its head, and is subject unto Him, so the wife must recognize her husband as her head, and submit herself to him and hold him in reverence. One thought governs all these deductions of the apostle: our marriage is the human counterpart of the heavenly marriage of Christ and the church.

It is, however, only a human counterpart, a copy in inferior material, therefore the glories and excellencies of the original will not find a perfect and complete reflection in the copy. St. Paul sees all the divine beauty of the heavenly Bridegroom and of the church, His bride. He is the Savior of His body, of His church; this a human husband cannot be in the same sense for his wife. Christ gave Himself for the church; this divine love and sacrifice far transcends any human affection. Christ sanctifies and cleanses the church, presenting it to Himself a glorious church without wrinkle or spot, altogether holy and without blemish; again this cannot be perfectly copied in the clay of human marriage. But if the union of Christ and the church has heavenly glories of love and sacrifice and sanctification which cannot be transferred as such to husbands and wives, let us not forget that at least the reflection of these glories can be embodied in human marriage to a certain extent. The moon does not glow with the dazzling splendor of the sun's glorious rays, it only reflects the limited light it is able to receive. So the sun of

Christ's love for the church, shining upon the humble bond of Christian marriage, will not produce another sun, a rival in brightness; nevertheless it will call out a beautiful reflection of its own true light of love, as rich and as full, as the reflecting medium is able to yield.

The first thing we desire to note in the example of Christ and the church for the relation of husbands and wives is the lofty foundation on which the marital union is made to rest. There is more than the idea of mutual utility and benefit; there is more than pleasure and ideal delight and genial companionship; there is more even than a bare bond of duty, pleasant or otherwise. To be sure, Christian marriage has its benefits not to be despised, pleasures and joys intended by God Himself, and bonds of duty as strong and as noble as any known on earth. But the model of the divine union between Christ and the church shows us a deeper principle and foundation for Christian marriage than utility, pleasure, or duty. Christ and the church are one in spirit, one in heart, one in mind. This is the essence of their union, making it at once perfect, glorious, and everlasting. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." More than this, Christ Himself declares to His disciples: "I in you and you in me"; "Ye are the branches, I am the vine, abide in me." And St. Paul speaks of the same thing when he says: "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."

Christ and the church are joined indissolubly because they are one, one in reality, so much so, that Christ would not be what He is, namely the glorious Head of the church, without this union between Himself and the church.

One spirit, one heart, one mind — this is the height of perfection in Christian marriage. One in the things of the Spirit, in Christian faith, love, fervor, devotion, service; spirit joined to spirit in the highest, holiest privileges, duties, and hopes of God. One in heart, in the affections, loves, friendships of Christian earthly life; heart joined to heart in the duties, trials, delights, and achievements of earthly relations. One in mind, in the aims of thought, in the modes of thought, in the loving interchange of thought. This complete oneness, corresponding to the union of Christ and the church is not attained where husband and wife are spiritually sundered, where heart and heart are separated by a gulf of diverse and conflicting affections, where mind antagonizes mind in the aims, mode, and expression of thought.

So-called mixed marriages, where husband and wife hold differing beliefs and belong to different churches, preclude from the start the chief Christian element of marriage. A Jew and a Christian, a Romanist and a Protestant, a Baptist and a Lutheran, cannot be one in spirit as Christ and the church are one. And in the same way, although to a far less decree, so-called misalliances hinder the oneness that should bind heart to heart and mind to mind. When the disparity between husband and wife is too great, the two cannot well walk hand in hand as do Christ and the church.

We must ever remember that the element of sexual attraction and passion in itself cannot bridge over these differences, for in itself it cannot constitute the bond of Christian oneness in marriage. In fact, this element is most deeply tainted with sin, and must be elevated and purified by the spirit of the new Christian life, so that it too may take its proper place in the holy Christian bond. The worst marriages of all, from the point of view of Christian perfection, are those formed merely on the strength of sexual passion, of love as the world knows and follows it, or of unworthy worldly calculation on riches, social position, and the like. They are the worst, because the bond of oneness is worldly, sinful throughout, and least like the bond that unites Christ and the church.

As is the tie that unites husband and wife, so will be the happiness resulting from their union in the married state. Only where spirit, heart, and mind are one in Christ will that lasting happiness result which the world knows not and cannot know. To be sure, this new and sanctifying bond with its resultant Christian happiness may be wrought by the Spirit of Christ, where it does not at first exist between man and wife. And perhaps there are very few marriages possessing this bond with any full measure of strength from the start. The great aim of all Christian hearts must ever be to grow in Christian oneness through the power of Christ and His Spirit.

From all that has thus been said it will be clear that woman, and woman also and especially in her wifely relation, finds in Christ and under Christ alone the elevation which she seeks in vain in the world. No

human philosophy or dream of woman suffragist or emancipator has ever reached an ideal to compare in excellence, truth, and blessedness with the model set for wives in the church as united with Christ. The heathen world knew only to make woman a slave; the Jewish world left her greatly encumbered and subjected to man's wilfulness; the medieval world made her a foolish object of fanciful chivalrous devotion; the modern world of unbelief makes her a rival and competitor of man to the hurt of both. The Scriptures alone make her what God intended, the true helpmeet of her husband, one with him in spirit, heart, and mind; yet not identifying both, or obliterating their differences, as we shall see, not making another man of woman, or another woman of man, but linking both together in the true and blessed oneness of head and body, and these united in Christ.

Christ and the church are one, yet He is the Head, and the church is the body. The Christian husband and wife are to be one in Christ, yet he is to be the head, and she is to be the body. These terms describe both the oneness that binds together husband and wife, and their distinctive differences in the union thus formed. Can there be a closer union than that between the head and the body? Therefore, "he that loveth his wife, loveth himself." Can there be a clearer distinction than that between the head and the body? The one is not the other, the one has powers and duties not possessed by the other. To confound the two produces a monstrosity, a double head without a body, or a double body without a head.

The duty of the Christian husband as the head of the wife is, according to the words of St. Paul, the love that governs, provides for, nourishes and cherishes the wife as the body, even as the Lord the church. The duty of the Christian wife corresponds to this love of the husband; it is the love that obeys, reverences, and devotes itself to the husband as the head, even as does the church in respect to Christ. On both sides there is love, the love that is sanctified in Christ; and this after the example of Christ's love toward the church, and of the church's love toward Christ. And yet this love of each has its own sphere of manifestation. The one is the love of the head for the body, the other of the body for the head; the one governs and leads, the other reverences, obeys, follows. Yet, being love, there is no trace of tyranny in the one, and no sign of slavishness in the other. The one love provides, nourishes, cherishes, the other love receives and returns every gift with hearty devotion and service; and yet being love in each instance, there is the true spirit of self-sacrifice in both, as Christ gave Himself for the church, and as the church gives itself unto Christ. Each delights in the peculiar love of the other, neither is dissatisfied with the love he or she is to manifest and is in turn to receive. And from this mutual interchange there flows the never-failing stream of Christian marital happiness. This is the scriptural ideal of holy wedlock.

Whatever is done on the part of the husband or of the wife to contravene the bidding of St. Paul as here set forth spoils the Christlikeness of their marital union. As we see from the Scriptures, it is not neces-

sary to spin out details. All details arrange themselves when husband and wife constantly hold to Christ and seek to follow St. Paul's bidding: "Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

It only remains to state that this Christlikeness in marital love is the necessary first link in the Christlikeness that is to manifest itself further on in the relation between parents and children, masters and servants, and between governments and subjects.



*He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them,
and blessed them. — Mark 10, 16.*

CHAPTER XIV.

HE TOOK THEM UP IN HIS ARMS.

ONE of the most beautiful and suggestive pictures of Jesus is that which exhibits Him surrounded with little children, stooping down to lift them in His arms, and laying His hand in blessing upon their heads. His treatment of little ones is the perfect pattern for all who follow in His footsteps and have anything to do with children.

"These little ones", as He repeatedly called them, are very important to Jesus. When He gathered them around Him, He intended far more than simply to entertain Himself with their innocent ways, to delight them with His kindness and love, or to instruct them with some lesson from His store of wisdom. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven", we hear Him say. This is the principle that governs His entire attitude toward children. They are meant for His kingdom; every infant counts as much in that kingdom as any adult. God's providence, Christ's redemption, the Holy Spirit's sanctification are concerned with babes and sucklings as much as with greybeards and hoary sages. It was impossible for the Son of God to pass by the little sons and daughters of men. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not", means for children what, "Come

unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden", means for adults. Jesus blessing little ones is the same as Jesus at table with publicans and sinners, preaching to the multitudes at the sea-side, or dealing with scribes and Pharisees in the Holy City. With God there is no distinction of persons; in Christ's kingdom there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither bond nor free, neither man nor woman, and therefore we add, neither child nor adult. Not the mere possibilities lying latent in a child render it so important in the eyes of Jesus; whether the babe will grow into a mighty apostle, become a holy martyr, climb the height of sainthood, or not, the Savior's arms reach out to enfold it. What the child is, not merely what it may become, is enough to make it an object of Christ's solicitous love. Each little one is an immortal soul, lost in sin, needing salvation, therefore Jesus extends His arms to embrace it.

Jesus met children with the same love with which He came to their elders, because He beheld all alike in sin. When He took young children into His arms to bless them, they truly needed His blessing. David's word concerning himself was true of each little infant, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. 51, 5. St. Paul includes every child born of man when he writes: "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5, 12. Christ's own word is fully sufficient on this point: "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3, 5. 6. However undeveloped the activity of sin may be in the infant, the sinful state is there, the great need of redemption and regeneration. It is for this reason that God made special provision for children in the Old Covenant, and the New has by no means failed to provide to the fullest possible extent for infant needs.

The children which Jesus met were members of the Jewish Church, and enjoyed the treasures of grace which God had already provided for them. Greater blessings and a richer measure of grace were to be theirs, now that the Redeemer had come. And no one was to deprive them of their heritage. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones", is Christ's warning, "for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." Matth. 18, 10. If the care of God's love for the children of His people Israel was so great that He appointed the angels of heaven to serve and shelter them, men would err greatly and sin against God, if they despised even a single one of these little ones. They who received the ministration of angelic servants were furthermore to be blessed by the service of the Son Himself. "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even

so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." Matth. 18, 11-14. The closing sentence of this parable concerning the lost sheep makes it apply especially to "these little ones." No one dare debar them from the Savior's love which seeks their salvation.

When, therefore, Jesus welcomed little children and forbade His disciples to hinder those who brought them, He opened the way for the little ones who had received the grace of God in the Old Covenant to receive also the added blessings of the New. Christian Baptism was not yet instituted, the time for that was not yet come; but the Savior was there, and His blessing could be received. Now the Old Covenant with its peculiar dispensation of grace has been abolished. Children to-day cannot come to Jesus having the Old Testament blessings as their own. When now we first bring them, they come with empty hearts; and our object in bringing them is not that they may receive an added blessing to what they already enjoy, but the very first gift of grace from the Savior's hands. If, however, Christ desired so much to increase the blessings of Jewish children who had already tasted the grace of God, He surely desires much more now to bestow the first gifts of grace upon those who when they come are still altogether destitute. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not", is now an invitation to all children that they may be brought to Him and receive what their souls need, and when once they have been brought, to return again and again and to receive grace for grace.

Through the Sacrament of Baptism they may be brought and laid into the Master's arms; through the ministration of water and of the Spirit Christ bestows upon them "the forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death and the devil, and the gift of eternal life." What greater blessing could any child receive? And when once our little ones have been brought to Jesus and blessed with His priceless gifts, they may be brought again and again, and indeed as soon as possible come of themselves and keep on coming. By believing prayer for our children we approach the heart of Jesus, as did Jairus of old, when he begged the Savior's help for his little daughter. By prayer our children themselves have access to all the love of their Master. All that they need for body and soul, every grace and blessing, may thus be secured. And they who blindly withhold Baptism from their children, or in their coldness neglect prayer for them and omit teaching them to know the Savior and to pray to Him, greatly displease Jesus, and condemn His explicit command, "Suffer the little children to come unto me."

Among the miracles of Jesus we find several wrought upon children. The little daughter of Jairus was raised from the dead; the nobleman's son was cured by a word; the daughter of the Canaanitish woman was released from an evil spirit; the lunatic boy was healed. We are certain of the age of only one of these children — the daughter of Jairus was "about twelve years of age." The others may have been older or younger, but whether they were still in swaddling clothes or on the verge of

youth, we know that Jesus loved and helped them. And there is nothing to prevent us from believing that among the great number of sufferers of all kinds constantly brought to the feet of the great Helper were also many children of all ages, led by the hand, or borne by the arms of loving fathers and mothers. Likewise, we may well suppose, that where older people often hesitated and battled with doubt, these little sufferers were quick to trust their Helper and gladly allowed Him to touch them and bless them with the gift of healing.

Jesus Himself declared that the hearts of children possess a special aptitude for His kingdom. He does not mean a condition of purity and innocence without sin, as some have supposed, but an openness, a trustfulness, a willingness which makes it easy for Him to give them His greatest blessings. When men are brought to Jesus, they are too often inclined to doubt and gainsay, and the sins in which they have lived hold them fast till shaken off; not so "these little ones." Children have the disposition to which older people must return by the help of Christ, if they desire to obtain His gifts. When, on one occasion, the disciples disputed among themselves who should be the greatest, Jesus called a child, and showed them in a living example the first elements of true spiritual greatness. When Jesus called, the child came; He set it in the midst of the disciples, and it made not the least objection to being thus placed; He took the little one into His arms, and gladly it allowed those arms to encircle it and press it to His bosom. There was no thought in the little heart of any excellence or de-

serving goodness on its part for thus allowing Jesus to do with it what He pleased; there was no pride for its obedience, no self-praise for its trustfulness. Holding the child in His arms Jesus said to the disciples, "Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Matth. 18, 4. 5. "To allow oneself to be called, led, loved, without conceit and without doubt, in simple confidence, this is childlikeness; and as are children in their way, possessing nothing and needing everything, able to do nothing and receiving everything, earning nothing and taking everything as a gift, so must all become through conversion who desire to enter the kingdom of heaven." (Besser). Verily, "of such is the kingdom of heaven", and "the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

But for this very reason we dare not neglect children or fail to bring them to Jesus. The more ready they are for the reception of His gifts and grace, the greater would be our crime, if through fault of ours they should remain destitute.

Despising children and disregarding our sacred obligations towards them is the beginning of grievous offenses against them. Jesus erects a sheltering wall around every "one of these little ones which believe in Him", by His impressive warning against offenses. The warning with its reference to the dreadful penalty should be unnecessary for those who follow Christ's footsteps; but lest we forget and grow careless, it has

been uttered and recorded. "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom offense cometh!" Matth. 18, 6. 7. Chief among offenses are those of an evil example. There are two sides to the evil men do, and therefore a double woe returning upon the evil-doer. In itself the wickedness of men brings a curse upon them, and an additional curse results from the harm that such wickedness does to any of the "little ones which believe" in Christ, whether these be children or immature adult believers. In any way to corrupt the trustfulness of children, to taint their hearts with the impressions of doubt or dislike, to sow weeds of error or of sin, is a most grievous offense. "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph. 6, 4.

Next to actual offense stands criminal neglect. Jesus found time in His busy life to deal with children. A part of the Son's business was to take up little ones into His arms and bless them. Therefore, however exacting our labors may be, however great and necessary in themselves, we must find sufficient time to devote to the spiritual needs of "these little ones." As we dare not neglect so great salvation for ourselves, so also we dare not neglect it for our children. "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me." Matth. 18, 5. "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name,

receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but Him that sent me." Mark 9, 37. The greatness of serving little ones is thus sufficiently stated for Christ's followers. As He Himself and His angels disdained not to devote themselves to babes and sucklings, so also the first of the apostles is bidden, "Feed my lambs." Heathen fathers may, like those of ancient Greece and Rome, commit the upbringing of their children to menials and slaves; Christian parents will account this task so great and blessed that they will personally do their utmost in performing it. Modern heathenism may concern itself wholly with the temporal welfare of children, leaving their souls naked and destitute, Christian faith and obedience will follow the Master's precept in regard to all child-training, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," trusting in His promise, "And all these things shall be added unto you.

"Of such is the kingdom of heaven," therefore "the Gospel of the kingdom" must constantly mold the hearts of our little ones, at home, in church, and at school. As we dare not offend one of these little ones ourselves, so we must guard them against the offenses of evil companions. As our personal efforts at training our children must ever be a nurture in the fear and admonition of the Lord, so all who are allowed to aid us must work toward the same blessed end. Whatever the difficulties and expense, they count as nothing in comparison to the result. Therefore we say, every church is remiss in one of its most sacred duties, if it fails to make proper provision for its children. Every sponsor, relative, or friend of a child is without

excuse, if he neglect to provide the best possible means for the Christian education of that child. The establishment of proper parochial schools is undoubtedly the duty of the Christian congregations in our land. The perfect equipment of such schools with truly Christian teachers and with every means for the prosecution of their work must be one of the great cares of every church member. "The promise is unto you," and not unto you alone, but "unto you and your children." Acts 2, 39. Therefore, as you enjoy its rich blessedness, so you must open a like enjoyment for your children.

It is not said that whatsoever you do for your own self is done for Christ; but it is said that whatsoever you do for one of the least of Christ's brethren is done for Christ Himself. Matth. 25, 40. "Behold the Lord Jesus with a child in His arms! Become like this child, then He will receive you; stoop down, as He does, with a loving heart to such a child, then you will receive Him." (Besser.)

CHAPTER XV.

THE THINGS THAT ARE CÆSAR'S.

THE Son of man was subject to the governmental powers that exercised authority at the time, and in the land in which His earthly life was placed. And this He did in such a way as to furnish us a complete example in regard to all that pertains to the things that are Cæsar's.

Christ was the Son of God, and as such no man's subject, but every man's ruler. All power in heaven and earth were His, and the legions of heaven were ready to do His slightest bidding. He was more than a spiritual King ruling with the scepter of grace over a kingdom not of this world. He was, and is now, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, ruling with infinite power and wisdom over the whole universe. All governments and authorities were, and are now, subjects of His supreme authority. And the Son of God never abrogated this authority, never yielded this supreme dominion. In all His humiliation He still ruled the world. If the demons were compelled to obey His behests, the lords and kings of earth were certainly not exempt from the authority of His power. If the hosts of heaven were subject to His slightest commands, the hosts of earth were not above this subjection. Pilate had power over Jesus, but only inasmuch as that

power was given him from above, by the King of heaven itself. It would be a grave error to lose sight of all this in speaking of Christ's relation to the human government beneath which He lived His earthly life.

As Christ was true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, so also He was the true King of all heaven and earth, and at the same time a true subject of an earthly government. It may be difficult for us to understand how He could be both God and man, and likewise both King and subject, yet the fact remains. For the purpose of redeeming our fallen race the King of kings "made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient," also to an earthly government, even to a government that subjected Him at last to the gross infamy and cruel injustice of the cross. As real as was Christ's kingly domain over all human powers and authorities, so real also was Christ's willing subjection to the powers and authorities of His native land. The greater part of His life was spent in the silence of Nazareth, where He lived quietly, a peaceful Galilean citizen. When His public labors at last caused the eyes of the authorities, both Jewish and Gentile, to fix their scrutinizing gaze upon Him, when a spirit of hostility to this King of Zion at last turned the hand of the chief priests and elders against Him, we hear never a single word from Jesus' lips or behold a single deed renouncing their authority or branding it as illegal. Even during the last tragic events Christ, the innocent sufferer, makes answer to Caiaphas as

president of the Jewish Sanhedrin and to Pilate as procurator of Judæa. However guilty these authorities may be, Christ stands before them as a citizen and subject claiming no more for Himself in this position than any other of the thousands who were His fellows.

The faultless bearing of Christ toward the government of His land is a translation into life of St. Paul's instructions in Rom. 13. The Son of man was "subject unto the higher powers," and this for the reason that these powers were "ordained of God." When the Jews, whose hearts were full of rebellion against the imperial power of Rome, sought to tempt Jesus with the question concerning tribute to Cæsar, He showed them plainly that nothing of this rebellion dwelt in His heart. Demanding a penny He pointed to the image and superscription stamped thereon, and bade them give unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, and to God the things that were God's. By accepting the coin of the emperor they gave testimony to the emperor's authority over them. Whether he was heathen or Israelite, it mattered not; as long as he was their sovereign they were bound to render him obedience and tribute. "The powers that be are ordained of God." It was the same in Paul's time, when he wrote these words to the Christians at Rome. Wicked Nero sat on the throne. Were they bound to regard him as their sovereign, to submit to his government, to pay him tribute? They were indeed. For all government is of God, and no emperor, king, or president, in whatever way he may have secured his authority, holds it except through the providence of God. It is the will of God that there be a

government; and it is He who guides each nation so that the government comes into certain hands, now with justice into the hands of good rulers, now with injustice into the hands of evil rulers. But whoever may rule, or whatever the form of government may be, Christ's example declares for obedience.

The real cause for such obedience of Christ to human rulers, and these evil men, is not to be confounded with the causes for such obedience usual among men. He obeyed, not because He feared punishment in case He should fail to obey; not because He liked the government or the persons exercising its functions—how could He be pleased with men like Caiaphas or Pilate?—not because He was reaping great blessings from the governmental management of these men. The Son of man was subject unto men for the sake of His Father in heaven. Because the powers that were, were ordained of God, Christ submitted to them. The secret of His example in pure and stainless citizenship even in the hour of greatest difficulty is His perfect obedience to Him whose will had placed Him into such position, and whose will was His only law.

Christ's obedience and submission as a citizen of Judæa did not militate against the open and fearless testimony which He bore against the sins and crimes of those clothed with power. Had John the Baptist rebuked the adultery of Herod the king, Christ seconds and confirms the rebuke: "I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery." Matth. 19, 9. As the ruler of Galilee Herod might have authority over the Son of man, but no divine or

human law gave him authority to put away his wife and to live with another in incestuous adultery. On one occasion the Pharisees came to Jesus with the report: "Get Thee out, and depart hence; for Herod is wanting to kill Thee." Evidently, they sought to rid themselves of His presence by inspiring Jesus with fear. But He who knew no fear answered them fearlessly with a word full of utter contempt: "Go and tell this fox, Behold, I am casting out devils and working cures to-day and to-morrow, and on the third day my work is done." Luke 13, 32. Whatever claim to respect Herod might have as a king, his abominable baseness deserved nothing but scorn and contempt. "If ever there was a man who richly deserved contempt, it was this paltry, perjured princeling—false to his religion, false to his nation, false to his friends, false to his brethren, false to his wife—to whom Jesus gave the name of 'this fox'." It has been well said that respect for the powers that be can hardly involve respect for all the impotences and imbecilities of such as Herod. As far as the law of God and the Gospel are concerned the highest dignitaries have no more claim than the lowest criminals. Sin degrades king and beggar alike, and when they glory in their degradation they are alike abominable and contemptible.

As Jesus failed not to brand the wickedness of Herod because of any power or authority exercised by this base offspring of a corrupt family, so He openly chided the evil intentions of the Jewish authorities. "Why do ye seek to kill me?" He asks them repeatedly, reading the deadly hate in their eyes, knowing fully all their murderous counsels, understanding all their futile at-

tempts against His life. Their wickedness was the greater because they were the spiritual leaders of Israel, and so much the more reason why it should be laid bare. When Jesus stood at last, a helpless sufferer, before Pilate, He declared that these His haters who had delivered Him into the procurator's hands had the greater sin in the crime of His death. Jesus was ready to acknowledge the governmental authority both of the Great Council of the Jews and of Pilate the procurator; He willingly made oath, when Caiaphas demanded a sworn statement as to whether He was the Son of the living God or not, and likewise He willingly answered the judicial inquiries of Pilate. But when Annas assumed unwarranted authority, and in a sort of preliminary examination inquired of Jesus concerning His disciples and His doctrine, he received the reproving reply: "Why asketh thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold they know what I said." And the base fellow who smote Jesus for these words received likewise the rebuke: "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" Base, treacherous, deadly cruel though they were, one and all of His Jewish judges, deserving the sternest reproof, and far more than mere reproof, swift and condign punishment for their criminal procedure, every word of reproof from Jesus' lips was spoken in the spirit of the last prayer on the cross for His murderers, "Father, forgive them." There was love ready to endure all things even in the prophetic warning which He added to the declaration of His divinity: "I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the

right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." Matth. 26, 64.

For the most part Christ met the lying accusations of the Jewish authorities, and their impotent attempts at proving Him a malefactor by means of perjured witnesses, with a silence of outraged innocence far stronger than any protest, appeal, or reproof would have been. When they who should have judged righteous judgment sold themselves body and soul unto unrighteousness, Jesus stung their callous consciences with the uncomfortable arrow of His silence. Again, when Pilate had declared His prisoner altogether innocent, yet for fear of the Jews found himself unable to dismiss their false accusations, Jesus was silent; and the power of His silence pierced deeply the heathen heart that knew well enough the sacred claims at least of natural justice. Herod was also confronted by the majestic silence of the innocent sufferer. But here there was more than reproof in the sealed lips so pale and stern. Herod did not even make an attempt to examine Jesus judicially, his utter depravity was bent on nothing but entertainment and an hour of diversion. With the silence of scorn Christ met the proposals of this king who had lost every kingly attribute. The shaft of this silence pierced the thick hide of this supersititious criminal. In impotent rage he loaded the vilest abuse upon his silent victim, and when the small fund of his cruel wit was exhausted sent Jesus away. The silence of Jesus speaks volumes; Peter helps to interpret it for us: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who,

when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." 1 Peter 2, 21, etc. Cruelty and injustice might rule for an hour, truth and righteousness were sure to triumph forever.

As long as possible Christ sought to avoid any conflict with the authorities of His land. Foreseeing their base hostility, Jesus transferred most of His activity to Galilee, appearing only for brief periods in the capital and its environments. When at last even this prudent course failed to prevent the inevitable, Christ withdrew Himself almost entirely, keeping to the distant outskirts of the land or in places little known till the final catastrophe had to come. But we must not suppose that Jesus simply avoided those in authority because hostile to Himself and the cause of truth, that He made no attempt to counteract and eradicate the evil in their hearts. To be sure, He did not assume the role of a political reformer stirring the land with His loud-voiced agitation, crying in the streets for the inauguration of new measures or for the appointment of new rulers. He took a better and more effectual course; He preached the Gospel in all its power. This was the only means for saving both the rulers and the nation from the swift destruction bound otherwise to overtake them. When the flinty hearts of the leaders of the people would not be softened by this divine power, there was but one course left Jesus as the Son of man subject to the powers of the land—that was to suffer while the righteous judgment of God proceeded on its inevitable way. "He reviled not, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth right-

ously." Human wisdom may find much fault with this course, yet divine wisdom will sanction it from beginning to end.

The example of Jesus is full of instruction for us in regard to the things that are Cæsar's. To be sure, Christ did not pass through every possible trial and predicament as regards citizenship and governmental authority; we may find ourselves in circumstances altogether different, facing problems and perplexities to which we can find no exact parallel or sufficient counterpart in the brief life of Jesus. And yet His footsteps will ever show us the true path of Christian duty, for we are not slavishly to repeat merely His words and deeds in our lives, but in true spirituality to fill our lives with the divine principles that guided Him, and to mold all our actions in perfect accord with these principles. Whether then we be rulers or subjects, kings or slaves, living the quiet lives of peace or the troubled lives of persecution, the shining footsteps of Jesus will show us the one path we are to follow.

More than the considerations of expediency and utility, or the common feelings of patriotism must bind us to the duty of mercy and justice, if we have any share in exercising authority, and to the duty of ready submission, if we belong to the numerous class of the governed. Christ gave to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's because such was the Father's will; He who was the Lord of all the kings and emperors of earth submitted Himself to the governor of a limited province, because His Father in heaven desired such submission. Christ's virtues as an obedient citizen were a divine service rendered to God for conscience sake. "Where-

fore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but but also for conscience sake." Rom. 13, 5. It is this higher motive, outlasting and outranking every other, which should move us to heed the bidding of Paul: "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." Rom. 13, 7. As far as heaven is above earth, so far is Christian citizenship above that of the world. Many obey because they must, some because they like, others because a natural feeling of duty prompts them. The Christlike citizen obeys and serves for Christ's sake, and his work will be remembered in eternity.

Although the powers that be are ordained of God, and are looked upon and treated accordingly by the children of God, they are nevertheless not divine, but only human powers, and must never exalt themselves or be exalted too highly. We reverence and obey them not because their authority has independent claims upon us, but "for conscience sake" in obedience to God's arrangement and command. Even the mightiest kings and emperors are only men, and what they command comes not with the authority of "Thus saith the Lord." It may please God to remove rulers and to reverse their enactments. When this takes place, the Christian must be ready to acknowledge the providence of God and content himself with the authorities set over him.

While the Christian obeys he dare not countenance the sins of those who may be in authority. Christ reprobated Herod and the elders of His people. Paul, when placed in bonds before Felix and Drusilla, rea-

soned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; and the fearless testimony of the Gospel from the lips of a bound prisoner struck home in the heart of the unrighteous and intemperate Felix and made him tremble. It may cost us dear to rebuke the open sins of the mighty and powerful, but a clear conscience before God is worth the price. The coward who looks on in silence while Herod revels in adultery is far from the footsteps of Jesus.

There is ever a difference between the Christlike reproof and that of mere worldly morality. The former appeals to the law of God, aims at repentance for sin, at the conversion and salvation of the sinner; while the latter is satisfied with an outward purification of the sinner's conduct. When Christ sought to heal the leprosy of His earthly rulers, He touched their hearts with the Gospel. Likewise we. A little agitation may teach our officials that honesty is the best policy, while at heart they care no more for true honesty than before. A crusade against intemperance and the hotbeds in which it is cultivated, may for a time lessen the evil, and in so far be a blessing. But Christ and the Christian must ever go further. They cannot be satisfied when men, because they must, or because they find it policy, desist from evil. Their end is not reached until men forsake evil altogether because they have learned to hate it and been made free by the saving powers of Christ. It may be difficult and even impossible to reach this goal; Caiphas, Pilate, Felix remained unchanged, while Christ and Paul, as far as their earthly treatment was concerned, by no means profited by their attempts to change them. Yet success

or failure dare not turn the balance of Christian duty. It is better to die with Christ than to live and rule with Herod.

No form of human government and no administration of any form will be faultless throughout. The principle to which the laws and their administration is to conform is, according to the words of Paul, that rulers may be a terror to the evil and a minister of God unto the good. But even in the attempts to keep the outward deeds of men reasonably pure the best of magistrates will have cause to lament many a shortcoming and failure. Now the laws will fail of reaching fully the ends of justice; again there will be insurmountable obstacles to their proper execution; and yet again our own ignorance and inability will help to hinder the cause of righteousness. The kingdom of perfection will not appear until the new heavens and the new earth are formed. But though the laws and governments beneath which we live be full of fault, they still claim our Christian obedience and allegiance. Though policies are pursued which we may deem unwise and hurtful, though laws are laid down hard for us to bear, and men are put into power evading the laws or utilizing them for base purposes, we are not on this account absolved from the duties of Christian citizenship. Such evils only help to lay another duty upon us, namely that we use energetically all legitimate means for their abolishment. Meanwhile, we dare not forget that a faulty government is a thousand times better than anarchy. Harsh and oppressive measures may exercise our patience to the utmost, but while they lead us to pray and labor more earnestly for laws and authorities beneath

which "we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2, 2) they will serve to stir us to earnest self-examination and repentance for our own numerous faults. It is not for naught that God lays a heavy rod upon us. Only too often we esteem the blessings of a good government too little, pray for its continuance and give thanks too coldly, murmur and complain too much; only too often we care little when others are oppressed, if only we be at ease, letting evils grow in unconcern until their bitterness overtakes us also.

For the Christian the principle of Peter must ever stand fast: "We must obey God rather than men." Whenever governmental and divine authority clashes there is no question as to the side on which the footsteps of Jesus lie, and to which our course must incline. Prison and death may be found on that side, but even they dare not turn us aside. "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were you called." 1 Peter 2, 19, etc. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but

let him glorify God on this behalf." 1 Peter 4, 12, etc. Peter and John would not cease proclaiming the name of Christ though threatened by the Jewish Council itself; Paul was ready to suffer anything from the hands of earthly judges and rulers for the sake of the Gospel. Not that we are to provoke worldly authorities needlessly, and glory in the simple fact of suffering. If our folly or unwise action bring persecution upon us, we should be ashamed and learn the lesson of prudence from Christ. Paul gladly made use of the special rights and immunities that were his as a Roman citizen. The cause of the Gospel is not furthered by foolish words or careless actions of ours, but only by firm and loyal adherence to the clear directions of God, though they be contradicted by the demands of men.

Against the crimes of wicked men we are certainly justified in appealing to the powers that be, that they may protect us by punishing the evil-doer. The government does not bear the sword in vain, and we are not to aid men in their wickedness by calmly standing by whilst they vent their wickedness upon us. One of the great blessings of good government consists in the protection which guarantees us a quiet and peaceable life in the land. A follower of Christ may, accordingly, serve his government in any legitimate capacity for upholding order and for apprehending and punishing transgressors of the law. A Christian may well serve as a policeman, sheriff, judge, or soldier. But he will lay down any such office sooner than abuse it at the command of evil superiors for the purposes of injustice and wrong.

Happily the Christian is not called upon very frequently to face the extreme of tyranny and oppression. Yet there have been and still are bloody rulers after the pattern of Antiochus-Epiphanes, Nero, and Caligula. Such are the Turk of to-day in his bloody oppression of the Arminian Christians, and the Czar of Russia in his treatment of the Lutherans, Stundists, and Jews in his realm. "Over against an unjust government and the violence it may employ the Christian is enabled to maintain an insuperable power of the soul, for conscience sake never yielding to force. If the government demand that which is wrong, the Christian will fight for the right first of all by refusing obedience in passive resistance. If the government threatens violence, he will boldly testify against the wrong and willingly suffer the pangs of martyrdom. For he knows that the battle for the right can never be fought successfully with the weapons of unrighteousness and violence. By his passive resistance, and by his active testimony in word and deed the Christian citizen brings to bear upon his government a moral power which must finally prevail against all tyranny, even if for the time the latter should maintain the upper hand. Christian strength of soul constitutes a power that conquers even by suffering defeat. Every true martyr's blood sends up a new growth of moral political life. The history of all times corroborates this truth. Here again we have proof that faith is the victory that overcometh the world." (Von Oettingen.)

We confess that in the face of the indiscriminate massacres of thousands of Arminians by the bloody Turk this wisdom of the Gospel will sound like folly to

unregenerated ears. They who so easily "despise government," who are ever inclined to be "presumptuous, self-willed, not afraid to speak evil of dignities" (2 Peter 2, 10), will be only too ready with Peter to whip out the sword and to raise the cry of revolt. Nevertheless, it is an eternal truth, that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, the church may not fight with the sword. Christ's kingdom is not of this world, else would His servants have fought that He should not have been put to death by the Jews, and would fight now that a similar death by violence may not overtake them. Though we perish, the church will not be shaken. Though we be led as sheep to the slaughter, the Lord our God will hear our cry, and mete out just judgment. Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. It may be a hard lesson to learn, faith may be sorely tried by the ordeal, yet there is not doubt as to the correctness of this interpretation of the example of Him who reviled not nor threatened when He suffered. Christ's footsteps are ever marked by the cross, never by the sword.

Great are the blessings of good government, and no one will be more ready to accept them gratefully than he who follows in the footsteps of Christ. Cheerfully will he bring every legitimate sacrifice for the maintenance of such government. Others may defraud the government of taxes and customs, he will not. Others may shirk the services and labors required, he will not. The call to arms and the field of battle will find him ready for duty. And yet he will reject the principle of an extravagant and false patriotism whose motto is: "My country right or wrong."

His sword will be unsheathed only in the cause of right and truth; for this cause he will be ready to yield his life, even if he must yield it by suffering the violence of the very authorities he would serve, when these authorities stand on the side of falsehood and wrong. The Christian can have no pleasure in warfare; he will seek the arbitrament of battle only when absolute necessity demands. And even when the fight is on, he will temper sternness with mercy, and pray and labor for the day when all swords shall be turned into plowshares, and all bayonets into pruning-hooks.

The principles of Christlike righteousness, humility, self-sacrifice, and love will guide the Christian in giving to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and in this very act also to God the things that are God's.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FULNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL.

THE God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory "hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church." And our great duty is to "grow up into Him in all things which is the head, even Christ, from whom the body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Eph. 1, 17. 22; 4, 15. 16.

Christ is the head, we are the members. The church is built upon Christ as the great corner-stone, not upon us, though we be fitly joined together as living stones. The church has but one Lord and Master, who may govern and command, guide and direct, provide and dispense; not many masters, or even a single other, who may lord it over God's heritage; for all we are brethren. The church knows but one chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls, and the voice of a stranger it will not hear, though again and again the cry is raised, "Lo, here is Christ, or there!" Matth. 24, 23. This position and exaltation of Christ as the only foundation, head, Lord, Master, Shepherd and Bishop of the church, over against us as only liv-

ing stones built upon the foundation, members of His body and of one another, brethren together, and the sheep of His pasture, seems to preclude on our part any likeness to Christ. Certainly for us to pretend to any power, mastery, and majesty like that of Christ would be directly antagonistic both to Christ and to His body, the church. The tyranny of the Romish papacy and priesthood is the very spirit of antichrist. Nevertheless the position of Christ as the head of the church, when due regard is had to His exaltation, may serve to point out the path of Christlikeness for us who are His members.

As branches of the living vine our great concern must be to abide in the vine, and to fulfill our part as branches in bearing fruit and submitting to purgation, as perfectly as the vine fulfills its part in bearing and nourishing the branches. As living members of Christ's body we must grow up in all things into Him which is the head, and thus serve in our capacity as members with a perfection similar to that of the head which is Christ. As servants of the one Lord and brethren together in the household and family of God, we must live in ready obedience and fervent love, rejoicing in our adoption and eternal inheritance, and thus fill our station as completely as does Christ. As the sheep of Christ's pasture we must follow Him, and hear His voice, and remain in His fold, as true and faithful in our position as the great Shepherd is in His. Thus will Christ be formed in us and fill every member of His church completely, so that with St. Paul we may vary the figure of Christ as the head, and the church as the body, and speak of the entire

church as "one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Rom. 12, 5. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." 1 Cor. 12, 12. At one time Christ is viewed as the head of the church in distinction to ourselves as members; at another He is looked upon as the life and spirit of the church, which is then taken as a complete body, Christ dwelling in every member. We are like Christ our head, when we remain members, and do our part as such as faithfully as the head does His. But when thus we imitate Christ, He Himself is our life and spirit, dwelling within us, and His image shining forth from us.

The Lord of the church, however, has also given His Spirit to the church. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come." Acts 1, 8. John 15, 26. This Spirit dwells in every member of the church; "now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His"; "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. 8, 9. 14. Wherefore also St. Paul describes the church as "an habitation of God through the Spirit." Eph. 2, 22. The Spirit's work in the church is not to "speak of Himself", but to glorify Christ and to give unto us the things of Christ, that every member of the church may grow constantly more Christlike. John 16, 13-15. Therefore our great concern as members of the church of Christ must be to open our hearts to the Spirit of Christ, to receive His gifts, submit to His working in us, and follow His leading. So shall Christ be formed in us, in accord with the

apostle's description, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Cor. 6, 11. So shall we be indeed "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." 1 Peter 2, 9. And as "His workmanship", as "God's husbandry", "the fruit of the Spirit" shall abound in us for the praise of Christ, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Gal. 5, 22. 23.

Whenever we speak of our relation to the church and of the path which Christ has marked out for us as church-members, we must lay stress on these vital elements, our union with Christ the head of the church, and our submission to the Spirit through whom Christ operates in the church. This union and this submission form the foundation upon which our lives as members of the church are to be built in the imitation of Christ. Prefacing this much, we may now proceed to view somewhat in detail the example of our Master for us as members of His church.

The kingdom of God and His relation to it was ever present to the mind and heart of Christ. In many a parable He set this blessed kingdom before His disciples, that they, having entered it, might know all its excellence and be able to lead others into its joys. The development of the kingdom of heaven under the New Covenant as the church of Christ was, in particular, the subject of a great part of Christ's teaching. He saw the church unfolding from its small

beginnings, like a grain of mustard seed, and filling all the earth with its widespread branches, sheltering nation after nation. It is true indeed, "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17, 20. 21. Its spiritual nature, differing so widely from the gross materialism of earth, did not render the church, the kingdom not of this world, less real to the mind of Christ. On the contrary, "heaven and earth shall pass away", "the world passeth away and the lust thereof", but the church which Christ builds, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it", it shall never pass away. In fact, if it were not for the church, and the work of God in building His spiritual kingdom, the world, lying in wickedness, would have passed away and perished in its doom long ago.

The church was in a special sense the object of Christ's love. St. Paul speaks of the love between Christian husbands and wives, and in this connection sets before us the model "as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it." Eph. 5, 25. Jesus indeed loved the whole world and gave Himself a ransom for many; His messengers are sent to all nations to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins; and His purpose and promise is, that whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Yet this love of Christ for all men in no way opposes His special love for the church. If in first coming to the sinful world Christ made no difference, offering His love and salvation to all alike, He is nevertheless constrained to make a difference at last, when many shall

have rejected His love altogether, and when others shall have accepted it and become His own. Looking into the future Christ beheld the company of His believers as His sheep who know His voice and follow Him and are known of Him; wherefore also St. Paul wrote, "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His." 2 Tim. 2, 19. The word of Jesus to His disciples applies to the entire church: "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." John 15, 17. Therefore, concerning the world as distinguished from, and opposed to, the church the judgment of Christ is fixed, "He that believeth not shall be damned", Mark 16, 16; "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God", John 3, 18; "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him." John 3, 36. Therefore also Christ makes a fundamental distinction in His prayer: "I pray for them", the disciples, "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me; for they are Thine." John 17, 9. And He states definitely whom He means by these, "they which shall believe on me through the word of the disciples." The end of the world shall witness the final repetition of this distinction, Christ's love for the church and His rejection of the world; for "before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and He shall set the

sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left." Matth. 25, 32, etc. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Matth. 25, 46.

Jesus knew that the church on earth would not be perfect, nevertheless He embraced it with His love, bestowed His gifts upon it, and works with infinite patience to bring it at last unto perfection. He saw that there would be tares among the wheat, wicked and unprofitable servants among the faithful and diligent, hypocrites among the true believers. The children of the kingdom would themselves be full of many faults. Some even would wander from the fold, or become lost like pieces of silver, necessitating the trying labor of search till they should be found again and returned with rejoicing. Some would fail of fruit and would need all the tilling of the faithful gardener to make them productive. Some would bear only thirtyfold, while others would bring sixty and even a hundredfold. Not all would build upon the foundation of Christ pure gold, silver, and precious stones, some would mix in wood, hay, stubble. In spite of it all Christ loves the church, and the Spirit of Christ goes on with the work of saving, recovering, cleansing, purifying, perfecting, glorifying. Christ's own mantle of righteousness covers the shortcomings of His church, so that there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. 8, 1. And the final outcome of all Christ's love and labor will indeed be "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any

such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5, 27.

In His infinite love Christ committed to the church the means of grace, His Word and Sacraments, together with all the blessings therein contained and the duties therein implied. "Preach the gospel to every creature"; "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." All nations are to be made disciples by this teaching and by being baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And they who have become disciples are to take bread and wine, even as Christ did in the night in which He was betrayed, partaking thus of His body given for us and of His blood shed for us for the remission of sins, and fulfilling His bidding, "This do in remembrance of me." Unspeakably great and blessed are the promises which Christ has attached to the proper use of these means of grace. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"; "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8, 32, etc. "According to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus 3, 5. "Take, eat", and "drink ye all of it" — "for the remission of sins." Matth. 26, 26, etc. But with the blessing there are duties conferred. The church itself is to continue in the Word; "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom", Col. 3, 16. Baptism and Communion are to be faithfully administered as Christ has directed; we dare not cast our pearls before swine. False prophets must be shunned, and

those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned must be avoided. Because "the promise is unto you and your children", the church must make ample provision for all its members that they may receive and enjoy the promise. And because the promise is also "to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call", the church is bound to preach the gospel of the kingdom with all its precious promises to every creature, and to provide everything necessary for the proper prosecution of this work, praying always, "Establish Thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it." Ps. 90, 17.

In addition to the means of grace Christ gave to His church the office of the ministry. "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. 4, 11, etc. Paul therefore urges the Ephesian elders, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." Acts 20, 28. Likewise the church is admonished: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." And again, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch

for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Heb. 13, 7 and 17. Every shepherd appointed in the church of Christ is to take for his model the chief Shepherd who gave His life for the flock. Peter writes, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." 1 Peter 5, 1-4. And the flock of God, which has both the love of Christ and the faithful labors of His ministers for its example, will not be slack in returning love, also in the manner indicated by St. Paul, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." Gal. 6, 6. "Even so the Lord hath ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." Jesus Himself allowed His friends to minister unto His necessities and freely partook of the kind hospitality proffered to Him. He gave similar instructions to the Twelve and to the Seventy, when He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom.

Christ, indeed, came not to be ministered unto Himself, but to devote Himself in ministrations to others, even to the extent of giving His life as a ransom for all. In the same spirit of love He has showered an

abundance of gifts upon the members of His church. St. Paul gives us a glimpse of the "diversities of gifts" bestowed upon the church in His day. 1 Cor. 12. And still "that one and selfsame Spirit is dividing to every man severally as He will." The church is therefore truly a body, and "the members should have the same care one of another." "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given you, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness." Rom. 12, 6-8. The root of all our gifts and of all the works resulting from our gifts must be faith; and the heart of all our gifts and of every exercise of our gifts must be charity. "Covet earnestly the best gifts", 1 Cor. 12, 31; and remember, "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." 1 Cor. 13, 13.

Christ the king, and the church His kingdom, are not of this world; therefore the greatness and glory peculiar to this world were not desired by Christ, and must not be desired by the church. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." John 13, 16; 15, 20. We may not change what

Christ has said of all His followers, "In the world ye shall have tribulation", John 16, 33; and what His apostles have repeated so often, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God", even into the glory that awaits us; "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Acts 14, 22; 2 Tim. 3, 12. As the cross was laid upon Christ, so will it rest here on earth upon the church of Christ. But the Lord of the church has not left His followers comfortless. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"; "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." John 16, 33 and 22. Nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, in whom the church has an unfailing source of joy; and "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Rom. 8, 18. Soon the day will appear in which we who have suffered with Christ shall reign with Him forever.

The footsteps of Jesus will thus appear with sufficient clearness for His followers when considering their position as church-members. The writings of the apostles are especially rich in setting forth the various phases of our relation to the church; we have only touched upon the wealth of knowledge there presented to us.

The church as the communion of saints and the spiritual kingdom of Christ must be for us what it was and still is for Christ, a living, blessed, glorious reality. There must be nothing dim, shadowy, doubtful, questionable about it. As our natural eyes

see the material world about us, so our spiritual eyes must see this spiritual realm in which Christ is Lord and King adored forever. The church as an earthly institution is certainly visible enough and tangible to our senses, but this is not the church as Christ saw it and embraced it with His love. Our natural eyes behold a multiplicity of churches, many rents and divisions; we see multitudes of error, and men holding them fast as truth; many hearts are without faith in Jesus Christ, the only Savior, and yet cling outwardly to His name. Our spiritual eyes must learn to look beneath that which is visible only to the eyes of the flesh; we must learn to see as Christ sees, the growing multitude of those in whose hearts Christ is enthroned by faith, in whom dwells and operates the Spirit of Christ. We cannot pick them out one by one, or call each by name, as the Master can in His omniscience. But we can know indeed and believe that they are all about us, and that we who have faith in Christ are joined together with them as living members of one body. This is the church of which Christ spoke and for which He labored with such love; this is the church which shall never pass away, though heaven and earth be removed, and the world with its lusts perish forever; this is the church, the Bride of the Lamb, which shall stand rejoicing at Christ's right hand while all its foes sink into condemnation; and this is the church which needs must be a living, blessed, glorious reality for every one of Christ's followers.

As Christ loved the church, so must all they who rejoice in His love. The entire body of Christ must

be unspeakably dear to every member of that body. And in every possible way this love must show itself. There will be special opportunities for its manifestation among those whom we are able to acknowledge and recognize as brethren, who are one with us in confessing the name of Christ and in holding fast the faith delivered to the saints. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love." Rom. 12, 10. "Let brotherly love continue." Heb. 13, 1. "Love the brotherhood." 1 Peter 2, 17. The many different ways in which this love is to show itself are described for us in hundreds of places in the Scriptures. This brotherly love among believers is to be an intimate bond, a reciprocal tie binding the one to the other. We are indeed to love all men, even as Christ loved them all and offered the fruit of His life and death to all. Loving them, we are to pray and labor for their salvation. Yet we cannot love the sin in which men lie, nor feel ourselves one with those who are still in the gall of bitterness. Our love toward them will be like a hand reaching down to help and rescue them; it cannot be, like our love for the brethren, a tie binding heart to heart. When men finally reject the Head and King and persist in choosing darkness and death rather than light and life, our love must cease, as does the love of Christ. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" 2 Cor. 6, 14, etc.

Often enough it will be painfully apparent that the members of Christ's church have not yet attained perfection. At such time especially our love will be put to the proof. But Christ loved us in spite of our faults, and we are to follow in His footsteps. Let us look well to the beam in our own eyes, remove our own faults, and then proceed to take the mote from our brother's eye.

All who are members of Christ's church must prize above all earthly things the blessed means through which His grace and gifts come to us. The preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments must be the magnet drawing every heart with blessed power, "He that is of God heareth God's words", John 8, 47; it could not be otherwise. So precious is the "remission of sins" in the Sacraments, that every believer must make every effort to possess and enjoy it fully. Whatever, therefore, may be necessary for securing as fully as possible for ourselves as well as for others the blessings that come through the means of grace, every member of Christ's church must be willing to secure and provide — pastors and teachers first of all, a time and a fitting place for worship, and all the hundred other requirements as their needfulness or helpfulness appears. But however excellent and complete our equipment for enjoying the Word and Sacrament, that Word and Sacrament must remain the centre of attraction, and nothing whatever dare turn our hearts from this fountain of grace. And as Christ gave to us such infinite blessings and treasures, the duty of passing them on to others, even to all nations and to every creature, must

ever confront us and move us to action. Every blessing we receive through the means of grace must be a call resounding in our hearts and stirring our energies to have a like blessing brought far and near to our fellow men.

The great purpose of Christ in bestowing so many gifts of all kinds upon the members of His church is that they may serve one another, as the members of a body serve each other, and that the borders of His kingdom may be extended even unto the ends of the earth. As Christ used all His powers and faculties and possessions for our benefit, so we must use our gifts for the benefit of others. Selfish enjoyment is contrary to Christ and ruinous to ourselves; the more we scatter, the more we gain, and the more faithful and unselfish our service, the more blessed and rich our possession and enjoyment. An excellent example of unselfish devotion on the part of church-members to each other is seen in the first congregation at Jerusalem. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." Acts 4, 32. The essential thing is that we be of one heart and of one soul, and that as the stewards of God we hold all our gifts and possessions subject to His direction and at the service of our brethren.

The faithfulness with which as church-members we follow in the footsteps of Jesus will by no means exempt us from the cross. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." Heb. 12, 16. The more closely we follow

Jesus, the more will the world see that we have bidden its lusts farewell, and the more will it hate and persecute us. But "rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." Matth. 5, 12. Abundant is the comfort Christ has provided for His church, great is the hope He sets before us to cheer and rejoice our hearts, and sweet are the fruits of affliction when we yield ourselves to Christ and let Him accomplish His purpose in us. Therefore, "we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed." Rom. 5, 5. Only a little while, and we too, if we be faithful unto death, shall be joined to the multitude of whom it is written: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. 7, 14-17.



*From that hour that disciple took her unto
his own home.—John 19, 27.*

CHAPTER XVII.

WHOM JESUS LOVED.

THE Son of man was no stranger to friendship. We now should seek friends who are like Him, and should be friends after His example.

Christ came to seek and to save the lost; He was everywhere and at all times the Savior of men. And yet the quality of friendship did not interfere with His character as the Savior. The Man who came to save men could well be the friend of men. Was not God of old the friend of Abraham? Did He not find David a man after His own heart, a man to take as His friend? Indeed, something would seem to be lacking in the perfect humanity of Christ, if this noblest affection had been alien to His heart.

The Pharisees called Christ derisively "A friend of publicans and sinners." And He undoubtedly met these despised people as their friend. He went to them, He ate with them at table, He treated them with as much distinction as He did the Pharisees and members of the Sanhedrin. And more than this, His heart went out to them in love and sympathy for their pitiable spiritual condition, and in eager earnestness to save them from their degradation. He was a friend such as they had never met before, and His friendship

won their hearts unto faith and love and friendly affection.

We must be careful, however, to distinguish the features of the friendship which is here attributed to Christ. The two between whom the bond was formed were very far apart, the one the Son of God, the other public sinners. Some might doubt that any degree or kind of friendship could exist between the two, just because they were so widely separated. And yet we must not forget that both were men, and that both were drawn to each other, the Man Christ Jesus by His love for the lost, and the men of sin by their longing for salvation. And so they could be friends indeed, Christ in His wondrous condescension bowing down to them, they in their deep humility looking up to Him. Love was the bond that bound them heart to heart.

The night before the crucifixion when Christ poured out the thoughts of His full heart before the men who had followed Him faithfully so long, we find Him saying to them: "I have called you friends." The word servant did not express the relation in which they stood toward Christ, "for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth"; they were far above servants, far above scholars or learners (disciples), they had become Christ's friends, and He had shown Himself their friend, "for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." They were on very intimate terms, there was no wall of secrecy between them, their hearts communed freely.

We see at once that the relation of Christ to His disciples, as far as the element of friendship goes, is considerably above that of Christ to the publicans and

sinners. The gulf for love to bridge is not so wide. Christ still stands as high as ever, but these men have been lifted up nearer to Him by their three years of intercourse with Him and training in His school. They are more Christlike than those sinners who had just begun to turn to Christ. "I in you and you in me," are Christ's own words expressive of the intimate bond between them. They knew the mind of Christ, as the publicans and sinners did not; they had given themselves to the work of Christ, as the publicans and sinners had not; they had been constantly in the company and under the influence of Christ as the publicans and sinners had not. And so the bond of love that united Christ and His disciples was higher than that uniting Christ and the publicans and sinners.

But the beginnings of friendship with Christ are free to ripen into the fullest exaltation of friendly communion with Him. For was not Matthew, the son of Levi, one of the publicans who drew nigh to Jesus and began to love Him with the others? And yet he was chosen to be one of the twelve, he was included when at last Christ declared: "Ye are my friends."

All who believed in Christ and followed in His steps were to a certain degree His friends. And yet there were differences in this manifold friendship. The essence of the bond was ever the same, but there were differences in form and quality and manifestation. The capacity and situation of those who became Christ's friends helped to make these differences. Christ knew many people in Capernaum and in other cities of Galilee and of Judea, and yet one family in the little village of Bethany was closer to Christ in friend-

ship than all the others who loved Him as their Savior and Friend. Christ, speaking to the disciples, called Lazarus "our friend"; and when that friend lay at the gate of death the message of the sisters came in this form: "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." The heart of friendship had dictated that phrase, "whom Thou lovest."

In the quiet home at Bethany Christ found a resting place where to lay His head, such as He found nowhere else. We know how He entered there at Martha's invitation and partook of her friendly hospitality. There were many women who followed Jesus and ministered unto Him of their substance. Luke 8, 1-3. Even among these Mary Magdalene stands first. And a like relation existed between Christ and the friends at Bethany who were so ready to minister to Him of the home comforts with which they were blessed. Here was the last haven of rest for Christ before the storm of death burst upon Him. Here they gathered in friendly converse at the last feast of friendship. John 12, 1 and 2. But among the three who clung to Him in friendship one again rose above the others in the exaltation of her affection. It was Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, who anointed Christ for His death. Her name ranks first, for of her Christ declared: "Verily, I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world this also what she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

As it was with these friends at Bethany so also with the disciples. They were all alike friends of Jesus, yet three stood out above the rest, and of these three

one above the other two. It is surely not accidental that the little circle of three formed within the circle of twelve, that on Tabor's hight, in Jairus' death-chamber, and in the night on Olivet Peter and James and John were near their Master while the others remained away. Nor was the choice of these three to be witnesses of Christ on these most notable occasions a mere arbitrary selection; the fact that these three and none others were thus repeatedly chosen shows that there was reason for the choice. Undoubtedly they were nearer to Christ than the nine; their hearts and minds were more quick to understand the Master, and better prepared to keep what they saw and heard. Among the eleven beloved friends* of Christ these three therefore stood in the first rank.

And yet there was a great difference even among these three. One of them designates himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved." It was John. He was nearer to Christ than any of the rest, nearer even than Peter. At the feast of the passover, as Jesus and His disciples reclined upon the couches, the one who lay next to Christ was John. "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples whom Jesus loved." John 13, 23. This nearness was not merely outward, it is referred to again: "the disciple whom Jesus loved . . . which also leaned on His breast at supper," and plainly indicates a nearness of soul, a nearness of most intimate friendship and love. Jesus loved all of His

* At the betrayal Christ asked Judas: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" The word friend is here not *philos*, but *hetairo*s, meaning comrade, not friend in the sense of one beloved and loving in return.

disciples, but in this love John held the first place. And he held it by being himself nearest to Jesus in love.

The proof of his greater love and faithfulness is seen beneath the cross. All had fled, but John was there. And this disciple whom Jesus loved was called to a special service because of his special love. Jesus gave His mother into John's care, that he should fill the place of her dead Son. This service of love lifts John above all his fellow-disciples. Of all the friends of Jesus John stood nearest to Christ. Of all who were Christlike, John was most Christlike; of all who understood Christ, His love, His work, His kingdom, and His infinite plans of mercy John was first and foremost. The gospel and epistles written by John show that he apprehended more of the height and depth of the mystery of Christ and His salvation than did any of the rest.

No especial outward honor is conferred upon John. He is not made the leader or master of the other disciples. The only marks of distinction conferred upon the nearest friend of Jesus is that his love is called to perform a special service for his Master and Friend, a service for which his greater and deeper love gave him a special fitness, and that he was permitted to remain in the service of his Master longer than any of the others, even until Jesus came again in judgment upon Jerusalem. John 21, 22, 23. Such were the marks and rewards of John's friendship and love for Christ.

In two ways this relation of friendship between Christ and those who loved Him may serve as an example for us to follow. As they all were friends of One who

stood above them, so we should seek friends to whom we may look up, on whom we may lean, from whom we may draw. As Jesus gave Himself to be the friend of those who stood beneath Him, so we should enter the bond of friendship with those beneath us that they may lean upon us and draw from us. And some will be found who can give us by their special gifts as much as we can give them through our special gifts.

The essential point in all the friendships formed in the footsteps of Jesus is the bond of love through faith in Christ. Friendship always demands two things, a certain degree of similarity and likeness, and a certain degree of dissimilarity and diversity. But all true friendships after the example of Christ will have, as the chief and controlling element of this likeness between two hearts, mutual love and attachment to Christ. No Christlike friendship is possible where this element is wanting. There can be no true bond of friendship between a lover of Christ and a hater of Christ.

Christ formed no friendships with those who did not acknowledge Him as the Savior sent of God. The attempt to do so would have been monstrous, in fact it would have involved that Christ give up His divine Sonship and His mission of redemption. There could be no communion between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial, between the Son of God and Beelzebub or the children of Beelzebub. This impossibility will remain to all eternity,

The Christlikeness of Christians will forever form an impossible barrier to any degree of true friendship between them and unbelievers. Christians may meet on friendly terms with all the world, but friendliness is

not friendship, and friendly treatment and kindness in intercourse with children of the world is not by any means true friendship with worldlings. When the very centers of life and love are so fundamentally opposite, contrary, contradictory, antagonistic and hostile, there can be no union and communion such as forms the heart of friendship. Other differences may be bridged over by friendship, this fatal opposition never in reality.

David and Saul could never be true friends, but David and Jonathan furnish us a beautiful example of true friendship based on their joint piety and obedience to God. We dare not be deceived by the mere semblance of friendship. Similar likes and dislikes often serve as a bond of union. Two men love fine painting, their joint love unites them, they are called friends; and yet their friendship is only a mere semblance of the true affection that bears this name. Souls can not be "knit together" by such a bond. Pilate and Herod became friends when the former tried to rid himself of a disagreeable duty and sent his exalted prisoner to the latter for trial. And yet their friendship is so radically different from that which contains the full essence of this beautiful affection that we would never compare these two with such friends as David and Jonathan or Christ and John. The semblance of friendship is formed the world over like the weeds that grow side by side in every garden, but the true affection of Christ-like friendship is like the lily whose clusters grow only in favored spots. Mutual love of this thing or that, joint hatred of this thing or that may be called friendship, but only the harmonious answer of heart to heart

in the holiest and highest things of God is true friendship after the example of Christ.

Christlike friends, although alike in faith and love to Christ, may be very different in their spiritual attainments, in their mental acquirements, and in their outward circumstances. Paul and Timothy were close friends, and yet the one was as a father and the other as a son. Again Paul and Aquila and Priscilla were intimate friends. Their friendship beginning at Corinth lasted for life, as we see from the letters of Paul. And yet what a difference between the mighty Paul who wrote the greatest epistles of the New Testament, and stood boldly in the face of a thousand storms, and the humble tent-maker with his meek, retiring, quiet disposition; what great diversity between Paul, unmarried, fighting the battles of the Lord as one of the greatest leaders of the church, and Priscilla, the humble spouse of Aquila, devoting her noble heart to quiet household duties and such occasional private work, as the instruction of Apollos in her Ephesian home.

Christlike hearts in their humility will seek like the friends of Jesus, like Timothy, Aquila and Priscilla stronger spirits to which they may knit themselves in the bonds of friendship. They will gladly follow the friendly leading of a stronger hand. And the time may come when they will be able in their humble position to render their greater friend the highest and holiest service of friendship. John took Mary as his mother for Christ's sake; Aquila and Priscilla laid down their necks in Paul's behalf for Christ's sake.

Like the friendship of Jesus for those beneath Him was Paul's friendship for those endowed with smaller gifts than his own. The glory of such friends is their higher ministry and greater service. Christ girded Himself about and washed the feet of His disciples, that they might follow His example in the humility of loving service. The great ones of the earth strut about with great titles and rejoice to have men serving them in servility. The great ones in the kingdom of God stoop to the lowliest and rejoice to serve those beneath them and less favored than themselves. The relations of equals in Christlike friendship is very grateful to each, but the relation of those who are higher with those who stand lower has its own peculiar opportunities and blessings. To be sure, such friendship excludes both pride and servility. The arrogance of the great and the presumptuousness of the small would ruin their Christlikeness and render friendship between them impossible.

The angels in heaven are all friends, Christ's followers on earth are not. The cause of division lies in the sin that still to a great extent darkens our hearts, vitiates our lives, and renders us unfit to be friends and to have friends as we should. But ever as the flesh dies friendship will grow and increase and reach perfection of bloom and fruitage. Lord, send us friendship and love on earth as it is in heaven.



Jesus bidding His mother farewell.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HAVE I BEEN SO LONG TIME WITH YOU ?

THE patience and forbearance of love appear constantly in Jesus' intercourse with His friends; and these twin virtues must reappear in all our intercourse with those who are near and dear to us.

We limit our view at present to Christ's dealings with His friends. There was patience and forbearance also in His treatment of His enemies, but the peculiar quality of these virtues as exhibited towards His foes present features altogether distinct. The difference is sufficiently marked for us to make a division. Christ never wept over His disciples and friends as He did over Jerusalem. He was pained indeed and grieved deeply by those who followed Him, but their faith, trust, and love helped to assuage the bitterness, while there was nothing to take the edge off the thrusts delivered into His heart by His enemies. There was always a gulf between Christ and the men who opposed Him, a gulf no word of His could bridge; but Christ and His friends were bound together by the tenderest ties, and every word of the heart they pained and burdened so frequently sank deeply into their own hearts. We may well summarize His tender patience in the question, so full of loving reproach, spoken to Philip a few hours before the end: "Have I been so

long time with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip?"

To begin with, those who were nearest to Jesus naturally by the ties of blood and relationship proved to be a trial, and sometimes a severe trial, to Him as a few instances serve to show. At Cana Jesus' own mother seems to have had no adequate conception of His position and work, and yet she was a woman of deep understanding and willing heart. Jesus turns her off with the reply: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." The word "woman" in the English translation might bear a tone of impatience or of disrespect; the original Greek word, however, is as polite and respectful as could be desired. With patience, indeed, and yet with firmness, Jesus is moved to put His mother's interference aside; neither she nor any of His friends have special rights or claims or privileges in the kingdom of Christ and in the work of Christ. Patiently Jesus sought to teach His mother the lesson at Cana. We know that she did not learn it fully; the patience and forbearance of Jesus had to contend still further with foolish and inconsiderate claims.

When Jesus was in the midst of His arduous labors, taxing His strength to the utmost, we suddenly come upon His mother and His brethren attempting to turn Him from His stupendous task. Their effort was doubtless well meant. They were solicitous for His health and comfort; they were anxious for His very life. They followed the natural prompting of their hearts, when they declared, "He is beside Himself", and when they sought to lay hold of Him and lead

Him away. But it is clear that they understood little or nothing of His true ability and of His God-given work. The mother of Jesus may have permitted herself to be drawn along by the fears of His other relatives, who very likely led in the foolish undertaking. But it was impossible for Jesus to entertain the proposal of His kin. With the same unvarying and unwearied patience He puts them off. "Who is my mother and my brethren?" Who has a mother's claims or a brother's rights for me? Not those who are mere natural relatives, but those who are spiritually related to me, who do the will of God. To these I will listen and to these will I give myself in never flagging labor and in completest self-sacrifice. All others and their claims will I put aside.

The relatives of Jesus sought first to draw Him away from His work; not long afterwards they tried to do the very opposite, to push Him forward for ambitious reasons. They urged Him. "Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that Thy disciples also may see the works that Thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and He Himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, show Thyself to the world." The folly of this dictating to Jesus appears on the surface. Did they pretend to know better than Jesus Himself where and how His work should be done? Were they really so little conversant with His true aims as to imagine He wanted to be acknowledged and exalted by the worldly spirit of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem? Patiently Jesus tells them that He knows His own hour best, and that He expects only to be hated by

the world whose admiration they would have Him seek. "My time is not yet come — the world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." St. John tells us how the relatives of Jesus came thus to push Him forward with worldly ambition, they did not believe in Him. John 7, 5.

So long time He had been with His mother, and so long time with His brethren, yet the latter did not know Him at all in true faith, and the former could be induced, by inconsiderate proposals, to interfere with her Son's divine work.

The disciples of Jesus tried His patience exceedingly, as we see at every turn. After all they had seen and heard prior to the storm on the lake, they could give way to the greatest dismay and fear with Jesus in their very midst. So dull and slow of heart were they after many weary months of teaching that the simplest parable required an explanation for their comprehension. Patiently, yet with a tone of reproach, Jesus asks them: "Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man." Their persistent ignorance was a sore trial to their patient instructor. Others perhaps would have despaired. But He only continued His gentle chiding: "O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand,

and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?" Matth. 16, 8-10. "Have ye your heart yet hardened? having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?" Mark 8, 17. 18. — "How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?" After all this patient labor, finally the film was removed from their eyes. "Then understood they how that He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." Matth. 16, 11. 12. But the same trial of patience continued to the last. So far was Philip from understanding that he who seeth the Son seeth also the Father, that he could ask Jesus: "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." We feel the pain in Jesus' words: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" John 16, 8. 9.

It is not surprising that the actions of men who were so slow of heart should time and again provoke the patience of Jesus to rebuke. John and James would have called down the fire of vengeance upon the Samaritans whom Christ had come to save; so little did they "know what manner of spirit they were of." Luke 9, 55. After all they had heard of Christ regarding "little ones" (Matth 18, Mark 9), they could so far forget themselves as to rebuke those who brought "young children" to Jesus that He should

bless them, and sorely displease their Master. Just before the end it seems that some of the disciples besides Judas understood so little of what was due their Master that they could join the traitor's scowling condemnation of Mary's beautiful and significant act. We have already seen how impossible it was for even the wonderful patience of Jesus to give them any insight into His death and resurrection. They could only fear and tremble; Jesus was weighed down not only by the anticipation of what was to come, but also by the constant perception of their ignorance and inability to comprehend the things to come.

One of the greatest trials for Christ's patience was the unscriptural ambition of the disciples. Covertly at first, then openly they disputed on the question: "Who should be greatest?" The first instance recorded is when they were walking together and talking among themselves. When Jesus questioned them they were ashamed and "held their peace." Jesus tried hard to turn their hearts to true spiritual greatness. He sat down, called the twelve together, put a child in their midst, and said: "Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." Matth. 18, 3-5.

But soon we meet the peculiar attempt of James and John, aided by their mother, to secure the highest places in the coming kingdom, that on Christ's right and on His left hand. Jesus frankly told them: "Ye

know not what ye ask." These high places "shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." And when the other disciples grew indignant at John and James for thus attempting to snatch the loftiest honors for themselves, Jesus patiently told them all the old truth: "Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many." Mark 10, 43-45.

Even the last hours of Christ were disturbed and pained by this pitifully ignorant rivalry for greatness. The solemn words and manner of Jesus as He assembles with them for His last meal before death, is not able to quench the to them so exceedingly important question: "Which of them should be accounted the greatest." It seems that each of them was so afraid of yielding any honor or precedence to the rest, that none of them would humble himself so much as to perform the service of washing the feet of his comrades. Custom made this washing indispensable, especially on so important an occasion as the present one, when they came in together from the street to eat the solemn passover feast. The humble patience of Jesus now made its last and greatest attempt to crush the foolish ambition of these unspiritual men, and to point them to the only road of greatness in His kingdom; He washed their feet Himself and told them: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have

done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than He that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." John 13, 14-17. It is impossible to say how long their folly would yet have tried the patience of Christ if He had remained among them. After Christ's death and the mission of the Holy Spirit we hear no more of the old dispute.

But before that death occurred, the most painful blows fell upon the patient heart of Jesus. One of the twelve, hardening his heart against all the love of Jesus, gave himself to Satan and sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver; another of the twelve, in his presumptuous boldness, entered the circle of temptation and fell shamefully, denying his Master thrice almost within earshot of the patient Sufferer. And all of the disciples, after making their own Peter's proud promises of faithfulness unto death, and after letting their Master wrestle alone for hours without one word of comfort from their lips, turned their backs upon Him and fled in cowardly dismay when He was led away. All this was laid like a crushing burden upon Him whose patience exceeds our comprehension.

But we dare not stop yet in the story of Christ's patience. Once more, after the resurrection, we hear the rebuke from Jesus' lips and His never-tiring patient instruction: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" On the way to Emmaus Christ goes on with the patient work He had been doing for almost three years. And even now yet Thomas dares to doubt and to demand spe-

cial proofs from the patience of Jesus. Jesus does not put him off, once more His patience shines out, and Thomas sinks down overcome at His feet.

Where was there ever patience like this?

In every Christian life there will be an unceasing call for patience in the intercourse with relatives and with friends generally. Christ's experience keeps repeating itself day by day, our nearest and dearest friends often fail to understand our inmost intentions, fail to appreciate our purposes and efforts, fail to estimate correctly our burdens, sacrifices, and conflicts. Their coldness will chill our enthusiasm, their wayward or ignorant opposition will cripple or hinder our best plans, their unsympathetic spirit will leave us to stand and bear and labor and contend and suffer alone, yea, their blindness will estimate our highest aspirations and our best achievements as so much folly. Their slights will hurt our hearts, their wrongs will grieve us deeply, their falseness and fickleness will pierce us to the quick. These trials in the midst of friends begin with childhood days. How often has a father's blindness and lack of sympathy increased his son's sorrow. And old age has still the same load to bear, finding itself misunderstood by the young. As long as we live in this world full of imperfections and shortcomings we will find love lacking, and our hearts sorely oppressed by the painful results of this lack.

Nor must we be surprised to find painful shortcomings of this kind in those of whom we have a right to expect far better things. Men of great learning, experience, and piety will repeat the selfish or the un-

sympathetic actions of the friends of Jesus. Those who should treat us most considerately will frequently trample our feelings under foot. Those who should shine with a brilliant example will often misuse and abuse their liberty and thus offend grievously others who endeavor to look up to them. The Lord's injunction against offending little ones in the faith is a strong warning against the wilfulness and carelessness of those whose superior strength should be most considerate and careful. From all sides, even where we ought to have least reason to expect it, our patience will be taxed.

But we must not forget that, unlike Christ, we ourselves are only too often the cause of the sorrow in the hearts of our friends. Where He was perfect, and never wounded the hearts of His friends by the least slight or misdemeanor of thought or act, we are imperfect and by a hundred faults wound others, even as they in turn wound us. For this very reason, however, we should bear patiently what comes upon our guilty hearts. If the innocent heart of Jesus turned not against those of His friends who wounded Him, much more should we who are not innocent suffer without a murmur and hold out in patience. Besides this, we are only too often to blame, at least in a measure, when our friends fail of their duty toward us. How often do others misunderstand us because we ourselves have given them reason for false interpretation of our motives or purposes? How often do our friends wound us because we ourselves have provoked them? But again this only emphasizes our obligation of patience. If the perfect heart and con-

duct of Jesus could bear quietly the failings of His friends, much more should we who lack so much of perfection.

Natural wisdom already counsels patience toward our friends, for impatience and resentment only serve to repel the friends we have and to leave us so much the more alone. But Christian patience goes far deeper than any counsel of natural wisdom. Its motive is not self-interest in any form, but self-sacrifice after the example of Christ. The worldly man may refrain from breaking with his friends and from turning in bitterness against them, by the calculation of profit for himself or his plans; he may even seek to utilize the ignorance or perversity of his friends for his own ends by shrewdly humoring their notions and accommodating himself to their selfishness. But the Christian will do nothing of the kind. He will forget self and think of Christ; he will put aside the thought of joys or profits for self, and give his heart willingly to suffer without bitterness after the example of Christ. He will not seek selfish ends by shrewd calculations of hypocritical accommodation, but will labor patiently by word and deed to win the hearts of his erring friends for truth, love, and righteousness. The motives and secret springs of patience towards friends in the Christian heart all reach down into Christ, who is ever patient with us, and whose patience seeks to reflect itself in us.

The character of Christian patience is well shown in the example of Christ. However wayward, weak, foolish, blind, and perverse His friends, there is no shadow of passion or resentment in His heart. Though

deeply pained and shamefully wronged, He never breaks out in bitter words. Patience in us must be free from resentful bitterness. Not that we dare dull our hearts in stoic coldness, which would be most unlike the patient forbearance of Christ. He freely expresses His surprise at the painful ignorance of His friends; He frequently lets them feel how deeply they have wounded Him; He even chides them with words throbbing with patient love. Likewise our patience may exclaim: Have I been so long with you, and have ye not known me, my friends? Our patience may ask: Can ye not watch one single hour with me in my sorrow? or: Simon, lovest thou me indeed? And our patience may also demand: Put up thy sword! or declare frankly: Ye know not what ye ask or do. But every note of vengeful bitterness in any such expression of our pain is contrary to Christlikeness. St. Paul exhorts us to true Christian patience when he writes: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Eph. 4, 1-3. Lowliness and meekness will greatly aid Christian patience, wherefore the same apostle bids us: "For I say through the grace that is given me, to every man among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.—In honor preferring one another." Rom. 12, 3. 10. If we would

be patient we must eradicate constantly "a fond conceit of ourselves."

Christ never wearied of patiently instructing His friends and disciples. He showed them again and again His own inmost heart full of humility, love, and patience; He opened ever anew to them the spiritual glories of His kingdom, greatness in lowliness, greatness in self-sacrifice, greatness in tireless labors of love. He did not let their dense ignorance drive Him to despair of enlightening their hearts, or their foolish adherence to old, perverse notions overcome His unwearied efforts in drawing their hearts to the hopes that rest on truth.

St. Paul follows the same line, when he writes to Timothy: "Preach the Word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine"—yea, with all long-suffering, which is tireless patience. He would have us bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. Impatience tires at once, derides the ignorant, will not burden itself with the arduous work of lifting the weak, instructing the ignorant, correcting the perverse. But Christlike patience counts this very self-sacrificing task precious, and its achievements are its fairest crown. Like Christ on the way to Emmaus the Christlike heart will range itself alongside the weak and ignorant, enter into their difficulties, and use all the ingenuity and fervor of love in helping them upward and onward.

A necessary form of patience is forgiveness. Daily Christ forgave the disciples when so often, even without knowing it, they wounded Him. We know how

Peter was forgiven. The Master Himself had astonished that disciple by giving him as the rule of Christian forgiveness: "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." Luke 17, 3. 4. And once when Peter came and inquired: "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" he received the reply: "I say not unto thee seven times; but until seventy times seven." Matth. 18, 21. 22. Paul's admonition is only a variation of this theme of patience in forgiveness: "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Eph. 4, 32. "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved," who are conformed to the image of Christ in patient forgiveness, "bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Col. 3, 13. Severely the apostle rebukes the Corinthians for going to law when one had a matter against another. "Why do ye not rather take wrong?" he asks them, pointing them unto Christlike patience. "Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" 1 Cor. 6, 7. Patience is ever ready to forgive, and ever ready to suffer wrong. Patience does not stand stubbornly on its rights over against

brethren who are inclined to disregard them. Patience will demand these rights quietly and firmly only when their constant disregard would produce evil. By suffering and well-doing the patient heart heaps coals of fire upon the heads of those who make it suffer, even its own selfish and perverse friends, and finds its reward in winning them from their faults and sins.

Patience is like a plant with many roots, it grows from meekness, humility, kindness, charity, forbearance, forgiveness, long-suffering, and love. Cut one of the roots and patience withers. It is one of the essential Christian virtues; without it every Christian community on earth would be torn to pieces, and every bond of unity be rent in twain. Let us cement our hearts together in this vale of sin and sorrow with unadulterated Christlike patience. In heaven all the burdens of the patient will be removed.

CHAPTER XIX.

MOVED WITH COMPASSION.

CHRIST'S blessed compassion is reflected in all true followers of His steps.

When Jesus beheld the multitude that followed Him, and noted that they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd, we are told that He "was moved with compassion on them." Matth. 9, 36. And again, after the Baptist had been slain and the disciples returned from their preaching tour, when Jesus withdrew into the desert and was pursued by much people, beholding them gathered together as sheep without a shepherd, He was "moved with compassion toward them," and forgetting for the moment His sorrow and the report His disciples were to make of their work, He obeyed the compassion of His heart and taught them many things. Mark 6, 34. And yet a third time we are told of the compassion of Jesus, when He beheld the hungry multitude in the desert mountain-place far from any village where food might be secured. "I have compassion on the multitude," are His own words, "because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way." Matth. 15, 32.



Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.—Heb. 5, 2.

As Jesus was moved to pity and sympathy by the distress of entire multitudes, so also the sufferings and sorrows of individuals stirred His heart deeply. A leper came to Jesus, kneeling down and beseeching Him: "If Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean." And compassion moved Jesus to cleanse him. Mark 1, 41. The widow of Nain weeping behind the bier of her only son filled Christ's heart with compassion, and moved Him to say: "Weep not." Blind Bartimæus and his fellow standing before the Master on the road from Jericho touched His heart, and Jesus had compassion on them and gave them sight.

These isolated instances in which the compassion of Jesus is expressly recorded are so much evidence, proving that His heart was ever filled with merciful kindness and feelings of pity for the distressed of every description. Whenever and wherever suffering and sorrow of body or soul met His eyes, His heart was moved with compassion. The compassion of Jesus is one of the deepest, richest, most comforting of all His Savior qualities.

The word which the Scriptures use to express the compassion of Jesus signifies literally "to have the bowels of yearning." It is a word to designate the deepest kind of feeling. There is another somewhat like it, yet not so strong; it is likewise translated compassion, but signifies literally to have sympathy, to feel with the sufferer in his distress. But the former expresses more than a simple sharing or partaking of the sufferer's pained feeling; it shows a yearning and a deep desire to relieve the suffering and to remove the distress. And we must name yet a third word re-

peatedly used in the Scriptures; it is also translated by compassion, but signifies literally "to show mildness or kindness." It is the fruit of sympathy with the sufferer, the result of the yearning to help and relieve, it expresses the mild, kind help that is given to the distressed. When we take all three together we have a true and complete description of Christ's compassion.

It is well to glance at what calls out this compassion. Properly speaking, it is not our sin and guilt that moves Christ unto compassion, but the spiritual and bodily misery and distress that forms the bitter fruit of sin. Our sin and guilt appeals to God's grace, but our misery and woe appeals to His compassion. Grace alone can remove our sin, but compassion removes our distress. To be sure, grace and compassion are both united in the heart of God and of His Son. "God so *loved* the world with a pitying love (herein was the *eleos*, the compassion) that He *gave* His Only-Begotten Son (herein the *charis*, the grace) that the world through Him might be saved." (Trench.) In eternity compassion prompted God to extend His grace; but in time grace and forgiveness is the foundation of compassion and compassionate relief. First Christ forgave the man sick of the palsy, then He healed his disease. If there were no grace for our sin, there could be no compassion for our misery. It was He who came to save His people from their sin who also put forth His hand to heal their diseases and remove their sufferings.

Sickness, all kinds of bodily infirmities, hunger, poverty, human sorrow for the dead, but especially spirit-

ual ignorance and destitution, the hunger of shepherdless hearts, the troubles of distressed consciences, move Christ to compassion.

And He shows this compassion freely. "I have compassion on the multitude," He tells us. He depicts the distress of the needy with touching words; they are to His eyes "sheep without a shepherd," they will "faint by the way." His compassion urges others to like feelings: "Give ye them to eat." When the sinful woman in Simon's house wept at Christ's feet, moved by infinite compassion, He drew a striking picture of her humble offer of love and held it up to the loveless heart of His host. The deep sorrow of Mary for her dead brother moves Jesus even unto tears. And He weeps likewise over the doomed city of Jerusalem, seeing in spirit the terrors that will crush out her life. He from whom all the tortures of His foes could not wring a single groan, is so overcome by compassion that with streaming eyes He laments over the city of His foes—"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace—but now they are hid from thine eyes." Freely the compassion of Jesus showed all its infinite tenderness and depth.

But the compassion of Jesus is nothing like the empty pity and superficial sympathy of the world. Jesus sees deep down into the root of all our human misery; He knows that it all results from sin. It is not the mere suffering alone that touches His heart and softens it in compassion, it is the deadliness of sin showing itself in all these manifold forms of suffering which touches Him to the quick and pierces His heart

through and through with real compassion. He sees that all our distress of body and soul is only the prelude to the fire that will not be quenched and the worm that will never die. It is impossible, therefore, for His compassion to be inactive. And it is likewise impossible for His compassion to be satisfied with mere bodily relief of pain and woe.

Jesus feeds the hungry with earthly bread, but He first feeds their souls with the heavenly bread. Jesus heals the paralytic of his bodily disease, but first forgives him his sin. Jesus awakes Lazarus from the dead, but first He points the sisters to the glory of God. And where the bodily relief precedes, it is ever meant only as a stepping-stone to faith in Him as the Christ of God, that body and soul may receive the salvation of the Lord.

It would be false to view the compassion of Jesus as mere philanthropy after the fashion of the world. Men may be satisfied with a little superficial bodily relief, but Jesus never is. "Charity," as practiced by the ungodly, which lets the soul perish while it eases the body, is but a pitiable caricature of the charity and compassion of Jesus. The charity of Jesus sees all our distress, and its mighty aim is to remove it all and forever by going back and removing its very root. The compassion of Jesus can be understood only by those who see in Him the everlasting Saviour of mankind.

Jesus was especially fitted for compassion with all who suffer. "He can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way, for that He Himself also is compassed with infirmity." Heb. 5, 2.

Although "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," being the perfect, sinless Son of God and Son of man, yet He "was made in the likeness of men," and was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He was no stranger to hunger and weariness, pain and tears; He was no alien to the grief that hatred and treachery and all the evil passions of men inflict on the heart; He knew well what it means to battle against temptation and all the insidious assaults of the evil one. His experiences as the Son of man among men and their sin and misery make Him one who could feel compassion as no other.

Though sinless Himself He bore our sin and guilt, and all the terrors of our sin spent themselves on His innocent soul in Gethsemane. And He felt all these terrors, together with all the distress of body, mind and soul which sin produces, in all their pitiless keenness; for none of His senses were blunted as are our own, nor His Spirit deadened as is our own with sin dwelling in us. Just because He who bore our flesh and its infirmities was the pure and holy Son of God, sin and misery touched Him with an awfulness of which we feel only a part. And therefore His compassion with suffering sinners is a thousand times deeper than that of any man on earth.

In an imperishable picture Christ Himself has depicted His infinite compassion toward us in our distress. The good Samaritan of the parable is a human reflection of the compassionate heart of Jesus. As the pitiable condition of the wounded man by the wayside

touched the sympathetic heart of the Samaritan, and moved him to do everything possible to relieve and help and heal, so all our human distress, every wound that pierces us, every unrighteousness and wrong that sheds its bitterness upon us, moves the heart of Jesus with mighty compassion, and He leaves nothing undone to rid us of our woe and its deadly cause. But we see reflections of this same compassion of Christ everywhere in His teaching. The father of the prodigal, when he sees his son in pitiful rags and bowed in shame, still a great way off, is filled with compassion, and hastens to meet him. The lord of the servant who owed ten thousand talents and could not pay a penny is likewise moved with compassion at the beggar lying prone before him, and forgives the entire debt. And there is the same note of infinite compassion with our wretchedness in every utterance like: "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden."

The wonderful compassion of Jesus is first of all a never-failing source of comfort for our weary and troubled hearts. But it is more, it is a glorious example for us to follow. The parable of the compassionate Samaritan ends with the admonition: "Go and do thou likewise." And the parable of the prodigal son in its last half, and especially the parable of the debtor who received compassion but would not himself show compassion, are two powerful warnings against the unfeeling hardness that "shutteth up the bowels of compassion" and "passeth by on the other side." And Peter's admonition is plain: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful." 1 Peter 3, 8.

And this compassion in the hearts of those who have tasted the compassion of Christ, must be like that of Christ, far more than soft-hearted, superficial, and flabby pity. It is not enough to be moved at sight of poverty, wounds, or death; nor is it enough to give bread to the hungry, to bind up the limbs that are broken, to comfort the hearts that mourn. True Christlike compassion goes deeper and does more. Readers of emotional novels and frequenters of theaters are often stirred deeply by the pathetic picture presented to their imaginations; perhaps they weep again and again at what they read or see, but when actual misery appeals to them, they do just as little to relieve that as they do to relieve their imaginary stage sufferers. To awaken the feeling of pity without urging the heart to benevolent action is to paralyze all true compassion. But even where the feeling is allowed to become a motive for benevolent and charitable action, much may still be wanting. Emotional appeals have often prompted men to instant action; whole audiences have been so moved and carried away by pity as to give all they could lay hands on, purses and jewelry and checks written then and there, to relieve the suffering that produced the momentary feeling. But one glance at the calm and constant compassion of Jesus must show us the vast difference between such emotional outbursts and real steady Christlike compassion. Bodily distress always affects the beholder, and often produces benevolent deeds in people altogether godless.

True compassion looks upon human distress with the eyes of Christ, and stretches forth its hand to re-

lieve with the love of Christ. True compassion sees the misery of men as it really is, and seeks to relieve this misery by removing its deadly cause. Christlike compassion recognizes all misery as the outgrowth and fruit of sin, and fills the heart with yearning to remove not only a little of the visible bodily suffering, but all the pitiful distress of body and of soul alike, yea more than all and above all sin itself. A hungry stomach is bad enough, but a starving soul is far worse. A broken bone is a painful hurt, but a broken and shattered will, giving way helplessly to every vicious prompting of the tempter, is a far more painful sight. To feed a beggar and do no more is better than to turn him away tearfully; but to set the bread of life together with earthly bread before him is Christlike compassion. To bind up a broken limb is better than with stony heart to leave the sufferer in his agony; but to add to the liniment for the flesh the balm of Gilead for the heart is Christlike compassion. Christlike compassion sees something of the true nature of human misery and knows something of its true cure. It is therefore a deep, true, and abiding quality of the heart, and a never-failing source of Christlike action. It mingles alms and service and prayer and spiritual aid, as did Christ our example.

And all its feeling and effort is truer and purer because back of it lies the Christian's own experience of sin and its misery and of Christ's grace and compassion. Having tasted of the same infirmities, flowing from the bitter fountain of sin, as our fellow-sufferers, we can sympathize with them, as can no one who has not known the sorrowful depths of repentance.

Having rejoiced in the healing, helping, comforting, saving love and compassion of Christ, we can bring to the aid of the sufferers we meet a compassion full of resources of which the world knows nothing.

Blessed therefore are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy; yea, blessed are the compassionate who tread in Jesus' footsteps, they shall receive compassion.

CHAPTER XX.

IF I HAVE TOLD YOU THE TRUTH.

“**I**F any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.” Such was the God-man. No guile was ever found in His mouth, His every word and deed was filled with truth, and nothing was more averse to Him than falseness of heart or action.

Jesus was not merely truthful, nor was He merely of the truth or a child of truth; He was all this and infinitely more, He was truth itself. “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” It is well to note this distinction, that we may appreciate His perfection as our example. Jesus was not merely truthful, that is, His words were not merely correct, and were not merely honest expressions of His thoughts. Jesus was not merely of the truth, full of longing for divine, everlasting truth, and inwardly illuminated, renewed, and purified by the reception of truth. He was truth itself, the very embodiment and source of divine truth, the outflow and expression of divine truth for men, the fountain of all that illuminates, renews, purifies, uplifts, and saves our fallen race.

Jesus is the very opposite of Satan; the latter is not only a liar and deceiver, not only one who is of the untruth, who has drawn from the source of falsehood and lies; he is himself the father of lies, who

propagates lies everywhere in every possible form. Jesus Himself said as much when He told the Jews: "I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. * * * Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8, 38, etc.

The entire life of Jesus, His every word and deed, proves Him to be the express image of the Father of everlasting truth sent into the world to bear witness for the truth. It would lead us too far to follow His life in detail. We will here refer only to the summary challenge with which Christ confronted His enemies. They had proved and tested Him at every point, with the hardest, most complicated, and dangerous questions possible; through all the black, dreary clouds of their error and ignorance the wonderful light of His eternal wisdom and truth had sent its pure and stainless rays. But they loved darkness rather than light, the fountain of falsehood more than the everlasting well-spring of life and light-giving truth. Therefore Christ challenged them: "Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" Could they convince Him of a single false statement or act? Could they point out a single trace of error or of falsehood in His life, which lay open before them, and which they themselves had watched with jealous and evil eyes?

Now was their hour to speak and condemn. But their tongues could frame no reply; they were utterly condemned by the question: "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" and by the open statement from the lips of Him whose truth they could not impeach: "He that is of God" (of the truth) "heareth God's words" (heareth my voice, the voice of Him who is truth and beareth witness of the truth); "ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (not of the truth, but of the father of lies). In their helpless anger they were able to utter only the lying slander: "Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" They were vanquished completely to the challenge of truth; they verified, in their way, by their inability to answer the challenge, that Jesus is indeed more than truthful, or of the truth, namely very truth itself.

This is not the only instance in which Christ challenged His enemies and appealed to them. On one occasion He directed special attention to His works, which were one with His words: "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me."
* * * "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do the works, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in Him." John 10, 38, etc. Again His enemies could make no reply, but simply sought to take Him. And when at last He had given Himself into their hands, when they sought by all means, fair or foul, to bring some accusation against Him, they again, and for the last

time, failed utterly. They could not in the slightest degree impeach the truth of a single word or deed.

We turn now to a few incidents which serve to show us how the divine witness for the truth walked the narrow path of truth amid this world full of error and deception. Christ was unwilling to tolerate the slightest error regarding Himself. When a certain ruler addressed Him as the "Good Master", Christ refused the appellation; He was no mere "good master", good rabbi, one among many, though greater in the degree of His goodness than others, and He refused to be so considered. His goodness was divine, and only in that exalted sense would He tolerate men to call Him the "Master" or the "Good Master." There was more than any human goodness in Him; when men felt and acknowledged this, He willingly bore with what ignorance yet darkened their minds, and used all the means of His wisdom to lead them fully into the light.

Christ never made the slightest attempt to accommodate Himself to the false Messianic ideals of the Jews, or of His own disciples and friends. When they would have made Him a king, after the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, He hurried His foolish disciples off across the lake and sent the multitude away, and on the following day preached that memorable sermon on the Bread of Life, which dashed the vain fleshly hopes of the multitude and turned all their idle expectations to naught. When Peter, still dreaming of earthly glory for His divine Master, took Jesus aside to urge Him against a course of suffering, shame, and death, the firm hand of the Master re-

pelled the temptation. He who came to draw all men unto Him never used the slightest deception in seeking or attempting to hold their favor.

To be sure, Christ did not at once and at all times, in so many blunt words, proclaim Himself the Son of God. In Him the highest truth and the deepest wisdom were combined. He sought to lead men step by step in all that He taught regarding Himself and His kingdom. When men were ready, He told them plainly who He was. After He had touched the heart of the woman at the well at Sychar, He told her directly that He was the Messiah; after He had healed the blind man at Jerusalem, and had filled his heart with longing for a greater healing, Christ told him plainly: I am the Son of God. When the time came, He asked His disciples, who had felt and acknowledged His divinity from the beginning, Whom do ye say that I am? When His words and works had given ample testimony to the Jews, He withheld not the open proclamation, that He was sent of the Father, that He was indeed the Son of God. And at last He sealed with an oath the solemn declaration in the face of death, that He was indeed Christ, the Son of the living God. Those who were of the truth He led with all tenderness, care, and wisdom unto the fulness of truth; those who resisted the truth, and persisted against the truth in their love of sin and falsehood, He confronted with all the fulness of truth, that they might see indeed what they were rejecting to their own condemnation, that they might have no excuse and not be able to cast blame upon Him. When men were unprepared, Christ made every ef-

fort to prepare them for the truth; when they would not permit themselves to be prepared, Christ showed them their awful sin by confronting them with the fulness and blessedness of the truth they rejected.

As He dealt truthfully with men regarding His own person, so He dealt truthfully with them regarding their own persons. He revealed the sins of men, that they might be brought to repentance and salvation. Self-righteous boasters He sent invariably to the Law; they who deluded themselves with the thought that they had kept the Law were awakened out of their delusion. The rich young ruler is pointed to his secret love of riches, that he might see the emptiness of his boast and repent. The lawyer who wished to excuse himself by the question, "Who is my neighbor?" is robbed of his excuse, and sent to follow the example of the good Samaritan. Again and again the disciples find their littleness of faith laid bare. Martha is pointed to her mistake. The murderous thoughts of the Jews are exposed fully to the light; all their hypocrisy, all their falseness, vanity, covetousness, and godlessness is brought home to them in a hundred different ways with telling effect. Christ never gave any man the slightest cause for deceiving himself in regard to himself.

Of all sins one sin especially is hateful to God, dangerous to man, and intolerable to the Son of God and man; it is the sin of hypocrisy. It is this which called out the most scathing denunciation from the lips so full of heavenly love. What Jesus found in Nathanael, he did not find in the leaders of His people. They were given to the most depraving deceit.

Long prayers, alms, and fasts for show; broad phylacteries, a sanctimonious air, the most scrupulous attention to the thousand and one points of their self-made legal system, and a heart that knew not nor cared for justice and mercy, full of the worst kind of bigotry, lying, slander, envy, hatred, pride, arrogance, thieving, murder. They were of the devil and pretended to be of God. If only they had admitted their devilry, Christ could better have borne them. But their very hypocrisy rendered all their other sins abominable beyond endurance. Their sin cloaked in the garb of sanctity could not practice its despicable deceit upon the true and holy Son of God. When their obstinate adherence to falseness would not yield in the least, Christ was compelled to repeat and to amplify the denunciations of His forerunner John the Baptist. Not a single syllable of those burning woes is to the slightest degree untrue either in letter or in spirit.

Because Jesus was not only truthful, but very truth itself, there is in all His utterances against man's sin, no trace of unholy or uncharitable passion. He did not strive nor cry (Matth. 12, 19); there was no passionate bitterness in His heart or on His lips. There are tears in His eyes as He weeps over the doomed city and nation. While He points out the worst sins of His foes and reveals their relation to the devil, He again and again stretches out the hand of grace to seek and to save the lost. And when their fury at last wreaked its vengeance upon His holy head, He reviled not nor threatened, but looked only to the Father who had sent Him. This is the example of

divine truth, truth full of grace and love, truth holy altogether, and higher than the heavens. Its every word is calm and deliberate, not one syllable too much nor too little, not a single epithet too strong or too weak, not a single chiding too soon or too late. "Never man spake like this Man."

As Christ rebuked and denounced the deception He constantly encountered, so He never practiced a single form of deception. His heart knew no fear, and never made a false or cowardly evasion. When the question of divorce was brought before Him, He was guided in His reply by no fear of offending the two parties among the Jews, or Herod, the adulterous tetrarch, who had already slain the Baptist for the sake of his adulterous wife Herodias. "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" Hillel and his school answered yes, and opened the door for the gravest abuse; Shammai answered no, yet failed to explain the divorce permitted by Moses. Jesus showed the error of both these great Jewish teachers; he spoke in the interest of no man, but only of truth which is for the true interest of every man. To the question, "Is it lawful", Christ replied: "Have ye not read?" To the further entangling question: "Why then did Moses *command* to give a writing of divorcement and put her away?" He answered: "Moses, indeed, for your hard-heartedness *permitted* you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so." And now comes the answer, so fearless, and so true at once: "Whoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another, except for fornication, committeth adultery; and he who marrieth a di-

forced woman committeth adultery." Herod might send out his armed men, the divided followers of Hillel and Shammai might unite in their antagonism against Jesus,

"The Word they shall let stand
And not a thank have for it."

The truthfulness of Him who was truth itself shines out especially in His openness toward His disciples and followers. He bade those who would cast their lot with Him to count the cost. When a certain man came and offered himself: "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest", Jesus replied: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Perhaps the man found the cost too great; but Christ deceived him not. Not only did Christ tell His disciples of His own death, and continue to tell them when they would not understand, He likewise told them plainly what they might expect for themselves. Immediately after choosing the twelve we hear that memorable utterance in the sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And more plainly still and more clearly foretelling what the disciples might look for: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matth. 5, 10, etc. The further the disciples went the more they were told, "The

servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." John 15. 20. — "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." John 16, 2. Yet He who truthfully foretold all that His followers would be called upon to suffer and endure for His sake, left not untold all that they would gain forever by remaining faithful until death. He sought to win and to hold men only by the true treasures of the kingdom.

Christ was ever open in His life of truth. When asked at last concerning His doctrine He could truthfully say: "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogues and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing." John 18, 20. He Himself faithfully followed the word spoken to timid Nicodemus at night: "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." John 3, 10, etc. The only secret part of His life was when He retired into solitude to pray; and even these private prayers are laid open to us in His teachings and in the prayers with His disciples. With the foolish, unimportant things of men Jesus wasted no time; idle questions He turned to account by directing attention to the deeper needs of man. The woman that would praise His mother is told who Christ's true mother, brother, and sister is. Some-

times silence was the best expression of truth. The silence of Christ at His trial before Pilate and Herod was the best defense of His innocence and truth, and the most crushing refutation of the accusations of the Jews.

He who lived as the embodiment of truth, died at last as the King of truth.

The first thing required of us in following Him who is the truth is that we be of the truth. We can never become the truth itself, as was the Son of God and of man; we cannot become independent sources of truth, subsisting in ourselves without God, or co-ordinate with God or God's Son. But we can be of the truth, connected with, and drawing from, the everlasting fountain of truth. And only when we are thus of the truth, can we be Christlike in truth and truthfulness. He who is of God heareth God's Word; he who is of the truth heareth the voice of the King of truth. There is no godliness and Christlikeness apart from the truth that came unto men in the Son of man. To be of the truth means to be filled with hunger and thirst for the truth of God, and to accept and be filled with this truth when it offers itself to us. God Himself brings the truth to us, to arouse this longing for its sweet enlightenment, its everlasting enrichment. As Jesus came with the truth to the Jews and to Pilate to win them for the truth, so He comes to us to-day.

Many reject the truth of salvation as it invites us in Jesus. The question of Pilate regarding spiritual truth has been repeated only too often. But all they who are not of the truth, and hear not the voice of the Truth, debar themselves from the highest, purest, and

most blessed elements of truth. They are like the mole digging away in the dark, busy indeed with his delving and the little round of his lightless life, but without even an eye for the glorious world above ground. The earth is full of such moles, digging and prying in every corner with their busy little science, but without an eye for the everlasting beauty of truth above. Whenever the sunlight of Christ falls in upon them in their molehill they inquire with half a sneer, What is truth? The longer they live in the dark the less they are able to bear and apprehend the light of truth. And worst of all, the more they reject and ignore the highest truth, the less true are their efforts and aims even in the dark little corner they have chosen for themselves. Their mathematics may be correct, but they will not be true, the whole bearing, aim, and purpose of the science will drift from its divine guiding center. Their discoveries and observation of facts may be very correct and exact, but their generalizations and highest deductions will be wide of the designs of the true God who formed earth and heaven. An uncorrected error in the start vitiates the whole calculation and ruins the answer; the vital error of setting aside the truth of truths and its embodiment in Christ must vitiate not merely all other knowledge, but even all effort and all life. He who is not of the truth gropes in error and ends in falsehood.

Christ's statement regarding goodness, namely that one only is good, God alone, may be repeated regarding truth; one only is true, namely God. And for this reason all men are liars, for every one has turned from God by his sin, from Him who alone is true, who is

the only source of truth. But we conclude furthermore that they only return unto truth who return unto God, and all who prefer their own folly remain in their lies. The question of truth and truthfulness comprises more than truthfulness in common conversation. Its first and chief part is a true judgment regarding our Maker and Savior, regarding our own selves, our real condition, God's gracious intentions concerning us, the real purpose of our lives, and our everlasting goal. To deceive ourselves regarding these things is to miss the supreme truth and to fall into the deadliest error. To find the truth and live in the truth here places the whole man under the influence of divine truth, and all his life will be filled with the light of truth.

There is no communion between light and darkness, between the truth as it comes to us in Christ and the lie as it comes to us in Belial. Indifference regarding the Triune God, and the way of salvation is the worst form of falsehood. There can be no toleration for unbelief or spiritual error. Christ's great warfare was against the lies that held His nation chained. He could not, and we dare not, admit a denial of God or of Jesus as the only Savior, or of the only righteousness and salvation that come to us in Him, or of the absolute necessity of regeneration and faith, or of any of the divine truths God has revealed to man. There is war to the death between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. But this warfare is spiritual, not carnal. Persecution of unbelievers, dissenters, and heretics is directly opposed to the spirit and example of Him who came to seek and to save, and not to kill and destroy. The battle is not with the sword of

steel, but with the sword of the Spirit of truth, with the everlasting Word of truth against every form of spiritual error. Unbelief is untrue, and dare never be admitted as true; self-righteousness and work-righteousness is untrue, and must ever be branded and condemned as such. To recognize and admit any of the contradictions of divine truth as revealed in the Word is to turn traitor to truth and to surrender to falsehood. Religious liberty is the abolishing of all persecution for the sake of religious beliefs; it is not a justification of religious lies, an admission that such lies are as true as the truth, that it makes no difference whether this doctrine or its opposite is believed. Every man is indeed free to seek salvation in his own fashion, but the fashion of error leads unto death, the fashion of truth alone leads unto life. The indifference regarding truth and error prevalent to-day is the very opposite of Christ's example, who in all His ministry rent in twain the network of error, and set man free from its entanglements by the everlasting word of truth.

The one thing needful for all the followers of Christ in the pursuit of truth is uprightness of heart, integrity and honesty of the soul. The moral hypocrite can never be Christlike. Where this root of evil fills the heart truth will forever be blighted. When error is held fast with an honest heart, it may be overcome by the honesty of truth; but when error and sin is cherished in a heart insincere and full of hypocrisy, all the efforts of truth are in vain. Saul was an honest enemy of Christ; when the truth in Christ came to him with its power, there was no question at all as to the victory. The Pharisees were inveterate hypocrites; as long as

their hypocrisy remained, all the powers of truth could not penetrate their souls. He who is dishonest with his own soul, even though he seek to serve the two masters, will always be found inwardly on the side of falsehood and sin. Woe, therefore, unto those who make a pretense of piety, who live on in sin, making empty excuses for their wrong, who turn from the truth inwardly whenever they feel its power.

As Christ knew no guile, so every Christlike and true heart will be guileless, abominating all the different forms of lying and deception. To tell the truth in a Christlike way in all our dealings with men is not merely to speak at all times what is so, what is altogether correct. The world's maxim, Honesty is the best policy, is not the Christlike maxim. That maxim reads: "Speaking the truth in love." Selfishness frequently dictates truthfulness, but such truthfulness is not Christlike. Even hatred may prompt man to tell the detrimental truth about the person he hates; but again this is not Christlike. Self-righteousness, worldly morality, philosophic wisdom often induces men to speak and act honestly and uprightly before men; but even such truthfulness is not Christlike in character. To be sure, the honest words of a moral man are good when compared with dishonest utterances and acts. But only when that which induces the lips to speak truly is Christlike can the utterance be good before God and really Christlike. God ever looks to the heart; and only when the love of God in Christ Jesus fills the heart, will the words that flow from the lips be godly and Christlike indeed. We hold fast here the difference that is ever found between

the virtues of the world, which are not the fruit of love to God, and the virtues of the kingdom of Christ, which are rooted and grounded in this love altogether.

Christlike truth on the lips or in the life is always moved and guided by love. Its justice is ever tempered with mercy. There are many ways of telling the truth. The worst is the loveless way which repels, offends, or enrages by the truth it tells. Another evil way is that of ignorance, blurting out the truth in a rough and helpless way. The Christlike way is that of love, with all its gentleness, all its firmness, and all its wisdom. The love that is not of Christ frequently finds itself driven to use deception, half-truths, and even direct falsehoods to secure its ends. Its plea is the old Jesuitic lie, the end justifies the means. But as there was no shadow of deception in Jesus, so there should not be in us. A lie, even in a half-truth which leaves a false impression, is never justified. "Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor." There is always a way out, some means of deliverance when difficult circumstances crowd us. We may be silent and suffer; or tell the truth fearlessly and suffer. We may tell it with such healing in the words that it will not shock or grieve others to death; we may utter it with such majesty as to cow the evil-minded and turn them from their purpose. We may utter it, and when its utterance seems to darken every hope, cast ourselves upon Him who is able to do more than men. However perplexing the circumstances, however sudden and trying the test may be, Christ never forsakes those who put their trust in Him. He will rid the heart of fear, which leads so many to stain their con-

sciences and ruin their characters; His Spirit will place the proper word upon the lips when our human wisdom can make no reply. Luther at the imperial Diet at Worms, holding with a true heart to the truth, was able to make a good confession. Examples of a similar kind, in all circumstances of life, could be readily multiplied.

Truth is ever open and woos the light; evil alone bands itself together beneath the cover of darkness. The lodge with its secret methods stands condemned by the word of Christ: "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved; but he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." John 3, 20, etc. They who are not of the truth may fail to admit the condemnation, nevertheless it is clear. An institution founded on secrecy, a system and society veiled in darkness cannot be of the light, nor its shrouded principles of the truth. Christ ever works in the light, and so do the Christlike; the devil works in the dark, and he abode not in the truth.

Christian truthfulness is bound to suffer. He who will not lie for others, or accommodate himself to their hypocrisies, will taste their resentment. He who is true to himself, and rebukes the falsehood of others, will not be loved of those who are false. Only too often our own lack of love, our own sinful passion in attempting to stand for the truth, will call out the antagonism of men. Only too often the best of causes has been defended with intemperate and inconsiderate words. Yet even when nothing but love and purest

truth fills our hearts and lips, all men will not be pleased with us. The servant is not above his Master. The way of truth is not free from affliction.

Nevertheless, truth always triumphs in the end. The children of light who walk in the light, whose hearts will reach the crown of everlasting light and truth above, are linked to the truth and keep the narrow path of truth; while they who shun the light sink down into impenetrable darkness.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.

AMONG the bitterest vexations that troubled our Lord during His earthly life were those caused by "the commandments of men." The way in which Christ treated these commandments comprises one of the important chapters in His life, and constitutes a precious part of the pattern He has left us.

Foremost among the false and dangerous traditions of the elders were those relating to the Sabbath. There was no practical question which, as far as we are able to judge, came up so often, stirred up so much animosity, and furnished such a ready pretext for Christ's opponents, as this regarding Sabbath observance. The spies that dogged the Savior's footsteps, endeavoring to find some telling accusation against Him, were constantly baffled. His life was lit up with such perfect purity and love that even malicious eyes could detect no real fault or flaw. The scribes and Pharisees would gladly have accused Christ of blasphemy for pronouncing forgiveness upon the sinful woman, upon the man sick with the palsy, and upon others; but they found their hands tied by the miracles He wrought in proof of His authority to forgive sins. Nor could they press the accusation, that He was "a glutton and a wine-drinker," there being absolutely no foundation for the

slander. The matter of fasting likewise would not lend itself to their evil purpose. And even Christ's receiving publicans and sinners, although horrifying the Pharisees utterly, could certainly not be used against Him among the common people; they, in fact, felt drawn toward Him because He was ever ready to help the most lowly, the outcast leper as well as the outcast sinner. In all His acts of love there was none which, even in the eyes of His opponents, could be construed into an excuse for any sin. But the Sabbath question gave them just what they sought. From their standpoint the evidence of transgression was complete.

Nevertheless, it was not until from other, deeper and more vital, causes the spirit of enmity against Christ had arisen, that His practices on the Sabbath day produced any disturbance. When Christ first began His work in Capernaum, He preached on the Sabbath in the synagogue, and before the entire assembly cleansed a man possessed of an evil spirit. Proceeding thence to Simon's house He healed another patient, Simon's mother-in-law, prostrate with fever. To be sure, the people of the city did not at once bring their sick for healing, but waited till sundown, till the twilight hour began another day. Yet no one murmured at the two miracles of healing that had been wrought openly on the Sabbath day. "They were astonished at His doctrine;" "They were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him." Mark 1,

27. Opposition against Jesus was still in its infancy; thus the sensation He created, for the moment caused even the scrupulous Pharisee to overlook what afterwards he was only too eager to stigmatize as flagrant Sabbath desecration.

The gospels furnish us six detailed instances of accusations brought against Jesus for having broken the Sabbath. And we must not fail to note the deadly animosity with which these accusations were made from the start. The first instance was the healing of the paralytic who had suffered for thirty-eight years; Christ bade him take up his bed and walk, and as a result we are told, "The Jews did persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath." Again, when Christ, followed by the disciples, walked through the fields on the Sabbath day, and they began plucking ears of corn, rubbing out the grains, and eating, the Pharisees, now ever on the watch, make haste to present their indignant protest: "Behold, Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day." Immediately after this, on the very same day it seems, Christ in the synagogue healed a man who had a withered hand. "Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him." A considerable time after these two occurrences Jesus, passing by, saw a man who had been blind from his birth, and ordered him to wash in the pool of Siloam. "Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the Sabbath day." In the coasts of Judæa beyond Jordan Christ found a woman who had suffered for eighteen years and was so bowed together

that she could not lift herself up. The Master laid His hands on her and bade her be loosed from her infirmity. At this the ruler of the synagogue "answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day," and said to the people, "There are six days in which men ought to work; in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." Finally, in the house of one of the Pharisees, before a number of these fanatics, Christ healed a man of the dropsy. The man, as it seems, was placed in the room for this very purpose; the Pharisees "watched" Jesus, whether He would again break the rules so sacred in their eyes.

In judging Christ's actions on the Jewish Sabbath we must remember that He was put under the law to redeem them that were under the law. Every Old Testament command in regard to the Sabbath was therefore binding upon Christ, and He had no thought of setting a single one aside; He had come to fulfill all righteousness, as He Himself declared. At no time, therefore, did Christ transgress any of the commandments of His Father in heaven; and this extends also to all the ceremonial regulations of the Mosaic law as given by God. As Jesus was circumcised, as He faithfully kept the Jewish festivals according to God's directions, so also did He comply with every divine command respecting the Sabbath. All the watchful zeal of the Pharisees was unable to point out a single infraction of any real command of God.

The pharisaic accusations against Christ as a breaker of the Sabbath were all based on the traditions of the elders. The observance of this day among the Jews

was no longer regulated by the commandment given on Mt. Sinai, but by the multiplicity of human regulations added by the rabbis. There were no less than thirty-nine primary and a whole host of secondary requirements fencing about the commandment of God, and forming a hedge so high and thick as to obscure the original divine injunction completely. Schammai forbade even the comforting of the sick and the cheering of the downcast on this day. To kill a flea on the Sabbath was as bad as to slay a camel. To pluck ears of grain and to rub out the kernels was the same as mowing an entire field and threshing out a whole load of wheat. The work of living up to these pharisaic regulations was oppressive in the extreme. But their worst feature was that they annulled entirely the real intention and purpose of God in regard to the Sabbath; for the Pharisees it was no longer a day of blessed rest for worshipping God and refreshing their souls, but a day for the painful and scrupulous performance of a long line of distressing human exactions. They imagined that they kept the Sabbath and fulfilled the commandment of God, when their attention to this wearying mass of outward performances was perfect. It was even as Christ declared: "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition—making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered." Mark 7, 9.

For this very reason it was impossible for Christ to assent to the rules of the Pharisees respecting the Sabbath. In fact, He found it necessary to reject openly all the traditions of the elders whether they applied to

the Sabbath, or to the washing of hands before eating, and to "the washing of cups and pots and brazen vessels and of tables," or to the gifts of children to the temple whereby they were released from assisting their parents. All these traditions served to foster, or even taught directly, what Christ had to condemn: "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." They all turned the worship of God into the observance of empty and false commandments of men.

We dare not look at the Jewish Sabbath rules, or at their regulations about the washing of hands, as only innocent customs of the land and people. The Jews themselves regarded their traditions far otherwise. If they had been nothing more than local or national customs, and if the Pharisees had pressed their observance only on this ground, they could never have accused Christ of ungodliness, or of a crime worthy of death, in refusing compliance with their traditions. The vital point, determining the course of Christ, was this, that the traditions of the Pharisees "made the Word of God of none effect." He was bound to obey the "Word of God" at all hazard. And if the hatred of the Jews had been multiplied a thousand times, if their rage had wreaked itself in actions a thousand times more fierce and bloody, He would never have chosen a different course.

Christ's treatment of the traditions of the Jews, risking without hesitation from beginning to end their fiercest animosity on the question of Sabbath observance, shows us plainly that Christ always and everywhere stood for the truth and righteousness of God,

that in no single instance did He, either by silence, or by word and act, "accommodate" Himself to any of the injurious errors of His day. The worst and most unworthy piece of this kind of "accommodation" ever latterly imputed to Christ is that in regard to the doctrine of the devil. The Jews believed the existence of a spirit of evil, whom they called Beelzebub or Satan. This belief now is said to have been acquired from Persian sources during the Babylonian exile; the Old Testament, we are told, contains no foundation for it. Now Christ, without question, taught and spoke, as though this master spirit of evil existed in reality; the entire New Testament does the same. There is never a hint from Jesus' lips to show that the ideas of the Jews in this respect were essentially false. How could this be possible, we ask, if Christ knew that these ideas were false? The answer we receive is that He simply avoided exposing this error, that He for certain reasons "accommodated" Himself to this Jewish notion. We recoil from the very thought; we cannot conceive of such hypocrisy on Christ's part. There is a devil; the Old Testament Scriptures tell us so; the Jews were not mistaken; this doctrine is no Persian or heathen fable; Christ spoke truth when He referred to Satan as a real person. Furthermore, it is altogether against reason that He who rejected the tradition of the elders respecting the Sabbath, washings, and a host of other matters, should have acquiesced in the Jewish doctrine respecting the devil — if this had been false. He who declared: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the command-

ments of men", would likewise have declared regarding any Persian fable held falsely as the truth of God: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the fables of men." There is no trace whatever in the life of our sinless Master of any "accommodation" to falsehood or wrong. No matter how much men might be offended by truth and righteousness, Christ maintained both, and bore the brunt of the offense in every case.

Nevertheless, we cannot deny that to a certain extent Christ did accommodate Himself to His surroundings. The commandments of men did not always militate against the word of God; the customs, habits, and practices of the Jews were in many cases harmless, and Christ freely adopted them. He dressed as did those about Him; He ate the same food as they did; He worked at Joseph's trade and rested at the home of His friends in Bethany. But He rebuked the vanity of "broad prylacteries" worn by the Pharisees, their trumpeting forth of their charities, their ostentatious prayers on the street corners, their straining at gnats in the water they drank. He submitted to the government of His native land and to its proper laws. He raised no objections to the common usages and customs in vogue at the celebration of the great Jewish festivals. He took part freely in the services in the Jewish synagogues as these had been arranged by men throughout the land, accommodating Himself, as we may say, to their manner of reading the Scriptures, to their form of prayer, and to a long line of minor practices. Wherever

there was no conflict with the word and will of God Christ allowed the commandments of men to pass.

Where there was such a conflict Christ always entered the battle and employed every means for exposing and contradicting the evil. Thus in regard to the Sabbath. Did an ox or an ass belonging to one of the Pharisees fall into a pit on the Sabbath, and did they not straightway pull him out? Why then should Christ be prevented from rescuing a man who had fallen into the disease of leprosy? What man, having a sheep fallen into a pit on the Sabbath, did not at once lay hold on it and lift it out? Shall a sheep be accounted as more valuable than a man? Shall more be done for a brute than for a man on the Sabbath day? Did not each one without hesitation loose his ox or ass from the stall on the Sabbath and lead him away to watering? Why then should Christ be forbidden to loose a daughter of Israel, bound these eighteen years, and lead her to healing on the Sabbath? The argument was unanswerable; the refutation of the Pharisees complete.

The second argument of Christ went deeper. The Pharisees were vanquished by their own practices; doing what they did for their own animals, they could not object to Christ's doing the same thing for the noblest creatures of God. But what the Pharisees themselves did was altogether right. There was only one true answer to Christ's question, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?" In other words, "to heal on the Sabbath days", or to leave men needlessly to the destructive ravages of disease? The Sabbath was made

for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Among the services of God whereby men may worship Him acceptably on the Sabbath are also the visiting of the widow and orphan, the helping of the suffering and distressed. Not that the Sabbath should be converted by such works of mercy into a day of excessive labor, so that all other services would be excluded. Christ's words and acts cannot be used for justifying such extremes. His work of healing never drew Him away from the worship in the synagogue on the Sabbath. He never declared that the Sabbath was the great day for working cures or bringing relief. When occasion offered He healed the sick on the Sabbath, never ordering the multitude of sufferers to abandon their practice of coming to Him on other days. One extreme would have been as bad as the other; forbidding all works of mercy on the Sabbath, as bad as overloading the Sabbath by commanding all works of mercy for this day alone. Among the many services which please God, "doing good" as Christ did is one; this one has its claims on the Sabbath, but this one does not usurp the place of the others.

In addition to these principles and elucidations Christ used another powerful line of reasoning. When His disciples were accused for violating the Sabbath because they plucked and rubbed out ears of corn, Christ referred the Pharisees to David. Did not he and those with him, when hungry, entered the sacred house of God and eat the shewbread, which according to God's own law only the priests dared eat? And yet he was held guiltless. The point of the comparison is found in the inner purpose and intention of

God's commandments. They were not meant to hurt or destroy man, but to help him. The regulations regarding the shewbread came from God Himself, they were part of the ceremonial law established under Moses. But even these regulations, when man's welfare demanded, could be set aside for a time at the imperative call of necessity; how much more then the traditions of the elders, mere human rules, respecting the Sabbath? Or did the Pharisees claim more for their injunctions than God claimed for His? But here, too, we must be careful not to draw unwarranted conclusions. Ceremonial regulations, rules for certain times, places, or persons, are not to be confounded with the everlasting principles of truth and righteousness. Under pressure of necessity David could be guiltless in setting aside the law concerning shewbread, but no necessity would have left him guiltless if he had set aside the law concerning lying or theft or murder. It is always absolutely necessary to obey the moral law of God. But on this very point the Pharisees were lamentably at fault. Christ rebukes them: "If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." There was no mercy in the heart of these foes of Christ; their hatred was glad to find what they imagined a grave transgression of the law. Could God accept their hollow Sabbath observance, when they cared nothing whatever about the essentials of love, charity, and judgment? These dare never be set aside or forgotten.

This brings us to one of the main reasons why Christ rejected the Jewish traditions, not only in regard to the Sabbath, but also in regard to everything else. These traditions were all of a kind, setting up human notions ostensibly as an aid to the keeping of God's commandments, but in reality making these commandments of none effect. They put lip service in the place of heart service; outward forms in the place of inward realities. A striking example is furnished by the divine commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother", and by the duty of helping father and mother, plainly included in this commandment. The Pharisees simply annulled this commandment of God, absolving children from doing anything for their parents, if they declared regarding certain money or goods, "It is Corban", that is, a gift for the temple. In the same way the washing of hands and the cleansing of pots and vessels was observed by the Pharisees with painful scrupulosity, while their hearts were calmly allowed to be full of hatred, malice, lying, theft, and murder. They sought their sanctity in such outward washings, treating these as sufficient without inward purity of heart. Well did Christ declare unto them: "Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness." Christ could not receive or keep traditions of men militating so completely against the law of God.

Finally, Christ points the Pharisees to an exception made by God Himself in regard to labor on the Sabbath day stating at the same time a far-reaching

principle. "Have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?" The work of preparing the sacrifices, the slaughtering of animals, the feeding of fires, and other labors went on in the Temple itself and by the very priests of God. And this at the command of God's own law. Had the Pharisees ever considered this problem? How could God forbid labor and yet also command it on the Sabbath? Because this labor was essential to the Jews for the proper observance of the Sabbath. The priests were bidden to do certain works that the nation might worship God acceptably on the Sabbath. If then the law of the Temple could make such exceptions, it was plain that this law itself was not absolute. He who had made it for a certain time and people could alter and abrogate it. As Christ had told the woman at the well: "The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father", so He declared to the Pharisees: "I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the Temple." And again: "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day." Christ had power to change or annul the Sabbath laws, as God in first making them had power to make exceptions. As yet the hour was not completely come. Christ Himself was still under the law and employed in fulfilling it, nevertheless He was the Lord of the Temple and of the Sabbath. His knowledge and practice, as well as His power and authority, was perfect. Christ indeed gave no new command concerning a day to be kept by His followers. The liberty wherewith He

made us free would soon enough remove the old yoke of bondage and find proper regulations for rendering to God the worship in spirit and in truth.

The example thus set for us to follow in regard to the commandments of men is not difficult of application. The Word of God must ever stand supreme, and every human command or injunction at variance with this word must be rejected. In the words of Peter, we must obey God rather than men. As long as the laws and traditions of men do not militate against the word and will of God, even though they be imperfect, we may let them pass. The spirit of brotherly love will shrink from giving offense by setting itself wilfully and needlessly at variance with others.

Human commandments are especially pernicious, and call for rejection, when men claim for them an authority equal to the divine, or seek to enforce them as though they were divine. Where God has not bound the conscience, it is sin for man to bind it. We are enjoined to stand in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. We are to let no man judge us in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days — after the commandments and doctrines of men.

The usurpation of temporal authority by the papacy, demanding allegiance and obedience from men; the similar usurpation of divine prerogatives in the spiritual domain, demanding faith and submission on the part of Christian people; and all the separate commands based on this fraudulent authority, such as

the enforced celibacy of the priesthood, the infallibility of the pope, the indulgences, fasts, etc., are contrary to the Word of God, and must be spurned by those who follow Christ. Here again the doctrines of men render the Word of God of none effect. Here again men are taught to rely on a show of outward works, whilst the essential matters of faith and the true fruits of faith are set aside.

When the Baptists prescribe immersion as the only valid form of Baptism; when the Reformed forbid the use of any but common bread in Communion, they are teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. When so many in the interest of temperance seek to make us believe that God Himself prohibits all intoxicating drinks, they are binding the conscience where God left it free. There are reasons enough for shunning the deadly dangers of drink without adding such as have no warrant. When Puritanic legalists attempt to prescribe the observance of Sunday as a divine command; likewise, when certain fanatics demand a return to the Jewish law and the observance of Saturday as the only legitimate holy day — we must refuse to admit their demands. "We should fear and love God, that we may not despise preaching and His Word, but gladly hear and learn it." This now is in effect God's commandment for us. It goes without saying, that the spirit of order and reverence, ever ready to learn from the wise regulations of God in olden times, will see the necessity of having a fixed day, and even fixed hours and fixed forms, for the proper hearing of the Word and the worship of God. But God has not bound us;

He has left us unimpaired the liberty of our Lord in making the first day of the week the Lord's day, and in rendering to our Lord in the freedom of the Spirit the worship wherein He delights.

At all times when presumptuous fanaticism comes with the imperative, *You must*, we are bound to assert our liberty and declare, *We will not*; where devotion to Christ comes with an appeal to our love, we are bound to lend a ready ear and to reply, *I will do my utmost*. Paul was ready to become all things to all men, if perhaps he might save some; but when certain errorists attempted to bind him and those whom he had won for Christ, to the Jewish rite of circumcision, and to other injunctions of Jewish law, he asserted all his apostolic authority and would not for a moment permit his conscience to be bound by the commandments of men. When Luther at Worms confronted the imperial demand to retract in bulk what he had written, he declared his conscience bound by the Word of God, nor would he yield one jot to this human injunction, however powerful in its imperial authority, unless it could prove itself in conformity with the Word of God. His words: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise — God help me!" have come to mark an epoch in the history of religious liberty. Consequences count for nothing in the face of divine commands; God always takes care of these consequences. But when we yield to men in disobedience to God for fear of apparently painful consequences, we shall not escape the most painful of all, the dire displeasure of God.

For us there will always be one danger. We may be mistaken in taking some command or doctrine to be divine, or in looking upon another as merely human. Before we take our course, this vital question must be settled beyond a reasonable doubt. And it can be settled in every instance, for the Word of God is clear, giving knowledge to the soul, and enlightening the eyes.

As long as the world stands we will be called upon to reject the commandments of men for the instructions of God, and to test our conduct daily and hourly by the divine principles set down for our enlightenment and guidance.



Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.—Mark 6, 50.

CHAPTER XXII.

WHY ARE YE FEARFUL?

THE absolute fearlessness of Jesus asks us reproachfully: "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" and bids us courageously: "Fear not", — "be not afraid!"

The life of Christ is a record of invincible courage and supreme fearlessness. And there is that in the dauntless manliness of Christ which is far above the exhibitions of courage not infrequent among men. Moreover, the courage of Christ is of such a nature as to be repeated and wrought in us also, even in the most timid and fearful of human hearts. Common bravery, boldness, and daring, even when inspired by a noble sense of duty, is generally such as to fire only those who naturally have something of the same quality and temperament in themselves; the fearlessness of Christ alone can implant itself in the hearts of the most timid and shrinking, and give them a boldness as far above mere natural courage as the spiritual is above the fleshly.

The calm, unruffled courage of Christ comes into view gloriously in the storm on the Lake of Galilee. After a day of weary labor Jesus and His disciples embark to cross the quiet waters. There is no trace of any approaching tempest. The waves ripple mer-

rily about the boat, the wind hums low and sweet, and the disciples sit together in quiet converse, while the boat glides smoothly on. We can explain their calmness at the start; they knew nothing of what awaited them. But Christ was equally and even more calm and restful than they, and yet He knew all that would befall them. In the face of the raging tempest whose coming Christ saw, He composed Himself to sleep on a pillow in the rear of the boat. The storm had no terrors for Him. He rested like a weary child in its mother's soft arms. With the roaring wind coming ever nearer and nearer Christ's eyes closed, and He slept the perfect quiet sleep of one who lies down peacefully in his own bed at night. No shadow of fear crossed His thoughts or kept His eyes open for a moment. There was absolutely no fear in His soul. And even when the fury of the blast descended, when the ship's danger grew frightfully, when the deep yawned to swallow it up, and the storm shrieked to plunge it down, when the disciples with all their fisherman skill gave themselves up for lost, even then Christ slept on. And when He opened His eyes and heard the despairing cry, "Master, Master!" and beheld the awful scene about Him, there is no trace of even surprise, to say nothing of dismay. Jesus opened His eyes on the dread danger as calmly and undisturbed as an innocent child after a peaceful night's rest opens its eyes on the familiar scene in its little chamber. It is not that in any way Jesus was ignorant of the real danger that threatened the boat and its passengers; on the contrary, we would say that He knew the danger far better than did the dis-

ciples themselves. As His knowledge transcended Peter's when the draught of fishes was made, so also here. But when we say that Christ knew the real danger, and yet feared not, we have only stated half of what He knew. The other half we will consider presently.

Even as here sketched it is not hard to see that no mere natural courage of man has ever equalled this wonderful calmness of the Son of man on the Galilean lake. The knowledge of the approach of such a tempest, though it might not strike fear into a heart of great natural courage, would at least keep the eyes awake and move the hands to get everything in the boat in readiness for the coming shock. The sudden awakening from the unconsciousness of sleep and the instantaneous perception of the danger of the boat would for an instant at least disturb the quiet even of the bravest man on earth. It is impossible for the greatest natural courage of man to equal the display of absolute fearlessness here given by the divine Master.

But this surpassing courage filled the heart of Christ constantly, and shone forth on a thousand different occasions. He stands again and again absolutely alone and without human aid in the midst of His blood-thirsty enemies. He sees them all about Him with stones in hand, ready to hurl them upon Him in sudden frenzy like the bursting of a storm. But His tone never changes, no shadow even of uncertainty flits through His thoughts. Not one word passes His lips in modification of any of His severe utterances. On the contrary, in the face of the rage

of His foes He adds the very word which must set that rage ablaze. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was I am." And while their fury is no longer able to contain itself, He walks calmly, without a sign of fear or hesitation, through their very midst.

A marvellous scene illustrating the same fearlessness occurred in the house of one of the Pharisees whither Jesus had been invited to dine. He went to table without first washing His hands. And when all was ready for the meal, and the Pharisees marvelled at His thus openly setting aside their commandment, He, far from any attempt at excusing Himself or at pacifying their resentment with captivating speech, rebukes and chides their falseness openly and fearlessly. "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and platter; but your inward part is ravening and wickedness." Like a knife-thrust into festering flesh these words of cutting truth pierced the hearts of the men on either side. With calmness undisturbed the Lord proceeds, and each word strikes more deeply and burns more hotly. "But woe unto you Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them." We can imagine the effect of these words upon a company of Pharisees already filled

with bitter hate against this guest in their midst. But Christ is not carried away by any excitement, His every word is weighed and measured and calm. He knew what He was saying, and why He was saying this and nothing else.

Then one of the lawyers answered: "Master, thus saying Thou reproachest us also." The remark only served to invite further rebuke, for the lawyers were in the same condemnation. "Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burden with one of your fingers. Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple. Verily, I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation. Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." No wonder that we are told, the scribes and Pharisees were fearfully aroused at these words, and began to surround and press in upon Jesus with hot and vehement words. But not one jot or tittle of the open and necessary truth Jesus had uttered did He retract or modify. Going out from the enraged

company He began to preach to the multitude: "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." "And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him." And Christ Himself, in His entire treatment of those who already planned to kill Him, was the embodiment of the fearlessness which He preached.

The twofold cleansing of the temple reveals the same fearlessness. The first took place when Christ began His ministry. He had hardly any followers as yet. This, so far as we know, was His first public appearance in Jerusalem. He came without possessing any recognized authority. And He introduced Himself by driving out single-handed the whole crowd of them that sold sheep and oxen in the temple courts, and poured out the changers' money and overthrew their tables. The act was a clear condemnation of the authorities who had given their permission to this shameful business. It seems almost impossible that Jesus should have been able to perform such a deed. It seems so to us, only because our courage is not equal to the deed.

The second cleansing of the temple occurred after the glorious entry on Palm Sunday. Then the doom of Jesus was already sealed, the hate of the Jewish rulers had become implacable and ineradicable. But Jesus feared them not.

Again, when the number of His followers had increased greatly, and enthusiasm for Jesus as the Messiah ran high, He made no attempt whatever at utilizing the support of the multitude in behalf of His cause. They were ready to proclaim Him their king and to bear Him in triumph to Jerusalem. The disciples would have encouraged and accommodated themselves to the favorable temper of the people. But Christ saw only how far they had missed His true aim and purpose. He proceeds at once to disenchant them. He fears not to turn them all away, and to walk on and work on unsupported and alone. His sermon on the Bread of Life caused many to leave Him, saying: "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" And even the disciples murmured, so that Christ asked them: "Doth this offend you?" Where others would have feared to lose favor Christ feared not; where others would have tempered and trained their words, so as to retain the influence obtained, Christ speaks the everlasting truth, and crushes all false hopes and aspirations, however fair and flattering they seem. Though every human support fall aside, He is undismayed; His courage has deeper foundation.

This is the course Christ followed fearlessly to the end. There were some outbursts of popular enthusiasm in His favor, but with a courageous hand He quietly puts them down as they arise. He preaches the same everlasting truth, though His enemies increase, His friends turn away, and even His followers become bewildered. And the climax of that preaching was the announcement, almost incredible to those

who heard it, of His own shameful death. At first the disciples could not admit the literal sense of the words. Then Peter took Christ aside and urged Him: "Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee." But Christ's strong hand brushed Peter's timid counsel aside. While the mere thought of such a death struck terror to their hearts, Christ went on unflinchingly into its very jaws. He was aware of all the agonies awaiting Him in Jerusalem, even as He had foreseen the fury of the storm on the lake; His pure and tender heart anticipated every pang as our dulled and darkened hearts can never anticipate coming pain — yet He never wavered for an instant. And though sorrows at last overwhelmed His soul, and His poor body could hardly stand the stupendous strain of the sacrifice, when the traitor and his helpers appeared at the gate of Gethesmane, Christ was ready and by an unexampled act of courage gave Himself into the tortures and death they would prepare for Him. And during all those heart-rending last hours before the Highpriest, Pilate, Herod, and on the cross never a murmur passed His lips. Like a lamb led to the slaughter He opened not His mouth; like an invincible rock His courage stood to the last. While at any moment one word or motion would have called down to His rescue all the omnipotence of God, He moved neither hand nor tongue. His everlasting fortitude could not be overcome.

To understand this fearless fortitude and courage of Jesus, our example, it is necessary to look beneath the surface and to uncover the hidden foundation whereon

it rested. A close examination of the outward manifestation of His unparalleled courage already shows striking and profound differences between the common, natural courage of even the bravest and noblest of men and the spiritual, divine courage of Christ. These differences increase and finally exhibit themselves to be vital, when we look into the inner life and heart of Christ and see there the well-spring of His fortitude.

Christ and the Father are one; Jesus was the eternal Son of God. And though He walked on earth in the form of man, His essential unity with the Father was a constant reality. And Christ ever knew Himself to be one with the Father. He had come to do that Father's will in working out our salvation; and the constant assurance of the Father's pleasure in His Son and Servant accompanied Christ through His entire life. This assurance included the perfect certainty of the divine guidance and protection at every step. Nothing in heaven or earth or hell could harm Him whom the Father had sent. Whatever suffering touched Christ came upon Him only as sent or permitted by the Father's will; came upon Him only because Christ Himself willed it and gave Himself into it. And here we have the true source of His calm fortitude and of His absolute lack of fear.

The God-man was ever absolutely sure of His heavenly Father, and therefore He was ever absolutely sure of everything else. There was no such thing as an evil or untoward chance in all His life. Nothing of its own will or determination could come upon Him or interfere in any way with His work. Hell might rage,

but all its fury was vain and impotent; Christ feared it not. Men might turn against the Son of man and plot and plan His destruction, all their hatred was held in the bridle of omnipotence, and would be let loose only when it pleased the Father and when the Son was ready; He feared it not. Nature might burst out in an uproar, the wind and waves unite in furious tumult, the Father held both in the hollow of His hand, and Christ could lie down calmly to sleep. Being ever in perfect harmony with the Father, there was nothing whatever for Jesus to fear; being ever perfectly conscious of this harmony and all it contained, no shadow of actual fear or uneasiness disturbed the heart of Jesus. This is at once the perfect explanation and the distinctive peculiarity of Christ's fearlessness.

And it is for us to follow in His footsteps, as many an admonition from His own lips shows us; and by His Spirit's help we can indeed overcome fear and timidity, and learn something of the spiritual courage that shines so gloriously in the heroes of Christian history.

"Be not afraid, only believe!" This word of Christ to Jairus, when his heart was rent with doubt and sorrow, opens for us the fountain of true courage. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Here again we touch the same well-spring of Christlike fearlessness. When the passion of Christ approached, and the disciples were troubled, Christ directed them to the everlasting source of Christian fortitude: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth

give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

What is this hidden fountain of fearlessness for Christ's followers? It is the sum of His everlasting promises; the more they accept and trust in these and hold fast to them by faith, the more their hearts will be filled with Christlike courage. Why should Jairus fear to lose his daughter, when Christ had consented to save her life? To be sure, as long as he doubted Christ's power or willingness, fear would crush his heart. The moment he believed fully the promise of Christ, all appearances counted for nothing, and fear was gone. Why should the little flock of believers be afraid of perishing? They have their Father's promise of the kingdom; they can fear and be worried and distressed only as long as they doubt; the moment they believe that promise fully, they may laugh at fear. Why should the disciples be troubled and afraid at Christ's leaving them? They had His sure promise of His resurrection, of His glorification and exaltation; He gave them His peace, accepted them as His own, whom He would lead into the everlasting city of peace. They could fear only as long as they failed to understand His promises, or as long as they gave way to doubt. The full assurance of faith was bound to produce an invincible courage in their hearts.

As Christ and the Father were one essentially; so we and Christ together with the Father and the Spirit are one through the adoption of God's grace. As the Son of man in all His earthly life rested with serene assurance in His oneness with the Father; so we should rest

with the serene assurance of faith in the grace and promises of Christ. Then will fear go out, and calmness and courage and abiding joy enter in. What if the elements of nature, or the fury of earthly foes, or the machinations of the evil one rise up against us—faith keeps its eye fixed on high. No man shall pluck us out of the hand of Christ; no creature shall separate us from the love of God; all things must work together for good to them that love God and are His. With David we may exclaim: "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about." Ps. 3, 6. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Ps. 23, 4. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear." Ps. 27, 1. 3. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah." Ps. 46, 1. 3. The letter to the Hebrews assures us: "We may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." And Peter writes: "Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." And Christ Himself bade the church at Smyrna: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." Rev. 2, 10.

There is no cause for the true Christian to fear, as there was no cause for Christ to fear; therefore the Christian may be fearless as was Christ. The believer fears only when he forgets his faith and gives his heart over to doubt. "O ye of little faith, why are ye fearful?" As long as Peter believed, the water beneath his feet was solid; the moment he doubted, his feet sank. Discouragements, misfortunes, dangers, troubles, sickness, and the ills of life of whatever kind trouble and harrass us with fear, only when our faith droops or goes out. Faith is the victory which overcometh the world. In other words, the fear of God is the death of all other fear and the birth of Christlike courage.

The fear of God, however, necessarily includes true obedience to God. Christ never deviated from the Fathers' will, and therefore the Father's protection was ever about Him. The believer who would be fearless as was Christ must not follow the perverse guidance of his own will, or of that of the world and the devil. God's promises protect us only when we follow God's ways and do His work. With God we may face the antagonism of all the world and remain fearless, confident, joyful. The moment we follow our own fleshly ambition, give way to our evil lusts, seek the gratification of our selfishness, we step out from under the shield of God's protecting promises, and become a prey to doubt and fear. Therefore, the follower of Christ's footsteps will ever keep carefully to the counsel of God's testimonies, and pray constantly for God's guidance and direction. Christlike fearlessness is

wrought by the Word of God, and developed by the spirit of prayer.

This fearlessness differs vitally from the mere natural courage so much admired among men. The backbone of Christlike courage is trust in Christ and His Word; that of natural courage is reliance on man's own prowess and strength, or the simple disregard of danger and of threatening harm. The Christian's fear dies, because he sees God removing the cause of fear for him; the worldling's fear goes out, because he stiffens and hardens his heart against the emotion of fear, while the cause of fear still remains. Those who are naturally timid will not be able to overcome their inclination to fear by any of the help nature may have to offer; education and training may do a little, but never enough. The most shrinking and timid can be rendered completely fearless by being filled with the faith which renews the heart and expels all fear.

Examples of the fearlessness of faith abound. Heb. 11 gives us a description of fearless Christian heroes: "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in

sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

The disciples had their doors locked at first for fear of the Jews; but when their hearts were fully established, they went forth boldly and knew no fear, however the Sanhedrin might threaten. Women and even children among the early martyrs were not discouraged or cowed by the most hideous threats of torture. Luther feared not to enter Worms and stand before kings and princes, though all the tiles on the roofs should be devils gaping to devour him.

Fear shall take hold of all the wicked at last, though now they boast with great show of courage and hide or hush the fearful accuser in their breast. But the fortitude and fearlessness of Christ's followers shall ever increase. And though at times their courage sinks, their prayers will soon dispel their doubts, for Christ hastens to their relief.

Jesus Christ, we cry to Thee:
Come to us out on the sea!
Storm and tide have wrecked our sail;
Helpless now the howling gale
Drives our craft and drowns our wail.
Hear us, Christ, we cry to Thee:
Aid us in our jeopardy!

Jesus Christ, we cling to Thee:
Bide with us out on the sea!
All our skill and might is vain;
Thou alone hast power to rein
Raging storm and roaring main.
Hear us, Christ, we cling to Thee;
Bide with us in jeopardy!

Jesus Christ, we trust in Thee:
Bring us home across the sea!
Yonder gleams the golden shore;
Guide the helm, direct the oar,
Leave, O leave us nevermore.
Hear us, Christ, we trust in Thee:
Save us from our jeopardy!

CHAPTER XXIII.

TELL NO MAN.

THE counterpart and complement of Christ's fearlessness is His perfect prudence, an example for us to follow.

The fearless man is liable to be over-bold, daring, reckless, and foolhardy, just as the fearful man is in danger of becoming cowardly, over-careful, over-cautious, and anxious. But the perfect virtues of the God-man never degenerate into corresponding faults. Though absolutely fearless there is no recklessness, no braggadocio, no temerity in the heart or actions of Jesus. His fearlessness is in perfect balance with His prudence and discretion.

The prudence of Jesus manifested itself especially in two lines of action. He cautiously commissioned the proclamation of His work and aims to men especially called, and prepared; He prudently evaded the final conflict with His enemies until the fixed time for the end drew nigh.

One of the first great miracles was that performed in the crowded synagogue in Capernaum upon a man possessed by an unclean spirit. This spirit knew Jesus and shouted aloud: "I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of Israel." Christ commanded the spirit to hold his peace, He desired no devil to proclaim

Him as the Messiah. On the same day and in the same city He healed many possessed persons. Invariably the evil spirits desired to tell who Jesus was: "Thou art Christ, the Son of God." But Jesus "suffered them not to speak, for they knew that He was Christ."

A few days later, near the sea, the same attempt of the spirits was repeated, but again Jesus straitly charged them not to make Him known. Their speaking could only interfere with His plans. Jesus could have no communion whatever with the devils, whose works He had come to destroy. To-day men seek the voice of spirits and follow their ostensible biddings. Such people evidently have not the Spirit of Christ.

In the early part of Christ's ministry we find Him forbidding almost every person whom He healed of any affliction to make any open announcement in regard to the miracle itself or to Him who had wrought it. A leper had his prayer heard, "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean." Jesus dismissed him with the injunction: "See thou say nothing to any man, but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest." And in this case we see the necessity for this prudent command. The man disregarded Christ's word and "published much and blazed abroad" what Jesus had done, so that He "could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places."

The parents of the little daughter called back to life by Jesus in Capernaum were bidden to "tell no man what was done." The two blind men who followed Jesus into the house and were healed received the same stringent command: "See that no man know it. And these two again disobeyed. The deaf and dumb man

who was healed in the midst of Decapolis not only himself received such a bidding from his Benefactor, but all the people who saw the miracle were likewise directed to keep silence, although in vain. The most explicit requirement of silence was laid upon a blind man healed in Bethsaida; he was sent "to his house" with the word: "Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town."

We may fairly presume that in every case where there was likelihood of the recipient of Christ's miraculous help proclaiming His deed abroad, the command of silence was added. Wisdom and prudence both dictated such a command. For what would such people invariably say? The miracle and nothing but the miracle would be their theme. They did not even understand the true meaning and purpose of these miracles. Their blazing Christ's miracles abroad, their accounts interlarded with all manner of exaggerations and imaginary detail, would have left an entirely false impression on the people. Christ did not want Himself introduced as a sensational worker of miracles. The kingdom of faith, and not the mere work of miracles, was the burden of His message. The excited and enthused utterances of people who had received His help could not aid His cause. The unauthorized proclamation of what Jesus wrought and what He was, could only work mischief. Christ had not come to draw excited multitudes around Him and regale them with signs and wonders. He had come to seek and to save the lost. It was best even for those who had made proof of Christ's miraculous power to go home quietly and to ponder in their hearts what they had

seen and heard and experienced. Such quiet meditation would have helped them to believe in Christ and to receive His highest blessings. Faith could only be prevented and hindered in its growth by their public parading and ignorant boasting of what had been done to them.

We know of only one exception to the rule Christ adopted in silencing the recipients of miraculous blessings. The two men freed of evil spirits in the land of the Gadarenes were instructed not to follow Jesus, as they at first desired, but to go home and publish throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto them. This command was obeyed. And the reason for it is plain. The Gadarene people bade Christ leave them, and Christ did not force Himself upon their unwillingness; yet He left them not without witness. The miracle He had wrought was to ring in their ears, if possible to lead some of them to believe.

Christ had made ample provision for announcing Himself without the questionable aid of incapable volunteers. He went in person from city to city; especially in Galilee He made one tour after another, and preached and taught everywhere. Then He trained and instructed the twelve, and afterwards the seventy; and when He needed their services to prepare the way for Him or to send His message where He would not go in person, He called, commissioned, and sent them out with careful instructions as to where they should go, how they should conduct themselves, and what they should say and do. The wisdom of this procedure is apparent. Having His own proper and prepared agents sent at His own proper time, there was

absolutely no need of self-commissioned efforts in His behalf. The prudent wisdom of Jesus shines forth abundantly.

How great this caution and prudence of Jesus was, especially as regards the proclamation of His name, we see by the restrictions which He placed even upon those who were called to be His messengers. They were by no means ready to declare everything to the people, especially when now enmity was rife in the land, and Jesus Himself was avoiding Galilee. Therefore, when Peter, leading the rest, made the noble confession, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus charged them all to tell no man that thing. Shortly after, Peter, James, and John witnessed the transfiguration of Christ on the mount. "And as He came down from the mountain. Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be risen again from the dead." "And they kept it close, and told no man in those days of those things which they had seen." With all the instructions of their Master the disciples were far from understanding fully their own confession and such a vision as that of the Transfiguration. Their own interest as well as the cause of Jesus counseled silence for the present. The prudence of Jesus knew no haste; He could wait patiently and courageously for the hour of fruition, while the seed slept and swelled in the ground. Where others would have been fast to reap, He was prudently content to sow.

It was but a little while till the unavoidable enmity against Jesus began to burst forth. This was an additional reason for shutting the lips and stopping the

efforts of foolish men. The uninstructed enthusiasm of such people could only serve to inflame the hatred of the Jewish authorities and drive them to wreak their vengeance upon Jesus before His work in the land had been finished. We see their rising fury in several instances when the miraculous work of Jesus came before them and aroused the envy in their hearts.

For the very reason, that the inevitable catastrophe might not be brought on before the fulness of time, Christ prudently guided His steps so that His work might be duly completed. There was no shadow of fear or cowardice in His cautious movements. His fearless courage faced His haters often enough; and when at last the time was come, Jesus left the safety and solitude of distant and secluded neighborhoods, and steadfastly set Himself to go up to Jerusalem to die. But while He had yet to break the bread of life far and near throughout the land, while He had yet to train the chosen apostles for their great life-work after His death, while He had yet to do and to say all that the prophets of old had promised concerning Him, He followed the voice of prudence and ran no unnecessary risks.

We must remember here that Christ never used His miraculous powers in an unnecessary way for what we might call mere personal ends. He could indeed have maintained Himself in Jerusalem as long as He pleased against the most violent fury of His foes. He could have held their frenzy in check by His omnipotent word. But this was not according to His plans. The same end could be reached by different

means, by a prudent course more in accord with the Father's will. Christ would not cast Himself down from the temple hight, tempting God to preserve Him by angelic hands from untimely destruction. In the same way, Christ did not recklessly cast Himself into the midst of His foes, and did not tempt God to preserve Him by miraculous intervention from untimely death. Duty dictated prudence, and Christ guided His steps accordingly.

Jesus made only a brief visit to Jerusalem at the time of the first passover after the opening of His ministry. After John's imprisonment He hastened to Galilee. (Matth. 4, 12; Mark 1, 14.) This province was better suited for the unhindered development of His work. "Along the western coast of the Sea of Galilee the chief scene of our Lord's northern ministry, lay a net-work of towns densely inhabited, and containing a large admixture of Gentile traders. This infusion of foreign blood, the want of any such religious centre as Jerusalem, and the contempt with which the southern Jews regarded their provincial brethren of Galilee, had no doubt loosened to some extent the yoke of the priests and scribes and lawyers in that province." (Hughes). To be sure, even here in due time danger would dog His steps. But He could easily, when necessary, withdraw northwestward toward the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, or southeastward into Peræa, and the end would then be near enough.

And this is exactly what Christ did. Judging the character of the leaders in Jerusalem, Jesus had made Galilee from the start the scene of His most extended

work. Even thus the hatred of the hierarchy at the capital soon crystallized. After the second passover following the beginning of His ministry, the antagonism of the Sanhedrim was fixed. Therefore now more than ever "Jesus walked in Galilee; for He would not walk in Jewry (Judæa), because the Jews sought to kill Him." John 7, 1. Prudence more than ever constrained Him to avoid the holy city; His appearances there were only brief and transient.

The work in Galilee went on unchecked at first; but in due time here also the rabbis and Pharisees turned in bitter hatred against Him. Finally the disciples asked, "Knowest Thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying?" Matth. 15, 12. Jesus knew the temper of his foes only too well, and next we hear of Him in the distant heathen coasts of Tyre and Sidon. Here we are told that He entered a house and wanted no man to know of His presence. Mark 7, 24. But He could not remain hidden, so He journeyed on till we find Him again in the coasts of Decapolis, east of the Lake in the country of the Ten Cities. Healing the deaf and dumb man here, He commands him to tell no man. Again His presence is noised abroad, and again He prudently moves on. This time we hear of Him near Magdala in "the parts of Dalmanutha", Matth. 15, 39; Mark 7, 10; then He crosses the Lake and enters Bethsaida at its northern extremity. The blind man is here commanded to go home and be silent about his healing. Jesus moves on northward toward Cæsarea Philippi

and remains for some time in this neighborhood, telling the disciples of His end.

Finally, having thus circled about Galilee, He returns, but only to pass through, "and He would not that any man should know it." Mark 9, 30. He now enters Capernaum for a last transient visit; and when asked about the tribute, renders payment "lest He should offend them", or provoke His enemies unnecessarily. He now leaves Galilee for good, going "through the midst of Galilee and Samaria." He soon appears in Jerusalem, whither He had set His face, to die there, passing in and out of the city for a brief time, then retiring to Peræa, till His final entrance is made, and the great Passion-week begins.

These last movements of Jesus are especially cautious and careful. When requested to proceed to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles He answers: "Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet fully come." When His kinsmen had gone, Jesus also went, "not openly, but as it were in secret." John 7, 10. At the opening of the feast there was great questioning as to whether Jesus would come; and no man could tell. His foes, therefore, did not make full preparation for His destruction. In the midst of the feast Jesus suddenly appeared. John 7, 14. Even then, however, repeated attempts were made to take Him (John 7, 52, 44; 8, 20), also to stone Him (John 8, 59). It was by no means safe for Him to stay long within the walls, and accordingly we find Him at one time at Bethany (Luke 10, 38), then somewhere near the city "in a

certain place" (Luke 11, 1), now here, now there. Finally He withdraws altogether to Peræa.

But the last hour came on apace. After the royal entry on Palm Sunday He retires to quiet Bethany. The plans of the Jews for His death are progressing steadily. Only a few more careful evasions, and all will be over. The place for the passover is prepared secretly so that even Judas knew not where it would be held. Christ means to preclude any treachery or betrayal during those last sacred hours. Knowing all the movements and plans of His enemies He prudently guides Himself, so that He may give Himself into their hands at the time and place chosen by Himself and the Father.

The example of Christ shows us that Christian prudence is one of the finest of Christlike virtues.

There is a time to speak, and a time to be silent; a time to stretch forth the hands boldly, and a time to fold them submissively; a time to stand like Luther at Worms against the whole world if need be, and a time to pray and labor silently like Luther in his Patmos at the Wartburg; a time to risk everything at the call of God, no matter what the danger that threatens, and a time to risk nothing because God does not call, and we must not tempt Him by our rashness; a time to expect even miraculous intervention from on high, and a time to expect nothing but the regular sequence of cause and effect; a time to trust all the possibilities of divine promise, and a time to follow only the prose of human probabilities, as Christian reason marks them out.

We are prone to make mistakes by forgetting now the one and then the other. To be silent, to go out of the way, to take no risk, to tie the thoughts down to unpleasant probabilities, often seems tame and even cowardly. But we see Christ pursuing the prudent path all through those three years of His ministry; and His example should be enough for even the most valorous of His followers. When we have no clear call of God to go forward into danger and death, Christlike prudence is the highest virtue, and self-willed rashness the greatest wrong. On the other hand, to speak out boldly, to stand even solitary and alone against overwhelming odds, to dare unflinchingly even apparent impossibilities, may seem foolhardy to the timid and weak, when they listen to the voice of false prudence and temporizing expediency. But where the voice of God calls, all arguments of reason, all remonstrances of foolish human wisdom are not prudence, but mere wilful disobedience, altogether un-Christlike and un-Christian.

It certainly belongs to Christian prudence and wisdom to take the rich earthly gifts of God gratefully and to dispose of them in such a way that the hour of need will not find us totally unprovided. Prudence demands that we shield our health and use all human means placed at our disposal for regaining it when lost. Speculation is sin; gambling or betting likewise. The risk involved may produce an excitement pleasurable to the the ungodly; in the godly this risk, this petty or potent tempting of God, will only produce abhorrence. Only when our wisdom is at an

end, will the Christlike man look to God and expect everything of Him. When all our efforts fail to bring us bread, He still has means to provide for us; He may commission the ravens to feed us; when all our prayerful medical care is fruitless, He still has remedies to preserve life; when all our God-given strength and skill proves impotent to ward off the threatening danger, He still has power and wisdom to shield. Then is the hour for heroic faith; and until then is the hour for prayerful, careful prudence.

The example of Christ contains one especial lesson of prudent wisdom. No exigencies or demands of the hour and no seeming present advantages dare induce us to set aside the divinely indicated order for spreading the name of Christ. Christ's cautious procedure in silencing many who were ready to proclaim His name, and in restricting the utterances even of the twelve, surely contains a bidding we dare not disregard. Not all, however willing and zealous, may undertake the work of preaching and teaching the gospel, but only those who are properly fitted out and called. It is not said that those whom Christ commands to be still, understood in every instance the reason for His command; some evidently did not, but imagined that there was great reason for their speaking out. And yet though men failed to understand the prudent wisdom of Christ, the results of their hasty zeal abundantly justified the wisdom of Jesus. Some now may not understand why women, for instance, are commanded by the Scriptures to keep silence in the church; and yet the wisdom of

the Holy Spirit's prohibition will never lack justification. The higher the plane of life or of work, the more necessary Christlike carefulness and obedience. The more our prudence trusts the wisdom of the Master of all prudence, the greater will be our praise and blessing in keeping the path of His footsteps.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM.

THE cross on Golgatha's brow is at once the symbol of the fiercest human hate, and of the most ardent divine love. Greater than the hatred was the love that met and sought to overcome it. And now this love of Jesus Christ bids us follow in its footsteps and love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us.

Christ had many enemies. It cannot surprise us that this should be so. Christ Himself told the disciples: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." The world hated Christ for the same reason it hated and still hates His disciples, because He was not of the world. The two were diametrically opposed from the start. Falsehood will never love truth, nor hypocrisy purity of purpose; darkness will ever hate the light, and the adherents of error Him who exposes its falsity. The lovers of sin will have no affection for Him who is sinless, and would separate them from their sin, pronouncing condemnation upon them if they refused. Those who are



*Father, forgive them; for they know not
what they do.— Luke 23, 24.*

from beneath hate Him who is from above; they who were of their father, the devil, had nothing but antagonism for the Son of God. "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets." It was no wonder that the Jews did not speak well of Christ, but exhausted their skill in vituperation and slander, for He was no false prophet, pandering to their lusts of earthly greatness and fleshly ambition. The light came into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light. This explains all the enmity that rose around the path of Christ who was the true light.

The cleansing of the temple at the beginning of Christ's ministry brings to view the gulf that separated the Son of man from the Jewish authorities. He sought the honor of His heavenly Father, they sought a base revenue by dragging God's honor into the dust. Christ would have His Father's house a house of prayer for all nations, they were ready to make it a den of thieves. Therefore, when Christ cleansed the Temple, no applause was forthcoming from the scribes and elders. Their antagonistic spirit comes out demanding by what authority Christ performed this deed. They showed with sufficient clearness that the authority they loved and acted upon, differed greatly from the authority that brought forth the deed they had just witnessed.

We meet the same antagonism at every turn in the life of Christ. They who are from beneath could not understand the words and deeds of Him who was from above, and found themselves constantly at variance with the Son who did only what He had seen and heard

with the Father. When Christ forgave the paralytic the scribes were shocked, and Christ's gracious act appeared to them to be blasphemy; and even after He wrought the miracle of healing the sick man by a word, their objection remained. In the same way, when Christ healed the man who had lain for thirty-eight years, and bade him take up his bed and walk, the Jews, shocked at seeing a bed carried on the Sabbath, inquired indignantly, "What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk?" The gracious works of the Son of God were grievous offenses in the eyes of these people who knew not God. And when Christ's reply came to their ears, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," their anger grew so great that they sought to kill Him, because in addition to breaking the Sabbath, as they thought, He made Himself equal with God.

The same effect was produced by the teaching of Christ. They who knew nothing of true mercy were silenced indeed, but not satisfied, by the merciful declaration of Christ, that the sick needed a physician, and not those who are whole; and haughtily they turned away from this Physician because He consorted with publicans and sinners. How widely separated were Christ accepting the woman who was a sinner, and Simon the Pharisee and his companions drawing their robes aside, lest her touch might defile them. All the wonderful mercy and compassion of Jesus, seeking to save the lost, was like a sealed book to the blind eyes of the Pharisees and scribes. Every invitation of Jesus to come unto Him as the way, the truth, and the life, as the light of the world, as the Son of God sent by

the Father, as the Savior who alone has the words of eternal life, aroused the Jews to hatred. They rejected this Bridegroom; they would not have this Man to rule over them, they wanted no king but Cæsar.

Whenever any man did turn to Jesus and accept the invitation of His saving love, the Jews became envious and angry. They cast out the blind man whom Christ healed, when this man refused to admit that his Helper was not of God. The moment the Pharisees heard that the people were murmuring regarding Jesus, "When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" they sent officers to take Him. The return of these officers with nothing but the statement, "Never man spake like this Man," enraged them still more. Full of impotent anger they cried: "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him? But this people who knoweth not the law are accursed!" In vain did timid Nicodemus attempt to reason with them, "Doth our law judge any man before it heareth him and knoweth what he doeth?" Glaring upon him they curled their lips in scorn. "Art thou also of Galilee?" A little more and even Nicodemus would have been cast out in spite of his high station. After this it cannot surprise us that the chief rulers sought to kill Lazarus because the miracle Christ wrought upon him made a deep impression upon many of the people. The more Christ unfolded His mission of heavenly love, the more did the servants of Satan rage and rebel. To quench the love of Jesus in His own blood, to annihilate all who listened to this love, became the fiery passion of their hearts. The heart of Christ was filled

with saving love and truth, the hearts of His enemies with murder and lies; this explains their conduct as well as His.

When once this spirit of enmity had begun to stir in the hearts of the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders, there was no stopping until the lifeless form of their victim hung upon the cross. The more Christ prosecuted His work of love, the more they prosecuted their work of hate. They watched Him, tempted Him, sought to ensnare Him, slandered Him, vituperated Him, agitated the people against Him, conspired against Him, attempted again and again to take and kill Him, brought treachery against Him, and finally unloaded all their desperate cruelty upon His innocent head, and nailed Him to the accursed tree. Every attempt of the love of Christ failed to check the onward rush of their hate. From every sweet flower of kindness and gentleness they drew the poison of deadly hostility. Far beyond the grave this desperate hatred followed Him who gave Himself into death as a sacrifice for them.

Of all this hatred, as far as Christ is concerned, His own saying is true: "Now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father; but this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause." From the beginning He had fulfilled all righteousness; we seek in vain in His life for any just cause of offense; the Jews themselves knew no reply but slander and insult to the challenge, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" He ever told them the truth—by attempting to stone or crucify Him for this they committed a crime for which

they themselves should have been stoned or crucified. "Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?" They were constrained to answer, "For a good work we stone Thee not"; and yet they never could point to a single evil work.

To be sure, the words and works of Christ angered, and at times even infuriated, His enemies. He told them plainly that they were not the seed of Abraham, but of their father the devil; and He proved what He said by pointing to their hearts full of lies and murder. He declared them hypocrites, and proved it again by laying bare their empty outward observances and false lip-service, while their hearts were all filthy within and far from God. He showed them plainly whither their sin was leading them, even to punishment greater than that awaiting Sodom or Nineveh. The calm, dispassionate, absolute truth of all these declarations was so manifest, that they who were smitten by them found no answer. Some ground their teeth in suppressed rage, others burst out with vehemence; but never a single Pharisee or lawyer stood up and proved the word of Christ false. It was impossible for the Son of God to remain silent while about Him men hardened themselves in sin. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin." God had sent Him to save men, but when they would not be saved and stopped their ears, Christ had to tell them that their end would be death and damnation. Every rag of excuse, every plea of ignorance was removed, and they were exhibited as what they were in reality. Though they might

grow frantic and frenzied, the Father's true and faithful witness did His part.

However great the enmity that assailed Jesus, however strongly He was impelled to use words stern and awful, there was never in His dealings with His enemies the least sign of enmity, spite, malice, vengeance, or cruel exultation on His part. He brushed their vexatious questions aside like so many noisome flies. He frustrated their most vicious and dextrous attempts at entangling Him, by uttering a single sentence, by drawing attention to a single word. They were ever completely at His mercy in the war they waged upon Him. But at every turn in Christ's dealings with His foes we hear the voice of love. When they were ready to stone Him, He had barely uttered the sweet gospel promise: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." When they tried again to stone Him, He had just finished the declaration of love: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Never did Christ return evil for evil. When the Pharisees accused Him of blasphemy in forgiving sins, and again in making Himself equal with God, and when they declared Him in league with Beelzebub, He stopped and calmly explained and proved the utter baselessness of these accusations. When the Pharisees dogged His footsteps, watched His every word and act with malicious eyes to catch some flaw, used every means fair or foul for injuring Him, He never taunted them, and never made one move resembling resentment or retali-

ation. Love, divine, perfect love lay at the bottom of all He said and did.

This love was ready at all times to forgive. Every gospel invitation and promise contained the offer of forgiveness. "Whosoever believeth shall not perish"—even though he have hitherto been one of Christ's greatest foes. In fact, this gospel offer of forgiveness was the vital part of all Christ's discourses and conversations with His enemies. He labored assiduously that they might turn from their sin, believe in Him, and receive everlasting forgiveness. As at last He treated the malefactor, so He longed to treat all His foes. When that evil-doer ceased blaspheming with his companion and turned to Christ, praying to be remembered in His kingdom, Christ forgave him his blasphemy and all his sin, and assured him of the joys of Paradise. It was this same forgiving love which pleaded with the Father above at the very moment when the terrible act of crucifixion was performed. As Christ's limbs were stretched out upon the cross, as the dull blows resounded driving home the sharp spikes through bone and sinew—it was not a cry of pain or anguish, it was a prayer that came from the bloodless lips: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Even at this moment Christ's pierced hands opened the door of forgiveness. The angel of wrath was not permitted to descend at once with his flaming sword; the gracious messengers of peace were still to preach the gospel in Jerusalem and Judæa. The tree was not to be cut down at once; for another year, a year as God's grace counts it, the gardener would use all His efforts and skill, that it might yet be made to

bring fruit. Here indeed the words of Christ were converted into deeds: Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully entreat you and persecute you.

Perhaps the most striking feature in Christ's dealings with His enemies is His absolute non-resistance. He never met violence by violence; He never raised a hand to strike a blow. The most that He did was to convey Himself out of the reach of His enemies, until the appointed hour came. He bore every slight and injury with perfect patience and meekness. His innocence was the shield that covered Him. When men were not deterred by that, when in spite of it they wounded His tender heart and at last heaped untold sufferings upon His head, Christ submitted without even a murmur, like a lamb sent to the slaughter. The weapons of His warfare were absolutely spiritual, and never in the least carnal. Therefore Christ was ever victorious, and His enemies ever defeated, even when their brutality seemed to have conquered, and Christ hung bleeding on the cross. No violence was used in reply to Judas' treachery, nothing but the word that cut deeply into the traitor's conscience: "Friend, wherefore art thou come? Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" No blow to reply to the blow of the high priest's servant, but only the crushing rebuke: "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" When Peter could not restrain his hand and smote off Malchus' ear, Christ made Peter desist at once; moreover, He did not let the hurt pass that had been done to His enemy, but touched the ear and healed it. The crimi-

nal procedure of the Jewish Council in seeking false witness Christ condemned by the silence of innocence, and His most hardened foes felt the just condemnation. Such were the weapons Christ wielded throughout; they are the only ones able to conquer evil hearts, and if these fail in the hands of love, evil must go on till it plunges headlong into its own doom.

As Christ could not pass through this world without being hated and persecuted, so we who tread in His footsteps cannot escape enmity and opposition. "If they have hated me, they will hate you." And the reason for this is the same as in the case of Christ. The world loves its own; therefore it hates those who are not of the world, but are chosen out of the world. The spirit of the world is full of bitter animosity toward those who are led by the Spirit of God. Woe unto us when all men speak well of us; for this would show that we are led by the same worldly spirit.

The world's hatred and persecution is therefore a sign that we are not of the world. "Rejoice, therefore, and be glad," when the world's hostility proclaims that you belong to Christ. "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice. inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you."

Nevertheless, we must remember that our sin frequently provokes men to oppose and evilly entreat us. Peter admonishes us, and we must recognize the ne-

cessity of the admonition, that none of us suffer as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Where Christ could say that men hated Him without a cause, we must confess that we frequently give them cause to hate us. When our evil, perverse, foolish actions bring their natural fruits in stirring evil men to retaliate by malice, vilification, and vengeance, we must bow our heads in shame, suffer what our evil deeds are worth, repent, and turn unto better deeds. But we are so liable to think that we are right; so easily we deceive ourselves. Other men's faults we see, our own we fail to see; others we judge and condemn, and fail to do Paul's bidding, "If we judged ourselves, we should not be judged." The danger that thus threatens us must ever be kept in mind and warded off by constant self-examination in honesty of heart. That man is his own greatest foe who persists in judging himself falsely, and refuses to submit to the purifying judgments of his Master.

Love your enemies — it is an absolute impossibility for the old Adam in us to do it, but never impossible for the new man born of the Spirit of Christ. "His commandments are not grievous", and this one is no exception, for those who follow Christ's footsteps, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you — it is one of the distinctive commandments of Christianity, and not so much a commandment as a vital principle, lifting our religion far above all others. We see it shining forth in Stephen preaching to the hostile Jews and praying for them in Christ's own words with his dying breath. We behold it again in Paul, whose heart's prayer for Israel was that they might be saved,

and who was ready to suffer anything and lose everything, if only he might attain this desire of his love. And yet the Israel for which he travailed in spirit hated and persecuted him as it had hated and persecuted Christ.

When we are bidden by Christ's example to love those that hate us, we must distinguish between the love that flows from the natural heart and the spiritual love that flows from the new spirit dwelling in us. Men love their wives, parents their children, friends their friends, the recipients of favors their benefactors. Such love is possible without Christ. It is not a love of this kind which Christ means in bidding us love our enemies. All natural love has more or less of a selfish foundation; therefore all natural love must be steeped into the Spirit of Christ, cleansed, elevated, sanctified. The selfish basis of natural love cannot be made to bear the true love of an enemy, because this love requires Christlike unselfishness. But when our hearts are led by the Spirit of Christ, when we learn to love parents, wives, children, friends, and benefactors with the spiritualized love that flows from above, we will be able to love our enemies also with the same love, born of Christ, and free from selfishness.

The vital purpose of this love will be identical with the purpose of Christ's love for His enemies. Mere natural love lives and moves in the things of earth, seeking to give pleasure and profit only in the things that fade and perish. The love that is from above lives and moves in Christ and in the things of Christ, putting even the things of earth entirely into His service. Christ's love sought above all the salvation of

His enemies; this was the great object of His labors of love in their midst. To win our enemies for salvation must be the central purpose of our love, of our loving labors, prayers, and desires. Christ's love shed many earthly blessings upon the men about Him. He healed the ear of Malchus; He fed thousands, though among them there may have been pharisaic spies; He healed the ten lepers of whom nine lacked even gratitude. But in all these works of love the object of Christ was to lead men upward to appreciate His heavenly love, and to seek from His loving hand the everlasting gifts He came to bestow. The same motive lies at the bottom of all Christlike love of enemies, at the bottom of all the kind and gracious deeds that flow from this love. When we feed a hungry foe, or give him drink in his thirst, or aid him in sickness and any distress, the inner motive must go beyond the outer relief. That relief is only the proper outward shell; the sweet kernel within is the desire that our Christlike love may be recognized, that it may overcome the antagonism of our foe, that it may penetrate his heart also with the power of Christ and lead him to become what we are, true followers of Christ's footsteps. It is clear that a love of this kind differs entirely from all the love of which the natural man is capable; yet this is Christlike love.

It is impossible for this love in the hearts of Christ's followers to close its eyes and seal its lips, when it meets the wickedness that dominates its enemies and threatens to lead them on to destruction. The love of Christ testified against the hypocrisy and reigning sins of His Jewish enemies. It armed itself

with the weapons of heaven and sought to vanquish the evil it met at every turn. Our love must do the same. It must grasp the spiritual sword of truth and testify against the open sins it meets. The thrusts of this sword, however, are not malice, bitterness, vilification, blustering words, offensive accusations, but calm statements and reasonings from the Word of God, earnest rebukes and appeals to conscience, dispassionate warnings of the judgments of God, loving invitations to forsake the kingdom of darkness and to enter the kingdom of Christ. Christ's life exhibits a great deal of this warfare of love against sin and its ruinous power among His enemies. To be sure, much of this work of love will not gain its blessed object. If they have obeyed me, they will obey you; many will not obey Christ, many will not obey us. They hated Christ only so much more intensely, they will hate and persecute us with the same increased intensity. But as Christ's love continued its work to the end and bore the sufferings that resulted, so will the Christlike love of His followers, comforting itself with the example of Christ and with the sweetness of His love.

The love of Christ was full of forgiveness, and our love must follow in the same path. "Agree with thine adversary quickly"; love will ever be ready to forget and forgive all it may have suffered, when its adversaries desire pardon. Not seven times, but seventy times seven, will it be ready to forgive. More than this, Christlike love holds out its forgiving hands even when its enemies desire no forgiveness and are bent on further injury. It resembles the love of God, which

is ready to forgive till the end, ready to bury the past and to receive its worst enemies into friendship and loving communion even at the last moment.

Christlike love is not opposed to Christlike prudence and wisdom. Jesus avoided His enemies when their fury grew excessive and His remaining in their midst was useless. The same course is for us to follow. Love will do all it can, and when that is in vain, withdraws lest enmity proceed to crime. Christ indeed gave Himself at last into the hands of His foes that they might work their will completely and slay Him. He was to die for our sins; we have no call to make such a sacrifice.

The wickedness of men is so great on earth that God has given the sword to the powers that be for vengeance upon the evil-doers. Christlike love does not debar us from seeking the proper protection of government against the malice of our enemies. Paul appealed to Cæsar. It would not be love to cast ourselves into the blood-thirsty hands of our enemies that they may multiply and increase their crimes.

Love is contrary to war and to every form of violence. But as long as the world is full of wickedness, refusing obedience to the Spirit of Christ, war may become a bitter necessity. The powers that be have received the sword to restrain the violent wickedness that would go forth spreading destruction and ravaging in insatiable greed. A Christian president, senate, or king, standing as the representatives of an entire nation, may be called to face the alternative, either to have the dearest treasures of the nation snatched away by the greedy ambition or some other

evil passion of a foe, or to grasp the sword committed to its trust, and wield it for the right and against the wrong. What the Christlike choice must be is not doubtful. A man may, therefore, be a soldier and a general and yet a true follower of Christ. His profession need not conflict with the love demanded in Christ's footsteps. John the Baptist did not ask soldiers to give up their profession as one at variance with the kingdom he proclaimed. He bade them: "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages." The police power and the army power of the state are checks for the violence and terrorism that would otherwise overrun the world. The one operates within the nation as such, the other between nations. As long as they stand for justice and right, so long they dare not be condemned, although their operations may be painful in the extreme. But when the powers that should check evil begin themselves to work evil, there is no doubt as to the condemnation. Countless wars have been waged which stand condemned without question. And yet, however much a soft sentimentalism may recoil from the bloody arbitrament of war, the dream of peace an earth will remain a dream, in spite of all humanitarian progress, until the nations of the earth bow in willing obedience to the true Prince of Peace. The Christian would rather follow the plow and wield the sickle in the arts of peace, but when the call comes to defend his altar and his hearth, he will not hesitate to shoulder the musket and buckle on the sword in the name of God.

Numberless are the evils that flow from the hatred of men. As this hatred bruised and wounded Christ without a cause, so it will bruise and wound His followers, now more and now less. Often our only reply will be like that of Christ, the silence of patience and innocence, crying aloud to the hardened consciences of our persecutors and to the tender heart of our Father in heaven. The tyranny of evil cannot oppress us forever. When God's purpose in suffering us to be oppressed has been accomplished, He will remove us from the reach of all enmity and translate us into the everlasting joys of His kingdom of peace.



*I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth
His life for the sheep.—John 10, 11.*

CHAPTER XXV.

HE GIVETH HIS LIFE.

IN the death of Christ upon the cross we behold the completion of His self-sacrifice. All that precedes this final act bears the same stamp; it is true of all His earthly life—"the Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." The spirit of self-sacrifice must control the life of every follower in Christ's footsteps.

The entire humiliation of Christ, from His birth into the world till His death and burial, is one continued sacrifice. For the Son of God to enter this world full of sin and shame and sorrow as one of our pitiable race, was certainly a sacrificing of self such as the world has never seen. But His becoming a servant and walking among men in humility was only the beginning of the stupendous sacrifice He made, the preliminary step, as it were, for taking upon Himself all the burden that was crushing us to death. He was born of a woman and put under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, and lead them to the adoption of sons. He was made man, that He who knew no sin might be made sin for us, and become a curse in our stead, and thus obtain for us the propitiation for all our sins. He sacrificed the glories of heaven for a time that He might bring to God the complete sacrifice of a perfect life under the law of God and of an inno-

cent death under the curse of the law. The great sacrifice of Christ was the taking of the mighty burden of rendering perfect obedience to God from our impotent shoulders upon His own strong shoulders, and the giving up of His own innocent self into all the terrible punishment brought on by our countless transgressions. He put Himself completely in our stead, made Himself in every respect our substitute, lived a life of perfect holiness for us, died an innocent death in our stead. He came and performed the labors which belonged to others, and which they had failed to perform, so that His work might be set down to their credit; He came and paid the penalty which others had deserved, and which would have plunged them into condemnation forever, so that His payment, rendered in perfect innocence, might be accredited to the guilty for their acquittal and release. "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

The greatness of the sacrifice thus made by the Son of God becomes clear to us when we recall, in the first place, that it was made for us while we were still His enemies. Greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life for his friends. But Christ, in a love surpassing all the love ever known on earth, laid down His life for us who were not His friends, but the friends of sin and the followers of Satan. He died to redeem those who as yet cared nothing for Him, being given

completely to their own evil lusts; He sacrificed Himself for those who hated and murdered Him and despised all His self-sacrificing love. For us, while we were still His enemies He entered into labors and agonies such as had never been witnessed on earth. The sorrows of Gethsemane and the pains of Golgotha, the sweat that fell like drops of blood from the bowed brow in the garden, the woes of the soul on the cross voiced in that awful cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me!" open up to us such depths of sacrifice as we can never fathom with our poor powers of imagination. All that heaven and earth have ever seen does not compare with the offering which Christ made when He gave His life for the ransom of many.

We must first of all consider Christ's sacrifice as a whole, from its first contemplation in the counsels of the Trinity in heaven till its final completion amid the darkness of death. Then we may pause to mark also some of the separate parts of this sacrifice.

The lad Christ Jesus, when twelve years old, knew that His Father was He who dwelt in the unapproachable light of heaven, and that the business of His young life on earth was to do the Father's will, to carry out the Father's plans for redeeming our lost race. Willingly He allowed Himself, like Isaac of old, to be laid upon the altar. He, who owned a throne in heaven, went down to Nazareth and obeyed an earthly mother and an earthly foster-father. All the greatness and majesty that was His as the Son of God He meekly covered up and bowed His head in the humiliation of a poor carpenter's home.

For eighteen years Christ dwelt in the little Galilean town. Then He came forward to proclaim the kingdom by word and deed. The last three years of His earthly life were one continued sacrifice. He became a wayfarer and a pilgrim, having now not even a home in which to shelter His weary limbs and refresh His tired strength. He traveled from city to city to preach and heal, devoting His time and strength completely to the arduous task; and even in the waste and desert places, where He sought a brief rest, He submitted to be followed, and full of compassion instructed and fed the multitudes. His hand was ever stretched out to bless; a shining train of miraculous healings followed His path hither and thither throughout the land. And these signs were not only priceless benefits granted freely to the individuals receiving them, they were gifts of God to all who beheld them or heard the account of how they had been wrought, directing every Israelite to the everlasting fountain of salvation. The labors of Christ were of infinite value to the Jewish people. Never did prophet work with such deep devotion, with such unselfish and self-forgetting love, with such tireless zeal and steady strength, with such loftiness of purpose and perfection of achievement. As the shepherd forgets all dangers and hardships in seeking the lost sheep, so He, the true Shepherd, sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, sacrificed His strength of body, mind, and heart in the hard and dangerous work of bringing help to Israel. And this sacrifice was made amid a multitude of discouragements. Few recognized at all what Christ was really doing for His people; the great crowd failed to grasp His blessed pur-

pose; ingratitude was His reward at every turn; hatred on the part of the leaders of the people, and finally shame and cruel death. Yet the love that prompted His self-sacrificing labors never waned, however much the animosity and hostility of His own people darkened around Him. He came to His own, to offer Himself and all that He had, for their eternal welfare; the offering was made even unto perfection, although His own received Him not.

In the labors Christ devoted to the training of the disciples as future apostles we meet the same self-sacrificing devotion. The Master is ever seeking what may profit His servants. He performs the laborious task of sowing, so that in time to come, when they go forth in His stead, the more delightful task of reaping may fall to their lot. He never wearies in giving them instructions, making explanations, answering questions, solving difficulties, leading them upward and onward from littleness unto fulness of faith, from narrowness to breadth of love. With infinite tenderness, care, and wisdom He guides their wavering steps; with divine patience He bears their faults and errors, taking them again and again by the hand to lead them aright; with love surpassing a mother's He shields them against the foe, tempering every attack, trial, and task so that they may be able to bear it. His heart is ever full of thought for them; in their interest He sacrifices Himself.

The last days and hours of Christ's life reveal this spirit of self-sacrifice in all its beauty and fulness. The shadows of death are already gathering about the Son of man, yet He thinks ever of the men who have been with Him in His temptations. He labors to prepare

them for the coming catastrophe, fortifying them beforehand, cheering them with divine consolations and heavenly promises, enfolding them in the mighty arms of prevailing prayer. In the night in which He was betrayed, He, their Lord and Master, stoops to wash the feet of His disciples, leaving them an example of humble, loving service from which they may draw inspiration all their lives. Peter is not left without warning, the Master prays for him especially, and in the midst of His sufferings turns His loving eyes upon the fallen disciple to lead him unto repentance and tears. The highpriestly prayer is full of petitions for the men God had given Him. When the traitor's kiss was already upon Christ's holy cheek, and the ropes were tightening around His wrists, He bids His captors to let these go, even the eleven standing terror-stricken at His side. He gives Himself into death, and in the very act shields His disciples from a similar fate. The Son of man was come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

"Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them." This is the way of the natural heart; it is full of pride, ambition, selfishness, is ever bent on securing honor, obedience, service from others. "But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life as a ransom for many." The Christian's life-principle is

that of his Master and the opposite of that of the world, self-sacrifice instead of self-service, self-denial instead of self-aggrandizement. The more nearly we approach the example of Christ in making His life an offering in behalf of others, the greater we shall be in His kingdom.

The shadow of this specific Christian virtue is found here and there in the kingdom of the world, but the shadow differs entirely from the substance as found only in the kingdom of Christ. Natural love frequently prompts to a kind of self-sacrifice. Maternal affection has been strong enough to lay down life itself to shield a child from death. The bonds of friendship have led even pagans to sacrifice themselves for others. The story of Damon and Pythias illustrates what a mighty offering natural love may achieve. The world from its own standpoint has learned to a certain extent to appreciate the beauty and greatness of disinterested brotherly love and service culminating in heroic devotion and self-sacrifice. Song and story are loud in praise of the noble men and women who have yielded their lives in the interest of some great cause. The world would be dreary indeed, if no ray of natural love would dispel the black shadow of greed and selfishness, if no gleam of nobleness and heroic devotion would offset the cold calculations of self-interest and the animal cruelty bent only on self-preservation. But the fairest flower of mere human love, the sweetest odor of mere human deeds of kindness and self-sacrifice are not to be compared to the love and sacrifice of self which grows like golden fruit on the heavenly tree of communion with Christ.

In the most admirable deeds of the children of the world there is no love to God; their noblest sacrifices are not made for the sake of Christ. Even though they do "many wonderful works," and do them "in the name" of Christ, ostensibly for His sake, as long as their hearts are far from Him, He must declare: "Ye did it not to me." Outwardly the deeds of worldlings and Christians may be much alike, inwardly they differ like darkness and light. Everything depends on the motive of the heart. If that is without the fear and love of God, if that cares nothing for Christ and the love of Christ, its greatest sacrifices lack the one element which is able to lift them up into true Christlikeness. If the tree be a growth of the world, its fruit will be likewise; only when the tree is rooted and grounded in the faith and love of Christ, will its fruit have the heavenly flavor, the true Christlike quality. This is true of all the thoughts, words, and deeds of men, and therefore also of all the sacrifices which men make for their fellows.

The wisdom of the world has ventured, in its folly, to belittle the sacrifice which Christ made, when He gave His life a ransom for many. It is claimed that God would not be dealing justly, if He would punish the innocent instead of the guilty; and again that God could have had no satisfaction or pleasure in the humiliation of His Son and in His sacrifice of Himself for transgressors. Instead of Christ's being wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, chastised for our guilt, we are told, He simply suffered in life and ended in death to seal His preaching and teaching by a martyr's blood. In other words, He sacri-

ficed Himself not for others, but only for Himself. He died not to ransom us from death, but to give His own life and work a fitting conclusion. At one stroke we are thus to be deprived of the most precious foundation of our faith, and of the loftiest and most valuable part of the example He has left us. But the whole argument of unbelief, seeking to overthrow the very chief part of Christ's work, falls to pieces when tested by the Scriptures, and even when viewed in the light of reason. The attempt of Christ's foes is vain; their shafts leave unharmed Christ's mighty sacrifice for us to trust in, and for us to follow as an example.

The question is not, "How can it be righteous to lay on one man the penalties of others?" As an excellent teacher has well said, the question properly put is this, "How can it be righteous for one man *to take upon himself* the penalties of others?" "How many an act of heroic self-sacrifice, which it would be most unrighteous for others to demand from, or to force on, one reluctant, which indeed would cease to be heroism or sacrifice at all, unless wholly self-imposed, is yet most glorious when one has freely offered himself thereto; is only *not* righteous, because it is so much better than righteous, because it moves in that higher region where law is no more known, but only known no more because it has been transfigured into love." (Trench.) To brand Christ's free, voluntary, loving sacrifice of Himself for us, as a piece of unrighteousness on God's part, is to destroy the admirable, noble character of all self-sacrifice, even of that which is undertaken from no love of Christ. No; it is noble even as men count nobility, to suffer and die for others,—let the world praise

its heroes; and it is divinely noble, as God counts nobility, to suffer and sacrifice self for others from love of Christ—and no man shall gainsay the praise of Christ, “Ye have done it unto me.”

Again, the question in regard to Christ's sacrifice is not, “Could God have pleasure in the sufferings of the innocent and the holy, and that innocent and holy His own Son?” Properly stated the question is this, “Should not God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ have pleasure in the faith, the love, the obedience of His Son as manifested in that Son's perfect pattern of self-forgetting, self-offering love?” When Christ gave Himself for us, He caused God to exclaim, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Unspeakable satisfaction filled the heart of the Father, when He beheld His Son doing the Father's will in absolute, perfect obedience even unto death. To brand the acceptance of this obedience as a piece of monstrous cruelty, is to rob all suffering borne willingly for others, and accepted as noble and praiseworthy the world over, of its noble and praiseworthy character. The pain may be bitter, but the love, the obedience, the sacrifice of self manifested in willingly bearing the pain is sweet. And when the love of God prompts us to sacrifice self in His service, this is a sweet-smelling savor unto God.

In the offering which Christ made to God for us there is one element which we will never be able to copy as such. The Son of God gave His life as a ransom for many; by His suffering and death He rendered complete atonement for the sins of the world; His sacrifice was the propitiation for our sins. Now

there is no sacrifice which we are able to make, no offering we are able to bring which will have any atoning or propitiating power with God. We may indeed bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ, but all our burden-bearing will never remove the least of our own or other men's sins. We may pay one another's debts before men, but never will any payment we make count in the least in decreasing our debt before God. It is perfidious and false altogether, when men imagine that, because they suffer exceptionally here, their pains will, in a measure at least, atone for sins they have committed. Christ's own question, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matth. 16, 20) admits only of the answer, He has nothing absolutely nothing to give. Even when we have done and suffered all — made every possible sacrifice and rendered every possible offering — we must admit, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." Luke 17, 10. Our hope and joy is solely in the atonement of Christ. To imagine the least bit of atonement in any suffering of our own would be a grave error, base dishonor to Christ, arrogant presumption before God. Our best offerings are not without some stain of sin, and are therefore so far from making good any sin of our own that they themselves have need of Christ's merit to make them truly acceptable to God. If then we would follow in the footsteps of Him who gave His life for us, we must forever put aside the thought of meriting anything before God by our own doing or suffering. We

are to bear the cross our Lord lays upon us only that we may praise His name and magnify His grace.

It would certainly be wrong for us to suppose that to become truly Christlike we must copy His example outwardly. Christlikeness may or may not demand of us to die; may or may not require of us that we spend years in obscure poverty, or amid constant persecution, or in the difficult labor of teaching and preaching. Sometimes God calls us to give up our lives in serving others. Stephen, Paul, most of the disciples were led to make such a sacrifice. But John was not, and yet his heart was filled with the same spirit as was that of Paul. The greatest of the apostles labored with his own hands and possessed little more than enough for his bodily wants. Others, however, had money and property and yet were Christlike in placing themselves and all their possessions as an offering, holy and acceptable, at the Master's feet. The outward will take care of itself, if only the inward be right. The king on his throne, the servant girl at her humble tasks, may both remain where they are, and yet follow Christ's footsteps in unselfish and self-sacrificing love. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" — "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame." Let each remain where God has placed him. In his own station he will be able to follow Paul's bidding: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Then do we follow the footsteps of Him who was sacrificed for us, when we put all thoughts of greatness, wealth, and pleasure for self away, and fill our hearts with love for Christ and our fellowmen. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." Christ Himself declares: "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." To deny ourselves and take up our cross does not mean to load ourselves down with self-imposed privations and self-appointed tasks. Christ's bidding and example does not in the least inculcate the self-righteous regulations of the Romish orders. To deny self is to say nay to the flesh, to all the evil desires of the old Adam; to deny self is to place Christ within that He may reign where hitherto the sinful self reigned. Crucify the flesh; drown the old Adam; live henceforth not unto self, but unto Christ who died for you. This is the living sacrifice required of Christ's followers.

To the world this may appear like losing life, like casting away all that is sweet, desirable, and precious in this life. The world understands only the things that are earthly, it knows as little of the beauty and excellence of the things that are spiritual and heavenly, as the blind man knows of the sunshine and the

beauty it reveals in bloom and verdure. To lose life in denial of self and in sacrifice for Christ is in reality to find life, the true life, full of real, exalted, abiding blessedness. Christ lost His life in sacrificing it in love for the Father and for us sinners; but where in all the wide world is there a life so truly a life, so full of the highest, sweetest beauty as was Christ's life? To crucify the flesh is to set free the spirit; to slay selfishness is to enthrone love; to bid adieu to sin's pleasures is to welcome heavenly joys. The world and all it offers fades away like unsubstantial shadow. To lose this is no loss, but a gain, when we grasp in its stead the real substance which is found in Christ. Self-sacrifice, devoting all that we have and all that we are to Christ, is incalculable gain, joy, glory, blessedness. Though it be in poverty, in privation, in suffering, in persecution, in death — if such be the Master's will — our lives, following Christ's in self-sacrifice will shine with the beauty that makes His the fairest and greatest ever seen on earth.

As Christ's sacrifice was made not merely in death, but also throughout all the days of His earthly life, in Nazareth as well as in Jerusalem, so our sacrifice is not to be restricted to some certain great deed at some supreme moment of life — which may not arrive at all — but to fill all our life. Day by day in all the little things of life our love for Christ, our denial of self is to appear. Mighty sacrifices in the great hours of life will never be made, as long as the little sacrifices day by day prove distasteful. We may admire a martyr's death, we may wish to make a like trial of our faith. But let us beware lest we seek our

own exaltation and the praise of men. He that exalteth himself, even in making what appears to be a wonderful sacrifice, shall be abased. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity", seeking not the glory of Christ, but the praise of self, "it profiteth me nothing." True self-sacrifice contains true humility; and this humility is not eager for some supreme test, which shall draw the attention of men, but ever satisfied with the lowly path of love, marked perhaps by the eye of Christ alone.

"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

CHAPTER XXVI.

INTO THY HANDS.

THE footsteps of the Son of man, marking the path we are to follow, end at the threshold of Paradise. As they pass beneath the shadow of death, the last stage is reached. It is appointed for man once to die and then the judgment.

The death of Christ is infinitely more for us than an object lesson or mere example. It is the propitiation for our sins, the sacrifice of the perfect Lamb of God for all the iniquity of the world, the crushing of the Serpent's head and power under the heel of the divine Victor, the opening of the gates of Paradise closed by Adam's disobedience. This precious doctrine constitutes the very heart of the divine gospel. "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." In this place, however, our task is not to hold up this treasure of Christian faith, but to view the death of Christ, and the things that are connected with it, in so far as they may serve for our example. Stephen, dying before the gates of the Holy City, commended his soul to the Father in heaven, even as Christ had yielded up His spirit into the hands of His Father. From the Son of man we learn both how to live while our earthly life lasts, and how to die when death comes.



Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.— Luke 23, 46.

Death, in reality, had no power over Christ and could never have forced Him to pass through its bitter pangs. "As the Father hath life in Himself, so He hath given the Son to have life in Himself." Christ declared: "I am the life"; the Scriptures call Him the Prince of life, even the true God and eternal life. There was no sin in Him, and the sting of death therefore had no power to touch Him. "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." The glory of heaven belonged to Him as in very truth His own; it would have been no robbery, but only a return to His own, if without death He had ascended on high and assumed the glory which for a little while made His face shine like the sun and His raiment glisten like light on the Mount of Transfiguration. But the very purpose of Christ's coming on earth in the form of man was that He might lay down His life. He who was far above death voluntarily entered death for us, that we who were bound by the hand of death might escape its power forever.

The darkness of death thus cast its shadow over the whole earthly life of Christ. The picture of the boy Jesus, assisting Joseph in Nazareth by carrying certain carpenter's tools, and holding them unconsciously so that their shadow is cast in the form of a cross behind Him, portrays a solemn truth. The shadow was there indeed; Jesus was born that He might die. Peter's sword had to remain sheathed, the legions in the sky had to remain in the silent dis-

tance, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled that thus it should be. Simeon's allusion in the Temple, when he held the babe in his aged arms, gave prophetic utterance to one of the clear thoughts that afterwards filled the heart of Christ. His face was soon turned toward Jerusalem and the painful events that would end in His death.

The words and actions of Christ furnish us ample testimony in this regard. Behind the temptations in the wilderness, so soon after the silent life of Nazareth, we find the thought of suffering and death. Christ could not be induced to follow any course save that of humiliation ending in the dark hours upon the cross. His first reply to the Jewish Temple authorities, after cleansing the sacred courts contains a reference to His death: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The conversation with Nicodemus, following shortly after, repeats the same allusion: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." To the disciples the Lord made a formal announcement of the dreadful events that were to come, and sought with patient reiterations to prepare them for the crisis. "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed." His discourses before the people and their leaders, likewise make frequent mention of His death. How soon the thought became familiar to Christ, we are unable to say. But we know that long before the hour drew nigh its coming was known to Him, and

He went forward willingly to meet it. His life was lived in the shadow of Golgotha.

Christ, however, always looked beyond His death to the resurrection which would follow. The temple of His body, when destroyed, He would raise up in three days. The Son of man, when lifted up, would be lifted not only upon the cross to die, but into heaven, whence He had come. The sign of Jonah for the unbelieving Jews consisted of Christ's being in the heart of the earth only for the space of three days and three nights. He prophesied that the Jews would kill and crucify Him, but added in every instance what the disciples entirely failed to grasp, that He would arise from the tomb on the third day. In the mind of Christ His death and His resurrection were indissolubly joined. The resurrection changed what otherwise would have been a dire calamity, full of irreparable destruction and despair, into an all-decisive battle, fiery indeed and full of agony, yet forever glorious and victorious. Death might bear the semblance of defeat, the resurrection showed it to be an everlasting triumph.

In the light of these statements we can indicate to some extent the influence which the approaching death of Christ exerted upon Him during life. That influence was not depressing; it had no shadow of discouragement in it; it caused no fluctuation whatever in the lofty purpose of His life, in the divine assurance and certainty which possessed His soul.

A deep well-spring of joy flows through the life of the Son of man, and not even death could cloud the crystal waters. The parable of the good shepherd

seeking and finding His lost sheep and bearing it home with rejoicing, is certainly of significance here. Christ's seeking the lost in the days of His humiliation, ending in death, might be a task ever so difficult and painful, the joy of the finding and bearing home, the delight of certain and everlasting success, when now the completion of the task would come, cast its radiance far back over all the bitter labors that preceded, and filled the days of Christ's humiliation with gladness. As Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ coming afar, so Christ Himself was filled with joy in the midst of His labors, seeing afar with unclouded eyes, the fruits of His labors and passion, the multitudes coming from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sitting down with Abraham in the eternal kingdom.

"In that hour", we read, "Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said: I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth!" Who will describe the heavenly sweetness of this joy in the spirit? It must have been in the heart of Jesus at all times, even when the storms of opposition raged about Him, and the stroke of pain and sorrow unto death pierced His soul. For this joy had its source in the divine and infallible certainty of success. It could perish only with the destruction of this certainty. And even the agony in the garden and on the cross, when Christ felt Himself forsaken of God, failed to touch that certainty. Death itself, with the pangs it held for the Son of man, was the divinely appointed means for accomplishing redemption, and filling all the hosts of heaven with the shouts of triumph. Death's darkness never hid

from Christ's eyes this glorious import of His death, and therefore never robbed Him of a secret inward joy of the spirit. It was the will of His Father that He should thus die, and to do that will, however bitter the doing, was meat and drink to the Son of man. Obedience unto death might make the heart of Him, who was man as we are, quake and tremble with sorrow, there was ever in that obedience a sweet and heavenly flavor of satisfaction and joy.

To suffer and die was painful in the extreme, but Christ's own words constantly remind us that He looked beyond the pain in contemplating death and kept His eyes fixed on the everlasting import of His death. As John the Baptist declared, He was the Lamb of God bearing away the sins of the world. Thus Christ said of Himself, that He would draw all men after Him, when now He should be lifted up. The very purpose for His being lifted up was "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In fact, all that Christ taught and preached concerning the entrance of men into His kingdom was based on His death as a part of the great work of redemption.

The unbelieving Jews are told that they cannot follow Him when in a little while He will "go unto Him that sent Him"; He will go His way, they shall die in their sins, for whither He goes, they cannot come. When Christ uttered the parable of the good shepherd and the hireling, He declared plainly: "The good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep", and "I am the good shepherd" * * * "I lay down my life for the sheep." In the distant future He beheld the

day when all the sheep should be gathered before their great shepherd. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." When Lazarus lay dead, Martha is comforted with the assurance: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Christ would Himself die, but it was well for the disciples that their Master should go away; for His death would be followed by the gift of the Spirit, His death and departure into the glory which He had in the beginning was linked to the promise, that they should be where He would be. Christ's death and resurrection, assured them of life and resurrection, of joy in the day of judgment, of eternal glory among the hosts of heaven. In the very hour of death Christ promised the malefactor at His side, that they, dying together, would be together in Paradise. The seed, placed in the earth, would die indeed, but its death would send up a glorious growth and priceless fruit. These were the thoughts and words of Christ, shedding the lustre of heaven over all death's bitterness.

But however much this bitterness was counterbalanced by the sweetness of the fruit that would follow, the bitterness itself was in no way removed. We catch only occasional glimpses of the pang that pierces Jesus' heart. The solemnity of His words when announcing His death to the disciples, the fulness with which He states repeatedly what shall precede His actual decease, shows us sufficiently how deeply Christ was affected by this part of His humiliation. "The

Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him." The words are brief and yet they pile up a fearful load of suffering before the culmination of death is reached. Surely, the heart of Jesus was deeply stirred with sorrow when these words left His lips.

As the end approached, this sorrow becomes more manifest. Standing in the temple, three days before His death, when certain Greeks desired to see Him, He spoke of the corn of wheat dying and thus bringing much fruit; yet the thought of the fruit growing from His death could not repress the utterance of deepest sorrow: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour." We know to what depths of woe this sorrow brought Jesus in Gethsemane, almost rending soul and body asunder. No man can describe what Jesus suffered when the angel came and strengthened Him. Death's approach had hardly a bitterness which Jesus did not taste.

The same is true of the sufferings which finally caused His death. The record of the gospels is exceedingly simple, containing little more than a bare account of what was inflicted upon the innocent Sufferer. Yet it takes little imagination to unroll before our eyes from the words of the sacred writers a picture of torture and agonizing pain of body and mind, such as the world has never seen. Men have indeed been crucified before and after; human cruelty has gone to

the verge of the possible in its infliction of suffering, lacerating body and mind and gloating over its bloody work. And yet the sufferings preceding Christ's death exceed all that man has ever, or can ever, suffer on earth. Every blow that Jesus received hurt Him far more than it could possibly have hurt our callous nerves and blunted sensibilities. The bitter sting that pierced His susceptible heart most deeply was the consciousness that all these sufferings were the deserts of sin. "The chastisement of our guilt was upon Him." He who knew no sin was made sin for us; He who utterly abhorred sin was Himself loaded down with the complete curse of the entire world's sin. In the very sufferings of Christ, as inflicted upon Him from the treachery of Judas on till the last mockery on the cross, we see a frightful host of sins and crimes pouring their bitterness and gall upon His innocent head. There is more than enough to make our hearts recoil, but there is much more behind the veil, known only to God.

Christ approached death and stepped into its very jaws, holding fast His Father's hand. The last hours of His life show us more prayers than any others. He prays for His disciples, and for all who shall believe their word after His death, for Himself, for His murderers, and He ends in death commending His Spirit into the Father's hands. He refuses the stupefying drink offered Him before He is nailed fast to the cross; He asks to have His burning thirst quenched, that He may rally the last vestiges of strength for the cry of triumph and the prayer of death. "It is finished!" rings out victoriously from

the bloodless lips of the dying Savior. Death and the enmity of treachery that brought it about have not marred the work Christ set Himself to perform, but only helped to crown it by bringing it nearer to completion.

Thus did the Son of man at last bow His head in death; such was the end of the "dying of the Lord Jesus."

His dead body was laid in the silent tomb, while His Spirit rested in the Father's hands, and the promise was fulfilled, that the dying malefactor should be with Him in Paradise. The light of Scripture grows dim as the shadow of death is passed. We know enough, however, when we are told, "God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2, 9-11. The battle was fought, the spoils of victory won, the never-ending triumph begun. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15, 51.

We are to follow the footsteps of Christ even into the glory of Paradise.

Unlike the Son of God we are all by nature subject to death because of our sin. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." And this "death" which has passed upon all men is not only the dissolution of soul and body, which we commonly

call death; it is far more, the entire sum of evil resulting from sin, especially also the eternal separation of soul and body from God the divine source of life and light. Of this death Christ tasted, when He gave His life for our ransom, and with St. Paul we say that we too, who are Christ's followers, have tasted this death. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" Again, "We have been planted together in the likeness of His death,"—"We be dead with Christ."—"Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." We, who were subject to death because of sin, have become like Him, who was not subject to death because He was the sinless Son of God and the Prince of life. When He in infinite love permitted death to lay its hand upon Him, we who are His own died with Him; His death is our death.

If this death had been permitted to strike us directly with all its power, we would have been plunged into eternal destruction. But now that Christ became our brother and substitute, now that He went forward with us to face this death, and we have died with Him, the power of death is broken in striking Christ. "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." God's Son could not remain in death; the grave and hell could not hold fast the Prince of life. Entering death He destroyed death. Where we, if we had been alone, would have lain in death forever, He, our innocent, divine Head, was raised up by the glory of the Father. And thus

we who are made partakers of His death, are now also partakers of His life. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." Christ's atonement is our atonement. The "likeness of His resurrection" is that now we are "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Death reigns through sin, but we who are Christ's "are freed from sin"; therefore "sin shall not have dominion over you," and we may sing triumphantly with Paul: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Behold the multitude of Christ's followers, He leading the van in facing death. He opens His arms and receives the fiery shafts all into His own breast. There they are quenched forever, none may touch the souls of those who follow Him. On through death, on over all death's broken powers He leads them into life. Death is passed: Christ lives, and all His followers share His life—He in them, and they in Him. This victory over death, this entrance into life through Jesus Christ is the essential thing, when we wish to speak of following Christ's footsteps into the light of Paradise.

The shadow of death falling upon Christ as He passed from the manger to the grave, was dispelled by the glory of the resurrection. His entrance into the glory which He had with the Father from the beginning, was for Him before it took place as certain as if it had already taken place. For us who are Christ's

followers the shadow of eternal death is likewise dispelled by the light of life which is ours in Christ, and by the beams of the heavenly glory awaiting us with Christ above. We are already passed from death into life. Therefore the same joy that filled Christ's heart because of the absolute certainty of the glorious consummation of His work, must now illumine our hearts because of our actual entrance upon everlasting life in Christ. As Christ was glad, beholding all the fruits of His life and death, so we must be glad, possessing the abundance of these fruits now, and going forward unto a constant increase of their riches.

Because the victory is ours through our Lord Jesus Christ, there is nothing left of death's power to oppress, harm, or frighten us. As Christ, with His eyes fixed on the day of His resurrection and on the hand of His Father in heaven, passed calmly through the storms and persecutions that raged about Him, wrought undisturbed the labors that were appointed for Him, so we, keeping our eyes fixed on Christ's death and resurrection, and holding fast the precious life which now is ours, are to be untroubled by the storms that toss us about in this present time, and are to work on with Christ's guidance and support in the labors set before us. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Christ could not fail; holding the hand of Christ we too cannot fail.

We do not forget or underestimate the severity and bitterness of the many tribulations through which we must pass here. The Scriptures constantly remind us of the sufferings of this present time. Among them we must count temporal death and the things which bring it about. The shadow of manifold afflictions and of our approaching dissolution is ever about us. As the heart of Christ was pierced again and again, as His body too received cruel wounds, so our hearts are pierced, our bodies are wounded. As Christ felt every pang inflicted upon Him, so we too feel every pain. Aside from the horrors that entered into Christ's death inasmuch as it was the punishment for the world's sin, the rending in itself of His soul and body was something bitter and awful for Him. Likewise, we, though made partakers of eternal life, cannot find death pleasant and the corruption of the grave delightful. Nevertheless, all these shadows, dark though they be, cannot dismay or overwhelm us; there is ever the light shining bright and clear: "We know that all things must work together for good to them that love God." Even temporal death, as it was made a servant of Christ in working out our redemption, so it is made a servant of Christ's followers, leading them unto glorification.

Some shrink from the burdens we must bear in Christ's footsteps while our earthly life lasts. When sorely pressed, they would hasten the hour of their departure. There is a disgust with the evils and labors of this life, even among Christ's followers, which is not Christlike. He did not murmur and complain; He worked in patience while it was day. Paul, too, would like to have laid the life in the flesh aside and

robed himself in garments of glory. "For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." Yet he confesses: "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith."

As some long with a morbid desire for death, so others fear and shrink from death and manifest a morbid attachment for this earthly life. The wings of their hope are weak, the eyes of their faith dim. To be with Christ is better, Paul tells us. When the hour came, Christ hesitated not, nor fled, but gave Himself to die. They are truly Christlike who are ready to wait in uncomplaining patience till the Master calls, and who live in constant preparation and readiness, joyfully looking forward for the call. If the choice were offered us, we might prefer instead of death to be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, as they shall be who will be found alive at the end of the world. But who can show that their lot is really preferable to that of those who die?

Death comes in many forms, some of them exceedingly terrible. We may not choose the manner in which we shall die, yet we may pray, certain of being heard, as the Church has prayed for ages:

“Holy and gracious God!
Holy and mighty God!
Holy and all-merciful Savior!
Thou eternal God!
Save us, Lord from sinking
In the deep and bitter flood.
Kyrie eleison.”

Whatever manner of death comes to Christ's followers, is allotted to them by His merciful hand. He knows what we are able to bear, and will stand by us to fight the last fight and grasp the crown of deathless joy.

Death will ever have its mysteries for Christ's followers. There are many questions which remain unanswered, until we ourselves close our eyes for the last long sleep. Curious minds run into all sorts of speculations, instead of abiding humbly by the Word. Surely, it is enough to know that Christ will be with us as we pass through the valley of the shadow of death, comforting us with His rod and staff; that the angels shall bear us aloft into Abraham's bosom, there to be comforted; that at once we shall be with Christ in Paradise. Nothing shall disturb those who rest in God, or limit their joy, when they enter where tears and sorrow and death and every shadow of evil shall forever remain afar. Faith asks no more than the fulfillment for itself of Christ's dying prayer: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."



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