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And other Sermons

By
LOUIS ALBERT BANKS

Author of "Christ and His Friends," "The Great Saints of the Bible," "Soul-Winning Stories," "Thirty-one Revival Sermons," "Prayer Meeting Talks," etc.



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*To
My Wife
Florence Aiken Banks
In whose loving intellectual and
spiritual fellowship these sermons had
their inspiration, this volume
is gratefully dedicated
by the author.*

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I

THE NEW TEN COMMANDMENTS

"And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.—*Rev. 21:5.*

"And he opened his mouth and taught them."—*Matt. 5:1.*

CHRISt made all things new because he brought God into close, intimate touch with life. The earth is very old, and most of it that we see has known the barren deadness of ten thousand winters, but at the touch of the springtime sun all things become new and fresh, with hope and promise as though the old earth had never heard the call from heaven before. So Jesus takes up all the old commonplace problems that pertain to men and women and children, and under his touch they spring into newness of life. He brings God to us, and at his call everything springs into vibrant pulsating life. The Sermon on the Mount, given at length in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of the Gospel as it is recorded by Matthew, is a wonderful example of how Jesus by bringing the old commandments received by Moses on Mount Sinai into human conduct and clothing them about with love filled them with fascination and charm, so that it seemed an entirely new teaching. It was the difference between theory and life. Christ put the Mosaic commandments into a man, breathed into them the breath of

life, clothed them with the essence of the God who is love, and lo! we have the most magnetic appeal to the human heart and the most attractive presentation of truth about life, that the world has ever seen.

Let us take them one by one for a brief glance for the inspiration and comfort of our hearts.

The first commandment is what men have come commonly to call "The Golden Rule."

I. THE RULE OF BROTHERHOOD

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." The romantic beauty of this rule is that Christ lived it before all men. Throughout his life he treated others exactly as he would wish them to treat him if he were in their place, and he assures us that as we treat others, so he will treat us. "Judge not and ye shall not be judged, condemn not and ye shall not be condemned; forgive and ye shall be forgiven." And again, "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." And still again, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." This is Christ's first test of a good man. We must not fail here or we are blocked at the very start. It is very simple. In every confusing situation I have only to ask, "How would I wish this man or that woman to treat me, if I were in the same situation?" It revolutionizes life very quickly, and life must be revolutionized if it is to be saved. Slavery went down before this golden rule. The liquor

traffic is being overthrown by the steady pounding of the golden rule, war must be overthrown by the same battering ram, and in your life and in mine evil must cease and good must come to the throne by our acceptance and obedience to the golden rule.

II. THE RULE OF GENTLENESS

Christ assures us that the good man is known by the way he acts under injustice. Hear his wonderful words: "I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." Christ lived by that rule. "Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." That rule when interpreted by its spirit is simply this, that we will not seek to avenge ourselves. We will not be angry because one is angry with us. We will not return evil words or deeds because we have received them. Most of us have to hang our heads in shame when we think of the retaliatory things we have said and done. But just because it is hard at first, and a commandment easily broken, we must fortify at this point. The good man must train himself to gentleness, model his treatment of those who are unjust to him after the conduct of his Master.

"Come wealth or want, come good or ill,
Let young and old accept their part,
And bow before the Awful Will,
And bear it with an honest heart,

Who misses or who wins the prize—
 Go, lose or conquer as you can;
 But if you fail, or if you rise,
 Be each, pray God, a gentleman."

The very source of that word "gentleman" which every true man prizes so highly is in this rule of Christ's holding human conduct to the law of gentleness.

III. THE RULE OF LOVE

Jesus says a good man can be known by the breadth of his love. It is natural and very easy to love those who love us and who treat us kindly. We are ingrates, and inhuman, and monsters of ingratitude unless we do that. But our love life is very cramped and narrow if it goes no further than that. Jesus says: "I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." And if you ask why, Jesus answers: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." If we hold ourselves steadily to this law of love in the treatment of those who dislike us, and seek to do them good, we become like God. Our lives become splendid as we triumph over that which is hard for us.

You have doubtless heard of the little boy's comment on the path which made Abraham Lincoln a great man. He said:

"It's no wonder,
Look what he had to make him great:
He had that log cabin,
He had that pine knot,
He had those rails to split;
He had that tall plug hat,
He had all those stories,
He had that Douglass debate,
He had that Civil War to win,
He had that Gettysburg speech,
He had everything
To make a man great.
And look what I have got—
Not one of those things."

Lincoln became great and gentle and patient and wise and immortal through holding himself steady and faithful against heavy odds to the law of love. In our humbler path we, too, may conquer in the same fight. The true Christian man will always be known by the way he acts when he is abused. It is so easy to fly off into anger and give way to resentment, but that is not Christlike. On the Cross he prayed for his enemies and persecutors, and said: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." May God give us victory on this hard battleground! Such victory can only be sure by a heart that opens to receive the love of God into its depths. God is love. It is the very spirit of his life. If I keep close to God and seek always to know his feeling about life, then I, too, will become love and all that stands in the way of my loving others will be overcome. God is so willing to give himself to us if we ask him. Do you remember that wonderful verse of James Russell Lowell's:

"Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us;
 The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
 The priest has his fee, who comes and shrives us,
 We bargain for the graves we lie in;
 At the devil's booth are all things sold,
 Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;
 For a cap and bells our lives we pay,
 Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking.
 'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
 'Tis only God may be had for the asking;
 No price is set on the lavish summer;
 June may be had by the poorest comer."

The June of infinite love comes to every heart that comes to God asking.

IV. THE RULE OF FORGIVENESS

Again Jesus says that a good man is to be tested by the way he forgives those who wrong him. Indeed, Christ lays tremendous stress upon this rule. With great solemnity he says: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." So our very hope of divine forgiveness for our own sins hinges on our willingness to forgive those who sin against us. Perhaps more sorrow is caused by people who count themselves among good people, through lack of a spirit of forgiveness than from almost anything else. We cannot be truly happy a single day or a single hour unless we feel that God is freely and lovingly forgiving us our many sins against him, and yet if we are treasuring up resentment against any one we know, he cannot forgive us. Sometimes a whole church is saddened and

made weak and powerless for good because of this lack of forgiveness.

I was once holding a series of evangelistic meetings in a church and the meetings had gone on for a week, and there had been little apparent result. All was formal and cold and lifeless. I seemed to be beating my soul out against a stone wall. On Sunday morning as I preached I laid the emphasis on the matter of forgiveness of injuries, and urged that we ought never to wait until one who had wronged us apologized, that it was too serious a matter for that, but we should go and frankly and lovingly assure the other person of our forgiveness and our desire to live in the spirit of love. Now, I did not know it, but there was a man in the congregation who had had a quarrel with another man in that church, and it had grown into a good deal of a feud, and though they belonged to the same church they did not speak to each other when they met, and it had split the people of the church into two factions. Well, as soon as the sermon was over the man who had been at church went straight across the fields to his neighbour with whom he had quarrelled, and when the other came to the door he burst into tears and said: "John, I cannot stand this any longer. You have felt hard toward me, and I have been bitter toward you, and I am unhappy and you don't come to church any more, and my heart is broken about it. Forgive me, John. I forgive you everything, and let us ask God to forgive us and be at peace and live as Christian men ought to live." The other man melted in a moment, and that after-

noon those two men came to church together and sat near the front in the same seat and sang out of the same hymn book, and the spirit that came on the church was that of Pentecost, and the church awoke to new spiritual power and hundreds were converted to God. God grant us the spirit of forgiveness!

V. THE TONGUE RULE

How close the Psalmist came to the proper law of the tongue when he exclaimed: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer." Jesus says: "Let your communication be, Yea, Yea; Nay, Nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil," which Paul, commenting and elaborating upon, enlarges into: "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 even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Many of us talk too much, and few people bridle the tongue with sufficient care. Many otherwise good people would have much greater influence for good if they held the tongue always not only to the law of kindness and gentleness, but also to the rule of charity and consideration for the feelings of others. An unwise, uncharitable word is often as dangerous as a spark from a passing locomotive in a field of ripened grain, and burns and consumes a promising harvest in another soul, leaving only blackened ruins in its path. Let each of us be careful of our tongues that they never go forth unbridled. And here, too, there is great blessing for

triumph over difficulties. If this is our besetting sin, it will not be easy for us, but our victory will be all the richer in blessing because it is hard to win.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox sings with true spiritual insight when she says:

“’Tis easy enough to be pleasant,
When life flows along like a song,
But the man worth while is the one who will smile
When everything goes dead wrong;
For the test of the heart is trouble,
And it always comes with the years,
And the smile that is worth the praises of earth,
Is the smile that shines through tears.”

VI. THE RULE AGAINST WORRY

How tenderly Jesus gives utterance to the command against worry. It is one of the tenderest as well as one of the most beautiful in the beautiful Book of God. “Wherefore,” says Jesus, “if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith! Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

Is it not apparent from these wonderful words of Jesus that our worry all comes from our not having

at the time a clear sense of the presence of God in our affairs?

Tolstoi once said that the trouble with the world is that it has lost its sense of God. The supreme difference between Jesus and other good men is his keen consciousness of God. Jesus realized his oneness with God. He said: "I have come to show you the Father; he that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Now Jesus never did anything for men in a spiritual way that he did not ask them to do for themselves. Jesus always identifies his life with man's life, and man's life with his. He says: "As I am one with my Father, I pray that ye also may be one." And again: "As the Father hath sent me into the world, even so I am sending you into the world." He called himself "The Light of the World"; but he also said: "Ye are the light of the world."

When we feel our oneness to God, that God is not afar off, but at hand, there is no need to worry. We worry only when we lose God.

Science and the Bible are at last a unit on this gloriously comforting truth of the immanence, the presence of God as the vital force everywhere, in everything.

There was a time when the scientist talked a great deal about "dead matter," but he recognizes to-day that all matter is living matter, and God is in it. The scientist agrees now with the Christian poet when he sings:

"Speak to him, thou, for he hears,
Spirit with spirit can meet;
Closer is He than breathing,
Nearer than hands or feet."

VII. THE RULE ABOUT SECRET PRAYER

All public prayer is to some extent consciously or unconsciously affected by the pressure of the audience. The real test of prayer applies only to our secret devotions, and it is there where Jesus lays the emphasis. After telling of some people who exploited their professed religion by public prayers, Jesus says: "But 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." Jesus often spent whole nights in secret prayer. He communed alone with his Father. The breath from heaven comforted his soul as he prayed.

It is told of Michael Angelo that by his prolonged and unremitting toil upon the frescoed domes which he wrought he acquired such an habitual upturn of the countenance that as he walked the streets men called him "a visionary with the heaven-turned face." If we are much in secret prayer it will give us a heavenward looking mind and heart, and a peace and courage earth cannot give.

"Treasure the gift of a quiet heart,
For the crown of peace is rare;
And a mind at rest is the better part:
God's pledge to the child of care.

"Fear not the storm, for he holds the sea
In the hollow of his hand;
Sorrow or pain can come to thee
Only at his command.

"Run out to welcome the dawning day
With shout that is cheery and strong,
For many who travel along life's way
Are helped by a brave man's song.

- “So quiet thy soul with the thought that God
Still reigns on the throne of time,
With sandals of peace the feet are shod
Which carry this truth sublime.
- “When Duty calls, thrice blest is he
Who dare obey her choice;
For Duty’s call, when heard by thee,
Is God’s directing voice.
- “All things are good and work his will;
His love will hold thee fast:—
Dread not the future—trust—be still:
God holds thee to the last.”

VIII. THE RULE ABOUT MONEY

The Christian religion has to do in a practical way with everything we think or say or do or possess. We are not built like compartment ships, we are a unit. If I am to be a good man, my money must come under the law of Christ. Jesus says: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.”

Now there is no prohibition in this nor in Christ’s attitude toward life at any time toward thrift and proper provision for the necessities of life here; but it clearly sets forth that money, earthly treasures, must never be counted superior or the equal of spiritual values. It must always be held in submission as the servant of the spiritual treasures that will endure forever.

Christ illustrates in his own life the principle he

teaches here. Paul says: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." That is the spirit in which we must hold all our earthly treasures to be used for the blessing and saving of humanity.

IX. THE RULE OF OBEDIENCE

Jesus makes obedience the test of discipleship. He says: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Jesus puts us side by side with himself in obedience. He says: "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." He judges the quality of our friendship by the character of our obedience: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." He makes it the thermometer that gauges our love: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." And again he says: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him." And still again he says: "If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." And John the beloved disciple, commenting on these words long afterwards, wrote: "Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his com-

mandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

The path of obedience is the only way by which we may rejoice the heart of God, gladden the heart of our Saviour, and bring the peace of heaven to our own souls.

I read the other day of a Korean Christian who told in prayer meeting how he conquered anger, which was his besetting sin. The Missionary had before explained to him how every burst of anger pierced the heart of Jesus. "So I hung a picture of the Lord Jesus on my wall," he said, "and every time I lost my temper I put a thorn on that picture. The picture was soon covered with thorns. A great love came over me that he should suffer because of my temper, and now he gives me grace in temptation. I say, 'Not I, but Christ within me,' and his sweetness comes instead of my bad temper." God help us all to keep the rule of obedience.

X. THE RULE ABOUT FRUIT

Finally we come to the results. After all, the test of the tree is in the fruit it bears. Jesus puts this very clearly: "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."

And again Jesus puts it in another way: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." And Paul, in that wonderful description

of the Christian's spiritual garden in the fifth of Galatians, says: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." We must not neglect the cultivation of any of these beautiful and blessed trees in the garden of our souls.

Now we have glanced at these ten rules which Jesus lays down for the Christian life. How glorious is our calling! It is the noblest conception of life possible for God to conceive for his children. It is a glorious thing to be a Christian. We cannot achieve it in our own strength, but in fellowship with Jesus Christ we can achieve it.

Let us go forth from our study of these new commandments of our Saviour and Lord singing with Robert Browning:

"I go to prove my soul!
I see my way, as birds their trackless way.
I shall arrive! What time, what circuit first
I ask not: but unless God send his hail,
Or blinding fire-balls, sleet or stifling snow,
In some time, his good time, I shall arrive;
He guides me and the bird. In his good time!"

II

EXPECT GREAT THINGS

“Henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet.”—*Heb. 10: 13.*

THAT virile and frankly Christian writer, Bruce Barton, not long ago had a most remarkable interview with the then head of the Roman Catholic Church in America, the late Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore, after he had passed his eighty-sixth milestone in the journey of life.

In beginning his conversation with Cardinal Gibbons, Mr. Barton remarked: “I notice that your secretary and your associates are all young men.”

“That’s part of the secret of warding off old age,” the Cardinal answered, with a smile the freshness of which belied his years. “When a man begins to look back, then he is old. I never look back. Lot’s wife looked back, you remember, and was destroyed. Looking back is destruction always—the beginning of the end. After a person passes middle life he ought to surround himself with those who have a long time yet to look forward.” He turned so that he faced a little into the sun. “Until you are forty, seek the companionship of men who are older,” he continued. “After that, keep a vital contact with those who are younger. That is a pretty good rule. Until my recent sickness I used to walk every afternoon from

five to six, and whom did I choose for companions? Students from the Seminary. They come from every part of the United States: one day a man from Massachusetts, another day one from Oklahoma, and so on. They tell me their hopes and their ambitions and their plans.

“And do you want to know what I say to them? I say, ‘Young man, *expect* great things! Expect great things of God; great things of your fellow men and of yourself. Expect great things of America. For great opportunities are ahead; greater than any that have come before. But only those who have the courage and the vision to *expect* them will profit when they come.’”

And at the close of that long and extraordinarily interesting conversation he closed the interview on the same key:

“I said at the beginning, ‘Young man, *expect* great things.’ And I say it again at the end. I have lived almost three times as long as the average age of your readers. I have watched men climb up to success, hundreds of them; and of all the elements that are important for success, the *most important is Faith*. Those who throw up their hands in discouragement when the first snow falls, fail to profit when the sunshine of spring returns. And no great thing comes to any man unless he has courage, even in dark days, to expect *great* things; to expect them of himself, of his fellow men, of America, and of God.”

When I read this remarkable and exceeding profitable piece of advice from this venerable man out of his long experience, there came to me these similar

words written nearly two thousand years ago by a greater than Cardinal Gibbons,—the words of St. Paul, in describing the attitude of Jesus since he gave himself on the cross as the infinite sacrifice for the sins of the world. Paul says, writing of Jesus in the tenth chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews: "But he, when he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; *henceforth expecting* till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet."

This wonderful declaration appeals to our imagination very strongly. It gives us the picture of Jesus watching through all the ages the strife and turmoil and evolution of mankind, never for a moment losing the attitude of confident expectation that the love of God, which had its supreme revelation in the sufferings of the cross on Calvary, will finally come to everlasting triumph.

Others may lose hope for humanity, but Jesus never. Others may become discouraged, but Jesus is the eternal optimist. "Henceforth expecting." That is the Christian attitude for us all if we are to imitate our Lord himself. I wish to apply this so as to be an immediate blessing to each of us.

I

Expect great things of your own physical life. I speak of the physical first because it is the first essential and has so much to do with our success in every other phase of our career. A man's or a woman's body is as important as the nest is to the young bird. "As useless as a last-year's bird's nest" has gone into

proverb, but nothing is more important to the young bird than this year's bird's nest, and your body is "this year's" life nest for you. No young man or young woman can afford to be careless or indifferent concerning the health and strength of the body. It is either one of your greatest assets or one of your heaviest liabilities. Without health and strength of body you will be increasingly handicapped and limited in your powers of achievement throughout your life. Every other gift or blessing of life will be discounted and detracted from if you surrender to go through life with a weak or sickly body. But what miracles can be wrought by improving your body and bringing it into a state of health and power if you will expect great things of it, and give yourself with earnest determination to realize your expectations.

Theodore Roosevelt, who was the beau ideal of the athletic world for so many years in America, was a very weak and sickly child. In her reminiscences of her brother, Mrs. Robinson tells how the first Theodore Roosevelt, father of the future President of the United States, turned one of the upstairs rooms in their New York City residence into a kind of outdoor gymnasium, with every imaginable swing and bar and seesaw, and when the second Theodore was eleven years old his father took him up into this gymnasium and said: "Theodore, you have the mind, but you have not the body, and without the help of the body the mind cannot go as far as it should. You must *make* your body. It is hard drudgery to make one's body, but I know you will do it." The little boy looked up, and threw back his head in a charac-

teristic fashion. Then, with a flash of those white teeth—which later in life became so well known that when he was police commissioner in New York City it was said that any recreant policeman would faint if he came suddenly face to face with a set of false teeth in a shop window—he said: “*I’ll make my body.*” And how splendidly he lived up to the expectations of his father, and his own, the story of his romantic and useful life tells.

II

We should expect much of our minds and the success of the work to which we give our energies for our share in the work of the world.

Your success in the development of your mental power will be largely dictated by your expectations. “According to thy faith be it unto thee,” is just as scientific in our every-day life as any demonstrated truth of science. You will not do more than you expect. Orville Harrold, who is generally conceded to be the greatest American tenor, is a splendid illustration of the power of expecting great things in high endeavor. He was a farm boy on a poor farm where there was no money for education. He was twenty years old before he graduated from the High School, so hardly did he have to work his way through. But he had faith in himself and in the powers God had given him to produce musical sounds, and struggled on. When finally, very late in life for the triumph of a great singer, he had brought the musical world to his feet, when asked the secret of his success, he said very simply: “I won because I thought I could

win." He expected great things and so achieved them.

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There is a picture called "The Devil's Auction" in which, among many other articles, the devil, who is the auctioneer, holds in his hand a small wedge with a very sharp edge. This he is said to prize above all his other tools, because he has caused more failures with it than through any other device. The name of that efficient tool in the devil's shop is Discouragement. Discouragement is the most insidious enemy known to man. So long as a man keeps his courage and expects great things, he is never defeated; but the discouraged man is whipped before the battle begins.

III

We should expect great things of our friends and those we love. We should deem this of the greatest importance, because the very sweetest and most satisfying comfort that will come to us in all our human experiences will be the love and friendship we win from others, and the tenderness and affection we feel for them.

Have you heard the story of the "Ruby of Great Price?" We are told that Abdul Hamid had long been troubled in his mind as he wove baskets in the doorway of his humble hut. So he asked of the bamboo tree beside the path: "Why should I toil and slave to make my living? Perhaps I shall be the one to discover the Ruby of Great Price, and so I shall become the Great Mogul, as the gods ordained

when they hid the great and beautiful stone. Tomorrow I will start and search until I find it."

And so Abdul Hamid sold his little hut and searched all the rest of his life throughout all the lands of the East for the Ruby of Great Price. But his search was in vain, and at the last, an old and broken and defeated man, he came back to die among the scenes of his youth, his only hope to be buried beneath the great bamboo tree that grew beside the path near the little hut where he used to weave baskets. But imagine his astonishment on his return to find that where once his little hut stood there was now the marble palace of the Great Mogul, and to find that the poor peasant no richer than himself, to whom he had sold his hut, had, underneath the doorstep where for so many years he had sat to weave baskets, found the Ruby of Great Price.

Oh, my friends, it is not in searching the halls of political fame, or the palaces of great wealth, or the temples of science, but in your own home, at your own doorstep, the richest and sweetest and most wonderful prize of life is to be found. It is in the bosom of your mother or your father. It is in the heart of your wife or your husband. It is in the love of your child or the affection of your friend.

Did David in all the years of his life in the palace as the great king of his time ever find any Ruby of Great Price as dear and rich with blessing as the love of Jonathan, who risked his life for him?

Expect great things of those you love and those who love you, and they will rarely disappoint you.

IV

We must expect great things of God. We must expect great things in our spiritual development and in the enrichment of our own characters in true goodness and nobility of manhood and womanhood.

There are three fields where we may expect great help in our spiritual lives and in the development of righteous character.

I. The first of these must always be through personal communion with God, in prayer. Our attitude toward prayer should be that of the disciples to Jesus: "Lord, teach us how to pray!"

Teach us to pray,
 In accents measured by thy truth,
 Thy love divine!
 Teach us the way
 That leads past earthly night
 To gates of dawn,
 And everlasting day.
 O Master of our way,
 Teach us to pray!
 Teach us to pray!
 To hearken by the gate ajar
 To unseen choruses of light,
 The choruses of faith, of praise and peace.
 Teach us to reach
 The far grand measure
 Of thy praise divine,
 O Lord of earth,
 Teach us to pray!
 Teach us to pray,
 In accents measured by thy love,
 Remove the earth mist from our eyes
 That we may see,
 Push thou ajar the gate of time
 That we may hear.
 And in thy vision glorified,
 Lift us to thee,
 O Lord and Master of our life
 Teach us to pray!

2. The second great help to the spiritual life we will find in the earnest, expectant reading and study of the Bible. And in approaching the Bible we must never forget that what we find will depend very largely on the spirit of our minds in our opening it for help.

John Hays Hammond, one of the greatest mining engineers of the world, writing about Africa, says that one finds in Africa what he seeks. It does not mean the same to all. To the imaginative youth, Africa stands for mystery, endless deserts, jungles and dark forests, towering snow-clad peaks, the lost Mountains of the Moon, cataracts beside which Niagara is a small affair, multitudes of black slaves, elephants, lions, camels, and other strange denizens of the zoo. It means ruins of ancient cities, great gold camps, diamond mines, strange tribes and stranger customs, cannibals and pyramids. It is the land of adventure.

To the student Africa means destroyed nations, vast tombs, and the thoughts of men long dead given to us to read on miles of stone carvings. It is still the land of adventure.

To the hard-headed, unromantic, business man, who cares it may be nothing for the past and little for the future, it is the land of greatest risks and quickest returns. It means miles of mills grinding out gold day and night; without ceasing, grinding it out literally by the ton—the greatest gold camp on earth, a vast black army of kaffirs digging forever in endless underground galleries. It means diamond fields, supplying the world with precious stones; cop-

per, too ; zinc, lead, iron, coal, rubber, ivory, palm-oil, and spices. It is still the land of adventure.

To the statesman and philosopher Africa beckons with a seductive finger. During thousands of years every race of mankind has marched into that mysterious continent. They have built cities and founded countless colonies. But whatever the search or whatever the result, it is always the land of adventure.

Now the Bible is in many ways like that. It is one thing to the historian, another thing to the poet, still another to the student of literature or comparative science, but always repays the adventurous explorer. But to the man or the woman who wants to find God, who wants to find the meaning of sin and the cure for his or her wicked heart, who longs for a ladder that leads from earth up to heaven, this is the most glorious and profitable field of adventure on the globe.

Here we learn about God and his love for us. Here we find the love of God coming down to earth in the person of Jesus Christ, who took upon himself not the nature of angels, but our own human nature, and lived the divine life of heaven in the midst of our own human conditions. Here in the Bible we find the cross as the center of man's expectations and hope, and the divine and glorious assurance that Jesus, the divine Son of God, who gave his life there as a ransom for sinners, is "able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him." We see Saul, the chief of sinners, become Paul, the chief of saints. We find the exploit of that marvelous power of God that has later turned a

drunken thief of a Jerry McAuley into an apostle of Jesus; a debauched John G. Wooley into an evangel of a sober world; and a dissolute baseball player into the most famous and efficient evangelist to great multitudes the world has ever seen. Here is the place where we may find salvation and uplift of the soul and culture of the spirit, and find our most extravagant expectations of spiritual inspiration to lofty character more than realized.

Third, we will find in service of our fellow men, following the example of Jesus who went about doing good, the greatest realm of glorious blessing to humanity. Expect great things in serving humanity, and God will more than realize your fondest hopes.

Oh, how much we need at this very chaotic hour of the world's history, when so many are discouraged, that every true follower of Jesus Christ shall imitate the example of their Lord and go forth to preach his Gospel and seek to win sinning men to Christ, not with doubtful or apologetic spirit, but in the attitude of Jesus, who waits, "Henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet."

The night is dark, storm clouds hang low,
 And fitful lights flash through the gloom.
 Men do not know the way to go.
 The deeper darkness tokens doom.
 Before the darkness, souls are bowed.
 The flashing lights do but betray
 Black question marks upon the cloud;
 And men are asking, "Whither way?"
 The lore of man reveals no light;
 Philosophy is blind before
 The growing gloom; and deeper night
 Reveals to straining eyes no door.

But in the background, on the cloud
 The great interrogations stand,
 And hearts in agony are bound,
 And "Whither way?" the souls demand.

Is there no way? Is there no light?
 No, not of man. But o'er the gloom,
 The voice of God breaks through the night,
 And Triumph paeans o'er the tomb
 Of black dead hopes: God lives and reigns.
 His everlasting tidings bright
 Will heal the wounds and wash the stains,
 And make the sad old dark world light.

Believe in God! Creative power
 Responds to faith, makes strong the soul;
 And in this awful judgment hour,
 No other cure can make thee whole.
 "Fear God," "give glory," "worship him"—
 Creator of the rolling spheres.
 The light of life shall never dim
 With him—joy of eternal years.

Beyond the turbid, murky cloud,
 There shines the light of endless day;
 Beyond the gloom palls that enshroud,
 Stretches the holy, heavenly way;
 Beyond the anxious questions rise
 The glorious answers of our God,
 So true, so sure, so just, so wise.
 The way?—The path our Saviour trod.

III

GOING ON ADVENTURES WITH JESUS

“He made as though he would go further.”—*Luke 24:28*.

CHRISTIANITY is not simply a system of negations, and thou shalt nots. It is a call to romantic exploration and lofty daring achievement.

The greatest commandments in the decalogue are among the thou shalt. When the lawyer among the Pharisees came to question Jesus, and asked “Which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus answered: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment, and a second like unto it is this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets.” So you see, according to Christ’s classification, both the first and second in importance among the commandments are thou shalt, and all the virtue in the thou shalt nots comes from obedience to these two thou shalt.

The very first step in the Christian life calls for adventure. Christ was always for advance. When the disciples came to him and told him that all the people in the town where they were believed on him, Jesus said: “Let us go into the next towns.” Christ is always for going on and doing more. He often

said while on earth that he would and could have done vastly more for the people of his day if they had had more faith. When he wept over the doomed city of Jerusalem his cry was: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" If they had been willing to venture farther with Jesus, he would have saved them from a thousand woes. And there is not one of us that Jesus would not have already done more for, if we had only had the daring faith that would have followed him wherever he led.

I

If we are to share the happy and adventurous career with Jesus, we must dare to cut loose entirely from sin and accept him, not only as our Saviour, but as our Lord and Master.

In South Africa there is a pagan tribe called the Red Kafirs. These people have the peculiar habit of rubbing their skin with fat and red clay, which makes them look like polished bronze. Those who are clothed wear red garments. The missionaries tell us that red is worn as a sign of their pagan religion. When one of these Red Kafirs becomes a Christian, the first token of it is that he puts off his red garment—that is his open confession of this renunciation of his pagan superstitions and of his acceptance of Christ as his Saviour and Lord.

A missionary relates that on one occasion a woman clothed in her heathen garb presented herself to him as a candidate for baptism. He asked why she came

for baptism wearing her heathen dress, and she replied that she would gladly put it off, but it was the only dress she had. A proper garment was provided, and she put off her red garment forever. So Christ calls to men and women now to put away the red garments of sin and be clothed upon with the white garments of righteousness. None need fear their sins are too red with iniquity, for the cheering call is: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

II

The man who would go on adventure with Jesus must keep alive his curiosity of mind and heart, in order to feed his zest and appetite for new and interesting and glorious achievements in high living. A prominent physician says that the normal baby comes into the world with knowledge-hunger. Through his sense organs there enter into his tiny brain myriads of messages; and his first life work, outside of nutrition and growth, is the interpretation of these messages. Long before he can talk he is a human interrogation point. In fact, it is curiosity, knowledge-hunger, that enables a very small child to learn a language more quickly and more accurately than can a grown person.

After a child has learned to talk he becomes a rapid-fire machine gun of queries. He is striving to know, and the wise parent will go a long way in patiently and honestly answering the questions as

they are asked. At no later period of life is there such a hunger for knowledge, but it is exceedingly important for each of us to know that as long as that curiosity of mind is kept alive and active, and that eagerness for knowledge continued, the brain continues to grow and develop.

What an interesting line of thought this arouses! A man, in the high intellectual sense, may be said to be just as old and no older than his curiosity of mind. Many people die young intellectually, though the body still remains fat and flourishing. Others go on to old age, as it is counted by years, and the hair whitens and the body shows signs of weakness; but the mind not only retains its freshness and its power for the exercise of noble thinking and the portrayal of splendid pictures of the imagination, but grows and enlarges with the years.

Where many men and women of forty seem intellectually to have reached the zenith of their mental powers, other men and women, like Victor Hugo, Gladstone, Julia Ward Howe, and many others, at eighty are yet as alive and progressive as in their youth.

In one case the curiosity of mind was allowed to atrophy and die, while in the other it was kept awake and alert by constant use and high endeavor.

We observe the same thing in the still loftier realm of the spirit, where we are dealing with those great dynamic forces that make for high and holy character. In the realm of sainthood we must be obedient to the same law as in the realm of the intellect. As curiosity is to the mind, so the zest and appetite of

the spirit is all that is needed for continued growth in goodness. Do you recall that puzzling one of the "blesseds", where Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled"? How clear it all is when read in the light of this thought! Just as knowledge is gathered easily by the mind awake with curiosity, so goodness, righteousness, is easily obtained by the heart that has an appetite for it, hungers and thirsts after it. God grant us all this great zest for goodness! May we keep alive, both in mind and heart, that higher hunger of soul that will enable us to grow in the beautiful grace of our divine Lord! How much men and women lose when they falter and hesitate, and do not dare to go farther with Jesus to scale all heights, and penetrate all the noble love mysteries of God where he would lead them.

One of the most pitiful things in the world is to see a man ten years on the way as a professed Christian, and yet not so sensitive to the breath of evil, nor so hungry for the reading of the Bible, nor so quick to respond in gratitude to God, nor so earnest in desire to win souls to Christ, as at the entrance of the journey. The moral and spiritual appetite has been allowed to atrophy through neglect and disuse.

My friends, let us arise and go on to holy adventures with Christ, and we shall grow and expand in high and saintly personality. Glorious careers, like that of Paul, who was the chief of sinners, yet became the greatest saint of his age; or the fiery-tempered John, who became the disciple whom Jesus

loved, have not exhausted, but only illustrate, the possibilities of growth into holiness of life.

It is the open road, the open secret of goodness. Thank God, we have in us the power and possibilities of growth if we but hearken to the call of the adventurous Christ and go to the limit where he will lead.

Some men are great by an inborn strength,

By a gift and a gift alone;

And some may leap at a single length

From a hovel to a throne.

But some—and these are the choice of God—

Must striving and patience know,

As trees that spring from the acorned clod

Must wrestle, and reach, and grow.

The rose that blooms for a happy hour

Knows only a brief, bright day—

The morn to bud, and the noon to flower,

And evening to pass away.

But the strong roof beam and the ship's tall mast,

Out there where the wild storms blow,

In thunderous tempest and wintry blast,

Through centuries long they grow.

Labor, and study, and yearning long,

And waging the godly strife,

These make character tall and strong;

These give power to life.

There's praise for the man who swiftly wins,

There are shouts for the man who knows,

But these fall silent, and then begins

The song of the man who grows.

III

The man who goes forth adventuring with Jesus must expect all hide-binding conventionalities to be broken.

Do you remember the preparation that God gave to Peter in order to rid him of his racial prejudices

and fit him to preach the Gospel of Christ to the Gentiles? Up on the roof top where he was praying to God (What wonderful things come to men when they are praying!) a great vision was unfolded to him—"He beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth: wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean. And a voice came unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common."

And while Peter wondered, the messengers came from the home of Cornelius and, inspired by the heavenly vision, Peter dared to go forth adventuring with Jesus. If he had faltered or refused to go, the great career of Peter would have ended and gone no farther than the home of Simon the tanner. Your career may be in the same peril this very hour.

This teaching may have great value to us at the present time, when the whole world is rocked with a strange social ferment. We must live with open minds that we may discern the Spirit of God working on the hearts of men. When William and Catherine Booth cast conventionalities to the winds and went forth to the founding of the Salvation Army, only a very few rare spirits saw anything in it but folly; but no one doubts now that they were led by God in a glorious adventure with Christ.

Let us be alert for any "new wine of the Spirit."

Out of this social unrest, with its multiplied currents and cross-currents, another world-swelling movement to advance the kingdom of God may come.

Bishop Fred Fisher tells us that in Paris a young and enthusiastic social leader shot a challenge across the table to him when he said: "Where is your Christ? You think you follow him? I say to you that the real living Jesus has left your dead churches, and is now out in the thick of this social battle. He is our Leader, this Jesus that loved starving children, and sick women, blind men, and all our struggling humanity." And the Bishop says he spoke with that rare passion of the disciple.

Bishop Fisher also tells us how he was shocked on another occasion in a crowded European labour hall to hear one of the passionate young speakers end an appealing address by quoting a vigorous poem of one of the modern writers, each verse of which ended with these daring words: "Comrade, Jesus hath his red card."

What dare we say about this, but what Jesus said, when the disciples told him of some, not of their company, that cast out devils in his name? He said to let them alone. As this gallant young Bishop says: "Whether they are right or wrong in their claim, thousands of the bravest and best leaders in this economic war have sworn allegiance to Jesus as they understand his life and its appeal to men. And who among Christians would be willing to deny them his name? They may prove to be some of these 'other sheep,' which he discerns through his tears—soon to hear his voice and be gathered into his fold."

IV

The finest and rarest field of adventure on the earth is open only to those who will go the limit on adventures with Jesus. The missionary field is the most romantic realm on earth in our day. Take that great teeming Republic of China, with its more than four hundred millions of human beings. Do you remember how Morrison poured out his soul for a lifetime and saved only his interpreter, only one sheaf for a lifetime of toil and ministry? But others have entered into his labours and are reaping where he sowed.

One of the most thrilling things in the literature of recent years is an address by a cultivated, scholarly Chinese gentleman, a Christian gentleman of China, about winning China for Christ. Let me read to you a single burning and illuminating paragraph. Remember this is not an Englishman nor an American speaking, but a Chinaman, Dr. Cheng Ching Yi, and this is what he says:

“The whole of Christian propaganda is the greatest adventure in the world. Are we bold enough to face the difficult situation? Under such circumstances are we daring enough to capture the unparalleled opportunity of taking China for Christ? Are we brave enough to tackle the (humanly speaking) impossibility, relying on the assurance that there is nothing impossible to God? Are we determined to act in accordance with the times, and do our utmost to win China for the Lord? Remember, friends, my heart is burning within me as I speak. The thought of a failure on our part to rise to the occasion for a

forward, immediate, nation-wide spiritual movement makes me shudder. Look wherever you like; such a definite step must be taken. Look at the compassionate Lord on high; look at the opposing forces below; look at the need of our fellow men around us; look at the personal obligation within us; and there seems to be no way out of it. We are in it, all of us, and no backing out is possible. Let us rise up to the call, and in the beauty of the Lord of Hosts attempt the impossible thing—seeing in the near future Christ for China, and China for Christ.”

Could there be anything more heartening than that, when the greatest danger of the future of humanity is the threat of an alignment of the great colored races of the world against the white races for the domination of mankind?

If we shall only be wise enough to keep our cast-off liquor traffic out of China and India and Africa, and give the missionaries and the native Christians like Dr. Cheng Ching Yi, a chance to pursue their holy adventure with Jesus, the world will be safe not only for democracy, but for humanity.

V

And, finally, we must not lose sight of the cheering fact that those who go forth to glorious adventures with Jesus experience the noblest joys of life. It is not the hardship that the adventurer thinks of and dwells on, it is the conquest and the glory of achievement. Listen to the song of the Panama Canal builders :

"Got any rivers they say are uncrossable?
Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?
We specialize in the wholly impossible,
Doing the thing that no one can do."

Think of Stanley's joy when he found Livingstone in the heart of Africa, when it was indeed the "dark continent"! Think of Greeley's joy when, after a lifetime of effort, he stood at the north pole—or of Shackelton's on the south. What did cold or hunger count for to those men? Less than nothing. Think of the joy of a man like Dr. Gorgas, who could seize a malignant bacillus in his giant-like grasp and free a nation of yellow fever.

But the highest of all joys comes to those who go forth with utter unselfishness of spirit to share with Jesus Christ in the adventures of divine love wherever he shall lead.

An English writer, wandering in a Sussex churchyard, found on a gravestone these valiant and glorious words: "They strove with their faces to the morning sun, and up to their God."

May it be in words as valiant and joyous as those that our friends shall find appropriate description of our own life adventures!

IV

THE HAPPY FORTUNE OF THE GOOD- WILL MEN

“Peace on earth to men of good will.”—*Luke 2:14* (a rendering by some modern scholars).

THE Standard Version of the Bible generally accepted renders the fourteenth verse of the second chapter of Luke, giving the song of the angels to the shepherds on the night of the birth of Jesus: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.” Some modern scholars of high standing assure us that this oft-quoted song may be well translated without straining the text: “Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good-will.”

This version of the song awakens a new and exceedingly interesting train of thought which seems to me well worth our careful study.

Certain it is that peace, in its deepest sense, can never come to any one who has not the spirit of good-will, and peace has been coming to the men of good-will in all parts of the world wherever Christ has been accepted and obeyed as the personal Saviour of men. “Peace on earth,” in the sense of stopping all wars among men, seems as far away now as when the angels sang to the shepherds. We have just passed through the most destructive war humanity,

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has ever known, and at this moment twenty-two wars of a smaller scope are raging in the world, any one of which would have been a serious war in those simpler days of the coming of Jesus. But, in this new sense, the angelic promise has been fulfilled in multitudes of instances, and is being gloriously fulfilled in every land on earth in some souls to-day. The words of Scripture will always be true that those who "live by the sword will perish by the sword"; but it will also be true, in the highest and truest sense, that the "good-will men" will enjoy the divinely promised peace of the angel's song.

Some people go through the world sowing the seeds of strife, even when they have no conscious purpose of doing so. Their very natures make peace impossible where they are.

A few years ago there was a mysterious outbreak of typhoid fever cases in New York City. For some time the health authorities were unable to trace them to the source of infection. Finally they ran them down to a woman employed as a cook, who was carrying around typhoid germs, to which she herself was immune, but which played havoc with other people.

There are many people who carry the germs of cynicism and hate in the very spirit of their minds and hearts, and wherever they go the infection from their evil souls destroys peace. But the man of good-will will find his own kind wherever his footsteps may wander. Edwin Markham puts it in graphic setting:

Once where a prophet in a palm shade lay,
A traveler stopped at noon one dusty day,

And asked, "What sort of people in this land?"

The prophet answered, lifting happy hand:

"Well, friend, what sort of people whence you came?"

"What sort?" the traveler snorted—"knaves and fools!"

"Well," said the prophet, "When your fervor cools,

You'll find the people here the very same."

Another stranger at the dusk drew near,

And paused to ask, "What sort of people here?"

"Well, friend, what were the people whence you came?"

"Ah," smiled the stranger, "they were good and wise."

"Then," cried the prophet, laughing in his eyes,

"You'll find the people here the very same."

I

An active faith in the good-will of God toward us is essential to our own confidence and peace. To the man who never doubts the good-will of God, the spirit of good-will toward his fellow men comes easy. Faith in God is the soil out of which all the finest fruits of the soul of man must ever spring. One of the greatest and noblest expressions of that lofty faith is in the prophetic book of Habakkuk.

The story is told of Benjamin Franklin that he, at one time while he was the American Ambassador at the French Court during or following the American Revolution, produced an old, worn book and read a passage to a glittering company assembled in a famous salon. The most cultured men and women of France were enthusiastic over the majestic beauty of the lines and inquired what genius had produced them. "He was a man who lived in Asia twenty-four hundred years ago. His name was Habakkuk," said Franklin. He had read to that brilliant company the last chapter of the book of Habakkuk. It is in the form often used in Hebrew poetry, a choral song

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and response, with a final response from the full chorus. It is a marvelous expression of faith in the power and goodness of God.

The first choir sings :

“God cometh from Teman,
And the Holy One from Mount Paran.
His glory covereth the heavens,
And the earth is full of his praise.
And his brightness is as the light.
Before him goeth the pestilence,
And fiery bolts go forth at his feet.
He standeth and shaketh the earth ;
He beholdeth and driveth asunder the nations ;
And the eternal mountains are scattered,
The everlasting hills do bow ;
His ways are everlasting.”

The second choir responds :

“Thou dost cleave the earth with rivers ;
The mountains see thee and are afraid ;
The tempest of waters passeth by ;
The deep uttereth his voice,
And lifteth up his hands on high ;
The sun and the moon stand still in their habitation
At the light on thine arrows as they go,
At the shining of thy glittering spear.
Thou dost march through the land in indignation,
Thou dost thresh the nations in anger.”

And then all the choirs unite in what may be called the Hallelujah Chorus of the Old Testament :

“For though the fig tree shall not blossom,
Neither shall fruit be in the vines ;
The labour of the olive shall fail,
And the fields shall yield no meat ;
The flock shall be cut off from the fold,
And there shall be no herd in the stalls :
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

The man whose faith rests upon God's good-will toward men in that way, will not find it hard to himself maintain a spirit of good-will toward his fellows.

II

We must all feel that to realize this God-given message sent to the shepherds of Judea by the angels requires that we shall have more than a mere kindly feeling toward humanity—a sort of lazy, inactive neutrality that masquerades under the name of good-will. Men and women often get a reputation for good-heartedness and good-will that is not deserved. It is nothing but indolence mixed with a desire for popularity and favor with everybody. Scratch through the bark of such people's indolent geniality and you find that what passed for good-will, and good-heartedness, was all selfishness. The words good-will signify a positive, aggressive determination of the will to do good in dealing with our fellow men.

When John, the beloved disciple, on the Isle of Patmos, was receiving those wonderful visions that make the Book of Revelation in our New Testament, the Laodicean Church was made up of an indolent, neutral, useless type of good people. They were the kind of good people, too often met in our own day, who are goody-goody—in plain English, good for nothing in the real work of a Christian church. In the messages which Christ sent through his beloved friend, St. John, to the churches—for he sent a special message to each of the great churches of that day—the church of Ephesus, the church of Smyrna, the church of Pergamos, the church of Thyatira, the church of Sardis, the church of Philadelphia—he dealt out commendation or warning or rebuke faithfully as the occasion demanded. But when the Master came to the church of Laodicea this is what he

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told the loving but loyal St. John to say: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

One of the newer poets, with a grace that reminds us of the "Lotos Eaters" of Tennyson, but with far greater moral passion, taking these Scripture lines for his text sings with real poetic fervor and spiritual insight of the Laodiceans of our own time. He puts into the mouths of these indolent, neutral, wishy-washy claimants of good-will these stinging lines of confession:

"We are the Laodiceans: we know not the ice nor the fire;

We have never sprung to the edge of doom at the call of a brave desire;

We have basked in the tepid noontides; we have drawn an even breath;

We have never felt between our lips the savors of life or death.

"We are the Laodiceans, loved not by God or man;

We boast in our ease or riches, and take what praise we can;

No love shall sear us with longing, no grief shall turn us to stone;

We shall not dance to the pipes of Spring, nor answer to joy or moan.

"We are the Laodiceans; when God's great summons came, Cleaving the hosts of living men, as with a line of fame, We were tossed aside like vagrant leaves at an idle wind's behest,

For we knew not the ways of battle, and we found not the ways of rest.

"We are the Laodiceans: we have slight fear of hell, For even its master can not say, "Ye have done my bidding well."

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And what for us would heaven be, with its endless lift
and range?

We are doomed to a passionless limbo, that knows not
life nor change.

"We are the Laodiceans: we care not for wrong nor
right;

We have no part in a world's defense, no cause for which
to fight;

The fruits of the ground are sweet; we would rest in
our garden-places,

But God himself shall drive us out, between the black
star-spaces.

"We are the Laodiceans: our fight is with only those
Who would send us to burning deserts, or whelm us in
alien snows;

We feel no lure of march nor flight; we taste not hope
nor shame;

And we die, in our visionless Eden, of a curse without
a name."

God save any of us from having to make at last a confession like that! Such people never know the keen, holy contentment that comes from the assurance that we have done our part loyally in the struggle for God's great and righteous causes. Such contentment, which is really the beginning of heaven in the human soul, Paul tells us has to be learned in campaigns of positive good-will toward men, for whom he dared to be stoned and shipwrecked and beaten with rods. But in the midst of all these, Paul says: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Paul was one of the finest specimens of a good-will man the world has ever seen, and its expression brought him into keen peace and contentment.

Just now the world is suffering from the violent throes of a desperate spirit of discontent. Like a foul and poisonous gas, the spirit of discontent seems

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to have tainted the very atmosphere in all parts of the world. And in many lands it is producing the most disastrous results, both in the lives of individuals and of nations. It is a time for the sincere good-will men and women of the world to guard their own intellectual and moral health, and so rest and steady their souls on the goodness of God that the genuine good-will in their hearts and in their deeds shall enable them to show forth their inward peace and contentment to a discontented world.

On every hand there is a fruitful field in which the good-will people may win the prize of peace. The good-will man does not need to go about criticizing his neighbours in order to improve them. As some one wisely says: "It is better to help people to criticize themselves than it is to criticize them." They will believe themselves; they are not likely to believe you. The way to bring about this wholesome and helpful condition of self-criticism, with its accompanying desire for improvement, is to show the spirit of sincere and persistent good-will in our own daily living. It was a very high tribute paid to a certain Christian man when one who had known him intimately said of him: "He never told me that I ought to do better, but I always came away from any conversation with him wanting to do better."

Our own homes, with the people who know us best, who love us most, and who are dearest to us, are a most fruitful field of blessing for all of us who are seeking to be men and women of good-will. Were you ever in a cold-storage plant? You enter a great warehouse, and huge padded doors are closed sharply

behind you, preventing even a breath of warm air from entering with you. Once inside the ice chambers, so radical is the change of atmosphere that one feels as though he had passed on a hot afternoon of a mid-summer's day into a cave in some Arctic winter. There, perhaps, in long rows hang hundreds of great beeves, frozen stiff. It requires only a few minutes to make you shiver as if chilled to the marrow of your bones. You are glad indeed to be out of doors again and feel the glow of the sunshine.

Do you know, there are too many homes where the atmosphere mentally and spiritually is like that? It is the tragedy of domestic life in multitudes of homes. My friends, cold-storage has no place in the home, where men and women and children are to live and grow and fit each other for heaven. It takes the warm sunshine of smiles, the loving caress, the tender embrace, the breath of kind, gentle words, and the dew of praise, to draw out the sweet fragrance of the beautiful flowers that blossom only in happy and grateful hearts.

How this old world would glow with new beauty and take on tints of the skies if about all the professed Christian hearthstones of America good-will should have perfectly the right of way! Why take politeness and courtesy to the office or store and be so stingy with words of love and praise and sympathy and tender appreciation for the dear ones at home? When we are in social life among mere acquaintances or among strangers, our tongues are nimble and quick to fit themselves to praise or thanks for a deed well or courteously done. But how often a deed accom-

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plished with even greater skill and tendered with the sweet grace of loving thoughtfulness in the home is received with silence as a formal matter of course!

The divorce courts would close to-morrow and never open again to any good man or woman on earth if every husband and wife, in the sincere spirit of good-will, would seek as carefully and tenderly to find the good points in each other, and express themselves as lovingly about them to their mate as they did in the sweetheart days before marriage. The wedded people who persistently continue to make love to each other after marriage, with the same unselfish thoughtfulness of their comrade's happiness as before marriage, do continue to love each other with a more reverent tenderness, a deeper sympathy, a wider understanding, and a more complete adoration as the years go by.

Nothing will give to children such a background of heaven out of which to go out to a strong and noble career, as a home where a spirit of thoughtful good-will and appreciation of one another is the atmosphere of the home.

They tell us the birds have many highways through the skies when they pass from land to land in their pilgrimages to summer and winter homes. A famous naturalist paints a graphic picture for the imagination in the gathering of the migratory birds of France for their annual flight toward Africa. It is shown that they have two great atmospheric highways which they pursue by preference—one leading over the Pyrenees by the principal passes in Spain, and thence by the Strait of Gibraltar; and the other skirt-

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ing the Alps, and passing down the whole length of Italy. As the season advances the birds may be seen converging from Western, Central and Southern France toward the Pyrenean passes. Sometimes the same species, such as the chaffinch, divide into two parties, which some observers claim to be able to distinguish by the character of their songs, one taking the Spanish and the other the Italian route. Each species has its favorite way, depending on the supply of the kind of food it prefers. The bullfinch follows the ranges of low hills; the blackbird keeps to the vineyards; and still others follow the water-courses and shore lines. And so the birds have many highways by which they reach their land of dreams. But it is not so with human souls. Man has but one sure highway from earth to heaven, and that is the Christ-blazed path of good-will. God guide us all therein!

V.

SUN-FACING LIVES

"There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us."—*Psalms 4:6.*

SAINT IZAAK WALTON, the patron saint of all thoughtful and joyous anglers for all time, of which number I have rejoiced to claim my right to membership these many years, says that in fishing in a stream on a bright day the fisherman must "always face the sunny side of the stream." Says the quaint old angler: "Never stand so that the sun will cast your shadow across the water."

The wisdom of that advice immediately appeals to us. Fish are so shy and timid that even the darkening of the water about them by a falling shadow will often drive them away. But like many of the sayings of the good old angler, it may be given a much deeper meaning. In the wider stream of life, where we angle for success and happiness, it is vastly important that we face the sunlight and do not throw a disturbing shadow upon others.

The Psalmist declares in our text, as in many other Psalms, that God is our sun, and it is when the sunlight of the face of God shines upon us that good things come to us and through us to our fellows.

Joaquin Miller, our old Oregon poet, means the

same thing in his beautiful song, "The Fortunate Isles":

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- "You sail and you seek for the Fortunate Isles,
 The old Greek Isles of the yellow bird's song?
 Then steer straight on through the watery miles,
 Straight on, straight on, and you can't go wrong.
 Nay, not to the left, nay, not to the right,
 But on, straight on, and the isles are in sight,
 The old Greek Isles where the yellow birds sing
 And life lies girt with a golden ring.
- "These Fortunate Isles, they are not so far;
 They lie within reach of the lowliest door;
 You can see them gleam by the twilight star;
 You can hear them sing by the moon's white shore—
 Nay, never look back! Those leveled gravestones—
 They were landing steps: they were steps unto thrones
 Of glory for souls that have gone before,
 And have set white feet on the fortunate shore.
- "And what are the names of the Fortunate Isles?
 Why, Duty and Love and a large Content.
 Lo! these are the isles of the watery miles,
 That God let down from the firmament.
 Aye! Duty, and Love and true man's trust;
 Your forehead to God though your feet in the dust.
 Aye! Duty to man, and to God meanwhile,
 And these, O friend, are the Fortunate Isles."

The keynote of a true human life is joy of the noble kind which one may find at its best only when receiving it as the good gift of God and in the happy consciousness of God's presence. The Bible declares that the joy of the Lord is our strength.

There is a little book called "*Good Cheer*," written by Humphrey J. Desmond, in which the author combats the popular notion that gravity is necessarily religious and that laughter is irreligious. He calls attention to the fact that Faber, who wrote some of our great hymns, in one of his sermons argues in

favour of a sense of humour as an aid to spiritual life. The saints sometimes joked; in fact, St. Gregory informs us that St. Basil was a great joker. St. Francis was nicknamed by his contemporaries as "Brother Ever-glad"; and St. Felix was known by his friends as "St. Ever-joyful." It is said that it lifted men's hearts to meet St. Philip Neri, and even after his death sad people went to his home to get rid of melancholy.

"The heart that is joyful is better disposed to receive grace than the heart that is filled with sorrow," said St. Bonaventura; St. Francis de Sales believed that the human heart needs joy, and "without joy it cannot be at rest"; St. Andrew held that the soul is not pure when the face is gloomy; "Let nothing disturb and nothing affright thee," writes St. Theresa; and in the same spirit are these words of St. Bernard: "Nothing can work me damage except myself; the evils that I sustain I carry about with me, and never am a real sufferer but by my own fault."

The Bible amply justifies the joyousness of these men who lived the holiest lives of their day, none of whom counseled a religion of sadness or fear. "Rejoice, ye just," and "Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid," for joy is among the fruits of the Spirit, and faith in God casteth out fear. The Bible is honeycombed with such radiant points of light.

II

The true meaning and the richest and most satisfying joys of life can never be found on the surface.

Only those learn the great secret who live deeper than the life of things in the life of the Spirit. In this day so given over to materialism it is hard for men to appreciate that wonderful sentence of Jesus: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things he possesseth." The world's beatitudes always begin "Blessed is he that hath," but the beatitudes of Jesus begin "Blessed is he that is."

Life is full of illustrations of the truth of Christ's words.

Not long ago a man died in Paris leaving behind him a fortune of a hundred millions of dollars. I have never heard it charged against him that he was an idler, a waster, a profligate, or unjust and dishonest in his manner of acquiring or using his wealth. On the contrary, he was an honest toiler, a wise and prudent administrator, of great executive ability in carrying on the necessary work of the world. And yet William K. Vanderbilt was never a happy man. Shortly before his death he made this confession in a newspaper interview:

"My life was never destined to be quite happy. It was laid along lines which I could not foresee, almost from earliest childhood. It has left me with nothing to hope for, with nothing definite to seek or strive for. Inherited wealth is a big handicap to happiness. It is as certain death to ambition as cocaine is to morality. If a man makes money, no matter how much, he finds a certain happiness in its possession, for in the desire to increase his business he has a constant use for it. But the man who inherits it has none of this. The first satisfaction, and the greatest, that of building the foundation of a fortune, is denied him. He must labour, if he does labour, simply to add to an over-sufficiency."

One cannot read this without seeing that this intelligent and powerful man had never even glimpsed the deep possibilities of the joys and triumphs of life above and beyond the life of things in the realm of the soul. It is not hard to find that road of the supreme joy in life's simple and quiet ways if we open our hearts to God's coming.

"How quietly God comes to you and me!
 In slippèd feet
 As seemeth meet
 To one who will not press his company.

"Not in the earthquake nor the hurricane
 Elijah heard
 A whispered word
 Whose healing made him strong again and sane.

"God seems to hide, and so he bids us seek.
 He makes as though
 He'd farther go.
 We must constrain him, he's so mild and meek!

"And so it easy is our God to miss.
 Be still and know!
 'Tis ever so.
 He comes as dew and as the zephyr's kiss.

"Oh, ye who say—Our God is hard to find,
 Remember love,
 From heaven aboye,
 Is very like the common, human kind.

"All love comes to us shod in slippèd feet.
 Love's gentle press,
 Its soft caress,
 Forever shun the uproar of the street.

"Be patient, heart; expectant, listening ear.
 Perhaps to-night,
 In shadowed light,
 The God you seek will quietly appear!"

III

Worry, one of the supreme joy-killers of the world, comes through our turning our faces away from the sun. If we keep our eyes fastened on the countenance of Divine Love, innumerable reasons for thanksgiving suggest themselves and a thankful heart melts worry as the sunshine at noonday melts snow.

Maltbie Babcock, whose short life which faced the sun so loyally that he himself became blessed sunshine to many tempted souls, once said:

“Look for the goodness of the Lord in your own life. The dross and slag of life accumulate; smoke is in the air; flakes of soot fall softly upon us; life can easily seem a poor affair. But life is full of dignity, grace and joy, full of opportunity for goodness and kindness. Will you wait till the sunset hour gilds its passing? Will you wait till death stirs your imagination and you see, but too late, how much beauty and half-appreciated joy could have been a blessing? Look for God’s goodness to-day. Only so will you come to see life in its fullness. The disagreeable may be forced upon you; but your mind will instinctively find an offset. Sweet uses will shine out of adversity. You will find ‘Tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.’ In every storm you will hear your Saviour’s voice, ‘It is I.’ Every day will have sufficient testing; but the word of Jesus will hold good: ‘My grace is sufficient for thee.’ You will see the sterner side of life, the rock-like structure of righteousness with the Puritan; but also life’s gentler side with the Mystic, the green pasture and still waters of Peace. In your life mercy and truth shall meet, righteousness and peace shall kiss each other. The world of law shall yet be a world of love. You shall hear it thunder at Sinai; but you shall hear the angel voices at Bethlehem singing the glory of the God of love, heralding to all mankind tidings of peace and good will.”

Worry, which comes from over-sensitiveness, usually comes from looking at ourselves instead of

God. When we center our thoughts on ourselves and think we must have our own way, we are mortgaged to a thousand worries.

A small boy wailed, "Mother, my tooth is sore! It hurts when I scrunch down on it!"

The mother patiently answered: "Then don't scrunch down on it."

"But," said the boy, "I want to! It feels kinder good when it hurts."

How many people like to "scrunch down" on the sore spot in their lives! How we do coddle our aches and pains! We put our ills under the microscope to make them look bigger. We roll our morsels of bitterness under our tongue instead of swallowing them as quickly as possible, and look in the glass to see what ugly faces we can make. We persist in living over again in memory our uncomfortable experiences, as if once was not enough to be troubled by them. Most of life's sores would soon heal if we would stop scrunching down on them. Let us stop all such folly and give each to-day to visioning the brightest side possible for its duties and its burdens.

"To-day, whatever may annoy,
 The word for me is joy, just simple joy;
 The joy of life;
 The joy of children and of wife;
 The joy of bright blue skies;
 The joy of rain; the glad surprise
 Of twinkling stars that shine at night;
 The joy of winged things in their flight;
 The joy of noonday, and the tried,
 True joyousness of eventide;
 The joy of labor and of mirth;
 The joy of air, and sea, and earth—
 The countless joys that ever flow from Him

Whose vast magnificence doth dim
The lustrous light of day,
The lavish gifts divine upon our way.
Whate'er there be of sorrow,
I'll put off till to-morrow,
And when to-morrow comes, why, then
"Twill be to-day and joy again!"

IV

This facing the sun will make good in the most trying experiences of life. Trouble only makes men stronger and grander and finer in every way if a man faces the sun and lives in the consciousness of God's presence. Through all the centuries Job is proof positive of this statement. First, Job lost his property that he had become accustomed to, and had depended on for the comfort of his old age—an exceedingly hard and bitter experience, as some of us know full well. But Job stayed close to God and kept his faith. Then he lost his loved ones, which to a noble soul like Job's is a much greater loss than the loss of property. Then came the loss of his health, which in many ways is one of the very hardest trials that human beings are called upon to endure. But Job's confidence remained steadfast. He kept so close to God that he could see his face and talk with him through it all. He "rent his robe, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped." Thank God for the man who, when money is gone and children are gone and health is gone, faces the sun, though it is from the ground, and worships his God. You cannot destroy a man like that.

In order that no man through all the ages might

say that his case was worse than Job's, Satan was permitted to go the limit in testing him. Frederick Shannon, one of the sweetest preachers of modern times, who calls Job "Trouble's big brother," says:

As if Job's troubles were not enough, he was given for good measure a thin-brained, tongue-lashing wife! "Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity?"—hear her piping scream across the years—"renounce God, and die." But Job was equal to even this emergency. "What?" he asked, "shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" In other words, God can do no wrong. Even evil is pregnant with good to a soul that loves God. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." How can a man like that be thrown down? He cannot! Toss him wherever you choose, he will put in his appearance, finely groomed and spiritually flourishing, on the other side of the universe. Job was bigger than his trouble.

Job was a revelation of God's love to his friends and to countless millions all the way down to our day, and will be until the end of time. Job is a Bible written to sorrowing and tried souls. So we, if we live in the sunshine of God's face, shall be a Bible of blessing to many who watch our lives.

V

The secret of being a constant benediction to others is to live ourselves in the conscious presence of God, with the light of the Sun of Righteousness shining in our faces. This old world is very sick, and many quack nostrums are offered for its cure; but the one thing that can heal all earth's maladies is the sunshine of God's infinite love in conquest of the sinful heart of mankind. Every one of us will be aiding in the cure of the whole world's sickness if we will

keep our own faces and hearts full of the sunshine from the face of God.

A delegate from England to the Pilgrim Tercentenary in Boston was traveling on a St. Lawrence steamer when he suddenly remembered the tragic circumstances connected with the death of Silvester Horne, the famous English preacher, some years ago on a St. Lawrence steamer. He went to the captain and said: "Do you happen to remember, Captain, the death, a few years ago, on one of these St. Lawrence river boats, of an English preacher named Silvester Horne?" The captain answered quietly, but with deep feeling: "I certainly do remember. It was on this very boat." He then proceeded to show the English visitor the precise spot where the saintly man fell. "I chanced to see him fall and ran toward him. He died instantly. His wife, holding his head, called out in agony: 'Are you dead?' An instant later she turned to me: 'Captain, is my husband really dead?' I shook my head, 'yes,' and ordered some sailors to carry the body into my cabin. 'Come on in, I want you to see the cabin.'" As the minister entered the captain's room he noticed as one of the most conspicuous objects in the room a beautifully framed photograph of the deceased prophet. Then he resumed the story: "But when we brought his body into this cabin, that was not the end of the tale. Mrs. Horne came in and immediately kneeled down beside his body. I was standing near. She turned to me and commanded, 'Captain, you must kneel.' I was not a kneeling man—in fact, I was altogether indifferent to religion. But I hesitated only a second,

then knelt. Her prayer was the simplest, most beautiful, most natural prayer I ever heard. She mentioned all the children by name, the church and various causes that had been dear to her husband's heart. Do you know, I have never been able to escape from the prayer. It brought me to Christ. I am now a professed Christian, and whenever I can I attend the little church of which I have become a member. I was Silvester's Horne's last convert."

I said to myself when I read that heart-warming story: "No, Captain, you are mistaken; you were not Silvester Horne's convert, you were his wife's convert. It was her triumphant faith in the time of a great emergency that conquered your soul. If she had given up to her grief, you would never have been converted through the death of the good man. But you saw the light in her face which she received from the face of her God."

Thank God, it is possible for each of us to live a sun-facing life and be a sunshine bringer to those who live about us.

Years ago, when that Scotch saint, Dr. Andrew Bonar, was at one of the great Northfield meetings, and had, in a very tender spiritual address, lifted his hearers up to heavenly heights, Mr. Moody arose and said: "Dr. Bonar, these people would like to know how you live this victorious life about which you have been preaching. Tell us your experience." After considerable urging, Dr. Bonar said, with great hesitation: "I do not like to speak of myself, but for fifty years I have had access to the throne of grace."

That was all the old saint had to say, but it told the whole story.

Blessed be God! We too may have access to the throne of grace.

VI

THE LOVE MYSTERIES OF GOD

“Great is the mystery of godliness.”—*I Timothy 3:16.*
“God is love.”—*I John 4:16.*

IT is evident from these texts, which are in perfect harmony with the spirit of Bible teaching throughout the Old and New Testaments, that the great mystery of godliness is the mystery of love. All the unsearchable mysteries of the personality and doings of God are the mysteries of love. From the very beginning God's dealings concerning man have been clothed about and upon by the divine mysteries of love.

Have you read the story of the creation of man recently? It has been a long time, has it not, since you read it? It is so brief, let us read it now.

The creation of the world was a finished task. Out of chaos order had come to pass. Out of darkness light filled the earth and the sky with glorious illumination. Continents and islands lifted themselves out of the great deep. The green grass and the waving trees and beautiful flowers adorned the land. Giant mountain ranges towered in the distance to make watersheds to give permanency to the fertility of valleys and plains. Great beasts roamed the prairies, or hid themselves in jungles and forests. The tides had yielded to the magnetic touch of the

moon and filled the harbours of the continents with their refreshing fullness of blessing. The great and small fishes disported themselves in the sea, and many of them went on voyages of adventure up the channels of the great rivers toward their sources in the mountains.

The birds had come to fill their place in this gorgeous new world—eagle for the rocky cliff, ducks and geese in lake and bay, and the innumerable songsters for the forests and the glades.

It was a wholesome, beautiful world, fresh from the hand of the good God. From mountain top to the depth of the sea, from the deepest canyon to the loftiest constellation of stars in the sky that roofed it in, it was the work of infinite wisdom, power, goodness, and love.

Then God looked over this last achievement and said to the Council of Heaven: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said: Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all

the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

And this great God, who is love, continued to devise things for man's comfort and pleasure: "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden. * * * And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying: Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Then this father-hearted God said: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him. * * * And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said: This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be

called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife.”

Surely the reader of this story must be dull and insensitive indeed if he does not see the love of God seeking children to wear his own image and reproduce his own character in the world he had created.

Every true father ought to be able to understand the feeling in the heart of our Heavenly Father in the creation of man. When a man with the true spirit of fatherhood looks on the face of his son, his soul is not only filled with infinitely tender compassion and love, but with a great and holy desire that his son may carry all that is noble and good in himself on to the future, and, if possible, realize greater achievement than himself.

Sometimes the skeptic says: “Christ was not the wonderful exception that Christians say he was. He was a great moralist, not unlike Confucius; and, indeed, he was indebted to moralists of the past for his principles. The talk of his originality as a world teacher is unfounded.”

But it is easy to see how quickly that criticism falls to the ground under investigation. M. Ellsworth Olsen suggests that the humblest Christian who has an experimental knowledge of Christ feels in his inmost being that the Saviour is unique, divine, unapproached and unapproachable by any mere human teacher. The man whose sins have been forgiven, and who realizes that pardon in his own consciousness, does not need to know the teaching of the world's seers. He had found the truth which the

noblest of them are seeking. His heart is satisfied, his deepest human need is met. For him there is but one name given under heaven whereby men may and must be saved. That name is Jesus. There were other great moral teachers before Jesus. Confucius put the impress of his powerful mind upon China; Buddha upon India; Greece also had her wise men during the same period, and later. They were great and sincere seekers after truth. They lived far higher and nobler lives than the men of their day. But when we compare them with Jesus, how great is the difference!

Confucius is the most representative of the great moralists of the East. He was of royal lineage, and at an early age attracted a large following. His teaching centered chiefly in the home and the family. His sentiments were excellent; but, as a system of religion, futile. There is no worship of a Supreme Being, no hope of life beyond death, and no promises to comfort the soul. Here is a condensation of his maxims:

“Have no friends not equal to yourself.”

“When you have faults, do not fear to abandon them.”

“To nourish the heart there is nothing better than to make the desires few.”

“The path of duty lies in what is near, and men seek for it in what is remote. The work of duty lies in what is easy, and men seek for it in what is difficult. If each man would love his parents and show due respect to his elders, the whole empire would enjoy tranquillity.”

“ There are three things which the superior man guards against. In youth, when the physical powers are not yet settled, he guards against lust. When he is strong and the physical powers are full of vigour, he guards against quarrelsomeness. When he is old and the animal powers are decayed, he guards against covetousness.”

Now all that is very moral, but what hope for the man who is not the equal of Confucius? Put alongside these maxims of Confucius the sayings of Jesus and you can but feel at once how vast and vital is the contrast in their spirit and their power to inspire, uplift, and bless the souls of men. Jesus says:

“ Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

“ Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”

“ 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.”

“ Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

“ God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

“ I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”

Here we have teaching, invitation, command and promise, that stir the hearts of men to the depths, and that have power to inspire transformations in human conduct wherever they are proclaimed.

But the Love Mysteries of God have their climax in the gift of Christ as the supreme sacrifice of God for our redemption. That stupendous sacrifice reveals to us the glorious, unsearchable mystery of a God who hates sin and yet loves the sinner with such divine passion that he gives his Son to be made sin in man's stead in order to save him. No man ever lived on so high a plane as did Jesus, and yet he never separated himself from sinners. It was one of the accusations of his enemies that he was a friend of sinners. No man hated moral impurity as did Jesus, and yet he did not shrink from the touch or the intimate conversation of fallen women. Indeed it may be said that the heroine of the New Testament is Mary Magdalene, who was redeemed by the mysterious love of God through the personal ministry of Jesus. Christ received this ransomed and redeemed woman into the inner circle of his most beloved and trusted friends, and he honoured her by appearing to her first of all after his resurrection. When he was at dinner in the house of Simon, the leper, and this woman, Mary Magdalene, came and washed his feet with her tears and dried them with the locks of her long waving hair, and poured on his head the precious and costly perfume as a token of her adoration, Jesus received it as from a queen among women, and justified his conduct in those wonderful words: "Her sins, which are many, are

forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

With the same justice and truth it may be said that the hero of the New Testament is the prodigal son. How that matchless parable does stir the great heart of mankind! Millions of men and women have had their deep fountain of tears unstopped as they have watched the folly of the wayward son separating him from his home and the counsel and care of the noble, loving father. The great heart of the human race is moved to emotion with the simple story: "When he came to himself, he said: How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father." And how it warms our hearts and brings the love mysteries of heaven in a gracious shower of tenderness down upon us as we listen to the summing up of the teaching of the great parable: "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."

What would Confucius, who never associated with people who were not his equals, have said to the parable of the prodigal son? Only the glorious love mysteries of the infinite God could have given us this hero story.

It is the supreme glory of our Christianity that it can take broken men and women and heal them; that it can take disgraced and shamed lives and wash them whiter than snow, and send them forth to noble careers; that it can take defeated and discouraged souls and send them on, with renewed hope and dar-

ing, to Godlike achievement. Modern Christianity needs only to cling close to the great love mystery of the infinite God in saving sinners to win the world to its banners. Let us never forget that this is our chief business, and success in it constitutes both our supreme credentials as Christians and our highest glory.

III

The mysteries of God's love-dealings with us do not end with our salvation. No, thank God, his divine love never ceases to follow us, and intercede and interfere in our behalf. How wonderfully this was illustrated in the case of Peter! The last time Peter had seen Jesus before his trial and crucifixion was when he had bitterly denied that he was Christ's disciple and friend, and that heartbreaking look of his Master had driven him out in shame into the darkness. Yet, in the great mystery of divine love, Christ, after his resurrection, sent a first special message to Peter.

The story of God's dealings with the Hebrews, when Moses, as God's leader, led them out of bondage in Egypt, should be full of encouragement for us: for though they murmured against God's providence and love, yet that love never failed them; and in the hour of pursuit, with their cruel enemies behind them and the Red Sea before them, God's love opened up a way through the sea for their escape.

I bring you this message from the God of Moses. Some of you may be facing what seems to be a similar place of trial in your own experience. You are

hedged about by troubles that you have no power, in yourself, to surmount or escape. Then, in this hour of your emergency, cry unto God as Moses did, and you will find that the glorious love mysteries of God will not fail in resources sufficient for your salvation. Even though it be another Red Sea that confronts you, he is sufficient for all your need.

“Have you come to the Red Sea place in your life,
Where, in spite of all you can do,
There is no way out, there is no way back,
There is no other way but through?
Then wait on the Lord, with a trust serene,
Till the night of your fear is gone;
He will send the winds, he will heap the floods,
When he says to your soul, “Go on!”

“And his hand shall lead you through, clear through,
Ere the watery walls roll down;
No wave can touch you, no foe can smite,
No mightiest sea can drown.
The tossing billows may rear their crests,
Their foam at your feet may break,
But over their bed you shall walk dry-shod
In the path that your Lord shall make.

“In the morning watch, 'neath the lifted cloud,
You shall see but the Lord alone,
When he leads you forth from the place of the sea,
To the land that you have not known;
And your fears shall pass as your foes have passed,
You shall no more be afraid;
You shall sing his praise in a better place,
In a place that his hand hath made.”

VII

THE LOVE MYSTERIES OF JESUS

“Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”—*I John 4:9-11.*

JESUS CHRIST is the most mysterious person who has appeared in human history. He appeared in the conversations and prophecies of men for thousands of years before his birth in Bethlehem. Every prophet of God who stood head and shoulders above the level of his own time, who peered down through the mists of the ages yet to come, saw Jesus looming up in the path of history like a great mountain of hope and blessing for humanity.

The birth of Jesus is a mystery. The angel who appeared to Mary, the mother of Jesus, said to her: “Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” And when Mary, awed and perplexed by the mystery of it all, asked how it could be possible, since she was a virgin, the angel messenger answered: “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the

Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God." And this is a mystery above and beyond our human reasoning.

I

Christ's relation to God, the Father, is a mystery. In John, third chapter and sixteenth verse, Jesus describes himself as the gift of God, saying: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." He describes himself here in the most direct declaration as "the only begotten Son."

Again Matthew records in the seventeenth chapter of his Gospel that on the day of transfiguration "A bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying: This my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

And Paul, in the opening of his letter to the Colossians, in a rapturous paragraph of thanksgiving for the blessing of the Christian life because God has taken us out of sin and darkness and "translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love," goes on to give this wonderful description of Jesus: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist."

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You will notice here that Paul expressly declares that Jesus is "the firstborn of creation." Let us not fail to grasp this significant statement, "The first-born Son." Warrall's Greek translation renders it "The primal source of the whole creation." And if you would see that Paul has full guarantee for this amazing statement, you have only to read the words of Jesus himself as recorded in the eighth chapter of John's Gospel: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was born, I am." And John opens his Gospel with the marvelous declaration that in the very beginning Jesus was "with God" and "was God." Surely, "Great is the mystery of godliness."

II

The relation of Jesus to the Holy Spirit is a mystery. He was born of a woman, whose name and story we know, and whose family and lineage we can trace, but the angel of God who came as a messenger to Joseph, her affianced husband, said, as Matthew records in the opening chapter of his Gospel: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit is never confounded with the person of Jesus, but is a distinct person. Jesus said to his disciples in that lonely hour when these close friends were filled with sadness at the thought of his going away from them, which is described in the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter,

that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it be- holdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you."

In this paragraph we have the three persons in the Godhead distinctly marked, The Father, the Com- forter or Holy Spirit, and Jesus who is speaking. These three are one in the same sense that Jesus meant when he said the husband and wife are one, a unity between distinct individualities. I do not pre- tend to understand it all. It is a glorious mystery fraught with salvation and blessed comfort to all who love God through Jesus Christ.

III

The mingled divinity and humanity in the person of Jesus is a mystery. There can be no question that Jesus himself claims to be divine. John records in the fifth chapter this claim in the most straightfor- ward and unequivocal words: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself; and he gave him authority to execute judgment."

The works of Jesus proved his divinity. Nico- demus declared that no man could do the miracles that Jesus did "except God be with him." And when we read the wonderful stories of the prophecies concerning Jesus ages before he appeared, all ful- filled in him and in no one else, when we trace the record of his life and teaching, his death and resur-

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rection and ascension, we are compelled to say with Napoleon Bonaparte: "I know men, and I tell you Jesus Christ was not a man."

And yet he was a man. Thirty times in Matthew's Gospel, fourteen times in Mark's, twenty-six times in Luke's, and eleven times in John's, are recorded instances where Christ calls himself "the Son of man." He was born into a world of sin, but was himself sinless; and after remaining in the world thirty-three years, went out of it as untarnished by sin as when he came. He had a human body which hungered and thirsted like other men. It was subject to pain as other human bodies. It was subject to weariness and exhaustion as were the bodies of his disciples. It sank fainting under his cross on the way to the crucifixion. He ate and drank, and walked and toiled, made friends and enjoyed them, was lonely for them and grieved over them like other men, but over it all and through it all there played the glorious sunshine of his divinity. It is all a mystery.

Matthew records how on one occasion the Pharisees were questioning about matters of marriage and divorce, and Jesus said: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh, so that they are no more two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." So in some mysterious manner beyond our comprehension in the glorious personality of Jesus there was a marriage between divinity and humanity. The "well beloved" "Son of the Most High" came

down from heaven in all the glorious majesty of his divine nature and wooed our frail humanity and wedded it in the personality of Jesus, and there lived among men a man with all a man's sympathy and feeling for our infirmities, and at the same time all the wisdom and purity and power of Almighty God. The path of the feet of that God-man is glorious, and in the breath of his life is the life of mankind.

IV

Christ's atonement for the sins of the world is full of mystery. Our salvation is in Jesus. John tells us in the seventeenth chapter of his Gospel that Jesus himself said in his wonderful prayer: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

The cross on Calvary is the climax of the mystery of man's salvation. The prophets saw Jesus hanging on the cross hundreds of years before he came to the world. Isaiah, seven hundred years before the three crosses were set up on Golgotha's rugged summit, wrote that he would come and would "be despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

In his first sermon at Nazareth, Jesus read from the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favour, and the day of vengeance

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of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified." And it was because Jesus calmly claimed that that wonderful prophecy was fulfilled in him that they stoned him out of the town.

Jesus went to the cross for us. He could not save himself and us. He suffered for us. We ought to look on that cross oftener than we do. It would awaken and quicken our love. Some poet tells the story of its effect on a traveler passing through Jerusalem and by way of the cross on that awful mysterious day of crucifixion. Try to put yourself in his place as he pauses to talk with a boy whom he overtakes along the road:

"Halt, lad! May I walk on with you?
I'm but a stranger passing through
These parts; but things I've seen to-day
Have driven strength and nerve away.
For when I stop my ears, I hear
The throng's insulting words of jeer;
And should I close my eyes to sleep,
I'd see those faithful women weep.
And all my dreams shall colored be
Of him who cast a glance at me—

"Of him who hangs 'twixt earth and sky
On yonder cross, condemned to die.
It made me faint, it drove me mad,
To see those heartless rascals, lad,
Drive spikes through both his hands and feet,
Then raise the cross with measured beat,
And roughly plunge it in a hole.
Oh, lad, it rent my very soul!

But yet, such things would never be
If they had caught his glance toward me.

“A king is he, for so I read
Above the noble Monarch’s head;
A king with soul as white, I trow,
As any freshly driven snow.
I know him not, but yet his face
Bespeaks an inner love and grace;
And as I lingered near him there,
I thought no other one so fair,
Methinks the angels wept as he
With pity cast that glance toward me.

“Excuse my tears; but, lad, some day,
I too may pass this selfsame way.
But could I see his winsome face,
And feel the pureness of his grace,
I’d soar above the pangs of death,
And bravely draw my weakened breath.
And when I meet the God of all,
I’ll shrink not from his searching call,
If this dear One I chance to see
In mercy looking upon me.”

V

There is a wonderful mystery in how Christ can supply all the needs of the Christian in whatever circumstances he or she may be placed. Paul says in his letter to the Philippians: “My God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” That could be said of no other personality in human history, but it is magnificently true of Jesus. What a wonderful, mysterious personality that can mean such different things to so many different people and fulfill their special needs in every case! A spiritual genius for searching out the “unsearchable riches of Christ” has brought together a wonderful statement of the many-sided personality of Christ in the rich gifts for helpfulness

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with which his pierced hands are filled for men. He shows that Jesus meets the needs of all classes and conditions of men. As deep answereth unto deep, so does he respond to the needs of each soul of man.

“Call the roll of the world’s workers and ask, ‘What think ye of Christ?’ Their answers amaze us by their revelation of this many-sidedness of our Lord.

To the artist he is the One Altogether Lovely.

To the architect he is the Chief Corner Stone.

To the astronomer he is the Sun of Righteousness.

To the baker he is the Living Bread.

To the banker he is the Hid Treasure.

To the biologist he is the Life.

To the builder he is the Sure Foundation.

To the carpenter he is the Door.

To the doctor he is the Great Physician.

To the educator he is the Great Teacher.

To the farmer he is the Sower, and the Lord of the Harvest.

To the florist he is the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley.

To the geologist he is the Rock of Ages.

To the horticulturist he is the True Vine.

To the judge he is the Righteous Judge, the Judge of All Men.

To the juror he is the Faithful and True Witness.

To the jeweler he is the Pearl of Great Price.

To the lawyer he is the Counselor, the Lawgiver, the Advocate.

To the newspaper man he is the Good Tidings of Great Joy.

To the oculist he is the Light of the Eyes.

To the philanthropist he is the Unspeakable Gift.

To the philosopher he is the Wisdom of God.

To the preacher he is the Word of God.

To the railroad man he is the New and Living Way.

To the sculptor he is the Living Stone.

To the servant he is the Good Master.

To the statesman he is the Desire of All Nations.

To the student he is the Incarnate Truth.

To the theologian he is the Author and Finisher of our Faith.

To the toiler he is the Giver of Rest.
To the sinner he is the Lamb of God, which taketh away
the sin of the world.
To the Christian he is the Son of the Living God, the
Saviour, Redeemer, and Lord."

Surely such a statement as that cannot fail to
awaken in your heart the searching question, "What
is Jesus to me?"

VI

Our study of these love mysteries of Jesus will
largely fail of its purpose if it does not quicken in
us not only love for Christ, but love for one another,
love for all men for whom Jesus gave himself as a
ransom. Love is the keynote of the Christian scheme
of humanity. Everything else will fail to bring hap-
piness to individuals or peace to the restless nations
of the storm-tossed world. But love will do it. The
one armor that can make humanity safe forever from
strife and war is love.

"I started out one morning
In armor gray and grim,
I thought I had an enemy
And went to look for him.

"I found him, oh, I found him
And many another more
I had not thought of finding
And had not known before.

"My heart grew cold within me,
I could not meet them all,
I had not half the courage,
My strength was far too small.

"I sought for re-enforcement
Next day, with love and prayer,
And found new strength and courage—
And friends, just everywhere.

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"And finding, learned a lesson
I cannot soon forget:
I found in love and confidence
The bravest armor yet.

"So now I have ceased trying
To find a cruel foe;
If I go armed with friendship
I'll find true friends, I know.

"I'd rather look for kindness
And friendship sweet and true;
I'd rather look for goodness
Than evil, wouldn't you?"

Paul gives us the secret to his wonderful life of hardship and sacrifice, and finally of martyrdom, yet nevertheless the most wonderfully joyous, buoyant and triumphant life of his time, in a single simple statement: "The love of Christ constraineth us." Oh, the wonder power of the constraining love of Jesus!

Some one says that there are five looks we ought to take every day for our spiritual safety. First, we should look around; second, look inward; third, look backward; fourth, look upward, and then, with face forward, go ahead.

"We look around; and naught appears,
Where'er we turn our eyes,
But troubled hearts and bitter tears,
Hatreds and enmities.

"Inward we look; and guiltiness
And doubt and fear are there,
A world of sad remembrances
And bodings of despair.

"Backward we look; and, lo! the cross
Of grief and agony,
Where the load of human shame and loss
Was laid, dear Lord, on thee.

“ And, looking up, the Throne we see
 Where thou sitt'st, reigning still
 And working out invincibly
 The purpose of thy will.

“ So forward to the dark unknown
 We look with fearless faith,
 Sure of the triumph of thy throne
 O'er sin and grief and death.”

And when we do go forward in that abiding faith, one of the most glorious love mysteries of the Christian life becomes real with blessings to our hearts. All our trials and hardships and burdens, and even our failures and our sins, are clothed upon with mercy and are transformed into memories that sing to us of the goodness of God and the glory of our Christ.

I read recently a little poem purporting to tell how the birds came from the dying leaves of autumn. It is an Indian legend, a fairy story of course, but full of teaching for our theme. The poetic putting of the legend goes :

“ All summer long the forest trees
 Had raised their leaves for dew and breeze ;
 But colder grew the autumn sun
 And slowly fading, one by one
 The leaves came drifting down the air,
 Till soon the boughs would all be bare.

“ What sadness comes with fall of leaf!
 The great trees bent their heads in grief
 And writhed their knotted arms to call
 In prayer on Him who made them all ;
 O, Gitchie Manitou above,
 Shall all be lost of these we love ?

“ In thunder roll and lightning flame
 The mighty Spirit's answer came ;
 Behold, my forest, tempest-tossed,

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How all may change, yet naught be lost!
And while they heard the Master's words
The drifting leaves were changed to birds!

"The leaves of willow fluttered down
As finches, tawny, green, and brown;
The red and russet leaves of oak
Became the thrush and robin folk;
The golden birch leaves learned to fly
As yellowbirds athwart the sky;
While all the maple leaves that turned
In changing hues that glowed and burned,
Took wing across the wooded knolls
As tanagers and orioles!

"So, every year when laughing spring
Dissolves the snows, on eager wing
The birds of forest, hill, and glen
Return to know their trees again—
To build their nests, to peer and stir
Among the leaves of which they were;
And from the boughs where once they grew
They sing to Gitchie Manitou."

There is a divine, mysterious alchemy in the Holy Spirit's use of the salvation bought for us on the cross by our divine-human Saviour that can transform to the sincere Christian every dying leaf in the experiences of life into a singing bird of blessing and eternal hope.

VIII

THE TRAGEDY OF THE GOSPEL JESUS CANNOT PREACH

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.”—*John 16:12.*

WHO can tell what the disciples lost because they were unable to receive the great messages that Christ had in his mind and heart for them, or what the world has suffered because humanity could not receive all of heaven's message in Christ's day from his own lips? No one could have hated slavery as did the great heart of infinite love which throbbed with such warmth of sympathy in the breast of Jesus. Yet the people of his age could not bear it, and he lived among men for thirty-three years and went back to heaven without saying a word about it. All he could do was to plant the seed of the Golden Rule, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them,” and leave it as leaven to work in the dough of humanity for many centuries before it accomplished its work.

Take the liquor traffic. The world of Christ's day was not able to bear the message that is beginning to be hearkened to when spoken by the earnest ministers of Jesus in our own time. He could only leave the root principle in what he declared to be the sec-

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ond great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and let it work itself out into the banishment of the saloon forever.

So with the terrible evil of war: the world was full of war in Christ's day, but he uttered no protest against it. The world could not bear it then; and who is able to say how much of it it can bear now? It is said that shortly prior to the great world war, William Jennings Bryan, then our Secretary of State, who was at that time engaged in negotiating treaties of arbitration with as many nations as possible, had a number of swords made into miniature plowshares of a size that would serve as paper weights, and these he distributed among the representatives of foreign governments in this country. Mr. Bryan deserves all honour for his sincere and noble efforts to bring about the end of wars, yet the greatest war in human history followed immediately in the wake of his efforts. Slavery has disappeared; the liquor traffic is going; and war, too, shall come to an end; but it is significant that Jesus was unable to sound the note of crusade in his own day because the world was not yet able to bear it.

I

It is certainly wise for us to study the causes that hinder Jesus from opening his whole mind and heart to men concerning the will of God toward them.

One of these is ignorance. No teacher in opening with a class of pupils the study of astronomy or geology or botany, or any other science, can begin to discourse to them as though they were already

educated on the subject. He must begin with simple discussions and progress only as fast as the knowledge of the pupils prepares the way for advanced lessons. And all the great joys of any great realm of science are like a locked treasure house until we have sufficient knowledge to open that realm to us.

I was reading recently of a naturalist roaming about the country in search of specimens. He stopped near a farm house and filled his bottle with brackish water from a muddy pond. While doing this he remarked to a farm hand who stood watching him what wonderful things a microscope would reveal in that water. "Within this pool," said he, "are a hundred, nay, a million universes, had we the sense of the instrument by which we could apprehend them."

The man with the hoe, unmoved by this remarkable statement, replied: "I know the water be full of tadpoles, but they be easy to catch." He saw only tadpoles where the educated naturalist saw miracles of nature.

So it is in undertaking to inculcate great spiritual truths: it is impossible to do so if the inner eye is blinded, or the inner ear deafened by ignorance of spiritual things, and given over to only material and worldly thoughts.

Do you recall that puzzling request of Elisha when the end of the life of Elijah drew near? His prayer was that a double portion of the spirit of his great master and teacher might be given to him. And Elijah's answer is equally as puzzling: "If thou see me when I am taken from thee," was the condition.

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That is, if Elisha had breadth of vision to really comprehend Elijah—his faith in God, and his utter submission to God—then it was possible for his prayer to be answered.

This thought should stimulate our own study of the Word of God, our own habits of prayer and soul-communion with God, that will enlarge our spiritual vision in such a way and bring us into such a sympathetic and sensitive relation to God that the Holy Spirit will be able to communicate to us all of God's will for us.

II

Unbelief is often the dead wall through which Jesus is unable to preach his greater Gospel which he longs to proclaim to us.

Paul, in the third chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews, declares that it was unbelief that kept the nation of Hebrew slaves, that under God's direction Moses and Aaron led up out of Egypt, wandering in the wilderness for forty years, until all died save two, and only their children entered into the land of promise.

How often we use the story of the exodus with its manna let down from heaven to feed the people, the pillar of fire to guide them by night, and the pillar of cloud to lead them by day, as a signal illustration of God's providence in caring for and guiding his people through life, and do not note that it was a terrible tragedy that they remained in the wilderness at all. God would have led them into the promised land, flowing with milk and honey, and

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bearing luscious grapes of Eschol, in forty days instead of forty years, but for their unbelief. It was not the giants of Anak that kept them out, but their lack of faith in God. And so they had to take second best in the wilderness, when God was yearning, with all the Heavenly Father's love, to give them the immeasurably greater comfort and blessings of home and peace in the Promised Land.

How many of us have to put up with second best because of unbelief that turns us into cowards! We turn back and do not, cannot, enter into the glorious career God has arranged in his mind and heart for us, because we do not dare trust him. The good is often the most deadly foe of the best. How our lives would blossom into beauty and fruitfulness for the joy of our own hearts, and the gladness and enrichment of mankind, if, like Joshua and Caleb, we dared to face every Anak against whom God would lead us! Why is it that we cannot learn that God's will is always the very best thing that can happen to us, and in all confidence put our hands up into the dark over our heads and let him lead us wheresoever he will? Then we would get the best that is possible for us in all God's bright universe.

"God has his best things for the few
Who dare to stand the test:
God has his second choice for those
Who will not have the best.

"It is not always open sin
That risks the promised rest:
The better sometimes is the foe
That keeps us from the best.

"There's scarcely one but vaguely wants
In some way to be blest:

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It is not blessing, Lord, I seek,
I want thy very best.

"I want in this short life of mine,
As much as may be pressed
Of service true for God and man:
Help me to give thy best.

"I want amid the victor throng
To have my name confessed,
And hear my Saviour say at last,
'Well done! you took the best.'

"Give me, my Lord, thy highest choice,
Though others take the rest:
Their good things have no charm for me,
Since I have found thy best."

III

Greed, the love of money, the fascination of the material things of the world, often make it impossible for Jesus to proclaim his greater Gospel to us. The greatest tragedy recorded in the New Testament story of the life and ministry of Jesus is a case of that kind.

Recall to your mind the picture of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus in all the glow of youth and wealth and culture and flaming earnestness, asking of him the way of eternal life. He was a fine fellow. He was a splendid specimen of young manhood in many ways, physically, mentally, and morally. Jesus, with his keen mind, could see far into men at a glance, and he loved this young man. There was so much that was lovable about him. The rich bloom of youth was upon him, his face had the rosy tints of the dawn. He was rich in money, which, rightly used, means power to advance all good causes. He had an open face, a clear eye, free from vice and

dissipation. There was about him that rare charm of frankness and sincerity. He was moral and upright, clean and wholesome in his habits. He was no coward—he was manly and courageous. He did not wait to come in the dark as did Nicodemus, he came openly in the public street during business hours, when all could see. He was a reverent youth, and came kneeling to the Christ. He had faith, too, that Christ held the key to eternal life—and Jesus loved him. Mark was a very practical, matter-of-fact writer, and even he, reporting, says: “Jesus, looking upon him, loved him.” What an opportunity to kneel at the very feet of the Son of God, the Lord of Life and Glory, to have his full attention, to win his admiration,—nay, more, his love! And then lose! What a tragedy! Jesus could not take him as a disciple and friend. He loved him, but had to leave him. Why? Because the young man loved money more than he loved doing the will of God and sharing the fate and friendship of Jesus Christ. God teach us this great lesson in our own day! Christ had a great gospel for this lovely and lovable young man, but the sermon was never preached. There was an impenetrable wall of gold between Christ and the man’s soul.

IV

Another thought so close akin to our theme as to be a part of it is that many men and women who long to do good to their fellows are going the way of life without power to bless humanity, and yet Christ needs them and loves them and waits to

make them powerful in blessing, but cannot, because they are not entirely surrendered to his will.

Power is a strange and wonderful thing. It is one of the great love mysteries of God. How little we really know about it! What could be more mysterious and wonderful than the power of gravity? How marvelous the power of electricity! Multitudes of men harness these great and mysterious powers of nature, who, after all, know little about them. But there is a far greater power than either of these, and that is the power of a human personality clothing the divine presence of the Most High God.

That is a wonderful statement in the Old Testament, that when God wanted to save Israel from the hosts of Midian, "He clothed himself in Gideon." God is never able to give us the greatest power to bless humanity of which we are capable, until, emptying ourselves of all selfishness and pride, we are willing and glad to allow God to clothe himself in us, and go forth in us to win men to righteousness. This old world, that has been rocked so horribly by the fierce storms of war, needs, more than anything else, that every sincere follower of Christ shall, with open heart, place himself humbly at the disposal of his divine Lord. Only then will he be able to sing:

"Only to-day is mine,
 And that I owe to thee;
 Help me to make it thine,
 As pure as it may be;
 Let it see something done,
 Let it see something won,
 Then at the setting sun
 I'll give it back to thee.

"What if I cannot tell
The cares the day may bring?
~~I know that I shall dwell~~
Beneath thy sheltering wing;
And there the load is light,
And there the dark is bright,
And weakness turns to might—
And so I trust and sing.

"What shall I ask to-day?
Naught but thine own sweet will;
The windings of the way
Lead to thy holy hill;
And whether here or there,
Why should I fear or care?
Thy heavens are everywhere,
And they are o'er me still.

"Give me thyself to-day:
I dare not walk alone;
Speak to me by the way,
And all things are my own—
The treasures of thy grace,
The secret hiding-place,
The vision of thy face,
The shadow of thy throne!"



IX

THE JAZZ SPIRIT IN MODERN LIFE

“And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”—*Matt. 7:26, 27.*

THIS is the age of the great god Jazz, and he is pervading the most sacred precincts of our present-day life with the noisy sounding brass and tinkling cymbals that are inevitable tokens of his presence. He seems to dominate nearly everything we do to-day. He has put a certain reckless speed mania into the people. We do not walk any more; we ride. And many ride as recklessly as Jehu drove. The wonderful invention, the automobile, is robbed of much of its possible blessing to humanity by the speed maniacs who throng the highways and make motoring for more sane and sensible persons a nightmare of terror while it brings neither comfort nor information nor real pleasure to themselves. Multitudes who would be healthier, happier, and far more wholesome citizens without automobiles, live cramped and narrowed lives physically, mentally, and spiritually, in order to possess them.

We are losing two of the finest arts of life, conversation and letter writing, because of the Jazz

spirit that has taken possession of our modern social relations. The telegraph, with its night letter of fifty words, has taken the place of the full and comprehensive expression of confidence, affection, hope, and good cheer, that brother, or son, or father, or husband, used to pen to the members of the family left at home, until letter writing is coming fast to be one of the lost arts. Some of the finest things in all literature are the published letters of cultivated, great-souled men and women, who a generation ago outpoured their thoughts to absent friends. I wonder if such volumes as those will ever again appear?

The art of conversation seems also to be going in the same way. There was a time when many men and women were famous for their gifts of conversation. They carried in their full minds treasures gathered through reading and travel and meditation, which made their speech like fountains of refreshment to their friends; but such conversation seems to be passing almost entirely out of modern society. The moment's chatter at the telephone largely usurps the communications when near by, and the occasional wire if they are separated.

The artificial Jazz spirit is eating into our homes with the most serious consequences. The home is the one place which, in the very nature of human relations, should be our social center; and it is ceasing to possess the characteristics that in poetry and story have made it a foretaste of heaven. People give all sorts of reasons why homes are built so much smaller at the present day, but is not the real reason that people use their homes very much less

than formerly? The home is by no means so important as it used to be to the average man or woman. The old-fashioned hospitality once so common and so delightful, both to the host and the guest, has almost entirely disappeared. The guest-room is scarcely remembered. The great living-room about which the children used to revolve as spokes about a hub, it being the very center of their lives, has been relegated to the attic with worn-out furniture. A lodging room and a lunch counter have taken the place of what used to be included in that glorious old word "home." "Home," now, to multitudes of people, is only a series of domestic lockers where they keep their spare clothes and go when they want to dress and go out to the show or the chop-suey joint for the real entertainment and nourishment of their Jazz-ridden lives.

The old "open-house" in the evening for the whole family, and for the neighbours who might drop in, where delightful conversation ran round the circle, or a group gathered about the piano to sing patriotic or religious or sane songs of sentiment and inspiration; where is it? The evenings when, taking turn about, members of the group read aloud some great history, or soul-stirring piece of fiction like Hugo's "Les Miserables," or Thackeray's "Virginians," or some new poem, and all the rest of the group listened, and now and again, when the readers changed, the whole circle was drawn into the conversation, until the children found lessons imprinted for a lifetime in the plastic fabric of their opening minds; where are they?

Alas! the great god Jazz has banished them and impoverished the homes from whence they were driven.

And the family worship that used to follow such an evening! when the father, if he were at home, or the mother, in his absence, reverently read from the Bible, from the Psalms of David, or the words of Jesus, or the practical comments on them of Paul, and an old hymn rose from the family choir, ere they knelt about the old fireside to commend the household to God; where, O where, is it? The great god Jazz has driven it out of multitudes of our modern dwellings, though they are still called homes.

At the home piano you will find a heap of senseless, soulless slush. The old popular songs, many of them words written by the great poets and set to melodies that stirred the lofty aspirations or roused the deep and holy emotions of the heart, are gone. Even the later rollicking and picturesque ragtime of a few years past has vanished, and Jazz music, so-called, has taken its place. Blatant orgies of monkey talk and jungle sounds that mean nothing to the mind or heart or soul, mere grunts and squeaks and gasps that suggest a going backward in evolution, beyond the days of recorded history, to some remote gorilla ancestry, now cover the pianos of multitudes of homes supposed to be civilized.

The Jazz spirit dominates a great part of the newspaper and magazine press of to-day. The newspaper not so very long ago used to be a respectable public forum for the discussion of things worth while; but in how many instances to-day they have

degenerated into mere printed movies! News is not measured by its value in giving information, but by the amount of exciting, sensational pep that can be put into it. The newspaper reporter of the day is too often a fiction artist, who does not hold himself seriously to any responsibility for what he writes.

Many of the comic supplements are Jazz creations of brutality and drivel that are so barren of intelligence as to be as asinine as the depraved Jazz-ridden brains that peruse them to their deeper degradation.

A great part of our modern newspaper is given up to be a flaring signboard that has become a burden to the merchant and the public, while the editorial page has perished of fatty degeneration of the coffers of the business office. What a waste of nature's resources that thousands of acres of perfectly good trees, the beautiful handiwork of Almighty God, should be slaughtered every day in order that these flaring advertising sheets, with but a spoonful of real news, may litter the streets of our towns and cities.

The effect of the Jazz spirit in the modern press is to largely destroy the people's confidence in the press. All newspaper men of any force and ability to-day agree that one of the outstanding characteristics of the present time is the people's distrust of the news found in the papers.

The Jazz spirit dominates the public entertainment of the people. The lecture platform that used to be graced by men like Edward Everett, Wendell Phillips, Horace Greeley, Henry Ward Beecher, and scores of other distinguished personalities who dis-

cussed great themes to which vast throngs came to listen and go away to debate over again in home and street and school, has vanished. Even the Chautauqua has, in many ways, succumbed to the great god Jazz. The entertainment of the people of America to-day is largely turned over to the moving picture show. There are hundreds of thousands of working girls and school children who see moving pictures every noon and every evening. There are literally millions of boys and girls in the great cities of the United States who are coming up to manhood and womanhood, and who, day after to-morrow, will be full-fledged citizens of the Republic, and hold the dynamite of the ballot in their hands for weal or woe to the greatest democracy on earth, who know absolutely nothing of love, work, home life, business, politics, nature, or indeed of anything else, save what the moving picture shows have to tell them; and even in this Jazz age, who is ignorant or conscienceless enough to claim that the movie of to-day is a safe or decent substitute for home, school, and church?

Now do not let any one for a moment think that this is a tirade against the moving picture movement, as such. I have great hope that the moving picture movement may be made of great benefit and blessing to the world. I hope to live to see it thoroughly and generously installed and fully equipped in the public schools throughout the land. I can think of nothing that could help so much in primary, grammar, or high schools in bringing the great truths of science and invention clearly to the minds of students. I also hope and believe that the day is not far distant

when every church in America will have its moving picture plant, and that its assistance will add very greatly in holding the interest and imparting lessons of the greatest moral and spiritual value, not only in the Sunday School, in the work among the children, but in the church itself. The church must possess and utilize all such inventions for giving the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus career among the people. But we must not allow the moving picture to displace those agencies which the experience of mankind proves can alone develop rich and noble minds.

Children used to read books during the evenings. "Reading," says the old proverb, "maketh a full man." But among great multitudes to-day neither the children nor their parents read books. Can we be blind to the danger that this will result in an empty-headed generation to whom all the great classics of literature will be like Greek or Hebrew? The old-fashioned book store is passing out in smaller towns and cities all over the land. I am writing this in a prosperous little city in the middle West, surrounded by farms worth from three hundred to five hundred dollars an acre. It is a fine business town, with imposing public buildings of which its citizens are justly proud. It has paved streets in which, at this moment, are parked many hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of high-priced motor cars, and yet there is not a book-store in the town, nor even a place where magazines are kept for sale. But there are crowded moving picture houses. Is not this a specimen of Jazz gone to seed?

The churches are being invaded by this spirit of Jazz, to their very great loss. It has turned the church in many instances away from its mission. It is not the mission of the church of Jesus Christ to compete with the concert hall, the lecture platform, the social settlement, or the dance hall, in its parish houses: its God-given mission is to keep the thought of God, and Christ, and his power to forgive sins and redeem and save men's souls, before the people. Nothing in all this noisy, jangling, brassy generation of Jazz is able to compete with the church that sticks faithfully to its own business, and refuses to be drawn away after strange gods.

I was in a large Southern city some time ago to speak in a certain church. I will not give the name of it, or designate it farther than to say that it was not a church of the denomination to which I belong. The fame of this church as a crowded hive of Christian workers, and as a great spiritual power in the city, had met me long before I reached the city itself. On the Sunday morning when I spoke it was crowded to all its standing room, though the day was very cold and threatening. The great crowd was not especially drawn to hear me. I was informed that it was always crowded like that. I spoke on the great movement for world-wide prohibition of the liquor traffic, and at its close the people gladly gave several thousands of dollars to help on that great cause; and when I was through, and the collection, to which the pastor had urged the people to give liberally, was brought in, that brave, faithful Christian minister took the platform, and in a few apt

words connected the address of the morning to the great business of that church in saving sinners. And in a five-minute exhortation, hot out of his flaming soul, he appealed to men and women, then and there, to give themselves unreservedly to the Christian life, and to confess Christ then, before leaving the house. When the congregation stood to sing, a great group of earnestly repenting, believing souls came forward to register their purpose to begin the Christian service as soldiers of Jesus Christ. No one seemed astonished at the pastor's conduct. It was the well-worn ordinary in that church. It was the business he and the church were there to do, and while other churches that competed with the opera and the lecture hall were thinly attended, this church was crowded to overflowing, and the spiritual fragrance of its saving grace filled the city and the state.

Do you ask me what is the cure for this Jazz spirit that is filling the whole land with unrest and the whole world with an artificial, unnatural life, that is as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, compared with the sane and wholesome life men and women ought to lead? My answer is: cease building on the sand and return to the solid foundation of rock. In Christ's parable, the man who built on the rock did not escape the storm, or the flood, but he did not lose his home. It remained steadfast, because it was founded on a rock.

Many of these modern inventions that I have used with which to illustrate the artificial, noisy, and empty life that threatens us with such sad and terrible loss, are all right in themselves. The automo-

bile, the telegraph, the telephone, and multitudes of modern inventions and conveniences should all be used for the blessing and not the degradation of the people. The pulpit, the press, the moving picture, and the school must work together to bring back the thoughtless multitudes to a saner, more sincere, more genuine and wholesome life. The home must again take its place as our social center. We must revive its deep fellowship of souls. Child life must know again its sweet quiet, and love, and worship, in which to grow strong bodies, sane minds, and pure hearts. The church must revive its deep Christ-given purpose to preach the Gospel to every creature, and call aloud until the whole world shall hear, above all the Jazz of the streets, of the power of Jesus Christ to save from sin and satisfy all the deep longings of man's soul. And in our personal characters we must make sure of the universal safety by holding ourselves to a genuinely simple and wholesome Christian life.

It is not easy to escape the spirit of the age in which we live, and, no doubt, we have all been tintured more or less with this Jazz spirit. Let us determine that we will, day by day, hold ourselves to such genuineness of living that if all the people in our town live the same kind of lives as we do, this perilous artificial spirit of Jazz will disappear, and our town will become a city of God.

I have not spoken in this way of the dangerous spirit of our own time because I am discouraged as to God's final triumph. I am not discouraged. God is not taken by surprise. He goes forth steadily.

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The ocean tide coming into the bay often eddies and revolves here and there in whirlpools, and wave after wave seem beaten into failure on ledge and reef, but after awhile the tide prevails, and fills the whole harbour with its blessing. So shall it be in God's great purpose of good to humanity. You may call this Jazz manifestation of our own day an eddy, or a whirlpool, or a white reef, as you will, but God's great purpose will go on to the triumph of Christ's glorious mission to the lost, but ransomed and redeemed world.

“ On the far reef the breakers
Recoil in shattered foam,
While still the sea behind them
Urges the forces home.
Its song of triumph surges
O'er all the thund'rous din;
The wave may break in failure,
But the tide is sure to win.

“ The reef is strong and cruel;
Upon its jagged wall
One wave, a score, a hundred,
Broken and beaten fall,
Yet in defeat they conquer;
The sea comes flooding in;
Wave upon wave is routed,
But the tide is sure to win.

“ O mighty sea, thy message
In clamoring spray is cast
Within God's plan of progress;
It matters not at last
How wide the shores of evil;
How strong the reefs of sin;
The wave may be defeated,
But the tide is sure to win.”

X

THE FOLLY OF MEDDLING WITH GOD

“Forbear thee from meddling with God.”—*2 Chronicles 35:21.*

JOSIAH was king of Judah for thirty-one years, although he died before he was forty. He came to the throne when a child of only eight years. But he was a good boy, and began early to seek the will of God, and he was much above the average of his line as a king. He was famous for his public profession of piety. He made large display of tearing down false gods, and there never was in the history of Judah such displays of religion in keeping the annual Passover as there was under Josiah. But both his intellect and his piety seem to have lacked good steady balance. After he had been king for thirty years, Neco, the king of Egypt, came up to fight Carchemish by the Euphrates, and Josiah took a hand in the fight. He had no call to do so. It was really none of his business. But Josiah liked Carchemish and he hated Neco, and so he mobilized his armies and got ready to interfere with Neco. When Neco heard of this action of the part of Josiah, he sent ambassadors to reason with him and said to him: “What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have

war: and God hath commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not.”

Neco was in the right. God was evidently using the king of Egypt against Carchemish as he on another occasion used the king of Assyria as his hired razor, and there was no call whatever for Josiah to interfere. The fact that he made no open declaration in answer to Neco shows that he realized that Neco's statement was true, and that he was really fighting against God and meddling with the divine purpose in persisting in his opposition to Neco.

But Josiah had been king a good while and had acquired the kingly habit of demanding his own way. Josiah had been peculiarly blessed of God. God had again and again shown peculiar mercy toward him, and on more than one occasion had turned from him the sword of judgment that threatened him. Evidently, instead of its making Josiah the more sensitive to God's will and increasing his reverence for God's purpose, it had had the effect of making him presumptuous, and although he was convinced that Neco was, in this case, God's messenger, he persisted in fighting him. He even went to the extreme limit of disguising himself in order that he might go out personally into the battle and fight Neco. So infatuated was he that he seems to have believed that he would not only be able to deceive Neco, but to cheat God at the same time. His folly was short lived. The record says: “Nevertheless, Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened

not unto the words of Neco from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants: Have me away; for I am sore wounded. So his servants took him out of the chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had, and brought him to Jerusalem, and he died.”

Josiah is a shining example of the tragic truth that though a man may have been very religious, and even faithfully served God in a most conspicuous way, he cannot with impunity meddle with the divine purpose of the Almighty.

II

Josiah is by no means the only man of high place in the Bible story who found his doom in meddling with God. The list is long and has on it many distinguished names, but perhaps none are more interesting or more significant in the lessons taught by the dramatic climax than that of the overthrow of Belshazzar related in the book of Daniel.

Belshazzar had not been without warning of the folly of meddling with God in the history of his own family. His ancestor, the great Nebuchadnezzar, had meddled with God and had been driven into the wild plains with the cattle herds to eat grass with the oxen.

Belshazzar came into a part of the power of the great kingdom of Babylon when only a boy of fifteen, and unlimited opportunity for luxury, and flattery, and power had utterly turned his head and made him morally as well as mentally unbalanced.

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We are so intoxicated with our own greatness to-day in America that it is hard for us to appreciate the grandeur of Babylon in the days of Belshazzar. Herodotus, the father of history, has given us facts that will open any of our eyes. According to this most reliable of ancient historians, the front of the great palace of Belshazzar was six times as great as the front of St. Peter's Church in Rome, and four times as great as the length of the Capitol in Washington. The whole structure was surrounded by three walls so high that it would take thirteen tall men standing erect one above the other to reach the top. Some idea of the extent of the splendid gardens surrounding the palace may be had when we are reminded that the outer wall inclosed more ground than Central Park in New York City. Babylon itself was fifteen miles square, surrounded by walls as high as our modern skyscrapers and wide enough to have conducted in safety a modern automobile race with many contestants.

There was, according to Herodotus, in the walls of Babylon alone more than five thousand millions of solid feet of masonry. Babylonian bricks, a foot square, inscribed with the name of Nebuchadnezzar are still dug from the ground about the ruins of that vast city in more than a hundred excavations. There are millions of such bricks to-day lying just where they were laid by the hands of the bricklayers twenty-four hundred years ago.

Belshazzar, in the midst of all this glory, forgot the judgment that fell on his fathers for their sins and went the same wicked way to his doom. At the

time immediately preceding the great feast which Belshazzar made for his thousand lords, which is so graphically recorded in the Bible, the city had been besieged by a great army of Medes from the North, and that army had been suddenly withdrawn so far as could be seen from the watch-towers on the walls.

Foolishly taking it for granted that the leaders of these armies had become discouraged and had given up and gone home, this great feast had been prepared for the purpose of celebrating the invulnerability of the great city. The whole city, as well as the palace, was given over to wild, drunken rejoicing. The poet describes the scene as King Belshazzar entered the hall :

“ And a thousand dark nobles all bend at his board ;
 Fruits glisten, flowers blossom, meats steam, and a flood
 Of the wine that man loveth runs redder than blood ;
 Wild dancers are there, and a riot of mirth,
 And the beauty that maddens the passions of earth ;
 And the crowd all shout, while the vast roofs ring,
 All praise to Belshazzar, Belshazzar the king ! ”

Daniel March, a past master in such descriptions, paints this brilliant scene in vivid colors :

“ ‘ The music and the banquet and the wine ; the garlands, the rose odors, and the flowers ; the sparkling eyes, the flashing ornaments, the jeweled arms, the raven hair, the braids, the bracelets, the thin robes floating like clouds ; the fair forms, the delusion and the false enchantment of the dizzy scene, ’ take away all reason and all reverence from the flushed and crowded revelers. There is now nothing too sacred for them to profane, and Belshazzar himself takes the lead in the riot and the blasphemy. Even the mighty and terrible Nebuchadnezzar, who desolated the sanctuary of Jehovah at Jerusalem, would not use his sacred trophies

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in the worship of his false gods. But this weak and wicked successor of the great conqueror, excited with wine and carried away with the delusion that no foe can ever capture his great city, is anxious to make some grand display of defiant and blasphemous desecration."

"'Bring forth,' cries the monarch, 'the vessels of gold Which my father tore down from the temples of old; Bring forth, and we'll drink while the trumpets are blown, To the gods of bright silver, of gold, and of stone. Bring forth.' And before him the vessels all shine, And he bows unto Baal, and he drinks the dark wine, While the trumpets bray and the cymbals ring, 'Praise, praise to Belshazzar, Belshazzar the king.' Now what cometh? Look! look! without menace or call, Who writes with the lightning's bright hand on the wall? What pierceth the king like the point of a dart? What drives the bold blood from his cheek to his heart? Let the captive of Judah the letters expound. They are read, and Belshazzar is dead on the ground. Hark! the Persian has come on the conqueror's wing, And the Mede's on the throne of Belshazzar the king."

And so Belshazzar is another shining example of the folly of meddling with God. That great feast of boasting and blasphemy was the last ceremonial of the Chaldean kings. The Bible story says simply: "That night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain. And Darius, the Median, took the kingdom."

III

It is just as great and presumptuous a folly to meddle with God to-day as in the days of Josiah or Belshazzar.

The versatile and cultured editor of *Current Opinion* published recently in that helpful magazine a very remarkable study in which he brings out the folly of trying to cheat God or in any way stay or

thwart his divine purpose. With great power he reasons from the accuracy of nature and sees in that proved accuracy that the same exact justice will be realized in spiritual realms. Nature, he assures us, is never in a hurry, never late, and never forgets or fumbles. The atoms, he declares, are also on time and march with the precision of soldiers. Nothing is hard, nothing is easy, for Nature. She juggles Arcturus and guides a raindrop down the window-pane with equal nonchalance. Nature never guesses, slips, or misses. She never makes a move that cannot be expressed in algebraic formula. There is no waste, no scraps, no refuse. The chemical reactions of the garbage heap are just as true as those of the apothecary's table. With irresistible logic he reasons that anger, malice, kindness, and love move with the same unerring exactness that prevails in the compounds of sulphur, hydrogen, and oxygen. Nature would not be careful in low matter and slipshod in her high products of the spirit. It is no mere figure of speech, then, to say: "Be sure your sin will find you out." "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." But it is just as true on the other side—also your goodness will find you out. We live in a world of accurate moral as well as chemical reaction. The ten commandments do not fizzle any more than does the multiplication table.

With merciless logic, our editor carries out his conclusion. "Behind every unclean thought," he declares, "roars the thunder of the Pleiades. Every theft and cheating calls a power of vengeance from the air. Every act of disloyalty, or jealous mean-

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ness, or malice, is on its road to meet somewhere a sword or a sorrow." And he quotes the poet's vision of "The Hounds of God" who mercilessly trail the sinner to his punishment.

"The hounds of God across the years
Are running swift and true;
Far and away they seem to play,
But they're tracking me and you.

"The king is seated on his throne,
His courtiers all around him,
They see him start and grasp his heart—
The hounds of God have found him.

"At low midnight the wastrel wakes,
Afraid upon his bed,
For the hollow sounds of the baying hounds
Are ringing in his head.

"The wicked woman wipes her lips
And says, "'Tis naught, 'tis naught!'
Yet the velvet feet of the hounds so fleet
Whisper behind her thought.

"They have torn great empires limb from limb,
They have conquered the conquerors,
And their teeth have hurt for sins of dirt
In plagues that are worse than wars.

"They have cruelly taken the old man down,
They have bitten the babe at the breast;
For there's never a sin of kith or kin
Can escape their fateful quest.

"Before us goes God's angel tall,
Flying upon the wind,
And sweet as the dawn he beckons us on—
But the hounds of God are behind!"

But, thank God, we never need close a Christian sermon on that key, for he himself has spoken to us of forgiveness and mercy through Christ, who dared to be made sin for us, and who opened a way for our forgiveness and escape.

FOLLY OF MEDDLING WITH GOD 121

In the old shepherd days in the East the Syrian shepherd led his flock on its way to the pasture ground for the day and again on the way home at night. The sheep knew his voice and followed him. But if any grew lazy or careless or willful and began to wander or linger behind, the shepherd's dog watched in the rear with sharp bark and sharper fangs to see that they did not forget. It is better to listen and give heed to the kind voice of the Good Shepherd than to feel the teeth of the hounds of God. Before us God's angels of love are always calling us to the right path, to do the will of God, and walk in peace; but if we turn to the wrong way we must expect the hounds of God. It is better to be sensitive to the call of God's angels than to feel the teeth of his hounds. If we heed the angels, we make friends with all the great accurate laws of God; we enter into a great and unshakable peace. We know that our destiny is not the plaything of chance, but is as sure as the God who holds the universe in his hand. With such assurance we are able to go on our happy way singing:

"He has filled my mouth with a song of praise
For blessings that hallow the passing days,
For his love bestowed in boundless ways,
Has my God, my Friend.

"He has filled my heart with his love so deep,
More love have I for his poor, lost sheep
That he seeks afar on the mountain steep,
My Lord, my Friend.

"He has filled my life with a glad, sweet song,
That sings of itself when the days are long;
And keeps me content as I journey on,
With my Lord and Friend."

XI

THE VOICE OF JESUS

“He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice.”—*John 10:3, 4.*

AMONG all the blessings which our Heavenly Father has bestowed upon us, none perhaps yield us greater joy than the power to hear and enjoy sounds and make response with our own voices. To nearly all the things which God has created he has given some voice with which to express pleasure or pain or appreciation of the experiences of life. Very few, if any, of God's creatures are condemned to perpetual silence. The long-accepted belief that the fishes were a peculiarly silent and voiceless section of the animated world has been disproved by scientific investigation. We are now told that not less than three hundred species of fish are known to produce sounds of various kinds and of different degrees of intensity. Among the most notable examples of sound-producing fish is the sun-fish taken around the coasts of Great Britain, in the making of which nature seems to have run out of material and left out the tail. When taken out of the water it emits a distinctly audible groan. The croaker, well known along the Atlantic Coast, derives its name from the sound it makes when

taken into a boat. The red gurnard has been nicknamed the sea-cock, from its habit of crowing like a rooster; while the grunt of the pig fish and the hog fish are responsible for their names. The big jew fish of the Gulf of Mexico breaks the solemn silences of the waters with sonorous booms, while the armado of South American waters, when caught with a hook and line, gives forth a grating, angry sound which is distinctly heard, even before the fish is brought to the surface of the water. The sea frog of the Malabar waters owes its name to the sound it emits. The Tagus has a fish that emits vibrations resembling the sound of a deep-toned bell or gong. Many scientists now believe that the fabled song of the siren had its origin in the sounds emitted by the maigre, which sounds vary in volume and tone, from a distinct, clear sound, lasting many seconds, to an indefinite hum which, either from lack of intensity or excessive vibrations, is lost in the silence of the watery waste. These sounds are said to be audible from a depth of twenty fathoms when the fish are traveling in schools.

It is a far cry from these sounds, emitted by the lowest order of animated life, up through the call of the woods, the pasture and the barnyard; through the gentle bark of the watch dog and the song of birds, the roar of the lion, the neigh of the horse, to the human voice; and on to its climax in the charming voice of the Good Shepherd. But they are all expressions and witnesses of the infinite goodness and mercy of the Creator and Preserver of the Universe.

Much has been written concerning the human

voice, and voice inflections. Gladstone's voice has been compared to a great cathedral bell sounding over the river. Henry Clay's voice, the historian tells us, had an indescribable charm; it could ring out in tones like a blast of a trumpet, or plead in low plaintive notes of haunting music that thrilled the listener like the chanting of the far-famed "Miserere" at Rome. Some one records that he could repeat the words, "The days that are no more," with such a melancholy beauty of expression that no one could hear him without shedding tears.

So wide is the compass of the human voice that it can be stirred by appropriate emotions to rival the thunder for majesty, the snarl of a tiger for rage, the hiss of a snake for hate, the cooing of a dove for melancholy, or the song of the angels for sweetness and love.

We are to study some of the characteristics of the most wonderful of all human voices, the voice of Jesus.

I

It was a voice of power and authority. Some people who came to hear him with critical ears went away amazed, saying to each other, "He speaks as one having authority." Some policemen in Jerusalem were sent by the Chief Priests to arrest Jesus one day when he was speaking in the open air, and they went and paused at the edge of the crowd to listen for a moment, and after hearing Jesus for a while they went away without even speaking to him about their mission. When they came back, the men who sent them said: "Where is your pris-

oner?" And with awed and solemn faces those veteran policemen replied: "Never man spake like this man." It was the authority and power in that voice which awed them into deep fear and sent them away without him.

Alone, with his platted whip in his hand, Jesus drove a great crowd of money-changing speculators and greedy crooks out of the Temple. It was not the little platted whip in his hand that did it; it was the keener lash of his commanding voice that stung them as he thundered, "It is written: My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Jesus stood before the man possessed by an evil spirit and said to the unclean devil within him: "Come out of him!" and he was obeyed. Thank God, Jesus has that blessed power until this day, and unclean spirits who have been despoiling the souls of men and women are still being dispossessed at the command of the all-powerful voice of Jesus. Here is a true story of our own time, equal to any story recorded in the Acts of the Apostles:

Chief Manitowog, a full-blooded Siwash Indian from Washington State, came to New York in 1914 to act in the Hippodrome, having lived all the sixty-five years of his life without any knowledge of Christianity, doing only as he pleased. Soon he was arrested, tried, and sentenced to eighteen months in Sing Sing for carrying a concealed weapon. As he was leaving the Tombs, the prison chaplain gave him a Bible, which was faithfully read, and before long the Indian became a Christian. His Bible was his

constant companion for eighteen months spent in Sing Sing. It was marked according to a system of his own, and so continuously has it been used that recently he brought it to the American Bible Society to be rebound. A few days after he received his Bible, as good as new, he sent the following letter to the Bible Society:

"My dear Sir.—I am mailing to you these five dollars out of my own earnings to want nothing but for the good works ye people doing for our Great Jehovah and the Saviour Jesus Christ by sending the precious Book Bible from pole to pole among the very savages of this world. It is really best works in the world, and the Gospel of Jesus must be reached to the very utmost parts of the world among all the nations and tribes. And I thank to my God, that his Gospel reached my heart to the very spot where it should be touched, that to-day I am a new-born man in every way. Your great Bible which was sent to me while I was behind prison bars for eighteen months, entirely changed my life. It caused me to lead a better and happier life than I did for sixty-five years, and I thank and praise the Lord for this wonderful change in my life. I wish the American Bible Society prosperity and great success, and may our God bless all ye people who are interested in the Lord and his works.

Thank you very much for the good work ye have done to my eternal and everlasting friend that Holy Bible, and I feel so proud every time I have it in my hand.

I remain yours a sincere friend in Jesus,
Chief Manitowog."

Thank God! The voice of Jesus even through the printed page was powerful enough to lift Chief Manitowog out of his sins into a noble manhood.

II

The voice of Jesus is a convincing voice. When men heard him they knew it was genuine. They did not doubt the inherent truth of Christ.

Just once, during his life, Paul, who was, at the time, the wicked persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, was permitted to hear the marvelous voice of Jesus. He tells King Agrippa about it, and you will find it in one of the most powerful paragraphs in human literature, in the twenty-sixth chapter of Luke's history of the Acts of the Apostles. This is Paul's wonderfully graphic story: "At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

That one hearing of the voice of Jesus convinced Paul so perfectly that he gave his whole life up to the service of Christ. Neither stoning, nor whippings, nor imprisonment could shake his faith; and at the

last, in Nero's dungeon waiting to be beheaded, he could write to Timothy: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

The convincing voice of Jesus had done its work well with Paul.

III

The voice of Jesus is a sympathetic, persuasive, and comforting voice.

When Lazarus died, his sorrowing sisters, Mary and Martha, sent for Jesus, and when he came and they had poured out their grief to their one great friend, can you not feel the divine sympathy in his tones as he says to them, "Where have ye laid him?"

And at that curiosity-seeking, loveless dinner in the house of Simon the Leper, when Mary Magdalene came, and to their indignation and amazement, the repenting, loving woman broke the box of alabaster and anointed with its rich perfume the head of Jesus, do you not catch the tones of understanding and sympathy as Jesus tenderly defends her action, saying: "Let her alone. * * * She hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying."

And on that other occasion, when they brought to the Master the woman taken in adultery and he, in a voice marvelously heart-searching and conscience-piercing to the men who brought her, said: "He

that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And then the confused hypocrites went away one after another in their shame, and Jesus looked up and said: "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." One must be heavy of hearing indeed who does not catch something of the tones of divine sympathy and understanding in the compassionate, encouraging, comforting voice of Jesus as he spoke those words.

God grant to us something of that kindness of tone when we would give sympathy and encouragement.

"Don't say to the fellow who's down and out:
'Forget your troubles! Cheer up, old scout!'
But give him a wholesome, friendly hand,
And say, 'I'm sorry—I understand.'

"The saddest thing in life, maybe,
Will happen—who knows—to you or me,
And it won't be in us to calmly smile
Or put it aside for a little while.

"So cheer him over the roughest spot
With sympathy, for he needs a lot.
For many a heart that's tired and broken
Longs for a word that is never spoken.

"It is fine to know, at the close of day,
That you helped some one in a human way.
Go give him a wholesome, friendly hand,
And say, 'I'm sorry—I understand.'"

IV

It is one of the most glorious facts connected with our miracle-working Christianity that if we give our hearts completely to be possessed by and directed

by our Saviour, he is able to take the harshest, coldest-voiced man or woman among us, and infuse into that voice something of the divine tenderness and sympathy of his own heavenly voice of love and give to us the same magic power to draw men and women away from sin.

One of the sweetest stories of the recent conquest of Jesus Christ among human hearts comes from Arizona. Mary Ritchie Ward tells in the *Penn Weekly* the beautiful story of a young Indian boy who was attending the Catholic Mission School at the old San Xavier Mission near Tucson, Arizona, built by Spanish Catholic missionaries hundreds of years ago. But Catholicism has rarely, if ever, in this section succeeded in reaching the hearts of the Indians. It seems only to have succeeded in grafting its superstitions on the root of superstition native to their pagan minds. One day from their own quarters came the chanting black-robed priests.

At a signal-gong the doors of the mission school were thrown open, lessons were stopped, and the children of the reservation came on their knees to join the worshipers. Nuns hovered near, trying to keep order. But here, boylike, a small Indian jostled his fat companion and sent him sprawling on the sand. Just behind, two little girls giggled and snickered. Bringing up the rear of the school procession came the big boys of the reservation.

"Remember your sins," said the priest.

José Hidalgo, a strapping fellow of seventeen, did not want to remember his sins. He wished heartily that he might forget them instead. José had cheated

at gambling. He had never been taught to regard gambling as a sin, but he knew in his heart that he had no right to the money that he had won unfairly from Carlos. The money had belonged to Carlos' mother, too, and she was old and sick. José felt little and mean. Remember his sins? Ah, if only he could forget!

A pebble ground painfully into José's knee-cap. He tossed it contemptuously aside. The hot sun beat mercilessly upon his bare head. He was more or less accustomed to that. But this walking on his knees was another matter. The strained, uncomfortable position irritated him. Besides, he saw no good in it. It seemed silly for a big fellow like him to be crawling like a baby.

Just then a needle-sharp cactus thorn pierced his other knee with an agonizing stab. He had to fall out of line to remove it. As he stopped he noticed for the first time an American lady and several young men, visitors, who were watching the scene.

"Poor people!" said the lady pityingly; "poor, misguided, hungry-hearted people! Seeking the truth so earnestly in the best way they know, and yet there isn't a ray of light in their faces."

"How different they look from those Indians we saw at the Protestant mission we visited," said one young man. "How their faces did shine! They say that every Indian who has graduated from the Tucson school has gone out a real Christian."

"Look at that fellow," said his companion. "Isn't he a perfect specimen!"

"Physically, yes," was the reply. "Too bad he

can't have better opportunities. He looks as if he might have the making of a man in him if he had a chance."

José knew a little English. He had picked up enough to understand that they were speaking about him. He had heard of that other school where they taught so many wonderful things. Above all, he wanted to be a man. This counting of beads, and walking on the knees, and seeking absolution by penance only to feel your sins as heavily as before, had seemed useless and childish for a long time.

The store of rebellion that had been gathering in his heart for months past broke suddenly. He'd have no more of this. He'd try that other school. He'd be a man.

Brazenly he rose to his feet, heedless of the horrified rebuke of the supervising nun. Throwing back his head in defiance of authority he stalked home across the desert.

I have not time to tell you the interesting story—how he paid his gambling debt by killing his pet chickens, and overcame all obstacles, and found his way to the Protestant Mission School.

There he had everything to learn. He had to overcome all his old Indian ways. He had to learn courtesy to women and girls, and cleanliness of person and life. But he conquered. He was the valedictorian of his class. But through all these school years he had never made any profession of his faith in Christ. All the rest of his class were avowed Christians, and the missionaries and teachers, as well as his classmates, were often in prayer for José. On

the last day of school, before entering on the regular Commencement program, the President of the school led a meeting of prayer and consecration. All hearts were hoping and praying that José might at last hear the voice of Jesus, but he sat stolidly and made no sign. Finally, when all heads were bowed for silent prayer, the voice of a young girl in the class, a girl whom José had secretly loved from the first day of his coming to the school, was tremblingly raised in song:

“While Jesus whispers to you,
Come, sinner, come.”

It was Therese, the favourite of the class.

“While we are praying for you,
Come, sinner, come!
Now is the time to own him—”

Her voice trembled, but she went on to the end of the song. The last notes died away. Then a sighing sob broke the tension.

José Hidalgo rose slowly to his feet. His face was pale with emotion. His broad shoulders were shaking. After a moment he spoke.

“I, José Hidalgo, have been a coward. Many things I have wanted to do and to say since I have come to this school, but I was afraid. Now I am afraid no longer. One thing will I say before I go, and I will say it to the whole world, too. Best of all in heaven and on earth I love the Lord Jesus.”

And then, “Lord, we thank thee,” prayed the president, “we thank thee that at last José Hidalgo has become a man.”

It was a happy class that left the chapel.

Now the visitors of the evening were arriving, proud Indian parents, roly-poly brown baby brothers and sisters, American friends, and a few curious Mexicans.

The exercises were held on the well-lighted porch of the school. The visitors sat on chairs and benches in the yard. José's valedictory was splendid. To-night he was able to put into it the heart that the teachers had feared it would lack. At the close of his address he told in a few simple words how he had found the Lord, and of how, if the missionaries thought him fit for such service, he intended to spend his whole life in giving the Gospel to his people.

At the close came the tableaux. These were not on the porch, but out in the yard, to give the natural setting. And such scenes as were portrayed:—the first Indians welcoming Columbus, the Indians bringing corn, pumpkins, and turkeys to the Pilgrim colonists for the first Thanksgiving celebration, Pocahontas saving the life of Captain John Smith; almost every good Indian prominent in American history had his place.

The closing scene planned was the representation of a famous painting, "The Indian Lovers." At the last moment in shifting some heavy scenes, Juan, the young man who had one of the leading parts in this tableau, sprained his ankle too badly to take his part. José, to the astonishment of all, volunteered to take the place. The young Indian girl of the tableau was Therese, the sweet singer whose tender voice had brought the Christ to José's heart—the girl whom he loved.

"You must appear to speak a few words just before the curtain falls," the teacher had said.

One thought alone filled Therese's heart. Of that she spoke. "I am so glad," she whispered, "so glad you love Him too."

Standing half turned from the audience, José had become oblivious to his surroundings. He knew only that he was with Therese. He remembered the parting that must come in a few hours, when he would return to the Papagoes, and she would go with her father to her Pima people.

"Best of all in heaven and on earth," he said, "I love the Lord Jesus. And after that," he said, "best of all on earth I love Therese."

"I never knew it," murmured Therese.

"And you, Therese?" urged José.

Therese smiled, and then with trembling lips she said, "Best of all in heaven and on earth I, too, love the Lord Jesus. And after that I love you, José Hidalgo."

Some who were looking very closely thought they saw José kiss Therese just as the curtain fell.

"That was simply perfect," said an enthusiastic American visitor: "I never saw such perfect acting."

"It was perfect," agreed a teacher; "but it wasn't acting."

Among the Papago people José and Therese have been living for some years now, happy in giving their lives in the service of Him who loved us all and gave Himself for us, regardless of whether our skins be white or brown in colour.

God grant to each of us the charm of the voice of the Master that we may win the world to him! If we have ears to hear, his voice will speak to us out of all the experiences of life, quickening within our souls the spiritual fervour that will make of each of us a divine transformer to convey the heavenly electricity to other souls. Luciel Doris Cress sings with beautiful imagery how to spiritually alert ears all seasons and all nature may bring to us his inspiring voice:

“ Out of the still dawn, when first the shadows rise,
 And the hills are tinged with light of coming day,
 Along the low horizon, where rosy-tinted skies
 Show forth His beauty in a wondrous way,
 A message comes as clear and strong
 As sounded word could be,
 And out of the stillness of the dawn
 He speaks to me.

“ Out of the bright noon, when brilliant sunshine gleams
 And makes the world a mellow land of gold,
 When man is at his labour and the world with business
 teems
 And the world is filled with vigor, strong and bold,
 Out of the bright sunshine,
 In a voice clear as can be,
 Out of the glorious midday
 He speaks to me.

“ Out of the sweet sunset, when glorious shades of gold
 And pink and purple touch the evening sky,
 When a picture lies before me, so wondrous to behold,
 That I could look and be content to die,
 Out of that glorious scene
 In tones soft as can be,
 Out of the beauteous sunset
 He speaks to me.

“ Out of the calm night, when wide-awake I lie
 To think and dream of all His wonders mean,
 When the light of myriad worlds glows bright against the
 sky

And His magic power is felt and yet not seen,
His message comes as clear
As message e'er can be,
And out of the wonder of the night
He speaks to me.

“Out of the whole world, wherever Nature rules
And casts her beauteous splendour all about,
Where life and love are clustered in such radiance of jewels
That when once seen can never be cast out,
Out of all great Nature,
Things past or yet to be,
Out of the garden of His love
He speaks to me.”

UNEXPLORED SPIRITUAL HARMONIES

“ Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit.”—*1 Cor. 2:9, 10.*

I HAVE been greatly impressed with a remarkable article in the *Atlantic Monthly* entitled “Unexplored Harmonies,” by Alida Chanler, in which she brings out the fact that though nature shapes our lives by many subtle forces: by climate and sound, by light and shadow and silence, yet our senses are dulled by repetition, and much beauty that we might see and hear often eludes us. But she brings out the far more interesting fact that it is not only by invisible colours and inaudible sounds that nature is constantly affecting our lives. She assures us that when we are soothed in the peaceful stillness of the woods, it is not only by the absence of discord, but also by silent harmonies actively at work; that often what seems to be empty silence is really deep-lying music, as harmonious as the sweep of summer fields on a mountainside; that our eyes and our ears are as windows built at the end of tunnels, through which we reach to the gardens of sound and colour beyond. But she proves to us that for all the light and visible colour it is possible for us to enjoy, for all the sweet sounds we can hear, there is vastly

more that until very recently no human eye or ear has been able to explore.

She relates that she has seen a Mexican bird, allied to the Northern hermit thrush, whose throat fairly quivered with notes inaudible to her ears. What can be heard by the normal human ear of his song is so thrillingly sweet that it makes the listener long to hear the whole of it, but his small body vibrates to notes no human ear can catch. Now all this is capable of scientific proof. We hear seven or eight octaves of sounds, and see only the equivalent of one octave of light. But the astounding fact that humbles and haunts us is that between the lowest colour vibrations we can see, and the highest sound vibrations we can hear, are twenty octaves of invisible light and of inaudible sounds.

Science has recently found a kind of periscope to turn the corner from light to sound. It combines electricity with magnetism in an electric bulb connected to a telephone; it is called the "oscillating audion" wireless receiver. Because magnetism from luminiferous ether can vibrate metal in air, this bulb changes invisible light into music. "And what is more fascinating," our writer asks, "than to listen to music till now inaudible to human ears?"

And she declares that the music heard with an oscillating audion bulb compares with the buzzing type of wireless heard on the ordinary crystal receivers, much as a violin compares with a policeman's whistle. It is, we are assured, "as sweet as flutes and as variable as Hawaiian guitars."

A delightful thing about this discovery is that the

music can be enjoyed without learning any wireless code, without danger of electric shock, and with merely a few lessons in tuning the oscillating audion, and its batteries and controls.

We can appreciate the sigh of satisfaction and enchantment with which our writer says: "At last we are finding an entrance into the secret gardens! The harmony of colour, which is a balanced adjustment of ether waves, is being transmuted into harmony of sound—into air-waves blending in music. Surely it is not enough just to read messages sent by ingenious man; it is not enough to manipulate ether for its speed alone. If we are patient, we may yet hear the morning stars singing together, or catch a whisper of moonbeams filtering down. As pattering leaves played over the 'let's pretend' games of my childhood, so I would let ethereal harmonies play over my dreams to-day. Even the noisy telephone may take its place in the harmony of life!

"I would like a lyre tuned to ethereal winds. With a frame of ebony and bakelite, with frets of selenium and strings of magnetic alloys bound in gold-leaf, it would respond to far-off suns, its melodies would be shot through with light. Then would I hear the music of the spheres that Shelley dreamed of, light and sound blending into the harmony of eternal life.

"With music interwoven,
The rainbow colors throng,
Their melodies of heaven
Are blending into song.

"Through comet's swirling traces,
Past moonlit fields of night,

The song of silent places
Spreads harmonies of light.'”

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Now I have gone with so much detail into this novel and'extraordinarily interesting scientific discovery in the hope of finding in it an attractive illustration of the way God is seeking to quicken our interest in the exploration of the still higher and more important harmonies of the spiritual realm.

I

After all, that is the supreme mission of Jesus Christ into our world. His birth, his life, his teaching, his suffering, his death, his resurrection and ascension were to open up to us a way whereby we might explore to our soul's eternal salvation the blessed harmonies of heaven, not in eternity only, but here and now on the earth in the lives we are living among our fellows.

The Incarnation of Jesus was to show us God. We could not see those holy characteristics of divine love, we could not hear those exquisite sounds of divine mercy, until Jesus came to be to us, first of all (and I say it with infinite reverence and love), our oscillating audion to reveal to us God. In his human life we were able to behold the glory of God's goodness and hear the music of his forgiving love. He showed us in his own human body and human life how our bodies and lives could be the channels of glorious graces that would make them beautiful and holy and full of blessing for others. Christ revealed to us that all the external things of life are of small importance compared with the richness of

a personality that is constantly growing in the beauty of holiness, and in fellowship and communion with God. Elizabeth Barrett Browning brings out with wonderful imagery the infinite importance of the invisible personality in man; that a man, like an iceberg, has the greater part of him hidden from the ordinary gaze. You must penetrate within and get hold of the hidden, invisible soul if you are to really control a man. She sings:

“Not even Christ himself
Can save man else than as he hold man's soul;
And therefore did he come into our flesh,
As some wise hunter creeping on his knees
With a torch, into the blackness of some cave
To face and quell the beast there—take the soul,
And so possess the whole man, body and soul.”

In that picture the great poet describes the heart of the mission of Jesus to the world, to

“take the soul,
And so possess the whole man, body and soul.”

II

Prayer is a divinely conceived oscillating audion by which we may hear sounds of love and behold visions of heaven's mercy we could explore in no other way. Saul of Tarsus, persecutor, bigot, without mercy or faith in divine things, was pursuing his cruel way until out of the noonday heavens he heard words inaudible to others, and as he prayed and asked who spoke to him, he found that it was Jesus. And when the Holy Spirit told the old saint who lived in Damascus to go and minister to Saul, he feared to go, and recounted what a violent and cruel

man Saul was; but when he was told that Saul had begun to pray he feared no longer; he knew that when the wicked Saul began to pray, he would hear new and transforming messages, and see all things in a new light.

Prayer has the same power of blessing now. Think what an oscillating audion prayer was to Elisha at Dothan, when his secretary came in and told how the whole Assyrian army had surrounded them in the night and there was no way of escape, and Elisha smiled sweetly and said: "They that be for us are more than they that be against us." And when the young man looked at the prophet in amazement as though he had lost his head, Elisha asked God to open his eyes so he could see, and then the young man was able to see the invisible hosts by which God was protecting his prophet.

So God is protecting us if we are honestly serving him, whether we are great or small in the eyes of men. Prayer peoples all life with romance and interest. To the man to whom God is real through frequent personal conversations in prayer, life can never be boresome or uninteresting. God is as real to us as a mother to a sorrowing child when we have really learned to pray. Do you remember, O skeptical man, when as a child you sought your mother for comfort? It may have been the sting of a hornet or a bruised arm or limb, or some cruel disappointment that it seemed impossible to bear. But when you put your head in mother's lap and she stroked your hair and spoke words of sympathy, your heart was comforted. So to the grown man God is as real

as that and can work as great a consolation in life's sternest trials if he has learned to pray. How much is yet to be explored of the real music and comfort of life to most of us in that realm of communion with God through prayer!

III

The Bible is a divinely prepared oscillating audion to give us spiritual visions and sounds of divine comfort and good cheer which we can never see or hear without its help.

How men go the way of life, with all its sorrows and griefs and disappointments, who have not learned how to use the Bible to give sight of visions of divine care and songs of heavenly love, I do not know. Oh, how wonderful are the promises and solaces of the Bible! Listen to some of them: "How great is the goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, for them that trust in thee before the children of men." Listen again: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Again: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Or this: "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." Or listen to this: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall

sustain thee," or "All things work together for good to them that love God," or that other, "The Lord's mercies are new every morning," and there are thousands of others that have been tested and tried out by multitudes of God's children in all lands. How we starve our souls when we leave unexplored the Bible God took hundreds of years in preparing for our blessing and comfort!

IV

Service of our fellow men is another oscillating audition by which we will be able to see new human values and hear sounds of grateful joy we will never hear or see otherwise.

How much the priest and the Levite and all others lost who went by on the other side of the road and pretended not to see when the poor plundered traveler lay suffering beside the Jericho road! But the Good Samaritan who bound his wounds and put him on his own beast and carried him to the inn and provided for him became immortal through his service.

What joy came to Jesus in the house of Simon the Leper on the night of that cold and heartless entertainment when the poor redeemed woman to whom Christ's loving ministry had restored the true dignity of womanhood came and bathed his feet with her tears and wiped them with the long locks of her hair, and broke above his loving head the rich box of fragrant perfume! Ah, the man who serves the needs of his fellow men gains by his deeds a new vision of the rare and golden depths of the heart of mankind and hears words of gratitude and tender-

ness and love such as the greedy and selfish shall never know.

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V

There is often a vast unexplored field for beautiful harmonies in our homes. How few parents know the exquisite music there is in the hearts of their children! Many children are bashful and afraid, and hide the depths of their hearts unless one goes exploring with the one key that can unlock a child's heart and cause it to show its most precious treasures, the key of sympathy and love.

How many husbands and wives have golden harvests in the heart of their life comrade. Many married people live only the ordinary life of partnership in bearing the burdens of family life, with but little of romance or tenderness, who might have heaven brought down to earth to spread its fragrance and glory about the portals of every earthly day if with unselfish tenderness and cherishing love they would search out the love mysteries of the good man or the good woman God has given them for wife or husband.

God give to each one of us the divine oscillating audion of unselfish love that will enable us to explore the hearts of those nearest to us in our own homes, so that we may be able to behold the beautiful visions of fidelity and tender devotion and loyal love that would otherwise be undiscerned by our dull eyes.

God give us ears to catch the music, sweeter than that of meadow lark or thrush or nightingale, more

inspiring for human ears than even the chorus of the angelic hosts, the music of a happy loving heart that has found in its God-given mate the love that inspires the soul to noblest deeds and comforts the spirit for bravest and holiest living.

Our homes are the gates to heaven, nay, they are heaven itself loaned to go to heaven in, when we have brought the love of God and love of wife and children to blend together in sweet communion there!

XIII

THE VISION SPLENDID

“We have seen the Lord.”—*John 20:25.*

ON the first Sunday evening after the resurrection of Jesus the lonely-hearted friends of the Saviour were gathered together in a little room for prayer and conversation about their Master, when Jesus himself appeared to them with words of comfort and blessing. John, who was one of the group, says: “Jesus came and stood in their midst and saith unto them, ‘Peace be unto you,’ and when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus therefore said to them again: ‘Peace be unto you. As the Father hath sent me, even so I send you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive ye the Holy Spirit.’”

Now one of their number, Thomas, was of a diffident, doubtful nature and had evidently been so depressed and discouraged that he had stayed away from the place of prayer,—many a man and many a woman has missed seeing the Lord by staying at home, when blue and depressed, from the prayer meeting,—so when the other disciples who had had this inspiring and cheering visit with Jesus met Thomas later and with burning hearts and glowing

speech exclaimed: "We have seen the Lord!" he found it hard to believe and was doomed to go a whole week with a despairing heart before Jesus mercifully appeared to him also.

Now the greatest blessing that can come to any man or woman in this world is a heart-warming vision of God. Multitudes are born into the world and live in it for many years and go out of it without having ever come to a clear recognition of the presence of God. That is not because he is ever seeking to hide from us; on the contrary he is always seeking to make himself known, but because men's eyes are blinded by the dust and smoke of material so that they have no spiritual vision.

It is interesting to notice the effect of this heartening vision on those early friends of Jesus.

I

In the first place it was to them a vision of great joy. Their gloom and depression that had been weighing them down was lifted and thrown to the winds, their hearts and faces glowed with a new joy born of the faith in spiritual realities that the vision of Christ had given them.

And that holy joy is a distinguishing mark of those who live within eyeshot of God. If men or women live in such a relation to God that they spiritually discern his presence, the splendour of that vision will show in the gladness of their hearts, the music of their laughter and the radiance of their countenances.

A Chinese woman of wealth was driving one day with her daughters. She passed the yard of a

Christian mission compound. Through the open gate she saw the children of the missionary and the school children playing and they looked so happy that she was very delightfully impressed by their joyous faces. Some days later she came to the missionary begging her to take her own daughters and put some of that happy "Shing polish" on their faces. It is the assurance in the heart of God's love and his personal care over us and his personal interest in us that can make the human face shine with a joy the world is as powerless to give as it is to drive away.

If we day by day live so that we discern the face of God and feel his nearness to us, we shall be able to face every morning with the glad determination—

"I'll greet this day,
I'll walk this way,
A smile upon my face;
There may be clouds,
There may be rain,
The storms may come,
E'en friends may leave,
But joy they'll not erase.

"I will be glad;
I'll not be sad,
Whate'er this day may bring:
It may be loss,
It may be gain,
Perhaps I'll lose,
But in my heart I'll sing.

"If I am glad
And if I sing,
Although the way is drear;
The man I meet,
The child I greet,
Will catch the glow
And hear the song,
And feel that God is near."

II

This vision of their Lord gave those early Christians a new and wonderful courage. Before this visit of their Lord they had been very timid and afraid, but now they became bold and full of assurance and only a few weeks later, on that wonderful day of Pentecost, they, under Peter's aggressive leadership, so boldly bore testimony to Christ and their certain knowledge of his resurrection and of his divine power to forgive sins that three thousand were added to their numbers in a single day. After that vision of the Lord their courage knew no bounds, death lost its power to make them fear, and one after another they unflinchingly went to the stake or the cross or to the dungeon for their Lord with brave hearts and joyful faces.

Paul was a wonderful illustration of the courage imparted to a human soul by a vision of the divine Lord. After Christ appeared to Saul on his way to Damascus, and that vision had changed his name and his purpose and transformed his life, Paul feared nothing but to sin against God. He could endure whippings or dungeons or shipwrecks or false friends and finally go undaunted to martyrdom with a cry of eternal triumph on his lips, because again and again he saw the Lord and knew that his life was pleasing to his divine master. So let us live that we with our eyes upon God may sing:

“Up, though the path is steep,
On, through the shadows deep;
Forward with Thee;

THE VISION SPLENDID

Till the glad morning shine
 Thy hand is clasping mine,
 Forward with Thee.

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 "Closer the shadows press,
 Greater the strain and stress
 As the hours fly;
 Oh, for the dawning light,
 Herald of morning bright,
 Flooding the sky!

"Pitch black may be the night,
 Yet I can see the light
 Hid in Thy face;
 Sweet is Thy company,
 Faithful Thy word to me,
 Sure is Thy grace."

III

This vision of their Lord gave those early Christians a new sense of their responsibilities to God. It put a new face upon duty. They were Christ's representatives here in the world. He had ascended into heaven and was their friend, their divine master there, and they were here holding a sacred trust. Duty became a task not to dread but to love and prize above all things.

An old English woman who had lost every human tie in the great war, wrote to a prominent Christian minister these wonderful words: "Me youth is gone, me hope is dead, me heart is heavy; but I neglect no duty." And the minister wisely wrote back to the tried soul, "In leaving you the love of righteousness God left you the best gift he had."

Oh, that God would give to each of us a vision of himself so distinct that we may feel as keenly as did those early friends that

“ Christ has no hands but our hands to do his work to-day;
He has no feet but our feet to lead men in his way;
He has no tongue but our tongues to tell men how he
died;

He has no help but our help to bring them to his side.

“ We are the only Bible the careless world will read;
We are the sinner’s gospel, we are the scoffer’s creed.
We are the Lord’s last message, given in deed and word;
What if the type is crooked? What if the print is
blurred?

“ What if our hands are busy with other work than his?
What if our feet are walking where sin’s allurements is?
What if our tongues are speaking of things his lips would
spurn?

How can we hope to help him and hasten his return?”

IV

This cheering, heart-warming vision which the early disciples of Jesus had of him after his resurrection gave them a new sense of human brotherhood, gave them a new love for humanity. They now realized that as God the Father, out of his great heart of love, had sent the loving Christ who had been their teacher and master to save them out of a wicked world, so they, too, were sent to be the saviours of men and women and children, and their love grew as they thus sought to save others. I think they also caught from Christ who had loved them as individuals a new sense of God’s love for the individual. And I think we need to get closer to God to catch that feeling anew to-day. We need to lay the emphasis to-day on what the apostle meant when he speaks of Jesus, “ Who loved *me* and gave himself for *me*.” We need to urge home with a new intensity on the minds and hearts of sinful men and

women that Jesus longs to be the private and personal Saviour of each private and personal soul.

The great war, with its great masses of human beings in action, has taught us to think of men in the mass, in armies, in races, in national groups, but our Heavenly Father thinks of us personally, individually, by name. This is a day when a keen sense of individuality is easily lost. It is an age of lodges and fraternities, boards, clubs, societies. There never was an age when it was so difficult to find the individual as to-day. To use the language of the trenches, the individual man has dug himself in. You have to hunt for him with a spade. But those grim lines of Kipling remain true:

“The sins we do by two and two
We must pay for one by one.”

It is only as a man comes to a keen, vivid sense of the personality—yes, the individuality—of God, that he gets a sufficiently definite sense of the importance of the individual man. If you have only a vague idea of God, you will have only a vague, hazy idea of either your own or your neighbour's personality. But when God becomes real and individual to you, you yourself become real. Tennyson expresses the gradual oncoming to this consciousness of self in a child in these lines of “In Memoriam”:

“The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is prest
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that ‘this is I.’

“But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of ‘I’ and ‘me.’

And finds 'I am not what I see
And other than the things I touch.'

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"So rounds he to a separate mind,
From whence clear memory may begin,
As thro' the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined."

And the noblest living is not possible to any man or woman who does not realize that they must live their own individual lives, responsible for that life to God.

Principal Fairbairn, the great English thinker and Christian philosopher, said: "Were it possible to reduce the pious soul to the consciousness of only two things in the universe, first the reality of God, and second of the self, it would then be possible to endow that soul with the highest happiness."

Oh, my friends, let us get deep down into our heart of hearts that the fundamental luminous facts—certainties about which there can be no doubt—are God and our own souls. God grant us that purity of heart that will give to us the vision every day which alone will insure our abiding joy.

V

How may I find God and make sure of this divine vision so necessary to keep my soul alive? Men have asked this question in every age.

Job in the midst of his troubles and perplexity cried: "Oh, that I knew where I might find him! That I might come even to his seat! I would set my cause in order before him, and fill my mouth with arguments."

But there are certain places where we may always

be sure of coming into an atmosphere through which we may see God.

First, **one of these is in the Bible.** The Bible is the book of God. The whole book is alive with the presence of God. You can open it anywhere, in the story of creation, in the historical sections, in the strange book of Job, the proverbs of Solomon, or the psalms of David, in the sublime prophecies of Isaiah or the Christian scriptures of the New Testament, and you cannot read an hour anywhere without coming face to face with the living God—the God who loves his children and who is forever seeking to bless and save them and make life sweet to them. Let us keep close to the Bible, for it will show us God.

At a recent meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London, this very remarkable story was told of a devoted Christian colporteur named Licata who for thirty years had been spreading the Bible in Southern Italy. One evening he was going through a remote corner of Sicily when he was held up by a brigand. The brigand said: "Oh, at last I have got you. You are the fellow that is going about corrupting the minds of poor people with your pestilent, demon-possessed books. I have got you now, and I am going, first of all, to burn all your books, and then I am going to shoot you."

So he lighted a fire and ordered Licata, the colporteur, to produce his books. By a happy inspiration, Licata persuaded him first to allow him to read him something in the books. The man said "Well, that seems to be fair, and I will promise you that if any **one of your books is not bad, we will not burn it.**"

So they agreed, and they sat down by the fire. Licata took up the Gospel of St. Luke, and he read to the brigand the story of the man who went down to Jericho and fell among thieves. The allusion was rather a personal one. The brigand might have been offended by the allusion to his own habits, but, to his credit be it said, he listened, and at the end, he said, "Well, there does not seem to be much wrong with that, anyhow. We will put that book on one side. Read another one."

So Licata took up another Gospel, and yet another. The books in the bag were gradually getting fewer. Not one of them had been put into the fire so far.

At last Licata read from the last one, and the man said, "Well, you need not burn that one either. Read the next." Licata said, "Oh, there are no more; you have heard them all." The brigand said, "My friend, don't lie to me. It is dangerous. Produce your bad books. You have given me the good ones. Now let us have the bad ones, those devil-possessed books that are corrupting the people." He said, "There are no more." The brigand got up and searched his pockets and his bag; but he found no more. Then he said, "You can go; but, remember, if you have deceived me, I will shoot you at sight like a dog." Licata wended his way in the darkness toward the village. The next morning he was at work selling the Scriptures, and he was surrounded by a hostile crowd that assailed him with clods and vituperation, when there burst into the crowd a big, burly fellow who called out, "Hold! Stop it!" It was the

brigand. He stood up in the midst of the crowd and told them what had happened the night before, and testified to the beauty and the value of the books which the colporteur was selling. The brigand is said to be a Christian worker among the Italians in the United States at the present time. Pollok, the poet, did not write too extravagantly of the power of the Bible to show men God and guide their lives aright when he exclaims :

“Most wondrous Book, bright candle of the Lord!
 Star of eternity! the only star
 By which the bark of man could navigate
 The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss
 Securely! Only star which rose on time,
 And on its dark and troubled billows still,
 As generation drifting swiftly by
 Succeeded generation, threw a ray
 Of heaven's own light, and to the hills of God,
 The eternal hills, pointed the sinner's eye.

“This Book, this holy Book, on every line
 Marked with the seal of high divinity,
 On every leaf bedewed with drops of love
 Divine, and with the eternal heraldry
 And signature of God Almighty stamped
 From first to last, this ray of sacred light,
 The lamp, from off the everlasting throne,
 Mercy took down and in the night of time
 Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow;
 And evermore beseeching men, with tears
 And earnest sighs, to read, believe and live.”

Second, in prayer we may find God and commune with him face to face as friend talks with friend.

And how much we miss when we fail to talk with God on intimate terms of friendship every day and often many times a day. Sometimes you pass your dearest earthly friend, only glancing across the street at him, and pass by with a nod. You are absorbed

in other things, and the beauty and glory of his wealth of sympathy and love is not felt, but at other times you seek him out in his home or invite him into your own home and open your heart and pour out your inmost soul to him, and you are comforted and encouraged and refreshed with his understanding and sympathetic friendship. So we may come into the closest friendship with God every day, and if need be many times a day, and rejoice in his loving sympathy even more perfectly than that of any earthly friend.

In my small boyhood my sweet little mother used to go every day, in the afternoon, to a little thicket beside the orchard in our primitive frontier home in Oregon, and though she sometimes went to that leafy sanctuary sad-faced and heavy-hearted, she always came away singing, with her face shining like the sun. My mother's face shone for the same reason that Stephen's did at his martyrdom. She had "seen the Lord" and her heart was glad.

Dr. Joseph Fort Newton was preaching in the City Temple in London during the great war, and one day he was in the Author's Club when an invalid English officer took him to one side and said: "I want to show you what was my bread and meat and milk and all that I had to keep my soul alive during the long marches of the campaign in Mesopotamia, and afterward through the long lonely waits in the hospitals, recovering slowly from wounds," and Dr. Newton was prepared to see a worn New Testament or some spiritual book like the Imitation of Christ, but instead the officer drew out reverently

a little worn note book in which he had pasted a half dozen short prayers uttered by Dr. Newton in the City Temple, and which the soldier had clipped from an English newspaper. The sermons printed with the prayers he had passed by, but the little prayers had shown him God.

Third, we may see God by being good to his children. Mark Guy Pearse wrote a beautiful story about the golden key that fitteth all hearts. This is the gist of the story :

Mr. and Mrs. Rogers lived twenty miles from any town, with a stretch of dreary moorland on one side, and nothing but the sea on the other. Mr. Rogers was a prosperous farmer, but his home was childless and loveless. He was brought up to believe that joy and grief are sins, and that pity and kindness are the roots of evil. Mrs. Rogers was disappointed in an early attachment, and the door of her heart was closed and locked, shutting in the love and tenderness of former days. But to be honest with Mr. Rogers, his feelings were too strong for his principles, and pity and kindness were his besetting sins.

One Christmas eve Mrs. Rogers dreamed a dream. In her dream she heard a voice calling from a long way off, "Charity, Charity," which was her name, "the sea hath given up its dead." Then she saw a hand holding out a golden key. She took it, wondering, and on it read: "The Master key that fitteth all hearts, and doth not fail."

Mr. Rogers had a strange guest for breakfast on Christmas morning, and it came about in a strange way.

During the night there was a wreck, and broken spars were tossed by the waves as they broke along the shore. Early in the morning Mr. Rogers was walking slowly along the beach wondering if he could render any help. Looking over a rock he caught sight of a little bundle of clothes, and lifting the loose end of a shawl he saw the pale face of a little child. The child cried and Mr. Rogers wept, and in his efforts to quiet the little one he pressed it to his bosom and kissed the little white cheek.

When Mr. Rogers returned to the house his wife was talking to the cat about her dream, and he put the little child into her arms, and hurried off without a word of explanation.

Mrs. Rogers leaned over the child a moment, then her heart opened and she kissed it. When Mr. Rogers came back the child was asleep. He told his wife the story of the rescue, and confessed his joy; and then, leaning over the child, he kissed his wife and she kissed him.

"What shall we call her, dear?" asked Mr. Rogers.

"The sea hath given up its dead," Mrs. Rogers said to herself, "and this is the golden key that unlocked our hearts."

Then turning to Mr. Rogers, she said: "Shall we call her Christmas, dear?"

"The very name," said Mr. Rogers. "I thought of Christmas, because on this blessed day our Father in heaven sent down the holy child to save us all."

"Yes, the Golden Key to open all hearts to himself," said Mrs. Rogers.

God grant us each one the Golden Key that shall
open all our hearts to God to-day.

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“ My Father knows my every want;
No help he ever fails to grant
Whene'er I seek his mind to know,
His will to do, his love to show :
He knows, he knows, my Father knows,
And safe his child where'er he goes.

“ My Father cares, he cares for me,
However low my lot may be ;
However great, however small
My burdens be, he cares for all :
He cares, he cares, my Father cares,
His children's burdens all he bears.

“ My Father loves with love so strong,
It fills my heart with grateful song ;
Nor life nor death nor depth nor height
Can hide me from his loving sight :
He loves, he loves, my Father loves,
And safe his child where'er he moves.

“ My Father knows, my Father hears,
My Father sees, my Father cares,
My Father loves because he knows,
And, knowing all, his love o'erflows :
He sees, he hears, he cares, he knows ;
With love for all his heart o'erflows.”

XIV

THE ROMANTIC INTEREST IN THE CHRISTIAN'S FELLOWSHIP

“Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”—*1 John 1:3.*

PROFESSOR WILLIAM JAMES, that radiant scientific expert in Christian experience, says: “The best things in life are its friendships.” John, who wrote our text, regarded this Christian fellowship of which he writes as friendship raised to the highest power. John was a close friend of Jesus during his earthly ministry. He had been known as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” He had no doubt held Jesus in his arms, his own head had lain on Jesus’ breast at the Last Supper, close before the awful tragedy of the cross. See how John introduces our text:

“That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea,

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and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ: and these things we write, that our joy may be made full." www.liberal.org.cn

If we are to fully appreciate these words of John, we must remember that he had become acquainted with Jesus in his youth and he is now an old man. He had already written the book known in the Bible as John's Gospel, in which he had told of the coming of Jesus, his life, his message, his work, his vicarious death and glorious resurrection; and now he writes this letter to go with it, telling how the fellowship with the Father and with Jesus had grown sweeter and richer with the years.

And how could it be otherwise? God is the most interesting being in the universe. All life comes from God. People talk as if God belonged to heaven only, or in churches on Sunday or at Christmas, to be talked of only on special occasions such as funerals. But we cannot shut God out like that. If God is at all, he pervades all life, is the source of all interest, not on Sundays only, but just as truly on week days, not in certain compartments of our life, but in all of our lives. Paul says in his letter to the Hebrews that God is the One "with whom we have to do." The fault is in ourselves if we know God only vaguely, for he is seeking always to make himself known.

"Halts by me that footfall;
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of his hand, outstretched caressingly?
Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest me."

I

The word fellowship is from a root word meaning literally sharing in common. The same form of the word is used by Luke in the Acts where he relates the story of the disciples bringing all their goods together and sharing in common. Do you grasp the romance and interest there is in that thought? John is saying that if we truly accept Christ as our Saviour and enter with full purpose of heart to live the Christian life, we enter into fellowship with the Father and with Jesus, and we have all things in common with them. When Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," the teaching is the same. The branches share with the vine and have all things in common with the vine. And so we may have all the beauty and joy and glory of the personality of Jesus in us.

That rare old fisherman, Izaak Walton, writing of old Dr. Donne, a mighty English preacher of his day, and one as quaint as Walton was himself, says of him that he had the gift of "enticing others by a sacred art and courtship to amend their lives." No courtship was ever so sweet as the way Jesus woos the soul that is willing to walk with him into the love mysteries of the divine nature.

"I met a friend whose graces rare
 There seemed with naught I could compare.
 On all she poured such wondrous love
 And winning sweetness, that I strove
 To find the secret of her power;
 And this I found, that hour by hour
 Companionship with His she blends
 Who calls His followers His 'friends.'"

How we impoverish our souls when we put God afar off from the intimate daily experiences of life!

An old Samoan Chief said to a missionary: "We know that at night Some One goes by among the trees, but we never speak of it." Many professed Christians live with that same ghostly thought of God. But we may meet God every day through fellowship and service to our fellow men as Jesus did.

A distinguished Christian minister tells this beautiful story. He came home one day weary from his afternoon calls. Entering the side hall that was already dark, he saw through the door slightly ajar his little son and daughter at play. Philip, eight years old, was building up blocks on the floor, while Esther, two years younger, was standing under the electric light with both arms raised as high as she could stretch them over her head. Seeing her dramatic position, and the unusual look on her face, the father remained silent in the hall, knowing that something interesting was coming. With intense feeling, the little girl said: "Oh, Philip! Of course we would kiss God!" To which Philip replied:

"Oh, you couldn't kiss God. He is a spirit. Why God is in you,—and in me."

Still standing in her dramatic position with the light shining full on her face, she began lowering her arms slowly, and as her expression of comprehension deepened she said: "Oh, well then, Philip, if God is in you and in me, if we were to kiss each other we would kiss God."

"Yes, that is right, we would," was his response. Then said she:

"Let us kiss God." He arose promptly, and the children, throwing their arms tightly around each other, kissed God!

No wonder the father says: "If ever there was a glad father I was one. Standing there in the dark hall I thought: 'God bless the dear children, they have the evangel.' That is the very essence of the Christian religion. 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me.'"

II

In such fellowship we shall come into great and wondrous light, so that all the great spiritual realities will be illumined, and we shall see the relative superiority of spiritual things. You cannot walk in darkness and have fellowship with the Father and with Christ. See how John continues his letter: "And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another."

Soon after H. G. Wells had written his famous book, "God, the Invisible King," Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, then pastor at the City Temple in London, met Wells at lunch and found him all aglow over his discovery of what he called "The happy God of the heart." And Dr. Newton says he looked much surprised when he suggested to him that he had found what the Bible means by the Holy Spirit, as if he

thought his discovery entirely new. The Comforter whom Jesus prayed the Father to send to those first friends still walks with us along all the trails of our earthly life.

The light never is refused to the earnest seeker after truth.

Willis E. Longee has recently retold in the *Congregationalist* in minute detail the story which Gen. Lew Wallace related to him many years ago of how he came to write his wonderful book, "Ben Hur." Wallace was on the train returning to his home in Indianapolis from his work as Governor of the then Territory of Arizona. On the journey he had a long conversation with his old personal friend Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll. During the conversation Ingersoll urged Wallace to make an exhaustive study of the subject in a scholarly way and once and for all forever explode the myth or legend that such a personality as Jesus Christ ever lived on the earth. Wallace was tremendously moved by this appeal, and on reaching home told his wife, who was a Christian woman and member of the Methodist Church, what he had determined to do. She tried to dissuade him from his purpose, but in vain, and for many months he gathered his materials for his book and had written the first four chapters, when he became convinced that Jesus Christ was as truly a real historical character who had lived and wrought among men as was Julius Caesar or Napoleon. With that conviction came also the assurance that he was the divine Son of God, God's gift to redeem and save a world of sinners, and following that the alarming convic-

tion that he, Lew Wallace, was a sinner, and that Jesus had given his life to save him!

He was alone in his study after midnight, when the Holy Spirit so convinced him of sin that he fell upon his knees and pleaded with God in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of his sins, and received the witness of the Spirit that his sins were pardoned. He could not wait until morning. He went upstairs where his wife was sleeping, now toward morning, and awakened her to tell her that he had been happily converted and was himself now a Christian. In her joy she threw her arms about his neck and exclaimed: "Oh, Lew, I have been praying day and night ever since you told me you were going to write that book that God would show you the truth and Jesus would make himself known to you." And there in the night they knelt beside the bed and rejoiced in their new fellowship with each other and with "the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ." That morning Ben Hur began to be written.

III

Walking in such light and fellowship we cannot fail to lose all our sins. See how John puts it: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." You cannot walk close to Jesus without losing your sins.

They tell us that in Japan there is a certain kind of spider which spins its web over the telegraph lines, and from tree to tree, and to the ground. When a

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sufficient number of webs have been spun, no message can be sent over the wires. Sin is like that. Sin shuts off the soul's communication with God. It did it with King Saul, and it does the same with the sinner now.

Isaiah says: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." But if we walk near Jesus we shall lose our sins.

General Gordon was a candidate for the United States Senate from Georgia. A member of the Legislature who had been selected to vote against him marched up to the polls with an anti-Gordon ballot in his hand. On the platform sat the old general, the scars of battle still disfiguring what had once been a handsome face. When the legislator saw those scars he wavered, his frame shook with emotion, but he tried to nerve himself for the ordeal. Then suddenly turning and facing the caucus, he cried: "It's no use, boys! I can't do it! Here goes my vote for John B. Gordon. It was all up with me, boys, when I caught a glimpse of that scar."

So when a man gets close enough to Jesus to see where the sharp thorns pierced his dear forehead and catch a glimpse of the prints of the nails in his hands and the torn gash where the soldier's spear entered his side, he turns from his sins in horror and cries for forgiveness. And that cry is never in vain. See again what John says in his letter we are studying:

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

We should never lose out of mind the glory of that experience.

Dr. Alexander Whyte, of Edinboro, says a beautiful thing about that fine Scotch preacher, Dr. John Kelman: “He was a man obviously saved by the recurring surprise and daily wonder of Christ. He found many around him taking Christ for granted, and heeding him very little. But to him Christ came with a new astonishment every morning, with a new amazement every evening.” May it be like that for every one of us!

IV

The brightest, most interesting and most joyous association known to mortals is this glad fellowship with our heavenly Father, with Jesus and with the Comforter.

Money, position, fame, no combination of things can ever give such exquisite joy as personal association with those whom we love and who love us. Not long ago, in a hospital, I heard a man who was looking for a comfortable room for his wife, say to the nurse, who reminded him that the room they were looking at did not have as much sunshine as the other: “She will have her sister with her, and that will be all the sunshine she needs.” No one can walk the way of life with God and Christ and the Holy Spirit without good cheer.

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John G. Paton, the great missionary who won the New Hebrides as a jewel for his Master's crown, tells in his book a thrilling story, that no good man or woman ever read with dry eyes, of the death of his wife and babe in a lonely island among heathen strangers. He had to dig their grave with his own hands, walling it up with blocks of coral and heaping it over with coral chips. And there, through months and years, that grave was his shrine where he claimed the land for Christ. But he was never alone, for he had fellowship with Christ. He writes: "But for Jesus and the fellowship he vouchsafed me there, I must have gone mad and died by that lonely grave." But Jesus was there, and encouraged and cheered by that divine fellowship he lived a happy, beautiful and glorious life, and won multitudes to the banner of his Lord.

V

Such fellowship insures a strong life of high and noble service. It is "the joy of the Lord" that is to be our strength. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." Enoch is a good illustration of the results of such a glorious fellowship on a man's character and personality.

There are just three brief paragraphs in the Bible that give us the biography of Enoch. The first is in the fifth chapter of Genesis: "And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: and Enoch walked with God, after he begat Methuselah, three

hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: and all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty and five years: and Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him."

The second paragraph about this wonderful man is found in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

The third and final word about Enoch we find in Jude: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying: Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

Now from all these we know some things about Enoch. He was a prominent man, the leading citizen of the world for three hundred years. He was a public man. He was a prophet. He was a great father, and in his family life as well as in his public life he walked with God and pleased God through it all. The precious fellowship he had with the Father grew in beauty and joy and interest as the years passed by. If it is true that the human heart is like an old violin that remembers all the melodies it has ever heard, how rich and sweet must have been the heart of Enoch in those latter years as he walked straight into the sunset and found himself at home with God!

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- "No, I have never seen Him face to face;
But I have spoken in His listening ear,
Have tasted freely of His saving grace,
Have proved His promises and felt Him near:
- "I have not seen Him face to face; what need?
When day by day His tender love and care
Wrap me around; when I can with Him plead
My heart's desires, and know He answers prayer.
- "Not face to face; not yet! but hand in hand!
As He has willed it, I would have it be.
But some sweet day, I shall in His own land
Behold Him, and His glorious beauty see!"

XV

WHEN GOD LIVES WITH ME

“Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you?”—*1 Cor. 6:19.*

GOD is a spirit. His access to the world is through his children. In Isaiah, fifty-seventh chapter, fifteenth verse, we read: “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.”

Christ makes this purpose and plan of God to use our body as his dwelling place, and to make it an instrument through which he can bless the world, very clear in that wonderful vine paragraph in the fifteenth chapter of John's Gospel. Let us refresh our minds with its rich and comforting utterance. Jesus says: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: And every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches:

He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered. * * * If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

In later years John, in his first Epistle, fourth chapter, from the 7th to the 13th verses, returns to this theme and gives us his own interpretation of these words in a paragraph which in some respects is one of the most significant in the Bible. He writes: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God * * * for God is love. Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us: hereby we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

And again in the third chapter of the final book of the Bible, also written by John, we have those wonderful words of Jesus which he records for us: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." There is a clear declaration by our Saviour of the dwelling of God in us; not simply calling on us, but living

with us in the closest fellowship of our daily lives.

Some good people put spiritual things away from practical consideration as if to be spiritual meant to be vague and unreal. Nothing could be further from the truth. The spiritual is the most real of anything with which we have to deal. I am a spirit, a real personality, or, to speak more correctly, an individuality entirely apart from the body in which I live and which at first glance seems to be the most substantial part of me. No one has sung this truth more clearly than Frederick Lawrence Knowles in a poem called "The Tenant," written but a little while before he passed on into that land where our spirits—that is, our real selves—shall be clothed upon by spiritual bodies. He sings:

"This body is my house, it is not I:
 Herein I sojourn till, in some far sky,
 I lease a fairer dwelling, built to last,
 Till all the carpentry of time is past.
 When in my high place, viewing this lone star,
 What do I care where these poor timbers are.
 What though the rafters break, the stanchions rot,
 And earth has dwindled to a glimmering spot;
 When thou clay cottage fallest, I'll immerse
 My long cramped spirit in the universe;
 Through uncomputed silences of space
 I shall yearn upward to the leaning face.
 The ancient heavens will roll aside for me,
 As Moses monarched the dividing sea.
 This body is my house, it is not I,
 Triumphant in this faith, I live and die."

But while we are here in this world God has prepared for us these human, physical bodies, fearfully and wonderfully made, in which to live and where he is willing to live with us in most marvelous and

loving fellowship. God is the Creator of our bodies, but he is the Father of our spirits, and if we are dutiful children of our heavenly Father, we will count it our highest honour as well as our supreme good that God dwells in our bodies with us.

It is impossible for us to have this fact real to us, that God really lives in us, without it having a tremendous influence on our manner of living. I know there are men and women who formally accept it in their creed and still live on as thoughtlessly as a dog in his kennel, a pig in his sty, or a fattening steer in his feeding corral, but no man or woman ever really grasps the great truth that God, the God who made the heavens and the earth, who holds the seas in his hands, who toucheth the hills and they smoke,—the God who made man, and when he sinned and went astray loved him enough to suffer and die for him,—that this God lives in his own body with him, without it lifting life out of the dirt up into something glorious and splendid.

May God give us all alert minds and hearts this morning while we ask ourselves the question: "What kind of life must I live when God comes to live in my body with me?"

I

First, when God comes to live with me I must be careful to keep my house clean. His name is Holy. I must not ask him to live in a dirty body. Since God created my body with so much skill and care that he is willing to make it his own, and come and live in it with me, I must seek to keep it clean and

wholesomely fed and in health. If God is to live with me, I must not be careless about my eating or drinking, I must seek to have my body at its best for usefulness. I must not let it get sluggish and lazy through indolence, or stiff and unusable through any fault in my care of it. If I realize that God is with me for dinner, I will not overeat, I will not be a gourmand. I will not so load down my stomach that my mind shall be dull and somnolent or my affections stupefied or drugged. I will not take either food or drink that will make my body an unpleasant home for the dear God who created it in such infinite love and gave to it such wonderful powers to minister not only to my own gladness, but to the joy of others.

II

If God is with me, then surely I will live in a reverent spirit toward him, ever watchful to do what I feel will be pleasing to him. It will surely not detract from our gladness, but add to it infinitely. You know Jesus expressly says that he comes not to give us a fearful, awful feeling, a cold stilted time. No, indeed! He comes to sup with us; and we are not to stand apart waiting on the table of our Lord only. Oh, no! We are to eat together. And the commonest fare will have a taste given it beyond the powers of any French chef, where God is at the table with us and the radiance of him, the essence of whose being is love, shines about us and dispels our darkness.

I think it is pitiful to hear people talk with long sad faces and funereal voices about submitting to the will of God, as though it were God's will for us to have a most terrible time, when God is always seeking to give us a better time than any world entertainer could dream of for us. Doctor Jowett tells us that on one occasion his congregation in his English church were singing the old hymn: "Thy Will Be Done." It is a sorrowful hymn, all the verses are full of sorrow and trouble. It was very depressing. Well, Mr. Fred Smith was there that day, and it got on his nerves and he went home and wrote another hymn, in the same metre and of the same mould, but he filled it with bright and delightful experiences. He took the thought up out of the "slough of despond," where the old hymn wallowed, and set it singing like a bird at mating time on a sunlit hill among budding trees and sunshine. He sang:

"O God, not only in distress,
In pain, and want, and weariness,
Thy tender Spirit stoops to bless,
Thy will is done.

"But oftener on the wings of peace,
And girt about with tenderness,
Thou comest, and all troubles cease,
Thy will is done.

"In all that nature hath supplied,
In flowers along the countryside,
In morning light, in eventide,
Thy will is done.

"In youthful days, when joys increase,
In light, in hope, in happiness,
In quiet times of trustful peace,
Thy will is done."

Let us never forget for a moment that the will of God is the very sweetest thing that can possibly happen to any one of us.

III

If God is with me in my body to-day, then love must be in complete control all day long. There will not be one time when I can forget and be cross or fretful. There must be no giving way to one uncharitable judgment or criticism of any other one of God's children. I must not give heed to any word of malignant gossip or speak an unnecessary word that might be a barb that will rankle in or poison another heart. I must not only speak the truth in his dear presence, but I must speak it in love. If I cannot speak it in love, I must be silent, when God is with me. Love, only love, must rule where he is. I must keep a watch on my tongue. I must set a sentinel not only at the door of my lips, but I must go farther back in the secret chambers of my thinking and put a strong hand on the lever that controls my temper. There must be no hot, angry, rasping word, not really meant to hurt, yet stabbing friend or wife or child. God is my guest to-day, and a violent explosion of temper like that, how it would grieve his heart of love!

No, to-day must be given to loving thought and conversation. In all I devise about my fellow men to-day I must live and think and act under the golden rule. Then indeed it shall be a good day because God lives with me. He will care more for some loving deed I plan or loving word I speak than

for any other thing I can do. How beautifully Sam
Walter Foss brings this out:

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“Who will write the best song, who will paint the best
picture?

Whose music is best?

He who understands man, knows the heart of him, loves
him

Above all the rest.

“Put stars in your song and put skies in your picture,
Put mountains and seas;
But one heart-throb that's tuned to the heart of a brother
Is greater than these.

“Man first is your song; man first, and then mountains,
And the woods and the seas;
And know, while you picture the star groups of midnight,
He is greater than these.

“What is art, what is art and the artist's achievement,
Its purpose and plan?
'Tis the message that's sent from the heart of the artist
To the heart of a man.”

And a message like that will give pleasure to the
loving soul of God.

Dr. Richard La Rue Swain, in his illuminating
book, “What and Where is God?” quotes a beauti-
fully told incident related by a good woman who was
earnestly seeking to live the most real Christian life.
It was her custom to retire each day to her own room
for devotion. On one occasion when her heart was
deeply depressed her prayers seemed all in vain. But
she continued to plead with God: “O Lord, reveal
thyself unto me.” And while she was thus praying
there came a rap at the door. It was the maid seek-
ing comfort; she had broken a choice piece of china.
But the woman was so annoyed that she drove the
tearful girl away harshly, saying: “You know you

are not to bother me at this hour." Then she went back to her prayer: "O Lord, reveal thyself to me." But the skies were as brass. But as she continued to pray, her little girl came sobbing for comfort, because she had broken her first doll. But she drove her away, saying: "My child, you must not bother mother now." She went back to her prayer, but as she prayed these words flashed across her mind as an electric sign will flash out at night on the street: "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me."

She sprang from her knees in shame and went out to the kitchen, where she found her maid sullen and angry, and by words of sympathy and comfort brought the light to her face, and went on to find her little daughter. From under the grape vine, where the child had cried herself to sleep, she picked her up and, when she had kissed her awake, told her she would get her another dolly nicer than the first, and, having comforted others, her own heart was filled with the conscious presence of God, and her soul was filled with inexpressible peace as the heavenly illumination again flashed across the mind: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these least, ye did it unto me."

IV

Because God is living with me, I will expect every hour of the day to be full of interest, and that surprises, happy and unexpected, and good enough to be true, will happen to-day. Life never gets to be a treadmill when God is in my body with me. Where God is there is always something happening.

God is in the springtime, and the Jack-in-the-pulpits spring up out of the mire on the edge of the swamps, the crocuses push their heads up ahead of the grass, sometimes through the lingering snow. God is in the summer time, and green fields turn to golden harvests. God is in the autumn, and apples redden in the sun and grow rich in the cooling night, and the maple tree bursts forth in a new robe of yellow or crimson. God is in the winter storm, and the world grows white under his touch. Something always happens where God is.

Sin is monotonous. It crawls on the ground like a snake. It has nothing new. You uncover old Pompeii or dig up ancient Babylon and you find the same old sins men wallow in now. If you want zest and adventure, and the joy of surprise, you must open your heart to the knocking hand of heaven and let God in to live with you. "What did the first frog say?" asks Mr. G. H. Chesterton, the English humourist, and answers it: "Lord, how you made me jump." God makes everything spring with life.

We are never so vitally alive with the gladness of adventure as when we are most conscious of the presence of God at home with us. There can be no dull days to men or women who are sure God is their guest. If we have constant fellowship with the God who made the sun, who said: "Let there be light, and there was light!" and also the God who "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" to save sinners, then we are sure that life for us will be full of radiance and life and love when God lives with us in our human temples.

So with great gladness let us open our hearts and lives to the full home-coming and life indwelling of God, who is love.

“Love rules the stars of light,
Love scatters all the night
With holy ray;
And as we sally forth,
Love fills the happy earth
With flowers of May.

“Love! Monarch of my heart,
O Christ, my King thou art,
Enthroned above—
Above the stars of night,
In everlasting light,
Eternal love!

“Responsive to thy love,
I lift my heart above,
O Love, to thee!
Thou art my Life of life,
Victor in all the strife
Eternally.”

But he is not only enthroned above, he is Lord over all in my heart. The constant source of life and light and love in my body and soul.

V

When God is in my body and holds fellowship with my mind and heart, I shall be awake to every opportunity to win other men and women to be friends of God, and there will be a certain tone of assurance about my words that will convince those who hear me that I do know God and what I tell them about him is true. Real personal experience of God in one's own heart and life is essential to give a tone of genuineness to our testimony for him.

There is a beautiful story of Reichel, the master musician, that tells how he was once conducting a rehearsal for the production of the Messiah. The great chorus had sung through to the point where the soprano takes up the refrain: "I know that my Redeemer liveth." The soloist's technique was perfect, she had faultless breathing, accurate note-placing, flawless enunciation. After the final note, all eyes were fixed on Reichel to catch his look of approval. Instead he silenced the orchestra, walked up to the singer with sorrowful eyes, and said: "My daughter, you do not really know your Redeemer liveth, do you?" "Why, yes," she answered, flushing, "I think I do." "Then sing it!" cried Reichel. "Tell it to me, so I and all who hear you will know that you know the joy and power of it." Then he motioned the orchestra to play it again. And this time she sang the truth as she knew it in her own heart, sang it as she experienced it in her own soul, sang it with no thought of applause, sang it so gloriously that all who heard forgot the craftsman's work and wept under the spell of the singer's soul. Again the old master approached her, not with sorrowful eyes, but with joyous tear-filled eyes, kissed her on the forehead, and said: "You do know, for you have told me so."

Oh, that God may live so really in my heart and in your hearts to-day and all the days that the radiance of our faces shall convince all who know us that God lives in us!



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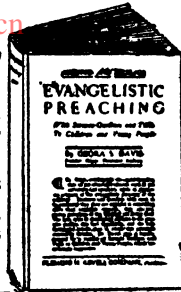
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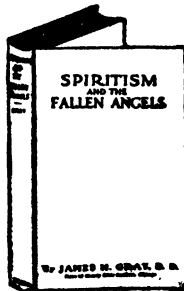
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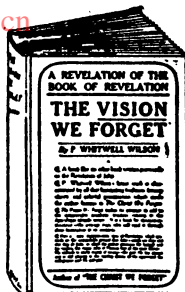
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