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MEN IN THE MAKING

by

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Author of
"The Gospel and Social Questions," Etc.

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MCMIX

I INSCRIBE THIS BOOK

TO

TWO VALUED FRIENDS

JOHN GLAISTER, M.D.

PROFESSOR OF FORENSIC MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

AND

CHARLES SCARTH, ESQ., J.P.

OF MORLEY, YORKS.

PREFACE

The addresses which make up this book are printed, almost exactly, as they were spoken from my pulpit in Glasgow. I have yielded to repeated requests that I would put them in a more permanent form than memory, or notes, can supply. There is always room for a book to young men; whether or not the book I now offer them is worth its room, is a matter about which I, possibly, am not the best judge. This I can say: There was a time in my life when I should have been helped, had I met through the spoken word, or printed page, some of the things I have tried to say as faithfully as I know how to say them, within the limits of taste and discretion. Whatever these addresses lack in thought, and in the handling of the subjects discussed, I have done my best to make them readable. In the case of the average young man of to-day, if a book does not interest him in the matter of style, any other merits it may possess will have a weakened chance of making themselves felt. If I have failed to meet this one condition of securing his attention—provided he give me a fair trial—I shall be disappointed and, to be candid, surprised. Should, however, his interest be tolerably well sustained through the ethical part of these addresses, say to the end of the chapter on "The Royal Law," I shall, perhaps, have no reason to complain. At the same time I would advise him to persevere with the rest, even at the cost of some effort.

There are one or two things which should be said by way of introduction to these addresses. When the manuscript was out of my hands and in those of the printer, I was informed that Archdeacon Wilberforce had, in one of his books, a sermon on much the same lines that are found in my chapter entitled "A Devil's Trinity." I have only to say that, so far as I know, I have never seen a line from the pen of Archdeacon Wilberforce. And in this connection I should like to quote a sentence or two from the Preface to my book on *The Gospel and Social Questions*. I remark there that, fortunately or otherwise for me, I have a tenacious memory which retains for long, not only a thought which arrests me, but the form in which it is expressed. Where I have made use of a quotation, or tried to paraphrase something I have read—and this applies to the following addresses—I have indicated the circumstances in the usual way.

The concluding chapter of this series is, in the main, a transcript of my booklet on *The Responsibility of God*, published by Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, of Edinburgh. I have to thank these gentlemen, and I do so heartily, for their permission to make this further use of it. Considerable changes are made in the reproduction; but I think this admission is due to any buyers the book may secure. I have also to mention my great indebtedness to Rev. J. F. Shepherd, M.A., of Manchester, for his help with the proofs, and for some valuable suggestions as to emendations of expression.

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CONTENTS

I

YOUTH AND AFTER

II

YOUTH'S STRATEGIC PLACES

III

THE WORSHIP OF LUCK

IV

A DEVIL'S TRINITY

V

TEMPTATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

VI

SELF-RESPECT AND COMPANIONSHIPS

VII

THE ROYAL LAW

VIII

'HE WAS DESPISED AND REJECTED'

IX

'WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?'

X

DOES GOD HAVE FAIR-PLAY?

YOUTH AND AFTER

"And Terah died in Haran."—Gen. xi. 32.

YOUTH AND AFTER

"And Terah died in Haran." This bit of prosaic information becomes suggestive by the emphasis of one word: "And Terah *died* in Haran." This was not his birthplace, but here he ended his days, and that for a reason over which it is worth our while to pause. "And Terah died in Haran." What of that? All people have died somewhere, who have lived and are dead.

When we first meet this man, he was a citizen of no mean city. Ur of the Chaldees was a great and representative centre in its day. Rising sheer from the midst of it, we are told, was an immense tower, or observatory, from the height of which men, reputed wise, watched the movements of the heavenly bodies; and especially the moon, for the moon was worshipped in Ur of the Chaldees as the great tutelary deity of this people. Here it was that Terah lived, at this time an old man, and "to trade," as the Scotch people would say, a maker of images. His craft was in things which symbolized some form of this lunar worship, and which people bought to put in their houses.

Terah had a son called Abram, who, as he came to years of thought, did not fall in very readily with this worship of the moon. He appears to have become very early in life one of an order of doubters to whom the world owes much; to have suspected, at least, that the moon was not, as the priests taught, a cause in itself, but the effect of a cause. What was that cause? What was the fashioning hand behind the effect? In other words, he had come upon the doubt which explains much of the faith and achievement of the reformers and path-finders of the world. Neither doubt nor belief has any virtue in itself; we must determine the moral quality by its expression in action. Had Abram merely begun and ended with his doubts about the moon, he would have died and been as soon forgotten as any other commonplace sceptic before or since his day. The trouble is not that men doubt, but that they are often content to do nothing else. It may be better that they should believe wrong things, than that they should cease to believe in anything.

Abram began, we imagine, to talk to his father about his misgivings, and notwithstanding the fact that Terah's trade was dependent on the popular religion, he seems to have yielded with something like enthusiasm to the greater personality of his son. Eventually they determined to leave Ur of the Chaldees and go, no matter how far, until they came to some place where they could worship in the new light which had come to them, or, as we should say, according to conscience.

It was a formidable undertaking, for they knew not their destination—if even, indeed, they knew their direction. Some one—I forget who—has traced their route through Larsa, where men worshipped the sun; through Erech, where they worshipped the planet Venus—the bright evening star; through Nipur, where they bowed the knee to Baal; through Borsippa, where they worshipped the planet Jupiter; and on and on until they came to Haran, where the people worshipped—the moon! It was not until they came to Haran, that they touched, as it were, their first footprints, and found the old religion.

And this was the finish for the poor old father Terah. Whatever the motives with which he had set out on this pilgrimage, whether of conviction more or less, or parental affection entirely, he was now weary. There had been little temptation to pause before on the score of a people's worship. That of the sun, of Venus, of Baal, of Jupiter, probably did not arouse in him even a passing interest. But when, worn out in body and mind, he suddenly came upon the old religion, his journeyings after another faith and form of worship were at an end. This powerful appeal to his past, with its resurrection of old memories, old prejudices, and the pathos of old associations, was too much for the old man. No second call came to him; or if it did, he had neither heart nor ear for it. It was Abram the younger man who withstood the temptations of Haran and with the faithful went on to a land they knew not of. It was the younger who had the staying power which, when acquired early, goes through life, and rejoins it in eternity sure as ever it came to it in time. Terah travelled some six hundred miles—a big journey in those days—to get away from the worship of the moon, and in the worship of the moon he ended his years. His evening and his morning were the same day: "And Terah died in Haran."

You see the thought underlying this bit of prosaic information. It simply means that the years close down the possibilities of a certain kind of moral exodus. It is in the days of your youth that you must make the "legs of iron," as Emerson calls them, for the journey which lies before you. If you wait until you get into years before you find right principles, and form good resolutions—well, even then it is better to make some start in the right direction. But why pile up the odds, that start you never will; or that you will not go far if you do? The enthusiasms of old men are as rare as they are short-lived, unless they are evolved out of earlier and worthy days.

There may be exceptions. If there are, I have never known one. The rule is practically a law, that old men, who are nothing more than old men, cannot make mighty resolves and carry them through. They may, for many reasons, start out from Ur of the Chaldees; but it is not often they get past Haran, if, indeed, they ever get so far. More likely will it end in the old defeat: "I will return into the house whence I came out," which is much the same, or, in some cases, is even worse, than if they had never left it. The old man Terah would get an interesting tour; although very probably people would hear from him more about it at the end than he had ever seen on the way. He would be a much-travelled man for those days, but he never found the new religion. It was the old religion that re-found him.

Understand me: I am far from saying that old age necessarily blocks the way to great attempts, or to conspicuous success in them. All history would cry out against such a statement. There is an old age we delight to honour, and which reverses the ordinary attitude to it in the general world. Instead of considering it a legitimate matter for lying about, and polite not to be aware of its presence, we make our boast in the virility which, in some men, accompanies their years until they quite shade out in a mellow maze of glory.

Take some of our statesmen. Were not the mighty men of the great nineteenth century aged men, if we count age only by shadows on the dial? At a time of life when most men are honoured with a natural right to senility, Mr. Gladstone was girding on his armour for one of the biggest conflicts ever waged in the arena of our Parliament. And years after, as the struggle still raged—to see him, almost blind and deaf, looking like so much vitalized parchment rather than a figure of flesh and blood, as night after night he stood up to the agility of a Chamberlain, and the subtlety of a Balfour—each perfected to a fine art—surely never gamer, grander sight ever challenged the imagination of poet, patriot, or historian. It was a testimony to all time of what can come out of the brain and soul of a man, when the body that houses them is written and re-written over with the hieroglyphics of age. It was a fitting termination to what may be, and ought to be, the great and sacred processes of life.

But Mr. Gladstone was great at the end, because all the way had been a preparation for it. This is the secret, if secret it be, which young men cannot know and master too soon. To end well, you must begin well; and you must fill in well the distance between the one and the other. Study carefully the triumph of old age in statesmanship, in science, and in affairs, and you will have to connect them with years of stern discipline and strenuous endeavour. In no case will you find strength where there has been no strain, or palm where there has been no dust. There are levels on which the truth, that "we reap what we sow," admits of no qualification. Omnipotence itself cannot make it possible for us to gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. To attempt after a given age, and on the strength of a chance impulse, to leave Ur of the Chaldees with its old habits and associations, its old moral settings, will carry us far as the impulse lasts, but that in all probability will be only as far as Haran. And as Terah died at Haran, so

shall we. It will be from moon to moon. Youth is the time to determine whether old age shall be a beautiful consummation, or a bitter regret. The threshold of manhood is the place to form resolutions that will have some chance of being kept, to cultivate the thoughts you would have ultimately become things. The serious danger is that, with the impression of a long future before you, you should merely drift in the present, and forget how inextricably the texture of to-day will be woven into the fabric of to-morrow.

I am quite aware that what I have so far said is more likely to hinder than help the purpose I have in saying it. You will not question that a clear nexus runs through our years, but my teaching about it, you tell me, is needlessly severe. If as the beginning is, so must the end be, what are we to say of a man's will? What are we to say about the power and working of divine grace? While there is life, does there ever come a time when it is no longer true to say that out of it can pass the old, or into it can come the new?

Surely to affirm that such a time can be is to give the lie to religion and experience. Many a young man is having what is called his "fling," who is yet quite sure in his own mind that when the time comes to accept the more serious responsibilities of life, he will change his habits and turn to ways that befit the new occasion. So we are told. And is it not true? Have we not known young men cover a considerable space of life with questionable, and even more than questionable courses, and yet settle down into exemplary domestic men and admirable citizens?

Yes, we have known them, and, whatever influences have brought about the change, let us be thankful for it. But what proportion do they bear to the legions who, once in Ur of the Chaldees, have neither thought nor desire for a better country? While, again, they may leave it from anything but worthy motives. Men may be compelled to change their habits without changing their natures. It is really to multiply words to no profit to debate the question. Your instinct tells you that it would be wickedness to encourage you to take your "fling" in Ur of the Chaldees on the risk that you can get away from it when prudence speaks the word. Settle it, then, as true for you, that out of to-day walks a to-morrow; and that what you shall do with to-morrow is practically determined by what you are doing to-day.

This counsel, or admonition, cannot be over-emphasized. I assume that I am talking to young men who do not intend to make a failure of life; then, I tell you again, that you must seize the one great chance you have, to make it a success.

Permit me now to apply very briefly what has been so far advanced, first, to your pleasures; and, secondly, to something more important to you than old age, and that is—middle life.

To everything, says the Preacher, there is a time and a season, and it must be that youth is the time for amusements and pleasures, which are not so much the privileges of youth as native to it. We are told that Darwin in his old age expressed regret that he had deprived himself of so many of the pleasures and resources of life by his concentration upon that study, the results of which have made his name so justly famous. He gave to get; but he lived to doubt his own right to pay the price. And no young man should give place, no not for a moment, to a doctrine of work which excludes his right to the joys and abandon of his years. There is danger, and very real danger, lest we should take for granted what the "Grad-grinds" tell us, that the only thing which matters is that we do work, and are not idle. Work for its own sake is not enough. It may turn men into machines—all clatter and monotony; or it may make them fussy nuisances. "A soulless activity," says Canon Ainger, "may save a man from vagrancy only by turning him into a thing; or it may keep him from idleness by making him an egotist." There is the man who, to use the common phrase, "sticks at it" with scarcely a competing thought or interest. He scorns ease, and lives laborious days. For what? I once heard it said, and I believe it was true, of a prosperous Yorkshireman, that the real pleasure he had in his money, for which he had toiled hard, was in a kind of mental calculation as to how many of his neighbours he could buy up.

"I do all things that I may honour the Father," said Jesus: and work which is not under this impulse, has in it no element of permanent satisfaction. In some way every work has to be brought into a conscious relation to God, or we only swell the crowd either of self-seekers, or of the men whose toil leaves no such impression upon their character as gives sign or evidence of a sane or worthy aim and end.

To give to work its essential dignity, and preserve it from mechanical routine we must bring motive into it—high and worthy purpose. There is no virtue necessarily in being always at work, but there is tremendous power in being able to work when we do work. Do not discount the old advice because it is commonplace: "work when you work, and play when you play." Master the distinction there is between having what is called your "fling," and having your really "good time." Get all the rational pleasure you can out of your young days. Let your religion be no dog Cerberus, snarling at the heels of innocent enjoyment. But never lose sight of the fact that unless you have a definite and worthy purpose, to attain

which you keep your good time subordinate, that good time will have the same relation to genuine pleasure that the throbbings of an ulcer have to the healthy action of the heart. And a very plain word is needed here. Our trouble to-day is not that young people will have their pleasures and amusements; it is that so many of them will have nothing else. One who knows his day has told us, that were it not for the sporting intelligence in the evening paper, not a few of our young men would forget how to read. It is a common experience to meet young men who have been decently educated, as things go, and yet they are ignorant as babies about the social and political questions which so vitally affect the welfare of the State. Decently educated, I say, as things go. But how far is that? "I have five clerks in my office," said a Bradford merchant lately, "who probably could tell me all I want to know and more, about a horse race, a cricket, or a football match; and not one of them could translate for me a foreign business letter. This is one principal reason," he added, "why Bradford is overrun with Germans, and why the Germans are getting hold of so much of our trade." On what is called the practical side of life, the first duty of a young man is to be efficient in whatever honest thing he is doing to earn his bread; and at the same time be preparing himself for whatever surprise or opportunity the future may have in store for him. A few hours in the week given seriously to the latter, will leave an ample margin of time for recreation and amusement; and who knows what he may need, until the need is there to test what he knows? To be great on sport, and a "stick" at one's business; to be an authority on amusements, and an ignoramus about almost everything else that is anything, is the surrender of manhood, and that in a day which has no need comparable with its need of capable men.

And such surrender has consequences that lie nearer than those which make themselves manifest in old age. Your next step is into middle life; and it is here where the question is finally decided whether it is, or is not, well for us that we are here at all. If a man has put little more than the rubbish of a selfish existence into his years he will, by the time he is old in them, be the victim of a callous insensibility which will carry him over into the stage beyond our human ken. An unworthy old age rarely feels much moral suffering; that but waits its awakening in the fires which shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

But when a man begins to sight the middle years, he learns to know himself as never before or after. This is the stage where increase of knowledge often means increase of sorrow. It is, in truth, the sorrow of finding out our limitations which, on their first acquaintance, often seem more appalling than they actually are. While youth may be saved by hope, by what is to be, middle life is often lost in the drab reality of what is. Every youth, who is not as indifferent to his possibilities as though he were nothing more than a lump of flesh, is about to become a numeral in the world. The tragedy enters when he knows himself to be what in a sense he must remain—a cipher, merely giving value to the men who do represent the numerals. When the youth, who used to talk about having the "ball at his feet," seems to have become very much the ball itself, to be kicked hither and thither as circumstances may determine, what then? Will he show that kicked he may be, but ball he is not? That circumstances may use him, but they shall not make him? The answer to this question will very much depend upon the stuff he put into his years, while as yet he knew not his limitations.

And even where middle life has won success in the things men covet, and for which they strive, it may be the success that is just deadly in its reaction of monotony. How often do we hear it said of a prosperous man, who in middle years is giving place to unworthy habits, or to ill-humour and chronic depression: "Would he had something to take him out of himself; some interest in anything, if it were but a harmless hobby." Think of a man being reduced to the need of a "hobby" to keep him out of moral mischief! What such a man, if man he can be called, really needs is some higher interest or a coffin. A hobby is well enough in its place, and much can be said for it, but when it becomes a man's only peradventure between himself and the devil, the world can probably spare him to its own advantage. The young have no little safety in their years, in the temporary buoyancy of the blood. It is when the former draw in, and the latter thins out, that dangerous things get their more obvious and, too often, fatal chance with men. It is when the first fires of passion have slowed down, and the ties of early friendship have relaxed, and the outlook appears to leave us with the problem, not how to live, but how to exist. I tremble at times when my experience suggests the dangers of those long stretches of emptiness, that so easily fill with the sinister and the unspeakable. I would pray, as a man in mortal terror, against the bottomless pit of a motiveless existence.

This is why I put emphasis upon the threshold of manhood; not that I believe it to be the most dangerous part of human life, but because I believe it is the time to safeguard the part that is. It is the time when habits can be cultivated, and resources acquired, which can make middle life as crowded with interest and good to enjoy as any of the earlier years, and infinitely more useful. But this is possible only when the middle years can command their own. Just as many of us "postpone life until after our funeral," so may we find ourselves in middle life discouraged and sullen because we cannot do what we would, only because we have not done what we ought. Men do not always go under because they cannot do things. They fail, not because they do not know what it is well to do, but because they do

not choose to attempt it. And why do they not choose? So far as this question affects middle life, it is largely because so few of us have the grit to face its difficulties, and attack them, when we have to do it with the serious handicap of self-made disadvantages. It is while you are young that you must lay up these stores of living material for the after years; and this is the significance of it all—you can only do it, or you can do it most effectually, when you are young. As touching certain advantages, "the day after to-morrow is the only day that never comes."

Have your good time, I say, and in it fear God, and fear nothing else. Keep a clean youth, and enjoy it to the full. But let the thought have its place as a goad when required, or as a steadying influence when the spirits would gallop too fast—the thought in the question: How will it be with me when my years are thirty-five or forty? That trying, and in so many cases, that fatal forty! When the youth of "rose-light and romance has faded into the light of common day, and the horizon of life has shrunk incalculably, and when the flagging spirit no longer answers to the spur of external things, but must find its motive and energy from within, or find them not at all." See to it while you may, that these forces, when needed, are there, or whatever else you may gain will be but a mocking remembrancer of the greater thing you have lost.

I have but another word to add. If there are, as I trust there are, middle-aged, or even old men, who would leave this Ur of the Chaldees, with all its unworthy past, and make for a better country, do not, I plead with you, be discouraged by anything I have said. Remember, I have been talking to the young; but God forbid that what I have said to them should seem to exclude hope for you. Make your start, though you should get no further than Haran. In a matter so supreme, it is better to have tried and failed, than never to have tried at all. But you need not fail in any degree that success is possible to you; and a success is possible to you in which are issues of everlasting life. Whatever the past, build up with courage and humility what you can do. God willing, and by His grace, you have time yet to prove how a consecrated determination can stretch out life's limits, and wondrously redeem no little of past failure.

YOUTH'S STRATEGIC PLACES

"I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong."—1 St. John ii. 14.

II

YOUTH'S STRATEGIC PLACES

"I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong." This description "young men" probably indicates that those to whom this part of St. John's letter was addressed were seriously engaged in the work of grounding their character, forming their habits, disciplining their inclinations, and confirming the election all must make between good and evil. He was not writing to those who had failed in the struggle, and had accepted their defeat. He was not writing to those who, beaten, knew that they did not intend to try again, and had thus written themselves out of the progressive forces of the human world. He was writing to those who had shown promise of better things, who were evidently pressing "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." I do not take it that the Apostle credits the young men to whom he wrote with having won a victory which is never finally decided on this side the grave, or with having attained to a moral altitude outside the reach of their years. When he says, "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong," he may be understood as referring to a strength consistent with, and yet peculiar to, their years—a strength the whole force of which was set in a right and healthy direction.

I want now to deal with the first part of this particular reference to the strength of young men. It would be away from my present purpose to weight this address with any attempt to say what the writer means when he tells them that, "The word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." I shall take the words of our text out of their context, and use them as a topic: "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong." Strong in what sense? How may we give the words a useful setting, as a remembrancer and a call to the young men of to-day?

In the first place, one great constituent of strength which is, or ought to be, the special possession of young life is—Hope. It is a common remark that as we grow older we become chary of convictions, and content ourselves with opinions. I should be sorry to believe it, but I am obliged to admit that age, even

with good people, changes to a large extent their centre of gravity from hope to faith.

It is suggestive to mark the order of these in St. Paul's famous procession—faith, hope, love. Love, he says, is the greatest. But he ranks hope before faith. Why? The passage in which this classification occurs is part of the distinctive literature of the Bible. Hence terms are not used carelessly. What is the difference between the two? "Hope," says David Hume, "is the real riches of human life; as fear is the real poverty."

Hope is that which is "at the bottom of the vase," as the ancients said, when "every other thing has gone out of it"—by which, as it has been suggested, they probably meant the human heart. "While hope trembles in expectation, faith is quiet in possession. Hope leaps out towards what will be; faith holds on to what is. Hope idealizes; faith realizes. Faith sees; hope foresees." [1] In other words, faith is apt to be content with what it has; hope ventures out to annex the wider provinces of the imagination. Faith is the prose of our religious life, hope is its poetry.

Unless you think about it, this will glance off your mind as a distinction without a difference. It is more than that, in the sense I am using the distinction. The loss of youth is not so much in the flight of years, as in the stealing away of our hopes. We may be justified by faith, but we are saved by hope, in theology and in life. There are twenty men who have faith in Christ for one man who has hope that His Spirit will ever incarnate itself in the life of the world. As we get older, most of us, I am afraid, are only too glad to keep our faith in great principles, without hoping much for them. The usual product of experience, and more especially experience gained in attempting some great reform, is, as Dr. Martineau remarks, "a certain caution and lowering of hope. When the spent enthusiast looks back upon the riches of his early hopes, and the poverty of his achievements, he is tempted to regret the magnitude of his aims, and advise a zeal too temperate to live through the frosts of inevitable disappointments."

Nothing more damps the ardour of young people with good stuff in them than this caution called wisdom, which so often creeps over us as we advance in years. Then it is so frequently the case that the precepts that most naturally flow from our lips are the negatives that stifle hope. "I can no longer afford convictions," said a man to me once, "I have come to limit myself to opinions; they can be held at less risk, and changed at less cost." And the disposition to regard both faith and hope in great things as subject to the same insecure and miserable tenure, is apt to grow with the growing years, until we come to sympathize with nothing which cannot take out a policy of assurance.

When we are young we may be susceptible to the new, only because it is new to us. We are ready to welcome in book or speech anything which charms us with a novelty we readily mistake for originality. After we have crossed a line it may be well that most of us should become a bit obstinate, a little stiff in our beliefs, lest we be blown about by every wind of doctrine.[2] At the same time, there is always the danger of becoming so rigid in our opinions and faith as to permit no horizon of hope. There are multitudes, in our churches and outside them, who, from want of the hope that saves, are dying from the top downwards.

And among them is an increasing proportion of young men. I hear them boast that they have no ideals, no hopes or aspirations that are above the earth earthy. For once, at any rate, they have a conviction, and it is, that man lives by bread alone, that his life is in the abundance of the things which he possesses. They are too "knowing" to be caught prisoners by ideas, too much "men of the world" to concern themselves about the "Utopias of religion." And they call it strength. Strength! It reminds one of the bitter remark of an historian on the march of the Roman legions: "They make a solitude, and call it peace." Strength! There are those in perdition at this moment who could tell them that what they call strength is the stupidity which adds to sin the increment of a huge blunder.

The young man who is strong is he who has the moral genius of his years. He does not deny that man lives by bread, but he does deny that man lives by bread alone. He has faith in the upward trend of the world; and he has the hope which can give to faith its adequate translation. He does not believe that there are two Almighty's in the world and that the devil is the greater; that sin shall breed sin for ever. He does not believe that the many must drudge to the limit of endurance and starve their higher nature as long as the world lasts, that the few may taste the sweets of culture and opulence. He does not believe that brute force shall for ever trample splendid intelligence underfoot, or that we must always stand on the margin of the dark river of wrong, in the unfathomed depths of which lie mysteries of terror—the despair of man, the sorrow of God. He has hope, that mighty dynamic—God's pledge to the young and unspoiled soul of a coming day when all that is false and unbelieving and wicked shall be cast into the consuming fire of divine holiness. He has faith in the great day of the Lord; and with the splendid optimism, the hope peculiar to his years, he cries: "I can, and I will, hasten the coming of my Lord." This is one great element of a young man's strength—hope in goodness, which goes so far to sustain the toil that can realize it. "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong."

Another factor in this strength is—Freedom. I hardly like the word, but I want to express by it immunity from certain responsibilities. Young men, up to a given period, are, as never again, free to sacrifice for what look like the forlorn hopes and apparently lost causes of humanity. "My six reasons for taking no risks," said a man in the American Civil War, "are a wife and five children." The reasons which in one man may resolve themselves into prudence, in the case of another man, differently circumstanced, may be nothing better than cowardice. Some years ago four men stood on the cage at the mouth of the shaft that penetrated to the workings of a Yorkshire coal-mine. There had been an explosion, and over forty men were imprisoned in what seemed likely to be their grave. The brave fellows on the cage knew they were taking their lives in their hands, but they stood calmly waiting the signal which should lower them into a possible death. While some detail of the machinery was being adjusted, a fine stalwart young man, some three-and-twenty years of age, forced his way through the crowd, and, seizing one of the rescue-party, literally flung him out of the cage to the pit-bank, and before the people could recover from their astonishment the men were being lowered through the pathway of the deep. Then they realized the meaning of the action. "He did it," said the man who had been so summarily handled, and his voice shook with emotion, "because I have a wife and bairns." The younger man was free from responsibility; he could better afford the risk.

There is a very real sense in which the same consideration tells in the warfare against sin and wrong. Some of us have less to risk in taking up the challenge which the powers of death and hell throw down to every true man. I write unto you, young men, because from your relationship to circumstances you are more free to accept risks.

We often hear men lament, and it may be sincerely, that they cannot afford to face the practical logic of their social, political, and religious beliefs. They shrink from the consequences of the good fight of faith. "Had I only myself to consider," says one, "how gladly would I sacrifice myself to attack this wrong or that iniquity." We need offer no opinion about the moral quality of such a position; enough to say that it is idle to ignore, or even to underrate, the force of it.

There are circumstances which are too strong for most men after they have put themselves in a given relation to circumstances.

Let me say a word here about circumstances, which will seem to contradict some things you will find in this book, if you have interest enough in it to read it through. A Glasgow minister some time ago made a stand against a considerable minority in his church over some matter that, as he said, involved a principle for which he should fight. It cost him many of his more wealthy members and adherents. "Not many of us," I said to him after, "have your courage to take so serious a risk." "Nor should I have had it," he answered, "had I not means that make me independent of my salary." It was a candid admission, and it reaches a long way. The strength of this man was in his position quite as much as in himself; and this is probably true of the great average of us. Circumstances may mean possibilities, more often than possibilities mean, or create, circumstances. What we can do is not only determined by what we bring into the world, but by what we find when we get here. Give, then, whatever courage is native to you its full purchase, by whatever favour you have in circumstances. It is here the young man has a great advantage; he is at an age when he can afford risks; let him use it before his years are mortgaged by other demands.

In public life he can base his efforts on the fact that there are tremendous evils that need resistance, that there are sacred causes which need assistance. He can afford, as never again, to close with the truth that there is a corporate life, a public virtue, a humanity of the body politic, with laws, responsibilities, and duties. In social life he can refuse to bow to an arbitrary and often empty fashion, or to immolate himself on the altar of mammon. He can be a living protest against the tyranny and lust of money, which are eating away the heart and destroying the soul of Christendom. He can stand for the sane and rational ideas and habits of life, without which society but personifies the unscrupulous and vulgar parvenu. And in religion he can accept the teaching and obey the commands of Christ without any overwhelming temptation to escape them behind some exegetical device or the plea of expediency. He can devote the rose bloom of his years to great principles, before he has had time to catch the infection of a commonplace belief in God. He can be a soldier of the Cross, and have himself placed in the forefront of the battle. He can go down into the pit to rescue the perishing, and take daring, awful risks for the Captain of his salvation and the race of which he forms a part. I have written unto you, young men, because you can afford to be strong.

A third, and for my present purpose a closing consideration in a young man's strength is—Audacity. I might call it courage, but it is that plus something else. It is courage carried to a point of daring that amounts to what I have called it, audacity, or, as the world would call it, foolhardiness. It is the merciful blindness which will not see difficulties; it is the glorious recklessness which will not be stopped by them. It is neither blindness nor recklessness; it is the baptism with which a young man must be baptized whose life is penalized for the Cross.

When a certain woman came into the presence of Jesus, and anointed Him with an ointment very precious, He answered the selfish criticism of some of the disciples with the unqualified remark that "long as His Gospel should be preached, this that she had done would be told for a memorial of her." To these disciples it is probable that the answer sounded like a benediction on waste. Jesus saw in the deed an abandon on the side of good, which on the side of evil makes evil so popular and, as it seems at times, almost universal. No one but a woman, unless it were a young man of true fibre, would have broken the vessel. Your middle-aged or old man would have cautiously taken out the stopper, that the costly unguent might have been expended economically, even on the Saviour. But this woman, in her uncalculating devotion, broke the vessel, that all its contents might issue forth in one consecrated gift of love. And it was what this broken vase symbolized that explains, or does something to explain, the unmeasured recognition of the action.

This is the moral temper of the young man whom St. John describes as strong. He does not fumble with the stopper in the vase-held forces of good. "If you believe," he cries, "what Christ lived believing and died believing, then break the vase, and do not keep as a private possession powers that are meant for the world. Do not keep as a personal luxury what is meant to be the family treasure." Such a young man is the living exegesis of Christ's revolutionary word: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

When he is warned not to expect too much from human nature, not to put too much trust in men, not to waste his strength in trying to remove mountains, not to jeopardize his chances on the threshold of manhood in trying to serve a world which, so far from thanking him, will very effectually resent his most disinterested efforts on its behalf; when he is reminded of some once aspirant who, young and confident as he, set out to reform the world, and now cynically affirms that the only wisdom is to let the world go to the devil in its own way—the young man who is strong says: "I acknowledge your facts, such as they are, but they are not facts for me. I, too, may be beaten in the right, but I would rather be that a thousand times over than succeed in the wrong. It is the temptation of the wicked one to conclude that, because history is said to have repeated itself hitherto, it must needs repeat itself for ever. I do not live on history; I live to make history. I believe that I was sent into the world new from the fashioning hand of the Creator, and that I have a new man's work to do. If my life of faith on the Son of God seem recklessness to you, wanting in proportion and eccentric, hold your opinions for all they are worth; but you shall not influence me by your abandoned hopes, you shall not even chill me with the east wind of your selfish ethics."

These are the young men we need to-day. Strong in hope, in position, and in daring; strong in the strength which they find in their years, and the strength they put into them.

And the Church has a right, society has a right, the nation has a right to look to young men for a greater and a better future. We who are older have a claim to look to you to confirm our faith in the survival of Christianity as the living force of the future. We need fresh leaders and men who incarnate new forces. We need, in fact, a certain style of man—we never needed him more. We want young men who are inspired by the truth that ideas are realities, and that scepticism about high principles is the most destructive form of ignorance.

We want young men of vision in business. Not cranks, not men who are responsible for their own failure in whatsoever their hand findeth to do; but men who see that the institution of business is God's present plan for distributing wealth, comfort, and intelligence. We want men in law who shall realize that the function of the legal profession is to build up justice and ensphere it in the will of the people. We want men in politics who have a clear conception of what the kingdom of God is, who recognize that the work of legislation and legislators is to think and speak and act for the interests of that kingdom—in the spirit and on the basis of Divine Fatherhood and human brotherhood. And in the pulpit we want men who have in them the vision of an Isaiah, a Paul, a John, and a Luther; men who shall make themselves felt as perennial gifts to their day—to tell us what we can do and what we ought to do, to lift up a voice for the eternally true, amid the clamour of self-interest and cries of craven fear.

"The world needs nothing more; the great English-speaking race has no need comparable with this need of men who can carry the spirit of vision, which is really the power of achievement, into every phase of our individual and collective life." [3]

Many of you represent great possibilities. You are, or you ought to be, at the flow-tide of an untainted enthusiasm. Your life should be a moral heat, which radiates in ever-enlarging circles of hope and service. But there are fires which, once they are allowed to slow down, can never be rekindled. There are large and generous beliefs at twenty-five years of age which, unless we cultivate and keep ourselves in the love of them, thin out like wasting magic, and no necromancy can ever conjure them back again. You young men have potencies of hope and enthusiasm which, if denied expression, strike inwardly and corrupt the source out of which they came.

And now, I repeat, is the time when you can give a true man's best hostages to the future. Now is the time to make the most of your strategic places in life. Almost before you know it, your power to determine many things will have merged into obligations that not one man in fifty is free to disregard. While it is called your day—before you are compassed behind and before with a commonplace that locks up so many lives like a numbing fate—signalize your record by some bit of heroism. If you would have posterity call you wise, seize your chance, while you have it, to be God's fool. Find the faith that can help you to play a man's part in the world; find in your faith the power which can grasp you by your weakness and sin, and lift you into strength and achievement. The Church needs you. For of all the institutions in Christendom the Church is stifled with safety, propriety, and conventional wisdom. It is the world which seems to monopolize the sparkle, the daring, and the picturesque. Respect us, your seniors in years, if we have done anything worthy in the past; but do not let it influence you unduly if now we seem to you perhaps timid and conservative. Time will bring most of you to the same place. But if—which God forbid—you do little after, do at least something now to redeem your career from impotence or from miserable aims that all end in selfishness. Find, I say again, on the threshold of your years, the power that can grasp you by your real requirement. Your first need is not wisdom, but grace; it is not education, but regeneration; it is not an ideal even, but a Saviour. Wisdom, education, and moral enthusiasms are but the machinery of our uplifting, the driving-power is Life. You know the Source of this power; you know the way to Him of Whom it is written: "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." Now is your accepted time—

"Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute:
What you can do, or dream you can, begin it;
Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.
Only engage, and then the mind grows heated;
Begin, and then the work will be completed."

[1] Robert Collyer.

[2] Dr. Maclaren.

[3] Dr. Lyman Abbot.

THE WORSHIP OF LUCK

"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."—Proverbs xvi. 33.

III

THE WORSHIP OF LUCK

It is reported that Prince Bismarck once and again attributed some of the most remarkable successes he had won in diplomacy to the circumstance that he had used truth as one of his greatest resources. Well aware of the fact that truth, for its own sake, was not the first thing that was expected from him, the use of truth gave him the tactical advantage of knowing how almost inevitably the opposite diplomacy would interpret it. He told the truth in order that it might be acted upon as something else. To adopt his own characteristic phrase, he "used the truth." If half the truth, or an untruth, would have served his purpose better, either most likely would have been adopted and as readily used.

"You call that witty," said a great statesman once, when some one related to him the saying of a well-known politician to the same effect—"you call that witty—I call it devilish." It is a just description. If the report is reliable that Bismarck, even in grim jest, spoke of truth in this sense as one of his great resources, the confession ought to cover his name with infamy. I do not commit myself to the statement that he ever said this; but whether he did or not, he is credited with acting upon what is a very general impression of how truth *may* be used. With vast masses of people it has become perilously like a conviction that strict integrity, while good and desirable as an ideal, is yet too much of a risk for the purpose of what is popularly known as practical life. The advice said to have been given by a Yorkshireman to his son who was entering on a business career would, I imagine, be widely acclaimed as common-sense: "Get money; get it honestly, if you can—but get it."

We preachers tell young men that whether or not they get on in business, they cannot afford not to go

up in character; and they are not in the world very long before they realize that its hopes in this admonition are but inverted fears, that the shake of its head is a scepticism which troubles not to articulate itself in words. A French cynic counsels us to always deal with a friend to-day on the possibility that he may be an enemy to-morrow. And there is a wide and deeply-rooted prejudice in favour of holding the imperatives of integrity on the same terms. Our very language in this direction betrays us. We talk about "smart" business men, "smart" professional men, and by the adjective we may mean men who, though "keen," are yet honourable in their methods; or we may mean men who are just as scrupulous as the law of the land or the arbitrary criterions of society oblige them to be. And young men feel the impress of this widely-shared sentiment in a way particularly vivid. They have, indeed, small chance to escape it. The world is profuse in its explanations of why men fail, but it has no mercy on the man who fails. It has its cheap jargon about inheritances and environment, and then kicks the man who is preached as their victim, into perdition. Our operations may not be nice, but young men soon find out, or they think they do, that it is success, not charity, which covers a multitude of sins. Hence the new commandment: "With all thy getting, get success"—

"Get place and wealth, if possible with grace,
If not, by any means get wealth and place."

The clamant need of our day is a clear teaching that shall appeal to us all, but especially to young men, as to what are the things that cannot be shaken, the things inseparable from a human life that is worth living. It is easy to part with our fine sense of integrity, but, once it is gone, it is the hardest thing in the world to recover. There are more senses than one in which we may speak of riches that are "beyond the dreams of avarice." The most valuable possession any man can have is the fight, either in his own conscience or to the world, to affirm himself to be an honest man. And the position I shall maintain in this address is, that there can be no sure success without honesty. Nor shall I speak about "absolute honesty" or the "strictest honesty," for I agree with those who say that there is but one degree of honesty. It is not a quality with grades and modulations. As well think, or try to think, of grades and modulations in the chastity of man and woman. Honesty, like chastity, is, or it is not.

We are often told that, from the lowest possible commercial standpoint, honesty is not only the best policy, it is the only policy. Whether or not it is the only policy depends upon the meaning we import into the term; of this I am sure—it is the best policy. But I shall not urge this doctrine upon you from the lower standpoint. That might do more than insult your intelligence; it would, I trust, offend against your moral self-respect. I assume that you all would hold it true with Archbishop Whately when he says, that though "honesty is the best policy, he is not an honest man who is honest for that reason." If, then, these latter remarks can carry the weight I want them to bear, what of those that have preceded them? How are we to explain a sentiment which is virtually a religion, having this one article for its creed: that honesty, while good as an ideal, cannot be invariably relied upon for practical concerns? How is it that so many men have to discover, when they are no longer young, that the thing which has passed from them and which they cannot recall is, after all, the one supreme value they possessed? There are many explanations of this tragedy, for tragedy it is, and not the least of them is, that so many young men have but one conception, one definition of success. These are men, and one is tempted to think at times that they are not so much a class as a people, who want material success and seek nothing else. They have no other standard by which to judge the thing behind the word. Not what we are, but what we have, if the latter is substantial and declarative, is the only idea which multitudes have of success. In a clever character-study of a well-known public man we are told that, "As far as he has a philosophy at all, it is this, that merit rides in a motor-car." It is a definition which fosters the impression that success can be secured the more quickly and surely by methods that are bound up with smartness, chance, or luck.

It is with the last of these I would come into somewhat close quarters. And let me admit, in the first place, that there is such a thing as luck, using the word in its common acceptance. In what is called a scientific treatment of the subject in hand I ought to say, as exactly as I can, what I myself understand by luck. It will leave abundance of room for criticism if I venture to define it—as some advantage that comes to a man independent of his moral worth, his native gifts, or of any equivalent he has rendered for it of industry and self-denial. That some people have such an advantage it would be useless to deny. Two youths, let us say, enter a business house about the same age, and at the same time. They are, as near as can be, equally matched in equipment to command success. In this respect there is little to choose between them. One begins entirely on his merits; he has no influence behind him to open doors before him as by some invisible hand. The other has influence; no matter what it is, or how it works, he has it, and it operates distinctly in his favour. A few years after, and the latter has far out distanced the former in position, salary, and outlook. And the reason is not the capacity of either; it is the arbitrary advantage, the piece of luck that one has had over the other from the start. "He has not much ability," I heard it remarked lately of a young fellow who, just having been licensed to preach, had also received a "call" to an influential church, and the remark elicited the significant answer: "No, but whether he has

ability or not, his father has position and influence." This hints to us why certain men, if they do not fill, yet hold the positions they do. Take some men in high places, say in the political world. Recall a few names, if you can, of men who have held great positions in the State within the last quarter of a century, and does any sane person contend that in ability they stand out sheer above ten thousand good average men who crowd about them? I think it was Sydney Smith who said it was about equal to being canonized to marry into certain families. And a man would need to be a very emphasized fool quite to spoil the advantages of a long line of position, privilege, and family ascendancy.

Take, again, a more typical case of what I mean by luck. It came under my own notice. A cloth-worker in Yorkshire, by carelessness or inadvertence, raises the nap of a given fabric a shade above the regulation height. He is dismissed, and the cloth is laid aside as spoiled. A French buyer comes in the place, and casting his eyes on it, instantly sees for it a future. That touch of heightened nap has done it. The manufacturer has his wits about him, and what a week before was a mistake is now a new and valuable design which, in a couple of years, makes him what some of us would regard as a substantial fortune. We are usually told that to admit the operation of this questionable factor in human affairs, called chance or luck, is inconsistent with a belief in the moral government of God, or, as we may prefer to call it, the reign of law. If this is so, how are we to read those old words that "chance happeneth to them all"? If we seriously contend that everything which happens in our human life is in accord with God's plans in us, and working through us, then I see not how we can refuse to hold such fore-ordination responsible for the grotesque, the irrational, the sinister, and the wicked in our actions. I could understand the objection were it limited to Nature, because that is a sphere in which it is the uses of things, and the uses precisely, which are the most obvious, and these compose, when taken together, a mighty reciprocal whole in which part answers to part, constituting an all-comprehensive and wondrous whole. There is no place in Nature for chance. Every particle of air is governed by laws of as great precision as the laws of the heavenly bodies. It keeps its appointed order, it serves its appointed ends. Nature never breaks out of its place. It has no such power—but human nature has. Man has enough free-will to make him responsible for what he does with it, and in the exercise of this mighty prerogative enters the element of chance or luck. We cannot establish free-will by rules of logic, we cannot gainsay it on the score of conviction. It helps us to interpret the great in human life and history, and what is sometimes even more to the purpose, it helps us to account for the little. As it has been well said: "It would save us much mental perplexity if we could assert without qualification that all is law, that everything happens as God ordains."

But God cannot make two mountains without a valley between; and He cannot give us free-will and withhold from us at the same time the freedom to make mistakes. The contradictions in human life do not yield to verbal simplicities, and, whether we like it or not, we have to acknowledge that this something called luck is a force in human events.

But let me say, in the second place, that there is nothing more easy than to exaggerate its extent and importance. Out of a hundred happenings that are generally attributed to luck, if we could find the genesis of each one and trace its evolution or unfolding, we should probably not find more than one that could be associated with the things that happen by chance. The case of a man who achieved what is called a "lucky fluke" out of a piece of spoiled cloth is perhaps the only instance of its kind on record in the history of cloth manufacture. I have admitted that there are cases where advantage falls to a man which cannot be explained by anything he deserves, or has done to win it. And the advantage, such as it is, often works untold hurt as an example. Just as the winnings of one gambler may tempt a hundred others to their undoing, so a single case of coveted luck is apt to encourage young men to transfer their hopes of success in many directions, from law to luck. You see here and there a man who accumulates a large fortune from beginnings that look as much like pure chance as was that piece of spoiled cloth. You see men close to you put into positions that have been secured, not by training or ability to fill them, but by the accident of influence, or, as you may think, by even more reprehensible methods; and your first impulse is to say that it is not merit but luck that holds the better cards. But let the impulse pass and bring quiet thought and good practical sense to this problem of success in men, and you will find that the instances are comparatively few where it is not about as wise to speak of it as luck as it would be so to characterize the law of cause and consequence. When you are discussing a man's success or his position, do not stop at the mere fact that he has it—that is obvious enough; try to know how he got it, and you may be surprised to find how little, after all, luck has had to do with it. In one of the most quoted of our Lord's parables we are told that "they that were ready went in to the marriage feast." And this right of entry was not a matter of luck. They went in because they were ready, and the others were left out because they had made no effort to be ready. And so if you would understand a man's success, know what he was doing while the opportunity tarried, while his chance seemed to wait, while his "psychological moment" appeared to linger.

Our fate or our fortune is not in great occasions; it is in our readiness to seize the opportunities that make great occasions. We frequently hear young men complain that they have not had a chance. Are

they always sure of that? How often is it that their chance has been and gone, without their knowing it? "There are scores of young fellows in our place," said a large employer of labour lately, "who would be in vastly better positions than they are, had they worked as hard to be ready for the better positions as they are anxious to have them." There are multitudes of young men who appear to have lost sight of the distinction there may be between wishing for an opportunity and being ready to use the opportunity when it presents itself. As Sir Frederick Treves once said to the students at the Aberdeen University: "The man who is content to wait for a stroke of good fortune will probably wait until he has a stroke of paralysis." He who waits for good fortune without doing his part to make it possible, opens up the way for lazy habits and morbid conclusions about the arrangements of life. Luck in any serious business or profession is not so much the coming of opportunity as readiness to make the most of the opportunity when it comes. A man was speaking to me not long ago about one of the leading commercial men in this city. "What is there in him or about him to explain his success?" asked the man, and he answered his own question with the round assertion that "it was all luck." It happened that I had some reliable information about the man under discussion, and I want you to have it. Thirty years ago he was working from ten to twelve hours in the day as just an ordinary workman. At the close of each day's toil he had his programme of studies, which, in its range and character of the subjects attacked, would not have disgraced a good student at any university. Eventually his attention to business and his marked attainments won for him the recognition of his employers, which meant in after years a place which was ultimately a leading place, as one of them. Yet this was the man who was said to have won his success by a lucky turn of the wheel. I admit his advantages. I grant you that he showed himself to have brains and will above the average endowment of these great possessions. But let me ask you to mark this: he might have left his gifts unused, as so many of us do. It is probably not gifts, in eight cases out of every ten, that determine position, but our use of them. We have infinitely more in us than our will and determination ever bring out. How few of us know the rich things God has put in our nature; and we verily live and die in ignorance of rare deposits of wealth because we do not work the inward mines. This young man was wiser. He did not wait for his opportunity to turn up, he turned up the opportunity. Because he neither slumbered nor slept while it tarried, he was prepared to make the most of it when it presented itself. And I am persuaded that something like this is the true explanation of practically the whole of what thoughtless people set down to luck. What we call fore-ordination is verily the present which we have made out of the past. We first make habits, and then habits make us. In our to-day walks our to-morrow, and in a very solemn sense there is no "dead past." As it has been well said, "the tree that falls so disastrously is no accident; it had the fall determined a century ago in some injury it received as a sapling." [1]

There is much less luck in human affairs than is popularly supposed; and, if there were more than there is, it would, in the next place, be moral insanity to put our trust in it. "Nothing walks with aimless feet." Our life is no lottery. We may make foolish experiments with it, but we do so at our own risk. It is no plaything of chance, it is a stern responsibility which is determined by law that brooks no interference and excuses no indifference. The proverb tells us that "our lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing is of the Lord." And just as the dark forces that sweep through our life are not necessarily hostile forces but form part of the order of the world, so things that we regard as haphazard, merely cast into the lap of chance, may be divine agents working out a marvellous equality of opportunity throughout our human life. I affirm it without a shadow of qualification, that chance has no place whatever in the responsible formation of character, and the formation of character is the decision of destiny. Beware, then, lest in playing with this *ignis fatuus* of chance you are trifling with law, for law will not spare you.

You young men cannot make up your mind too soon that there can be no sure success apart from uprightness and integrity. You cannot too early in this life settle it as an immovable truth for you, that unswerving rectitude is not only a great and desirable ideal, it is the only practical course you can afford to follow. Goodness, I say again, is the only success, and I shall not try to save this statement by fencing the word "success" with any arbitrary definition of my own. I just mean by it what any man means by it who has a healthy moral perception of things. Success, like honesty, has but one degree, and as nothing is worthy to be called life which cannot be affirmed of God, so nothing can be called success which is not the resultant of right-doing. Every advantage which you would try to scheme or sneak or coerce in face of the protest of conscience, has in it its own curse and its certain defeat. Understand me: right-doing will not necessarily help you to make a fortune or achieve some great position. You may not have the special gifts to do either. Such gifts are something not ourselves which we might easily have been without. Neither religion nor morality promises to bestow these gifts, any more than religion or morality claims to regulate the colour of our hair or the inches of our stature. But when said, there is yet a wonderful power in right-doing. The man who does the right because he believes in it and loves it, whether it is called successful or not, is always bringing out far more than he thought was in him. The faithful doing of daily duty continually reveals opportunities which, used with readiness and a good conscience, act upon life with a perpetual and gracious benediction.

Then what about the end? It may seem a far-off cry to talk to you young men about that. But the end will come, and you will need nothing then which you do not need all the way. The end will only emphasize the need—the need of a good conscience. The day is coming when all tainted success will mock, as only a bad record can mock, when there is but time left to regret, and none to retrieve the past. "I am getting old," writes one, "and I am wealthy; but I would part with every shilling I possess, and take my risk for bread, to be at peace with my own conscience." Trample under your feet the immoral side of the maxim that nothing succeeds like success. Success is not always in hitting the things at which you aim; it is the good conscience that you are aiming only at right things. Let your success be goodness, and goodness will be your success. Leave luck to fools, and act as though it had no existence. Believe that character or manhood, without which nothing great is possible, is the content of your endowment put out to full advantage through grace and will. Believe that every man, worthy to be called a man, has in him the promise of the gradual supremacy of character over the accidents and happenings of circumstances. Be, then, your own luck. Link your life in Christ to God, and stand up to all the world and say—

"Perish policy and cunning,
Perish all that fears the light.
Whether losing, whether winning,
Trust in God and do the right."

[1] Rev. Thomas Templeton, M.A.

A DEVIL'S TRINITY

"Know ye not that ye are a temple of God?"—I Corinthians iii. 16.

IV

A DEVIL'S TRINITY

There are expressions taken from the Bible which, by length of popular usage, become, as it were, independent either of their setting, or of methods of exposition. This usage has its length of days, not always in the sense of the expression so much as in its sound. Those of you who have been accustomed to listen to Christian preaching will have often heard appeals to your manhood, to self-mastery, to kingship over your habitudes, rounded off with this question: "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God?"

In this way it has passed into what I have called popular usage. And whatever it may be as exegesis, it is good admonition. If we may speak of a house made with hands as a dwelling-place of the Most High, we may also claim an equal sacredness for this mortal temple which is the crowning achievement of His creative power. For myself, I have never had the least sympathy with a teaching that almost amounts to a vilification of the body, and which is at the basis of much that passes for religion, both Christian and pagan. Our body is a gift worthy of the Giver. We can do much to mar it in ourselves, and through us for others. Hitherto the one perennial idolatry of the world has been destruction; and if one thing has escaped this insanity less than another, it is the human body. But for all that, we do not deny that a picture may be a work of genius, because any madman could destroy it in less time than it takes to suggest the possibility.

Much is said and written about the duality that is in us; and many of us are Manichean without knowing technically what the term means. The two parts in the same self are represented as East and West, and "never the twain shall meet." We must understand, however, what we mean by this bisection of man. Between the carnal and the spiritual there must be no compromise and there can be no peace. But carnality is not in the body, it is in the principle that uses the body as its medium and expression. We say much about "sins of the flesh"; as a matter of fact there is no such thing. Sin is, before it is wrought out through the flesh. It is not the body that commits adultery or gets drunk, it is the creature which owns it. The same Apostle who tells us that the "flesh lusteth against the Spirit," also speaks about the "redemption of the body"; which means that as the latter can be degraded, so can it be honoured by him who uses it. Hence the people who weaken the body to strengthen the soul begin at the wrong end. Let them guard the life, and the strength of the body will become an agent of pleasure and service, not of sorrow and defeat. It is surely better to ride a fine steed well under control, than

find our safety only because we mount a hack. I have heard young men complain bitterly about the disproportion between their bodily passions and their will-power. They overlook two things—first, that will can be acquired, that an act of will means more will; and, secondly, that passion in itself can be, and is intended to be, a great and precious possession. The absence of passion may mean an anaemia, which virtually cuts us off from some of the finest possibilities of human life. Our bodies are part, and the highest part, of a cosmic order which is "sinful only when it refuses to be spiritualized." If we regard the body as an exquisite instrument provided by our Maker for the translation of the things of the Spirit, then so long as the Spirit working by grace is the master, we can hardly attach too much importance to the body as a temple of God.

"If any man defile this temple," says the Apostle, "him shall God destroy." The ways in which it can be defiled are endless, as some of them are fatal. For my present purpose there are three which I want to urge upon your serious consideration. I must try to compress what I have to say about them into one address, because the first I shall mention is something about which no clean-minded person would choose to write or talk without having, what he conceives to be, the gravest reasons for so doing. In this case, the fewer the words the more effective they may be, if they arrest attention, arouse thought, and make some headway with the conscience.

There are three ways, I repeat, in which we may defile this temple, and the first I will venture to speak about is the sin of Impurity. And when I say I will venture to mention it, I quite realize that I am taking some risk. He who would speak with authority and with wisdom on this subject to a mixed audience, should possess a poet's gifts in the art of putting things. But some one must speak, and to whom does the duty fall, if not upon him whose calling it is to stand between the quick and the dead? If the good work of the world must wait to be done by perfect men, the lease of evil has a long while to run. It is, in truth, a sad reflection which should stir up strong protest in every earnest soul, that this sin—so deadly in its nature—should be practically safe so far as the pulpit is concerned. In many cases this is a result of sensitive timidity, or it may be an affectation of refinement which is but veneered coarseness. If it be the first, it should be respected but not yielded to; if it be the second, it should receive no indulgence from us. The great Hebrew prophets, and the Supreme Teacher Himself, did not surrender this stronghold of the soul to the evil one from a shrinking which, if a man cannot conquer, he is no preacher, and still less to a mental indolence that will not seek out acceptable words through which to convey a warning. I speak as unto wise men, and submit it to your judgment whether the preacher who has to any extent the ear of young men can afford this eternal silence concerning a subject that so vitally affects character, society, and the race to which we belong.

There are many reasons why this sin of impurity seems to be on the increase. The old order of town and country is fast breaking up, and practically the whole migration and emigration is to the former. Britain is fast becoming a series of congested centres of population. One consequence is the increasing number of women and girls who find it terribly hard to survive in the pitiless struggle to exist. And we know what this means in so many cases. It is no secret how the scanty earnings of a growing body of girls are eked out. This is not a matter on which to dwell, and while it is serious enough to compel some very searching thoughts, I refer to it in order to say how much I want to see the day when every calling, profession, and trade in which a woman can earn her bread and efficiently make her way, shall be open to her equally with a man. The education of our girls should be the care of parents and the State, every whit as much as the education of our lads. There are positions in which I should not care to see women, and hence I would work all the harder to bring about the economic conditions in which sex, and the means of livelihood, can have some fitting correspondence. This I say, that he who would exclude a woman because of her sex from any place where she can turn to honest account her capacities and industry, is the enemy of women. To the extent you restrict what is called the sphere of a woman who is dependent upon her own toil, you set up temptations which every man worthy the name of man should sacrifice much to make impossible.

There is also the growing reluctance of young men, more especially in the upper and middle classes, to undertake the responsibilities of married life; so rarely now are they content to creep before they walk. They must begin where their parents leave off in position, appearances, and comforts. This often means to defer marriage until these can be secured; but it does not always mean that these men keep a clean record in the meanwhile. A sinister consideration which has much to answer for in the existence of a class of women which, in turn, takes a terrible revenge on its makers! Nor are parents always as free from blame as they might be. I have known fathers and mothers who had the reputation of being good men and women, sternly forbid their daughters to engage themselves to young men who had most things to recommend them, except too much means; and I have known them encourage the advances of men whose past and present should have excluded them from any decent home—only because these men had money.

My purpose, however, in these remarks is not to discuss the sources or temptations to impurity, so much as to say a faithful word to young men about the thing itself. Permit me to counsel you to face the

truth and not to fear it, that past a given age in your life and up to another the cravings of our lower nature are tremendously strong. If you would fight the good fight for a clean manhood, make no mistake about the task that lies before you. These cravings implanted in a healthy man or woman are in themselves beautiful and right. All turns upon the control of them. If Nature could have let us off more easily the conflict would have been less searching; but nothing weaker would have secured the perpetuation of the race, and all that it involves in struggle, anxiety, and self-sacrifice.

A young man came to me not long ago to ask for my signature to an application he was making for a certain position. He told me in a few words about the years he had given to the fitting of himself for the place he was seeking, and how anxious he was to get it, because, as he said, he wanted to be married and to make a home for himself. As he talked to me there was something so clean that looked out of the eyes of him, while at the same time he gave me the impression of so modest a self-efficiency, that my entire sympathy and heartiest good wishes were won for him. I mention this incident because I want to hint much that I cannot put into words. As you sight the years of responsibility you will, if you are wise, prepare yourselves by industry, thought, and control, with a view to married life; for marriage, among other things, is the natural, the honourable, and the divine provision for the legitimate cravings of our nature. Whenever I hear a man speak sneeringly of marriage, if I have to conclude that he says what he feels, I may not think him a fool, but I strongly suspect that he is a blackguard. "He who attacks marriage; he who by word or deed sets himself to undermine this foundation of our moral society, must settle the matter with me, and if I do not bring him to reason, then I have nothing more to do with him." So wrote Goethe, and I echo his words in your hearing.

Keep marriage before you as a sacred goal, and as an incentive to put out the best there is in you in order to reach it. Do more than this; resolve that when you enter this covenant you will carry into it as clean a conscience about the past as you expect her to have who gives her happiness into your keeping. One sex can substantiate no claim to licence, or even indulgence in this matter, that can be morally denied to the other. There are events in life that are worth more than it costs to meet them well; marriage is pre-eminently one of them, and you can, if you elect to do so, enter it unspotted men.

Get control of your imagination. Be lord over your thoughts. You cannot, as an old Puritan writer says, "prevent the birds from flying over your head, but you can prevent them making their nests in your hair." Which means that while you may not be able to prevent given thoughts from darting into the mind, you can forbid their finding a home there. The danger is not in what comes, but in what is permitted to stay. You have some sense of the training that is needed in certain parts of your nature; and if you join that training to the help of God, you can not only cast evil cravings out of your life, you can do something that is harder still—you can keep them out. Be careful about companionships. Have no friendship with him who boasts of his "amours," the "affairs of the heart," that he can sustain at the same time. Shun, as you would a pestilence, the man of unclean speech. Let it be a truth with you which must not be questioned, that the truest indication of nobility of character is reverence for womanhood. By the sweet and holy thoughts of your mother, by your sacred love and wishes for your sister, I would remind you of words in which the "wisdom of many buried ages lingers": "Keep innocence, keep purity, and do the thing which is right, so shalt thou be brought at the last to thine end in peace." May you watch and pray, that you yield not to temptation. May you watch and pray, that you enter not eternity with that stain upon the soul which no tears of your own can ever wash away, or time blot out of the memory.

Another way in which we may defile this temple of the body is by the habit of Betting. We usually speak of "betting and gambling," but the latter term includes and covers transactions so wide in extent, and complex in their nature, as to make it impossible for me in this address to do more than refer to them.

It must be understood in the few remarks I purpose to offer on this subject, that I confine them to what I have called the habit of betting. I shall not affirm that betting is necessarily a sin, but I do state it as my conviction that its tendency and results are practically always in that direction. William Cobbett—than whom no man has ever written more sensibly to young men—says that "betting is always criminal in itself, or in what it leads to. The root of it is covetousness, a desire to take from others something for which you have given, and intend to give, no equivalent." These statements may be debated, but they appeal to me as essentially sound. A young man says: "If I choose to risk a sum of money which I can afford to lose over a bet with some one else who can afford to do the same, what has talk about equivalent got to do with it? What, or where, is the wrong in such a transaction?" This is a test question, and I am disposed to answer it by saying that I do not think any young man who takes himself seriously will urge it; and when put on a lower plane, the closer you examine it the more rotten it is found to be. Is it wrong to cultivate and indulge a habit that inevitably leads to bad results? And that is what betting does, apologize for it as you may. Putting aside for the moment any considerations about the money you can afford to lose, you cannot afford, either in your own or in the interests of the community of which you are a part, to take the moral risks that are involved in betting. It is to insult

our intelligence to deny that, comprehensively speaking, the basis of betting is cupidity, and cupidity of a particularly dangerous kind. There may be exceptions, but they are scarcely worth mentioning; whatever may be the inception of the habit of betting, it almost inevitably roots itself as greed; and it is greed that consumes character like a furnace. It is the black altar on which everything worth being must suffer immolation.

I was told some time ago of a place of worship which had a billiard-table on its premises. Provided at the suggestion of the minister with the best of intentions, it was soon turned into a means of betting. The managers were obliged to take the matter into serious consideration, and out of a regard to the susceptibilities of the young men who used the table, they decided not to prohibit stakes upon a game, but to insist that all winnings should be handed over to the Hospital Fund. The room was soon comparatively deserted. The interest was not billiards, so much as billiards plus the money won or lost in betting on billiards.

When I am told that to stake a trifle upon a game is not for the sake of winning money, so much as to give the due seasoning of excitement to amusement, I have to remark that in a few cases this may be so, but it is not the explanation of betting. Almost entirely it comes to mean the desire to win money for which we have given, and intend to give, no just equivalent. That almost deserted room on the church premises tells the truth about the whole squalid business. Almost any kind of amusement, not accompanied with betting, is, to an increasing number of people, as insipid as water is to the palate of a brandy-drinker. In the case of young men the habit does two things: it gives rise to false and ruinous impressions, and it murders the soul. As touching the former, it tempts a young man to think he can get a living, and a flourishing one, without working for it—a greatly coveted science in these days. It seems so much easier to put money in the pocket this way, than by honest toil with head or hands, or both. The notorious fact that betting strikes at the root-principle of worthy and strenuous labour, is not the least of the vicious features of this many-sided evil.

It also creates the most hopeless form of selfishness, and it grows by what it feeds on. The avarice of betting destroys the best part of us. As I have said, it kills the soul. Who, indeed, can call that which is left in the confirmed gambler, a soul! It is rather, as one well describes it, "a shrunken, useless organ, a noble capacity sentenced to death by an ignoble passion, which droops as a withered hand by the side, and cumber Nature like a rotten branch."

To my thinking, it is a waste of time to ask, and it is an abuse of time to discuss the question, wherein the wrong or evil of betting consists. The practice has evil consequences, and evil consequences only; and they necessarily become the more evil the more widely it is diffused throughout society. What other proof of wrong does a right-minded person ask? My estimate of the effects of betting is such that I would neither employ nor trust any man who is addicted to it.

I hope and believe that I am talking to young men who have never touched this dangerous thing. Continue to be wise. Others, it may be, have ventured a little way. My message to you is, turn away from it, another step may make retreat impossible. As you value the things that rightly enter into life for attainment and possession—honest enterprise, true success, worthy ambition, upright character, peace of mind, and hopefulness of outlook—bind these words about your neck, write them upon the table of your heart: "He that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool."

And once more, we may defile the temple of the body by Drunkenness. Or if this term, and the state it connotes, be unduly aggressive, let me say by an intemperate use of strong drink.

There are those who tell us that any use which passes it through the lips is intemperate. If I offer a word of criticism on this position, it is because I want the assent of your reason in the few things I have to say about this part of the subject before us. The first condition of permanent reform is, that it shall be founded on truth. The peculiar temptation, it has been said, of the ardent reformer is to exaggerate. Intense feeling is apt to build upon a half-truth—the unsafest of all foundations. It is one thing to insist upon the evils that are inseparable from an intemperate indulgence in strong drink, it is quite another thing to assert that it is evil, and evil only, to touch it at all. The latter order of polemic is always liable to bring about a reaction which is terribly prejudicial to the good we desire to accomplish.

I have no warrant to question a man's loyalty to the forward movements of our time, who conscientiously for the sake of health, as he thinks, or social arrangements, cannot recognize it as his duty to forswear drink altogether. When a man claims his liberty to be the arbiter of his habits in his home, or in society, for me to arrogate the right to censure him may be impertinence; and, so far as I am concerned, to read him out of Christian consistency may be to make myself, as St. James puts it, a judge of evil thoughts. When a man has reached fifty years of age, and has worked hard and lived sparingly, if he should consider it advisable to relax somewhat the severities of earlier years, I have nothing to say to him unless it be to remind him of the example he owes to others, and of the need

there always is to keep before us the warning: "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

I think it right to put this side of the question in its just evidence, and having done so I willingly dismiss it with the remark that I am not talking to middle-aged nor to old men. My appeal is to young men, and I say to you without qualification, without a suspicion of mental reservation, you do not need strong drink. There are conceivable circumstances where it may be medically prescribed, but such prescription from competent men has well-nigh reached the vanishing-point. Near as any statement can get to its ultimate, I affirm that you never have need of this drink. Keep it, then, out of your blood in your threshold years, and you will have less or no craving for it at all in those that are travelling your way. If you should imagine that you inherit the craving, there is, at any rate, one rampart which, if held, the craving cannot force—that is, total abstinence from the thing craved. Range yourselves with the abstainers, and be proud of your legion. It will be better for you in every way, whether it be in physical health, mental efficiency, moral force, or spiritual attainment. Settle it with yourselves, that there are no conditions in your life which can be called normal, and few that are abnormal, where you need the drink, and that to trifle with a thing so unnecessary, and yet so dangerous, is moral idiocy.

I plead with you to take high ground in your conceptions of the duty you owe to yourselves, and to your day and opportunities. As a nation we have to conquer drunkenness, or it will go far, as it is doing now, to conquer the nation. And we have a right to look to you young men to lead us forth to this great victory. We have the right to ask you to quit yourselves like men in mighty attack upon this devil's trinity of impurity, gambling, and drunkenness. I have said little in this address on what is called its distinctively religious side. The religion is in the subject itself. Realize what it is that needs to be done in yourselves and in the world around you, and I will trust religion to take care of itself. Face this work of conquest first by self-conquest, and you will find the need of a help not yourselves and greater than yourselves. And the help will come: "I can do all things," said the Apostle, "through Christ which strengtheneth me."

"I wish he would find the point again in this speaking man, and stick to it with tenacity, with deadly energy, for there is need of him yet." So wrote Thomas Carlyle of the preacher. "Could we but find the point again—take the old spectacles off his nose, and looking up discover, almost in contact with him, what the real Satan, the soul-devouring, world-devouring devils are." I have tried, however imperfectly, yet faithfully, to talk to you about three of these "soul-devouring, world-devouring devils." Give them no inch of foothold in your life, and do a brother's part for others who, perhaps weaker than you, are waging the same conflict in the interest of the things that are sacred, and kingly, and divine. And when your brief mortal life is over you shall have the noble satisfaction of knowing that you have done something to make sure and real the power of that new day when our "sons shall be as plants grown up in their youth, and our daughters shall be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."

TEMPTATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man; but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed."—St. James i. 13, 14.

V

TEMPTATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

St. James has been called the Saxon of the goodly company of the Apostles. It is in many ways a happy description. We associate the term with thought, rugged, perspicuous, easily grasped, and expressed in the shortest and most readily understood words. St. Peter, in a reference to the letters of his "beloved brother Paul," warns the reader of these letters that there are things in them hard to be understood, which the ignorant handle only to their own confusion. If the former part of this warning were written about the Epistle General of St. James it would be dismissed at once, as having neither point nor application.

St. James does not think deeply, but he thinks clearly. He knows what he wants to say, and he says it in language that he who runs may not only read but understand. He touches most of the great themes that engage the commanding mind of St. Paul, and settles them—for no other word so well describes

the process—in his own characteristic fashion. In the passage before us he attacks the most difficult subject which the mind of man can approach, and disposes of it to his own satisfaction in some forty-two of the shortest and most decisive words to be found in any speech or language.

It is well to come across a man like this occasionally; he may not be profound, but he has abundance of common-sense. We see him just as God made him—genuine, sincere, calm, and clear, touching with searching words, if not quite the roots of things, yet, without a doubt, the things themselves. He was the Apostle of that myriad-headed person known as the "man on the streets." St. Paul, however, to the end of his manifold and strenuous life, was always the student and the theologian.

And in nothing does the difference between these two men better illustrate itself than in their separate treatment of what is called the Problem of Evil. St. Paul speaks of evil as the law in his nature, as so entrenched there that the good he would do he does not, and the evil he would not do he does. Unless we weigh these words carefully, we overlook the significance, in the connection before us, of this term law. It implies that evil is, somehow, a part of our being; a something not our higher selves, and yet so deeply rooted in our nature, that like an unsleeping sentinel must a man be on his guard against it to the end of his mortal days. Were it not for this Apostle's mighty faith in Him who can give us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, we should say that he stands ever on the margin of that dark river in whose mysterious deeps are possibilities of wickedness and disaster, the sorrow of God, and the despair of man.

St. James would not have put himself in opposition to a single thing that St. Paul wrote about the seat and nature of evil, but to him the practical question was not its source but its control, and concerning the latter he is sufficiently explicit: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man; but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and by his own lust permits himself to be enticed." You will notice that in this passage the writer puts no emphasis on outward inducements to sin; he says nothing, for example, about a devil. I do not assume that he would have questioned for a moment the traditional teaching about Satan. But he will allow no man to transfer to circumstances, inheritances, temptation, or devil, a responsibility which is his own. Comprehensively speaking, he declares that if men do wrong it is because they want to do wrong, or because they are not disposed to make a creditable fight against it. So far as men know the right, the right they can do, if they will.

We can readily imagine how this Apostle would handle one of the modern and enlightened critics, who appear to think they have but to refuse a name in order to get rid of the thing which the name is held to represent. "You tell us," he says to a man of this order, "that there is no devil; that to think or talk of him in any personal sense, say in the sense that Milton incarnates him in *Paradise Lost*, is mischievous and absurd. That sounds formidable, but to what does it amount? The word, or name, 'devil,' you, tell us, simply connotes a principle. Very well, take the initial letter from the word, and what have you left? You have 'evil,' and that is the only thing about which you and I need concern ourselves. In what degree have you advanced 'liberal thought,' as you choose to call it, by telling us there is no devil, while yet there is so much that is devil-like in yourself and in us all?"

The Apostle leaves a legion of questions unanswered, and, as compared with St. Paul's treatment of this complex problem of moral evil, he moves on the surface. But he is himself; and, in his plain and terse fashion, he forces upon our attention one truth which, on the principle that an inch of fact is worth a yard of theory, is, if well in the mind, more useful than acres of metaphysics which leave us very much where we were. His broad affirmation is, that temptation does not, and cannot, put sin into a man's mind or heart. Temptation does not make, it only finds. "The prince of this world cometh," said our Lord, "and hath, or findeth, nothing in Me." And His Apostle takes his stand on the position, that temptation does no more than reveal the latent evil within us, waiting its opportunity to come out. I mind me of a remark I once read, and which has suggested whatever of worth there is in this address. "As to the notion," says the writer, "that our adversary the devil puts evil thoughts in our mind, I contend that neither God nor devil does it. God would not, the devil cannot. The most that the enemy of our souls can do, is to stir and use the possibilities already there." [1]

This, if I rightly apprehend his meaning, is essentially the contention of the Apostle James. The temptation is to the latent evil what the spark is to the inflammable material. If the material were not there the spark would be as harmless as though it dropped into ice-water. "I can hear words, I can see things, but they will have power over me only in the measure that something in me answers to the words and the things." "I was so tempted," says a man, "and I yielded," which means that the desire already there came into contact with the opportunity to gratify it, and in what struggle there was, the desire was greater than the will-power put out to control it. To say that the sight of opportunity to do evil often makes evil done may be true, but the sight does not make the evil, it only discovers the evil ready for the sight.

In the first place, then, the Apostle admonishes us, that we cannot refer the guilt of our sin, or the responsibility for moral failure, to causes and sources outside ourselves. We may do that with failure of many kinds, but never in a case of conscious moral obliquity. The Apostle James would have agreed with the greater Apostle when he said: "I find a law within me, that when I would do good, evil is ever present"; but he would not the less have stood his ground and said: "Call it a law if you like, but it is not, and is not meant to be, beyond our control. It is one thing to be tempted, it is another thing to fall." Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.

Let us allow at this point for a word of qualification, or we may find ourselves in confusion. As I have just hinted, we must not confound moral guilt and its consequences with the consequences of troubles and failures over which we have next to no control.

Here is a man, let us say, who is a hard worker, temperate, enterprising, and upright. He is making headway in a certain business. But a powerful combination is formed in the same line, which offers him the two alternatives of absorption or almost certain ruin. He decides to hold out against it, to find possibly after a time that his business is gone, and with it his capital, and he himself in a world that apparently has no further use for him. Then, soured and bitter, nursing a sense of wrong, he gradually parts with his self-respect, probably takes to drink, and goes down below the hope-mark of social redemption.

The man—and you probably have known such an one—may, or he may not, have been responsible for his business disasters. He had a right to trust to his own judgment, and providing that he did not choose to enter the combination, he was justified in making a struggle for his own independence. Whether his decision was a wise one is nothing to the point; it was his decision, and he had the right to exercise it. It brought trouble. That was a contingency to be reckoned in the risk; but having taken it, he had no right to sacrifice his manhood to his trouble. He might not be able to resist the strength of the circumstances that selected him for a commercial victim, but he was bound to overcome the weakness in himself to which the circumstances appealed. He might not be responsible for losing his business, but he was responsible for losing himself.

We talk about people doing wrong from force of circumstances. Well, every man who knows anything about it, has felt something of the touch of omnipotence there may be in circumstances. It is not always either kind or wise to try to hearten people who are in difficulties, by concealing or underrating their force and gravity. It is a terrible experience for a man past a certain age in his life, to find himself in the grip of financial difficulties, and face to face with social annihilation. I have seen men there, and the very thought of it unnerves me.

But past it all, the old saying holds good, there is nothing in life we can afford to do wrong for; and if, in the stress of circumstances, a man elects to take a wrong turn, he takes it according to the teaching of the text, because the inclination towards wrong is there, waiting its turn. We may sympathize with a man who goes down in his outward affairs and social status before the impact of circumstances he cannot resist, but we must maintain at the same time, that while circumstances may explain the trouble, whatever it is, they cannot justify wrong-doing either to escape trouble or as a refuge when in it.

Victor Hugo declares that for every crisis we have in us an instinct to meet it. That is a fine saying. If any man, who has had some moral training, will obey his first instinct of right, it is marvellous what possibilities there are at the heart of it. If, finding himself after the best he can do apparently defeated, he will take heed and be quiet—that is, do the best he can with what is left, and trust God—he will also find that the resources of the old word are not yet exhausted: "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."

He may have to lose his means, and step down in the world, as it is called, but let him do it with a clean conscience and a fine integrity; and just as "man's periods are only God's commas," so this man's going down is but a more splendid way of going up. I can imagine that nothing is more pleasing in the sight of Heaven than to see uprightness only the more enlightened, quickened, and made imperative by the troubles and vicissitudes of life. Let a man keep, if he can, what he has honourably got; but if go it must, let it go rather than attempt to save it at the cost of moral integrity. Let him say: "Empty my purse if need be, but fill my soul; take my world, but spare my life; darken my circumstances, but keep bright my spiritual outlook." And what are the slights and neglect of a passing and superficial world to a man whose life is in tune with the Infinite, who hears in secret what one day will be said from the housetops of time and eternity: "Well done, good and faithful servant"?

We are not always responsible for the temptations that sweep into our life. I will go further than that, and say that we are not necessarily responsible for what the attack of temptation finds in us; that, in some cases, may be our inheritance, and in others faults of early training; but we are responsible for what temptation does with what it finds. For it cannot be repeated too often that temptation never puts

evil in our thoughts, it only makes manifest the evil that is there.

And hardly more do we differ in our features than we do in the things which, and through which, we are temptable. We cannot all be tempted by the same thing, but all of us can be tempted by something. You remember how Achilles was dipped in the magic water and made invulnerable in all parts except one. "Where the finger and thumb held the heel it was dry, and, though the arrows glanced off from the other parts of the body, when they pierced this one soft place he was wounded, and that unto death."

Each one of us has his vulnerable place, and it is our life-business to guard it. The weak place is there; the arrow will be aimed at it, and if it find the place it is aimed at, we may refer the blame to what or where we will, it does not affect the truth, that the blame is nigh unto us, even at our own door.

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil things; neither tempteth He any man with, or unto, evil things; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away, when he yields to his own lust, and by it is enticed, by it is overcome."

Which means, in the second place, that not only is a man his own worst enemy, but that no enemy outside of man's self can vitally hurt him, except so far as he places himself within the enemy's power. This is not to say that other people cannot hurt us; still less is it to say that it is not their will and wish to hurt us. To commit oneself to such a statement would be to speak in the teeth of the commonest experience of human life. There are men, and women too, who have the will, the wish, and the power to hurt us. They are, as Christ said of this brood in His day, of their "father the devil." To say a kind word about any one, to do a generous turn for others on the road of life, would be to them a positive task. There are people with whom I would as soon think of entrusting anything I held sacred, as I would think of risking the blood in my veins to the instinct of a deadly snake.

Nor is it want of charity to say this; it is want of sense to deny it. "Beware of men" is as much a word of Jesus as His command to love one another. There does not seem to be in the mind of most people any clear conception of the attitude of Christ towards sin and sinful people. And this confusion is at the bottom of many of our speculative difficulties, as well as of our practical troubles in the Christian Church. When we are convinced that a man's policy and his motives as translated in his policy are inimical to the highest interests of others, to the commonwealth of good, then we owe it to ourselves and others to speak and act upon our conviction.

There are men, again, whose vested interests mean our hurt, working through institutions that are co-extensive with our civilization. Look about you on the effects of drink, and then think how attractive its surface accessories are made. Consider the men who make fortunes out of lust itself; how seductive they make the openings and avenues which end in the lethal chambers wherein are dead men's bones. We have in our midst a well-organized body of men who make it their business for money to trade upon and to tempt the lowest and most dangerous forces of our carnal nature. And what does it mean when these men are, by the acknowledgment of public sentiment, the representatives of what is called "legitimate business"? It can only mean that the sentiment which should be the active and protective side of a worthy manhood is being used to destroy it.

Beware of men who say to evil: "Be thou my good!" Reckon with the fact that in so far as we stand for anything in a life worth living, there are people who have the will, the wish, and the power to do us hurt.

And yet, I say again, they can hurt us vitally—mark the word vitally—only so far as we place the opportunity within their power. We have to hurt ourselves before we can be hurt by anything outside us. We have to be our own enemy to give the enemy his advantage. "Nothing," says St. Bernard, "can work me harm except myself; the harm I sustain I carry about with me, and never am I a real sufferer but by my own fault."

Recall once more the word of the Lord Jesus, how He said: "The prince of this world cometh, and findeth nothing in Me." The prince of this world crucified Christ; he made Him the victim of the fear, the hate, the murderous fury of the organized religious classes of that day. But the prince of this world could not pass by a shade the extent which the saving purpose of the Saviour had Himself decreed and set fast. When the prince of this world came to the soul of the Saviour, the power of the prince of this world had reached its limits. Had there been, I will not say sin, but a sin; had there been the shade of a suspicion of what the world significantly calls a "past" in that Soul, the devil would have had his leverage, and the Divine Saviourhood would have thinned out at the most in the ordinary tragedy of a human martyrdom.

The emissaries of the prince of this world could lay violent hands on the body of Christ—that was permitted for your salvation and mine; but their power became impotence when it approached the soul, and there is where the battle is won or lost. "Fear not him who can kill the body only, but fear it"—that

is the better translation—"fear it, the evil principle within thee, that can cast both body and soul in hell."

We are told that a man once wrote the late Mr. Spurgeon saying that unless he received from him within two days a specified sum of money, he would publish certain things that would go far to destroy the great preacher's hold upon public estimation. And Mr. Spurgeon wrote back upon a postcard: "You, and your like, are requested to publish all you know about me across the heavens." There is a world of meaning in the answer. This master in Israel had his enemies, who would have hailed as a providence any report, true or false, which could have been effectually used to strike at the message through the man. And it was because the man had not made himself his own enemy, in the past or in the present, that he could look this devil in the face and tell him that he was the devil.

This is how one man came out of an encounter with an enemy outside him; take another case where the enemy of a man was the man himself. He came to me, this man, when I was working in the South of England. In a bitter temper he told me that he had been dismissed from a business house in the town. He had left a good situation six months before he entered this house, and was now ousted to make room for one who had resented his appointment from the first, and had been his enemy. I spoke, as I promised to do, to the employer, with whom I had some influence, and in whose integrity I had implicit confidence. "It is an absolute misrepresentation of the facts," he assured me. "The man," he said, "got his situation on no better than false pretences. He had not been with us a week when it was evident that he was quite unequal to the duties of the position he had professed himself competent to fulfil. It is nonsense to say that any one has ousted him; the truth is, that he has wasted his time, and thrown away his opportunity, so that in what should be his own line he has neither training nor proficiency to be other than a low-placed man."

This is a single line in a large literature. It was a foolish use of the past that became the man's enemy the moment his present required something better. And this is an instance of how we can so become our own enemy, as to make it impossible for God to be our friend, in the sense we imagine God should be our friend. It would be, not the law which is the deepest expression of divine thought and love, but immoral force, if we could waste the time sacred to the preparation for a better position, and yet be ready for the position when it comes our way. God can forgive the waste, but God cannot give us back what the waste has lost out of our life. We must never lose sight of the fact that divine forgiveness cannot be vulgarized into impunity. I do not say for a moment, in the case of a middle-aged man, that the enemy he has made of himself is irredeemable and hopeless. I believe that a man's own effort and the grace of God can change this enemy into a valuable friend, if a man is man enough to accept and honour the cost of the great transformation. But how few people, past a given age, ever do quite conquer the inward foes whose sinister power is of their own cultivation? For one man who goes down before an outward enemy, there are a score who lay themselves in the dust and keep themselves there by acts that become habits, and habits that become character, and character that hardens into something that looks like destiny.

This, therefore, suggests a closing word to you younger people. Many of you to whom I speak are in the making. You are on the threshold of your manhood, with practically the future in your own hands.

I often recall my faltering energies in thought of a remark I once heard the revered principal^[2] of my college make to a body of students who were about to enter upon their ministry: "Gentlemen," said he; "you may be able to offer twenty good reasons in after life for your failure, if fail you do. People will not concern themselves about your reason, they will simply look at the fact that you have failed." The truth in this remark is preeminently a truth for young people. The world, on one side of it, is very hard and cruel. It will apologize for failure in the abstract under tricks of speech, and cant about charity, but for individual failure it has no mercy.

Listen to one who has to fight bitterly his own self-made enemies, when I counsel you to begin straight from the beginning. Beware of making to-day the enemy of to-morrow. The present, says a wise man, has always got to pay the purchase price of the past. Never let the temptation overcome you, to take a "short and shady" cut to the gratification of desire, or in the achievement of what is sought as success. Nothing in life is unrelated, and everything you do which cannot pass the bar of your higher self is not only sin, but also a blunder. It may sleep to-day, but it sleeps to wake. When you can least afford it, it will be more than awake, it will be hungry. Educate and cultivate your conscience, and never disregard its voice. Keep your heart with all diligence; keep your heart, and always have in it room for God.

In the open, and in the secret of your life, watch and pray that day by day you may say with Spurgeon: "Write, if you like, all you know about me across the heavens." And while you may have your enemies in men and circumstances, they will be as nothing and vanity compared with the friend you have in God and yourself. Never seek to refer your moral responsibility for actions to influences outside

you. Settle it once and for good, that a thing can radically hurt you there only so far as you place yourself within its reach. Yield yourselves to the Power that can lift you by your real need, the need of regeneration, which can so change your nature that while you are free to many things that have in them the elements of temptation, you are yet too free to want them—the Power which can enable each one of us to say: "I fear no foe, because, by the help of God, I am my own friend."

[1] George Dawson, M.A.

[2] Rev. Dr. Falding—*Clarum et venerabile nomen*.

SELF-RESPECT AND COMPANIONSHIPS

"Is Saul also among the prophets?"—1 Samuel x. 12.

VI

SELF-RESPECT AND COMPANIONSHIPS

Ever since we could hear or notice sayings and things, and for long before we were here to do either, this text has been in the world as a kind of proverb-question: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" If a man says something which is decidedly in advance of his generally-accepted reputation for intelligence and good sense, if he surprise us by doing something which rises sheer above the plane of his average life, if we happen to find him in company that is made up of men who are his superiors in attainments, character, and social importance, we mark the unlooked-for circumstance by repeating this text. We say: "How does this come to pass? What is the explanation?" "Is Saul also among the prophets?" If we think out our impression, it means that the unexpected has somehow happened; that the man must have more in him, or about him, than hitherto he has been credited with having, or by some accident he is found where we should least have thought of looking for him. In a word, the popular interpretation of Saul among the prophets is that Saul had taken a step up. The truth is, the text may mean that he had taken one down. It all depends who these prophets were. Before we can say that it is to a man's credit to be found in a certain company, and that because he is there we must revise our judgments about him, we must know what the company is, and why for the moment he is in it. It is also well to reflect that a man may be in a company and not of it.

In these prophets of the time of Saul, when we first meet them, we have the type which prophesying had first assumed on Canaanitish soil. They were men, as Professor Cornill in his suggestive book tells us, after the manner of Mohammedan fakirs, or dancing and howling dervishes, who express their religious exaltation through their eccentric mode of life, and thus it comes that the Hebrew word, which means "to live as a prophet," has also the signification "to rave, to behave in an unseemly way."

These men lived together in Israel until a very late date in guilds, the so-called schools of the prophets. They were, in fact, a species of begging friars, and were held by the people in a contempt which they evidently did their best to deserve. To Ahab they prophesied whatsoever was pleasing to him to hear; and as one of them came into the camp unto Jehu with a message from Elisha to anoint him king, his friends asked him: "Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?" Amos likewise indignantly resents being placed on the same level with this begging fraternity: "I was no prophet," he says, "neither was I a prophet's son." And so when the people exclaimed in astonishment: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" they did not mean: "How is it that such a worldly-minded man finds himself in the company of such pious people?" Their meaning is better represented in a question like this: "How comes a person of such distinction to find himself in such disreputable company?"

Let it be understood that these last two or three paragraphs are roughly paraphrased from Professor Cornill's book, *The Prophets of Israel*. My opinion as to how far his reading of this proverb-question will bear criticism is of no value. It may be open to debate whether, historically, he has not placed certain hysterical phenomena recorded of these prophets much too late. But whatever scholarship may have to say about his interpretation of our text, the interpretation commends itself to my judgment, and it serves the purpose before me. It has, I venture to think, a very timely message for us all, and especially to young people.

You have heard the question a score of times, and you will hear it again if you live. Hear it then, for

once, as the remembrancer of this truth—that when Saul was found among these so-called prophets he had ceased to respect himself, and when a man does that he must either recover himself, or accept moral ruin. I care not what his exterior circumstances may be; just so far as he fears self-scrutiny is he self-damned, and he knows it. We talk about the "basis of character." It is this, or it is that, according as a man may regard it from his standpoint of morals or religion. We may call it what we choose, but one thing is certain, there can be no worthy character where we have not established some right to respect ourselves. And this right must be born and reared, not out of egotism, nor in religious professions, but in the findings of a cultivated conscience on the motives and actions of our everyday life. A man may have many things, and many things pre-eminently worth having—but as a question of character, if he have not the right to respect himself, that is the lack of the one thing which is virtually the lack of all.

I have mentioned religious profession, and it is well to mark the commonplace but important distinction there may be between religion and our profession of it. Religion, while it is a possession of infinite worth, may be of no worth to us so long as we know that we are keeping back some part of the righteousness which is the backbone of any religion worth the name. A man's religious beliefs and convictions are his own business. They are between him and a higher tribunal than ours. What he does concerns us; and what he does he is. It may take a time to identify the true relation between the two, but our instinct decides the question, long, it may be, before the actions appear to justify the verdict of the instinct. Somehow we know through this worth-discerning faculty whether a man is trying to be what we mean when we speak of a good man.

I believe that human character is homogeneous. It is of one substance and quality in each particular person. Untold mischief has been done by excusing the unpardonable in a man, on the ground that in some other directions he is a good man. If he is ill to live with in the home, or is hard and overreaching in his business, if he willingly makes life more difficult than it need be for others, this is conduct which is character; and when it is found with a profession of religion, let the man, who thus outrages religion, be anathema. But at the same time, young people should not conclude too hastily that a man is a hypocrite because he does some things they cannot reconcile with his profession. A man may be a very faulty man, and yet be a genuinely good man. His goodness does not excuse his faults, nor do his faults destroy his claim to goodness. I have known many a son judge a father very harshly, and find himself in after years glad to find a place of repentance. If you would have less reason later on to call yourself a fool, be told that as yet you are not the best judges of what are but faults on the surface of a man, and what are vices that are the man himself. The truth about others will out sooner or later; what most concerns you in the meanwhile is to know the truth about yourselves. While always trying to think fairly, and even generously about others, have you the right to think well of yourselves? "It is above all things necessary," said the late President Garfield, "that in every action I should have the good opinion of James Garfield; for to eat, and drink, and sleep, and awake with one whom you despise, though that one be yourself, is an intolerable thought, and what must it be as a life experience?"

This is his way of saying that, as he puts it, above all things he must be able to respect himself; and therefore there must be no double existence, no secret sin, no side streets off the open thoroughfare of his life, which he preferred to visit when it was dark—for, although his neighbours and friends might not know about them, James Garfield would know about them, and to be this creature whom you despise was Garfield's idea of what every rightly ordered man should think of with loathing. It is the word of wise old Polonius over again—

"This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

Let a man have the right to respect himself, and he has that which can take the sting out of his disappointments and the tyranny of victory out of his failures. He may be no great success, as the world appreciates success. He may not make much show at money-getting; the position he fills may not excite much envy. Whether or not he achieves this order of success will be all the same fourscore years hence. These things, seen and temporal, will be past and forgotten, but that which he makes himself in the use of them will remain, and that will *not* be all the same whatever it is.

I myself have been through a hard mill. I know what it is to have to struggle for self-respect over the toil by which I earned my bread. I have been counted as just a "hand" among a few hundred others, of importance only so far as it affected the cost of a certain production. But I say it advisedly, and speaking out of years which have left their mark, I would rather have this experience to the finish of my mortal days and all the way, and at the end be able to look my soul in the face and say: "There is no shadow between us, we are at peace"—rather this, I say, than any such success as I have had, multiplied a hundredfold, if it can only turn to conscience to be smitten by it.

I would have you succeed; and by success I mean, for the moment, what the world means by the

term. Why should you not? There is no necessary connection between a straight life and failure to win the kingdoms of this world. You can be clean and conscientious in your methods, and you can succeed if you have it in you to succeed. If you have not, scorn the trick of blaming honesty for what is really lack of ability. There may be cases where honesty handicaps a man for a time, but they are comparatively few and short-lived in their operation. But lift the definition of success to higher levels, and I assert without qualification that with the right to respect ourselves there can be no failure, and without it there can be no success. That I do or do not make money is a question of gift or the favour of circumstances; that I am an honest man happens neither upon accident nor contingency. It is the deliberate and responsible exercise of my own moral will. I may make money or position and be a failure; I may do neither and be a success.

Let me counsel you to hold it true with the great President: "I must, above all things, have the good opinion of myself." Look up to God and pray: "Keep Thou me from secret faults"; then look in upon yourselves and say: "By the help of God I will make it possible for God to give me the help I ask." To thine own self be true. Put this estimate upon yourself, and whatever price the world may put upon you, time will show that you have no more valuable asset than your own self-respect. You may not be able to command the declarative success upon which the world places its emphasis, but you can always deserve it. He is the great man who can say, and mean it, I would rather be beaten in the right than succeed in the wrong.

Saul had ceased to respect himself, and this very probably supplies the explanation of his being found in this questionable company. Bear in mind who, and what, these so-called prophets were, and you gather the force of the surprise with which it was asked: "Is Saul also, the king, the Lord's anointed, in the company of men like these?"

For in this connection it suggests the influence of companionships. There is a well-known saying that a man is known by the company he keeps, and it is truer than many sayings that are oftener on our lips. "Do you think him beyond further effort?" I said lately to a good man concerning one in whom we were both interested—a young man fast heading towards ruin. "I am afraid there is, humanly speaking, no hope," was the answer; "he has taken up with company that forbids it."

When we are young we are apt to evolve friendships out of our imagination. We do not so much prove them as create them, according to the impulses and undisciplined generousities of our disposition. It is only time, here as elsewhere, that can teach us how much there is that is human about the best of friends. But how much may have been done, for better or for worse, before we realize that the angels have gone away only because they were never here? As we get older outside friendships count for less. Life fills with other interests, or it empties in a sense friendships can never fill. If we who are older have carried into the later years one or two, or two or three, well-laid, well-tested and useful friendships, let us be very thankful, and cherish them. They are pearls of great price, for no friends are like old friends, and as they drop off we have to make the best we can of acquaintances. It is when we are young that we have the genius for friendships; they are, indeed, a necessary part of our life. And whether or not it is much use to warn young people about the formation of friendships, the warning is seriously needed. Much will be determined by affinities and by mutual sympathies. You may have to sample many friendships before you find a friend. And while it is difficult, not to say impossible, to lay down rules where affinities are involved, one thing you can do, you can allow the moral instinct to decide, as it can decide, whether in the real interests of character a given friendship is worth cultivation. If you realize that you must surrender something of your better self to be the friend of a certain person, you will be almost sure to establish that friendship at your peril. It is far harder to save your life than it is to lose it, and the chances are, not that you will lift the friendship up to your level, but that it will pull you down to its own.

These remarks on the general subject of personal friendship are warranted by its importance. But there is another aspect of it which, as a question of widespread and deep-seated influence, is even more important. And it is one that is too rarely touched in or out of the pulpit. There is something which begins with only an acquaintance, but it readily grows into more, and that more is supplied at a heavy cost to the individual and to the community.

In a well-known passage in one of his letters, St. Paul asks: "What concord hath Christ with Belial, or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Wherefore come out from among them, saith the Lord, and be ye separate; touch not the unclean thing." Both the question and the admonition apply to personal friendships and to other relationships, such as marriage, social and business intercourse. But it has another and wider application. They refer to the general attitude of our thought, our bearing towards interests and people whom we have reason to believe are hurtful themselves and represent hurtful institutions. For me to call myself a Christian, and yet be on terms of apparent friendship, of easy good nature and tolerance of men and things that stand for Belial, that are Belial, is one of the most effective ways I know of crucifying Christ afresh, and putting Him to open shame. Whatever the

King of Israel might think of his company, the fact that he was in it gave to their worthlessness a new tenure of existence and to their wickedness an added licence. He did not make them better men, but they made him a worse man. And for us to appear to countenance wrong things, so as to favour an impression that possibly they are not so wrong after all; to strengthen the wickedness which would hide itself behind the sinister expression, that the "devil may not be so bad as he is painted," is to be on the side of the devil. It is to hearten the foes of good and perplex and discourage the enemies of evil.

In that remarkable book, *Mark Rutherford's Deliverance*, the writer speaks of a day when politics will become a matter of life or death, dividing men with really private love and hate. "I have heard it said," he tells us, "that we ought to congratulate ourselves that political differences do not in this country breed personal animosities. To me this seems anything but a subject of congratulation. Men who are totally at variance ought not to be friends, and if Radical and Tory are not totally but merely superficially at variance, so much the worse for their Radicalism and Toryism. Most of us," he goes on to say, "have no real loves and no real hatreds. Blessed is love, less blessed is hatred, but thrice accursed is the indifference which is neither one nor the other, the muddy mess which men call friendship." The truth underlying these words is put in a severe form, but there is truth in it. Our compromises in politics, and the consequent slow and doubtful progress we make in social conditions, have many explanations, but the abiding one is, that at the moral root of things we have not, as Mark Rutherford means it, those real loves and hatreds which vitally influence conduct. Take any wrong that happens to appeal to your sense of indignation, and ask why it continues? in what does it get its lease of existence? And the answer is, the fact that we have too many Sauls among the prophets. The wrong remains because, although we do not profess to be its friends, its friends have no need to reckon with us as its foes.

I have already alluded to my experience in a hard school. Indulge me if I return to it for a moment. My earlier years were spent in a Lancashire cloth mill. In it I wrought from morning to night side by side with youths of my own age and men who were older. For the most part, young and old, they were practised in almost every conceivable coarse and brutal way of casting their existence as rubbish to the void. But I think I can truthfully say that, while I tried to be loyal to the conditions of contact, and as a comrade in the ranks was not unpopular, yet they knew that neither within those grim walls nor without them was I of their world.

It is not easy, sometimes it is very hard, to take up this positive position amid one's daily surroundings. And it is not only hard to do the thing itself; it may be even harder to do it wisely. It is not pleasant to have your conscientious attitudes to things which to you are neither expedient nor permissible interpreted by the old words used as a sneer: "Stand aside, for I am holier than thou." Young people like to be what is called "popular" with those who touch their lives; and within well-defined limits they owe it to themselves and others to cultivate the qualities that invite popularity. If, however, the price of popularity is some form of compromise with things that harm and things that hate—then, if you are worth world-room, you will draw the line sharply and keep on one side of it. And that can be done without giving the impression that you are either a prig or a snob. When you go the right way about it, the attitude I advise is far harder in contemplation than it is in practice. The real difficulty in eight out of every ten of the critical places in life is not what is in them, but what we imagine is in them. Let it be felt that the things you hold to be wrong must expect from you neither compromise nor show of friendship; that you are the open and declared enemy of unclean speech, filthy jesting, secret sins, with their hints and implied fascinations, brainless pursuits, frivolous conversation, and low down levels of existence, and, with the exception of those whose enmity it is a distinction to have, people will come to realize that your position is neither that of the religious crank nor of self-righteous conceit—that it is the expression and outcome of your reverence for whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good report.

Human society has no need more pressing than its need of young men and women with moral courage and religious conviction to take up the right attitude to wrong things. "Know ye not that whoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God?" When Saul was found in a certain company he had ceased to respect himself. This is why he was found there; and these two things were more than enough to sweep his life to its tragic close. How many of us have read this man's life-finish? Let me suggest to you something new to read. A story that has in it more elemental material than half the fiction that ever was written, or half the facts that mortgage the attention of a superficial world. Read that chapter where Saul, face to face with the last things in his darkened career, and hard upon the Nemesis of his own evil past, seeks out the woman with the familiar spirit, and in the words that he addresses to the apparition which he conjures up before his distorted vision you have the confession of a lost soul: "The Philistines make war against me, and the Lord answered me no more, neither by prophet nor by dream." "I have read nothing," says a well-known novelist, "quite like this man's experience in its utter abandon of lonely horror."

Think what you may about the setting of this story, you will be strangely lacking in moral insight if

you miss the meaning that pulsates through the words that were wrung out of Saul in his extremity. They point to the lost, which once lost is lost for ever. Even God, I say again, cannot give us back the yesterdays. Once they are gone we can only say: "That which is written is written."

Many of you have practically the best of your chances before you, but every day takes some part of them out of your hands, and gives it to an irrecoverable past. Be jealous about your own self-respect, and do only the things that command it. Take care of your self-respect, and your success will take care of itself; as also will your companionships. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near." Do not put off and forget, forget and put off until your clock strikes, and so far as the best of your opportunities are concerned, you have to say: "The Lord answereth me no more, neither by prophet nor by dream." Lay hold at once upon the help that comes through genuine decision for God. Place yourself in position where God can help you; and you will find that God in Christ denies you nothing except that which disappoints in the seeking and defeats in the finding. You will realize that He offers you life; strong, sane, happy life all the way, and at the end the more life and the fuller.

THE ROYAL LAW

"Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well."—St. James ii. 8.

VII

THE ROYAL LAW

What St. James calls the Royal Law, is mentioned as far back as the time of Moses. It is one of the two commands to which our Lord gave new incidence, into which He put fresh meaning.

There has been, I hardly need remind you, endless debate about the source of some of Christ's most characteristic sayings. Was He original in His teaching, as we use the word, or was He eclectic, gathering together the most luminous things that had been said? Jewish scholars, as we might expect, have not been slow to point out that many of the sayings attributed to Jesus, and certainly many of His ideas, are to be found in the old Rabbinical writings; that many of His highest truths had been announced by saints and seers of His race long before He came.

We need not question that there is truth in this representation. But we must question the inference from these words, "long before He came." For time has known no such solitude. He, which is, and was, and is to come, has ever been in the world teaching men how to pray, inspiring them what to say. He had taught "them of old time." "Before Abraham was," He says, "I am." And St. John tells us that "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." Originality is no mere traffic with words however skilfully manipulated. There is a language of God transcending all words, and intelligible only when we meet Him spirit to spirit in the secret places of His eternity.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Observe the setting of this admonition when first given: "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This word "neighbour" connoted something that was a distinct advance in the upward trend of the race. It did, at any rate, a little to lift the Israelite out of himself into the lives of others. But it meant to him, at the most, only those who were of the same tribe or nation. In the fulness of time—when the world was ready—Jesus took up His own word spoken through Moses, and limited in its interpretation by the moral intelligence of that day; took up His own word, and made it co-extensive with humanity.

This is what I mean by a language of God transcending all speech. "You have been told," says Jesus, "to love your neighbour"; and to the question, "Who is my neighbour?" He makes the answer reach out to its full circumference—"Thy neighbour is he or she who bears thy nature." By the law which declares that God has made of one blood all the nations of the earth, the physical unity of the race is implied; so by the operation of the law of love the moral unity, or, what we now call the "solidarity of humanity," is intended.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And I hardly need point out, that it is this little word *as* in the text which gives us pause. Is it possible, then, to bring down this command and incarnate it in our daily life? It does not say, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour with certain arbitrary qualifications of thy own." It evidently means what it says: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*." Is it possible to do it?

And many of us are ready to answer, It is not. Either there has been some mistake in the way it is reported, we tell ourselves, or it is useless to try to fulfil it with such natures as ours in such a world as this.

Put it in this way: granted we loved others as we love ourselves—this should be good and pleasant for those who possessed our love, if it had genuine strength in it. Granted, again, we had the fulness of the strong love of others, that should be helpful to us. If we may condition the Royal Law in some such manner as this, "Love them who love us;" or, "love them who are worthy of our love," the difficulty is obviously lessened, if not in fact removed. But such a limit, while it might amount to prudence, would not reach up to beatitude. "If ye love them who love you, what do ye more than others?" "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." But who is thy neighbour? And Jesus answers, "thy neighbour is he who bears thy nature." This is iteration, but I venture it because I want us to confront the real insistence of this text. They who share our nature may be, and often are, those who hate us with or without a cause. There are people who perpetuate an existence on others which is little better than a moral and physical calamity. To tell us to tolerate them, not to speak about loving them, is like telling us to attempt the impossible. And yet Jesus did not forget these people when He said: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you."

We, then, who say we accept Christ's teaching must accept it. This is one of the places where we cannot escape behind some ingenuity of exegesis or manipulation of text. The command is plain. We can take it or leave it. One thing we cannot do, we cannot re-write it. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." As thyself. If this but fixes a hard standard; or simply indicates the measurement of neighbourly love, then we may almost as well close the discussion—its practical attainment is out of our reach.

But, as some one has very wisely said: "Love of self must become a medium before it becomes a measure." [1] In other words, we cannot love our neighbour as we ought until we love ourselves as we should. Out of love of self "flow the ingredients which must enter into neighbour love."

The text, then, lays down a twofold obligation: to cultivate a right love of self, and to translate this love of self into love for others.

As touching the first part of this obligation, it is useless to ask what it is in our neighbour we are to love as ourselves, until we know what it is in ourselves we are to love. In what sense is a man to love himself? Because there is a radical difference between self-love as taught and practised in the world, and the love of self sanctioned and regulated by the Royal Law. Love of self is a right anxiety to secure the things we need in this world. It is based upon the principle that life is not to be unclothed but clothed upon. The fact that we are in the world and have to fulfil its desired ends should carry with it reverence for our manhood, and the demand for space to work out its full equation. While the Apostle Paul was always ready to subject his rights to the law of love, he was equally careful to assert that they were his rights before he yielded them. In his care for the weak brethren, he did not become a weak brother. One of the first things we have to learn, is how to take wise care of ourselves; and then, step by step, a true life is a growth in the knowledge of how so to take care of ourselves as to promote the best interests of others. In this matter of a right love of self, the point of transition at which it passes into beneficence is the victory over a self-love which is selfishness. It is really the basal principle of moral government in the world.

But when this is said, the surest and simplest answer to the question, What is it in ourselves we are to love? is to say—We are to love that which God loves in us. And what does God love in us? From all we know of the divine nature as revealed in Jesus Christ, we are surely right in thinking that God loves in us what is most like Himself. No man can stand at Calvary reverently and thoughtfully for five minutes without being impressed with the truth of a wondrous self-sacrifice. I met with a remark lately in a story I was reading which fastened itself on my mind. It was made by a poor, toiling woman who had scarcely sufficient means to keep body and soul together: "I never, somehow," she said, "seem to think a thing is mine until I have given it away."

This is the spirit that God loves, a spirit ever getting further away from "miserable aims that end with self." God loves in us the self-mastery that scorns to compromise with self-indulgence. God loves in us that which cannot find its true home in the things seen and temporal, but must ever soar out to the things unseen and eternal; the things that live in and wait upon the earnest man and after which he must ceaselessly aspire. God loves in us the strenuous effort which proceeds from the conviction that there is sacred power in every life which must not be wasted in "egotistical pride, or in a narrowing self-love." From instinct, from the moral consciousness, from the Scriptures—these we know to be representative of the things that God loves. And we know we are right in loving in ourselves what God loves in us. We also know that no man can wisely love himself until he knows the purifying power of a love that is divine.

If now I may assume that this exposition of the text shows the ground, and defines the sphere of a right love of self, I may further say that the Royal Law does not require us to love in others what it does not permit us to love in ourselves. And we do well to be clear about this. Many of us stumble over this text because, not getting at its true inwardness, we have an uneasy feeling that it carries us too far. Others try to work up an artificial sentiment, and profess to exercise a charity which is not theirs to extend.

Here is a man, let us say, who calls himself a religious man, who yet notoriously is a mean and shabby creature. I once heard this man, well placed and prosperous, boast of having that day become richer by some twelve hundred pounds through an oversight of a solicitor in winding up the affairs of a late client. I afterwards learned that the mistake was at the expense of a widow and her young children, who, because of it, were brought within very measurable distance of want. Must my love for my neighbour include one callous enough, not only to do a thing like that, but to boast about it? Must it annex the whole low plane of such a squalid disposition? God forbid. What I hope I should hate in myself I am not asked to love in another. If a man is base and unworthy we are to recognize the fact, however ugly; we are to look the devil in him in the face, and say it is the devil.

But, on the other side, Christianity admonishes us that our judgments of our neighbours are neither infallible nor final. It has been well pointed out, that if we "have found any part of the secret of God's mercy shown to us, we shall not find it hard to believe in God's mercy for our neighbours." To realize that the essential thing the Redeemer saw in us and deemed it worth dying for, He sees in them, will help us, however weary at times in their service, not to weary of it.

In this command, then, we have the ground and motive for the sacrifice of each for the good of all. We see that it is possible to love our neighbour in the sense we are to love ourselves. We see that the command which, on the surface of it, seems to urge an unattainable experience, is, in truth, what St. James calls it, the Royal Law that binds us together not only as neighbours, but as children of the same All-Father.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Should any one ask, "Who does it?" I answer, That is not the question. To deny that we can love our neighbour in this sense is to deny that we can love ourselves. Yet I know what fate, especially for young men, may lurk in this cold, faithless question. And I want it to be understood, that my single aim in this address—the reason why I have wrestled at this length for the meaning of the passage before us—is to show, that *whether we choose to do it or not, it can be done*. I affirm that this text is a simple statement of the principle of the only rational, helpful life man can live. And to prevail upon you to admit this, would be to accomplish much. To accept it as the truth, that you can love your neighbour as yourself, is to win intellectual confidence in the service which your day demands of you. It is to take the sting of death out of the old evil question: "Who does it?" Once recognize that Christ asks for nothing impossible, when He gave a new and ever-abiding authority to this ancient precept, and the question will not be, Who does it? Rather will it be, Who can afford not to do it? For not to do it is selfishness, and selfishness is self-defeat. He who exists only for himself, exists only to injure himself. It is the fashion now to get rid of a judgment to come by telling us that we are our own judgment here. The latter part of the statement is not the whole truth, but there is truth in it. The strain brings out the strength there is, but shirk it and we have weakness. Do as we like rather than do as we ought, and the price must be paid in loss of manhood. Everything we gain for selfishness we must steal from ourselves.

"Ah me," said Goethe once, "that the yonder is never here." Go deep enough into every wrong and sin and you find at its root this selfishness. So many of us degrade life into a heartless scramble. We fight each other because each man, dissatisfied himself, is convinced that his neighbour is getting more than his share. It may be doubted whether there has ever been a day in the Western world when more people were dominated by the conviction that gain is godliness. So many about us have virtually ceased to put their trust in anything about which they cannot lace their fingers. With them, dreamers about anything else are cranks, and martyrs for anything else are nuisances. And this reacts upon such apology as they have for more serious thinking. We seem in many ways to be returning to the pagan condition when judgment was not feared and spiritual influences were unfelt. In novel, drama, and much that passes for science, we have the monotonous iteration that man is the creature of blind chance under an indifferent sky.

But this, thank God, is not the whole story. There is another and brighter side. If we take a very subdued estimate of our modern day and world, I am yet persuaded that never were the saving ideas of the Saviour more potent, never have His high aspirations been more ardently welcomed or more strenuously followed than they are now.

Past all human speculations about Christ, men hopelessly divided in creed are yet getting nearer to what He lived believing and died believing. In the weariness of so much of the modern world, and in the

hopelessness of its outlook, I see an age ready to receive anew the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I see a temper ready to grasp with fresh earnestness the thoughts of the "Living Lord and Supreme Teacher of our race." Men to-day are dreaming like dreams as shone before the souls of the ancient prophets, and in the visions of men who have wrought for human progress since the first days even until now. Waking dreams of a new and diviner order of society. A state marked by righteousness, peace, and happiness for the whole people; the golden age, when man, knowing what it is in himself he ought to love, loves that in his neighbour as in himself.

And Christianity, which came into the world to fulfil these heaven-born dreams, is being openly challenged as never before to substantiate them.

In the larger aims of our spiritual ideals the "yonder is never here," nor, indeed, can it be. There must always be above us something better than our best. When we cease to make progress we die, and that, in the language of Scripture, is the second death.

If, therefore, the searching demand of the text confronts us with the weakness of our nature, we need not wonder and we need not be discouraged. It is the purpose it has in view. "It discloses an ideal, and it reveals an end." If in seeking to realize the ideal and gain the end we are forced to know how insufficient we are in our own strength—this, I repeat, is the end it seeks to accomplish in us and for us. Until our life is in Christ linked on to God, we cannot love our neighbour as we ought, because we have not the higher power to love ourselves as we should.

But the power is offered us. And it is for you young men to lay fast hold of it, and accept the world's challenge in a way it has never been handled and faced before. "Do not talk about the things you believe," says the world to us who name the name of Christ; "convince me that you believe by what you do." And this is said, not from an indifference to dogma, as some would have us think. It means that a man's beliefs are between himself and God. It is what comes out of his belief, that can be reckoned with amid the forces of our everyday life.

You place in cold sheet one of the loftiest passages of a great composer before a man sensitive to music, but who does not know one note from the other, and he looks at it with indifference. You put the sheet before a gifted organist seated at his instrument; and as the melody rolls forth in swells of power, then in cadences of persuasive pathos, the indifference of the man vanishes as he catches his breath like a sob, and feels a prayer he cannot speak. We say we believe in Christ, and men turn aside with indifference. We live Christ, and men love Him. It is common enough to find this indifference about religion, and a marked want of what I have called intellectual confidence in Christianity as we preach it from the pulpit. But I have never yet found a man infidel to the fruits of its spirit, which are, love, peace, goodness, a living faith, and a genuine self-sacrifice. Before men can be expected to become Christ-like, they must know what Christ is like, and how far are we prepared to put our lives before men as an answer to the question: "What think ye of Christ?"

Preach Christ by living Christ. "All men," says the Koran, "are commanded by the Saint." And no man ever casts the wealth of his life and the crown of his devotion at the feet of Jesus without "quickenning the earth with a diviner life, and uplifting it with a new courage." One of the most brilliant of the eighteenth-century poets said: "The lapse of time changes all but man, who ever has been, and ever will be, just what he is." Which means that man is by make incurably selfish. This is a lie. And it is the worst kind of lying, for it represents not only the inability to find good in man, but the inability to believe that there is good to be found. My own stand is where thought and experience have forced me. From human nature left to itself I hope for nothing; with that nature remade in Christ I despair of nothing. It all turns on the remake. And it can be remade: "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become sons of God: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Let us, therefore, by divine grace, refashion our lives on the mighty principle of divine love. And let us settle it as one of the truths never to be questioned, that nothing is worthy to be called love that cannot be affirmed of God. We know what God loves; or we know enough for the practical ordering of our daily life. Let us love in ourselves what God loves in us. This will include for ourselves and others all things which are good for us to have and enjoy; and because it will exclude all things that are narrow, mean, and selfish, it will go far to raise the world to a power of a new day. Then, through hearts and homes, through Churches and societies, the Royal Law, made royal life, will solve the problem of the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. It will become the touch of omnipotence that casts out of our life the unworthy, by bringing in the opposite virtues, resolving all into character which shall transform mankind into one realm over which the right and the might of Christ shall at last prevail—

"From creed and scheme the light goes out,
The saintly fact survives,
The Blessed Master who can doubt,

[1] Two or three sentences in this chapter are memorized from a sermon I heard years ago, preached by Rev. H. E. Michie, M.A., of Stonehaven.

'HE WAS DESPISED AND REJECTED'

"He is despised and rejected of men."—Isaiah liii. 3.

VIII

'HE WAS DESPISED AND REJECTED'

Some two or three years ago the picture, "He was despised and rejected," by Sigismund Göetze, was on view in Glasgow. In this address I shall try to tell you something about the impression it made on me; and the reason will be given at the end why I include it in this series. Some of you may have seen the picture; others may have read or heard about it.

The conception of it appears to have formed itself in the mind of the artist out of what ordinarily is a very commonplace circumstance. He had attended a Sunday service at St. Paul's Cathedral, and heard a sermon that made a deep impression upon him; which found his higher being with something like the touch of an immortal influence. He thought within himself: "What a real difference a word like this must make in the thoughts and life of those who have been privileged to listen to it. Never again, surely, can they be as though they had not heard it." It was a message, so he felt, to shake men, to arouse them, and make them turn on one another and cry: "Men and brethren, what must we do?"

Under the impact of his own emotions and sensitive to his surroundings, he was eager at the close of the service to share with others what he virtually demanded they should impart to him. But he was grievously disappointed. Not a word did he hear, not a look did he see on the face of a departing worshipper which so much as betrayed the transient emotion stirred by dream or romance. If they had listened to the discourse, they had evidently forgotten what they had been at no pains to remember. No new experience befell this man of artistic and impulsive temperament. I heard a sermon a short time ago preached in a seaside church, which deeply moved me; a sermon I was thankful to have heard, and the like of which I would walk a long way to hear again. As I stood outside the building waiting for a friend, the congregation came out, and I heard the usual interchange of verbal nothings. The only reference I did hear to the service was from a well-dressed young man to a girl by his side, and this is what he said: "A long-winded fellow, that; let us go on the parade." The remark did not unduly surprise me. "I wonder," said a man to me lately, "why some people go to a place of worship at all; they appear to be as indifferent to what is said, sung, or prayed, as the dog that barks is indifferent about the dog-star." In every congregation of fair size there is a strange mixture. But it always includes those whose attention and evident interest do something to compensate for others who show neither. There are elect souls who hear the Word and receive it. You may not trace the fact by what they say, but you know it by the holiness of helpfulness, which radiates from them like light, and is made by them as an atmosphere. God has not ordained the foolishness of preaching—which does not mean foolish preaching—to thin out in the miserable anti-climax of a remark like that of the young man I have just quoted. Fortunately, however, our artist had not sufficient experience of the conventional congregation at a place of worship to have become philosophic about it—which usually amounts to indifference. Judging others by what he himself felt, he thought they must be equally moved. But instead of having received the preached Word, there was nothing, so far as he could discern, to indicate that they had even heard it, while there was much to lead to the conclusion that they had not. Hence he resolved to repeat the sermon through the translation of his art. They should, if he could accomplish it, receive through the eyes what they would not hear with the ears.

Something like this, we are told, was the genesis of this picture, with its central Figure of the Crucified One close by an ancient altar, yet immediately outside a modern building called a Christian church. There He stands unregarded and silent, but so far as His anguish speaks the eternal Passion of God, while there stream past Him the clearly-defined types of a twentieth-century multitude—each, with one doubtful exception, as indifferent about who, and whence, and why He is, as if He were one of the stone pillars that support the vestibule of the temple dedicated to His worship. Poverty sits at His very feet and it is not even curious; fashion and vice, toil and sport, science and ruin, culture and

ignorance, want and opulence pass by, and do not so much as despise and reject Him—for that at least would argue some form of interest. It is the indifference which, as Confucius says, is the "night of the mind—night without a star." I need not linger over the types. You may see them any day in a characteristic London throng; you may see them in a less emphasized form in a city like Glasgow. If I may make one reference to them, let it be where the artist attempts to represent the attitude of the Churches to the Man of Sorrows. We have, for example, a high ecclesiastic in one of the sacerdotal communions, and by his side there is some order of Nonconformist minister. The latter is evidently in earnest, not to entreat the attention of the crowd to Him whom they pass by, but to convict his companion of error out of their commonly-received Scriptures. And the great ecclesiastic, sleek, debonair, and well preserved, has a bored look on his capacious face which says: "My dear good man, why excite yourself? I readily make you a present of your contention. You take your truth and I will keep my position. As we can settle nothing but ourselves, why not settle ourselves as comfortably as we can?"

According to the artist, each in his own way is in the crowd and of it. It is anything and everything except the Crucified One, as in St. Paul's it was anything and everything except the message spoken to those who, having ears, heard not. How do we explain it, then, from his point of view, that this stream of people, representative of a widespread society, is utterly indifferent to that Figure so pathetic in its loneliness, so tragic in its appeal, and almost aggressive in its sorrow? It is possible that not a type on the canvas is to be interpreted as quite ignorant of the letter of the claims made for Him who is yet the Object of the world's indifference. There is a sense in which it is true that Christ was never better known than He is in your day and mine. We have the well-authenticated Scriptures which testify of Him. We are more sure that we possess many of His sayings than we are sure that the writings known as Shakespeare's plays were written by a man called William Shakespeare. In these Scriptures He is reported to have said:

"Before Abraham was, I am." And in another word, that falls like a beam of light on everything He did and said, He tells us that "the Son of Man is come to seek and to save the lost." We have the key-word of the Father's message to the race in the wondrous declaration that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

We have a mighty Christian literature which, if it be evolved out of a myth, resolves itself into a miracle. We have the fact that never before was Christ so admired, so much quoted, and so generally applauded as He is at the opening of the twentieth century. We have accredited thinkers who reject, as they think, all dogmatic theologies about Christ, and yet tell us that the spirit which Christ incarnated in His words and actions reveals a God humanity cannot improve upon. We have, moreover, an army of men who are set apart by training, and what they believe to be their "calling," to preach Christ by precept, and to teach Him by a life derived, as they declare, from Him whom they preach and teach. And amid many failures, and motives of the earth earthy, these men do not all fail, nor do they all live by bread alone. Was there no place in that canvas-crowd for one of those devoted men who, ill-paid, half-starved, and overwrought, toil night and day in that most awful work on this earth, the attempt to rescue and raise the lapsed masses of our large populations? Was there no room for the man who penalizes body and soul to straining-point for words and thoughts that shall inspire and hearten men to steer their lives by the higher stars, those eternal principles of truth and right? Was there no room for a woman of the Salvation Army who is out of some hideous slum for a moment's breathing, before returning to it with a great self-renouncing life of love and healing?

But take the picture as the artist's impression of the ail-but universal indifference about Him who is yet declared to be the soul and centre of our Scriptures, our creeds, and our religious life, and how do we explain it? Or if we put the artist's impression aside, and on our own account face the truth which, for the purposes of constructive art, he may have exaggerated, is there any less need that we should ask: Why is Christ despised and rejected of men? Why is it that they do not come unto Him that they may have life? The answers are legion. To my thinking, they resolve themselves into practically one. Before we can know Christ, before we can understand Christ, before we can come to Christ, we must come to ourselves. And not a face on that crowded canvas suggests a hope that he, or she, had taken an honest step in this all-determining direction. Before I can look to Christ as my Saviour I must know that I need a Saviour. Before I can realize my need of salvation from sin I must realize that I am a sinner. So much, if not all, turns there. It is not every man who feels that he is a sinner because he talks about being one. But let him feel it, and out of the knowledge will come his saving health, or the death that dies.

It is declared to be the work of the Holy Spirit to convince men of sin, and the unbelief growing out of sin. Analyse the causes of indifference about the things that belong to our peace, and you find that for the most part they resolve themselves into sin, and the unbelief that follows sin, as consequence comes out of cause. I know with what impatience the world turns from what is called the evangelical teaching

about the nature and effects of sin. And we need not go outside the Church to find the same impatience, not to say contempt. We have in our pulpits men who represent sin to us as good in the making. It is in some sense a necessary means to an end. They speak of arrested development, of defect of will, of inheritances and surroundings, of a vacancy as yet unfilled by virtue. It is hard to think that people held by a half-sceptical pantheism, and the relativity of evil, have ever been face to face with the awful deeps and disobediences of their own heart, or have felt the hot breath of the devil on their own cheek. If we have any worth-discerning faculty, we know when a man is handling certain subjects whether he knows what he is talking about; whether or not, to use an expressive colloquialism, "he has been there." No man who with the eyes of the soul has looked down that awful cleft that separates between the carnal mind and the holy will of God, can use words here under the wasting impression that he knows things. If Christ only died to save us from something which, after all, is only good in the making, then the Cross of Calvary is the supreme irony of time. We shall never find a Saviour by the road that, at the most, leads but to a martyr.

Here is a man—and he is not an imaginary case—who is married, and has young people growing up in the home. He is wealthy, with a reputable position in society. But there is a sinister something in the background of his life, and he sets himself to do what he knows full well is an irreparable wrong to an inexperienced and defenceless creature. He makes no fight against the wicked prompting, and does the hurt which if another man were to do to one of his own family he would willingly shoot him dead. And say when the hurt is done, a searchlight—he knows not whence it comes—is flashed across his soul and he sees himself as he is, a base scoundrel before God and man, will it help him to think of his sin as good in the making? For whatever he may become, he has done his part to damn another. And let his conscience become, as it can become, and woe to him if it do not become, as real as the wicked thing he has done, and his first and devastating question will be, not can God forgive him, but can he ever forgive himself? Let his one hope come to be in some means of expiation, which can give him a degree of rest from the sin by paying what he can of its wages, and he will begin to realize what is meant, not by the remission of the consequences of sin, but by the remission of sin. He will know the need, where the need is agony, which God in Christ has met for us, and which, had He not met, would have left the need something greater than God Himself. It is when a man must have peace with himself or die to all that is immortal in him—it is then I will trust him never again to pass by with unconcern the anguish of Him who bore our sin in His own body on the tree.

Sometimes we look at the Lamb of God without feeling that we are sinners, and then we have a thousand difficult questions to ask. At other times the burden of sin is so heavy upon us, we see the sinfulness of sin so vividly, that we get away from the mere accident of place and time as far as it relates to sin, we see sin as God saw it, and must ever see it—then it is we look to the Crucified One. "When I feel myself in my heart of hearts a sinner," I once heard Dr. Parker say, "a trespasser against God's law and God's love; when I feel that a thought may overwhelm me in destruction, that a secret, unexpressed desire may shut me out of heaven and make me glad to go to hell to be away from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne—then when I am told that Jesus Christ was wounded for my transgressions, that upon Him was laid the chastisement of my peace, I press my way through all the difficulties and say: If I perish I will pray and perish at the Cross; for if this be not sufficient, it hath not entered into the heart of man to solve the problem of human depravity, and the human consciousness of sin."

I am not seeking to explain or defend what I am saying. I may try to make it a little more clear before I close. For the moment I am putting before you what I believe to be the truth of very truth. To some I may be speaking in an unknown tongue, but not to all. If there is one here who, with some years behind him, has ever been in serious conference with himself, he knows that there is something radically wrong with himself, which calls for something he is powerless to supply. He knows that the springs of his being have been poisoned, and he has no detergent to make them sweet. It is the fashion in our day to speak of the old description of "hell-deserving sinner" as marred by exaggeration, if not to say morbid. I do not fall into that fashion, for it expresses just what I am—a hell-deserving sinner. When the great Puritan, John Newton, saw a man taken out to be hanged, he said: "But for the grace of God there goes John Newton." It is when the true idea of sin is realized under the convincing power of the Holy Spirit, that the "necessity of the sacrificial work of Christ will be felt, understood, and become the one foundation of human hope."

Do you say that you have felt nothing of this convicting and convincing power? Then I ask: Have you ever passed through an hour of serious inquest with your own soul? Have you ever tried to know yourself even as you are known? The debate cannot be all on one side. A man only knows that he is ignorant through the need of a knowledge he has not got. Before I can persuade you that Christ is your Saviour, you must realize that it is a Saviour you need. Before you can start out for Christ you must come to yourself. And while men make a mock of sin, while they regard it as a matter of indifference, or profess to explain it away under the terms of science and philosophy, we need not wonder that they

have so little faith in higher things. We need go no further for an explanation of the thoughtless unbelief which is eating its way like a festering sore to the heart of our modern world. If the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life sum up the totality of our being here, why should that crowd on the artist's canvas be represented as moved by an anguish that touches no chord in its soul; which is, indeed, foreign to its every thought, sympathy, and pursuit? So long as men are indifferent about the very question, Why that anguish? vain is the appeal, "To you is it nothing your Saviour should die?" So long as men are utterly unconcerned about the fact, and nature, and effects of moral evil, then selfishness will remain for men the only recognized law of self-preservation.

And here is where I come into line with the practical side of the Christian evangel. The Cross of Christ is no arbitrary arrangement. It is not the expedient of a system cunningly devised by priest, theologian, or Church. It is the grimmest, sanest, divinest thing ever set up in this human world. The Cross is symbol of the only Power that can enter the lists against selfishness, and enter to throw it. And let me plead with you to think about this: every wrong in the world has selfishness, if not for its root, yet at its root. Cast out the selfishness which is sin, and you cast out the first and the last thing that stands between us and the new heaven and the new earth. Think of this, and you will better understand the anguish of Him who carries the sorrow, and is wounded in the wounds made by man's inhumanity to man. Refuse to think of it, and cease to wonder why countless thousands mourn; why the strong oppress the weak; why might is worshipped as right; why men seem to fear nothing but the hell of not making money. Think of it, and cease to wonder why men's bodies and souls are sacrificed in what is little better than a murderous struggle to exist; why one man has so much more than he earns, and others earn so much more than they have. Think of it and cease to wonder why our age is distinguished by a bad pre-eminence of restlessness, by feverishness, a panting for excitement, and a poisonous atmosphere of pessimism.

The Cross of Christ means the life that lives in unselfish service as against the selfishness that is death and defeat. It means not only individuals and Churches, but the race, redeemed and lifted from the dark and narrow life of self, into the life and light of the kingdom of God. Can we wonder, then, that the rejection of the Cross blasts our beliefs in everything divine and hopeful, and is accompanied everywhere by a "melancholy introspection and lack-lustre view of human life?" Recall then in this connection what I have said about sin, and the relation of Christ's death to the forgiveness of sin. What I am saying now does not include all that is implied in that relation; but see in it what I have just put before you, and you will realize that I am not talking in mere morbid terms, nor in those of theology except so far as it is the theology of life. Long as men are willingly in their sin—which means selfishness in all its deadly forms—can we wonder at the unbelief portrayed on that canvas? Can we marvel why the Christ is still despised and rejected?

It may be asked, and justly, what are the professed followers of Christ doing to convince men of their need of Him as their Saviour; to convince them by lives that are the evidence of triumph over sin? What are Christian people, what are the Churches doing to fight down the wrongs, the hurtful conditions, the curse-centres that degrade men, keep them ignorant, and as by a satanic ingenuity hide the real Christ from those who most need to find Him, and are the least able to oppose the things that make Him so misunderstood and even unknown? How far are we responsible, not only for the deliberately cultivated wickedness of men who choose evil as their good, but for the indifference that passes by only because our lives have never compelled its attention? The Church is a Church but to the extent that it is the organic expression of Christ's life, the visible Body of His soul. What, I ask in all faithfulness, are we doing to make real and living to men the presence of a Lord who is ever suffering in their sin and for it? The artist was well inspired to give his picture a twentieth-century setting. What an amount of grim Calvary there is in Glasgow every day under the shadow of our Churches; ah! and behind the sanction of their power. That is the word that should smite us; it is the word that must be said—behind the sanction of their power.

The world would begin to see Christ, if we ourselves would see Him crucified, not merely in the remote Palestine of the first century, but, I say once more, in this Glasgow of to-day. In the foul slum, in the haunt of shame, in the abode of crime and wretchedness, in the places where children are robbed of their birthright before they know what things mean; in the sweater's den, in the heartless side of business competition, in the drink hells, in frivolous pursuits and brainless amusements, in the insolence of wealth, and the sullenness of poverty—in every place or thing where despite is done to the Divine Humanity. Let us feel that whatever wrong is done to a single human being, throughout the world-wide family of man, is literally done to Jesus Christ, and we shall better understand that central Figure in the artist's picture. Let us see Christ crucified in whatever evil is done, in whatever good is left undone that we could do, and sin will become to us not a term only, not a thing to be excused and explained away, but a real and tremendous horror. We shall feel it to be what it is, a stab struck at the living heart of Jesus Christ. As it has been truly said: "Fellowship with Christ's sufferings will become less of a mystical phrase, and more of a vital fact."

"To you is it nothing, all ye that pass by?" As I sat and looked at that picture, this was the question that oppressed my thoughts. And then the further question forced itself—Why, in so many cases, and to all human seeming, is it just that—nothing? It is not enough to talk of sin, and unbelief, and indifference, outside our life: they are real enough, but do they suggest no responsibility on our part? Let it be a call to prayer, an incentive to unceasing watchfulness lest one should be passing by because there is nothing in us which constrains him, or persuades her, to look and be saved, to look and live.

I said at the opening of this address that I would tell you later why I include it in this series. I am not sure that I can keep my word. What has been said will glance from your mind unless you have, like Luther, and for the same reason, wrestled with the question: "How shall a man be just with God?" But assuming that as yet this is outside your experience, still you know the difference between what may but arbitrarily be called sin, and sin that is what it is called. Believe me when I say that the first, and worst, and nearest of all problems for each man of us, and for societies, is the fact of sin; and that with it no one deals, or can deal, save Him upon whom the chastisement of our peace was laid, and with whose stripes we are healed. What is the exact relation between the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sin no one can tell us; but that there is a relation charged with redeeming power is not a theory about Christianity—it is Christianity.

I read some time ago that a "Van Missioner," who was preaching Unitarianism in the villages of Hampshire, found himself at one of them interrupted by a number of farm labourers, who began to sing —

"What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
It washes white as snow,
No other fount I know."

To the modern enlightenment which patronizes Jesus as a teacher and rejects Christ as a Saviour, the theology, or sentiment, in these lines is not so much crude as grotesque. At the best it is but curiously reminiscent of the ignorance of a by-gone day. Doubtless this well-meaning man had much to say worth hearing; but he was talking in the name of religion, and to these villagers there was in it the lack of the one thing, which is the lack of all. Theology apart, these simple folk found in these crude lines the heart of saving truth. It is my conviction that they were right. In this conviction I live, and in it, by God's grace, I trust I may die and live again.

"I do not despise Jesus: with all that is best in me do I reverence Him as one of the world's supreme teachers; but I cannot regard Him as more than that," said a friend to me after reading over the manuscript of this address. "And yet," he added quietly, "if there is anything in Christianity which distinguishes it from any other great religion, it must be near to the place you have been trying to get at."

'WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?'

"What must I do to be saved?"—Acts xvi. 30.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know."—St. John vii. 17.

IX

'WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?'

"When I was well into my teens," said a very intelligent woman to me some time ago, "and for long after I had left them, I listened to preachers and preaching; and such powers as I had I put into my listening, for I wanted to get at something I could hold for sure and real in the promises of religion. I was told Sunday by Sunday to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, to trust in Him, and commit to His keeping my soul's welfare. And as far as I knew what belief meant I believed; and tried to persuade myself that I was trusting Christ. But I was not conscious that it made any real difference in my life; that it gave me anything I had not before. Hence I gradually came to the conclusion that either the preachers could not tell me what it was on which I had specifically to lay hold, or it was useless for me

to prosecute my attempt to grasp it."

This woman said what many think, who are as yet within listening distance of our pulpits. They want to understand what they must do and believe, to lay hold of that which can make a difference in their life; which can find in it, or bring into it, something that answers in very truth to what the Bible calls "the power of God unto salvation."

It is, surely, a reasonable thing to ask. As religious teachers we can have no right to plead with people to believe what we are not prepared to help them to understand. Some of you may have reason, as you think, to endorse this woman's testimony as a fair statement of your own experience. Can I help you? Most gladly will I do so if I can.

One thing should be said, as I come closer to the attempt. If you are really anxious to find help, guard against mistaken impressions of what that help should be, or can be. In religion, as in all the deeper places of human life, one great teacher is experience; and you can neither anticipate nor rush experience. A mother says in answer to certain questions of her child: "Wait until you are older and you will find out." That, to the child, is no answer at all; but, while the child is a child, it is the only answer there is.

Divine truth is infallible; but, as it has often been pointed out, there is no human infallible apprehension of divine truth. We have to admit that there may be, and indeed must be, many phases and aspects of saving truth which we cannot comprehend. There are others, again, of which we get only distant and fugitive glimpses as we study the Word of God. But we shall also admit, that these higher reaches of truth are not those alone on which our faith is called to repose. It may seem to many of you, that in my treatment of the subject now before us, I overlook much that is essential to the Christian doctrine of salvation. I may even seem to eliminate the supernatural element from it. A little thought, however, should correct the latter impression. In passing I have only to say, that I am not trying to exhaust this theme, but simply to give it a setting which, I venture to think, is worth consideration.

"What must I do to be saved?"—a question which may be put in two very different states of moral being. It may be asked in a temper merely curious and academic; or it may, as in the case of the text, voice a profound sense of need. If we would be saved, we must realize that we need to be saved. It was when the prodigal "came to himself" that he said: "I will arise and go to my father."

We are to be saved from what? and into what are we to be saved? In other words, not only must old things pass away, but all things must become new. From what, I repeat, are we to be saved? There is but one answer to the question: We are to be saved from sin by being delivered from the power of evil; and sin is the wilful assertion of our self-will against the holy will of God. The sense of sin may vary in different people; it may vary with the moods of the same personal experience. There are people who appear to be quite callous about the evil within them and the evil they do. But just as our moral nature is educated, just as we grow in sympathy with the divine will, do we become increasingly sensitive to the distance there is between what we are, and do, and the holiness of Him who is a consuming fire. We feel that the Apostle was neither morbid, nor did he exaggerate the actual situation when he cried: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

It has been said that the "only way to be saved from sin is to cease to sin." And it is true that a man cannot, at the same time, sin in any given direction, and cease from that sin. But it is also true that he may cease from sin in the sense of not doing certain things, and yet be the greater sinner in the sight of God, because of the motive which acts as his deterrent or restraining force. I have seen men repent of their sin, as the process was called, when I have had no faith in it whatever. They were not repenting of their sin, but lamenting the cost of its indulgence.

We must do more than cease to do evil things only because evil has its price; we must learn to do well by learning to love all that is meant by well. There is no escape from evil except through love of good. The Christian salvation, which means the saving of the whole self-hood of man, is a positive thing from its inception into its endless development. Where it is repression it is that there may be expression. This, I imagine, is what Robert L. Stevenson must have meant when he said "We are not damned for doing wrong, but for not doing right." Christ, he contends, "would never hear of negative morality; 'thou shalt' was ever His word, with which He superseded, 'thou shalt not.'" According to Stevenson—I do not say he is right, but I do quote his words as worth attention—we are not damned so much for yielding to evil, as for not getting into our life its opposite virtue; some content vital enough to cast out the evil, and to keep it out. To go on fighting some besetting sin is only to repeat, for the most part, an experience many of us know but too well. It almost invariably ends one way. In weariness and despair we ask: "Why should we war with evil? It is more than our test, it is our fate; let us take what sweet we can before it becomes all bitter." Which is but another way of saying: "Evil, be thou my good."

Mark well, then, our next step. It is not enough to tell us that we must conquer the wrong by doing the right. The question is this: Is there any power, anything in what is called saving grace, which is adequate to the struggle on our part, and which appropriated can make us, to use the Apostle's description, "more than conquerors"?

There is; and I will try, first, to tell you what it is, and, secondly, how we may realize it. It is—call it by what name we may for the moment—that which casts out the mean, the ignoble, and the selfish, by filling out life with the great, the noble, and the unselfish. It is, in a word, the salvation which means the "highest character and blessedness, which we, individually and collectively, are capable of reaching and realizing." Let us, then, call it what it is—the power of God unto salvation. And how are we to get it into our possession? The answer is, it needs no getting in. Potentially it is there. "The kingdom of God is within you," says Jesus, and it is ours to bring it out in all its actual reality. It is the greater which includes the less, of the gracious possessions God has put in our being, and of which we know so little because we do not work these inward mines: "Work out your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you."

Some one makes a great inventor say: "Anybody might have done it, but the secret came to me." Do you believe the first part of this statement? Would you hold me true in saying that anybody might have anticipated the discovery of wireless telegraphy? There are times when the world appears to halt for want of some new thing, or for want of some one to put new meaning into the old. And when the fulness of time has come, the secret, which has been sleeping through centuries of men, awakes in a man. He is the chosen of Providence to deliver unto us that which he also has received.

What is true of a few in the endowment of what we call genius, may be true of us all in the power of God unto salvation. When we were "made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth," the Maker of us all put a part of Himself into the mysterious substance. "Let each man," says Browning, "think himself a thought, an act, a breath of God." There is evil in our nature; but evil can mar us only so far as we allow it to become sin. It is in victory over evil that we find character and make. There is evil in our nature, but there is also a germ of God which He can touch into immortality and glorify with the very splendour of His own image and being. When that germ is quickened into life, we are, in the language of theology, converted; as it develops and becomes the more life and the fuller, we are, in the same language, sanctified and made meet for the Master's use.

Is there anything mysterious in this; anything we may not understand? Christ did not think so, if we may judge from His conversation with Nicodemus. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." Our Lord, if I understand Him aright, tells this master of Israel that there is nothing more wonderful about this new birth than there is about a new affection or a new love. And what cannot love do? No one enters our life except through love. They may influence it profoundly, but that of itself gives no admittance to the heart. What, I ask again, cannot love do? Have we never known lives changed, and indeed transformed by a new affection? I have seen love work miracles; and so far from not believing in such miracles within their sphere, I believe in nothing else. But does that which wakes love put it there? Is some new thing added to life? Rather let us say that it is life coming to its own; just finding what was already there. This may be what the Psalmist means when he speaks of deep calling to deep. The deep in man answers to the deep of attraction which appeals to it. If man was conceived in the image of God, then God is immanent in man. This is not to say that this immanence is equal to, or implies the whole content of what is known as Christian salvation. It is true that the "eye and the brain must be there before the light can be perceived or any object interpreted." But it has been pointed out with equal truth that the "eye would be useless did not the light come to it, and that the brain would have nothing to work on, were not objects from without brought for our perception." [1] Which means that immanence alone would be powerless apart from some transcendent influence. Unless this be so, what are we to say of the multitudes which sit in darkness and the shadow of death? Our salvation is in the answer of the life immanent to the life transcendent, and the connecting and combining power is the Holy Spirit.

But what, in the next place, is our part in this matter? How is this power to come? How, to use a better term, are we to realize it? Have we to wait for something, or have we to do something to make it a real experience?

A youth, let us say, or a girl, is beginning to learn music, to play the violin or the piano. At first it is drudgery, and its immediate results are a trial unto all that are in the house. The parent or teacher says: "Persevere, obey instructions, and as you pass through routine into the soul, the task will soon be lost in the pleasure." The beginner may not believe it; but granted the facility is there, and determination to bend to the task of learning, and the reward comes. That which is within is brought out, and by the only way it can be brought out: "Stir up the gift that is in thee."

This hints to us the answer to the question, Have we to do something that salvation may become a

known and felt reality? We have to do something. We have *to do*, as we are told by Him who only can tell us what it is we have to do: "Will to do the will," says the Christ, "and ye shall know." And if we are really seeking a basis of assurance in His saving power, we ought surely to take Him at His word, when He tells us how to find it. It is not first through assured belief that we become sure of Christ, it is by doing Christ's will that we become sure of our belief. Have we to explain to a child the mechanism of its limbs before it can attempt to walk? The impulse comes, and the child walks, that is all. But the child has to walk to know that it can walk.

But what, you ask me, are we to say about sudden conversions, of which we once heard so much, and which we are still taught to seek and expect? What, I ask you, about those sudden flashes of insight which at times seem to reveal in a moment a way out of difficulties which for years we have sought in vain? A man told me lately about a period in his life when through drink and betting he was reduced from a prosperous man to a wreck in body and means. "I was down," he said, "low as a human creature could get in this world." He was converted to God, and from the very hour his change came, he declared that his craving for drink, and mania for gambling, dropped out of his being, as a piece of dead matter falls away from a living organism. And there are such cases, thank God, but we must not make our teaching about them misleading by making it despotic. As in the instances of sudden insight, we do not because we dare not say they are general, deny that they occur. The soul-development on its immortal side is, for the most part, gradual and slow. The life-faculty is there, but it often means hard work, patient waiting, and great faith, to realize its presence and bring out its power.

[2] It has been said that modern psychology confirms scientifically this method of seeking and finding the truth. It teaches that action has often to precede thought and feeling. If this is the word of psychology, it is really in accord with the method of Jesus. Practically all His teaching is addressed, not so much to the intellect or to the emotions, but to the will. He does not put doing and believing in opposition; in actual life they are really indistinguishable parts of a healthy spiritual growth. But our Lord does put doing before knowing, as He puts religion before theology, and life before the understanding of life. His unmistakable object is to constrain men to take action, rather than to wait for emotion, or even for intellectual confidence and conviction.

As a matter of experience, we find at every turn on the road of life we have to do things we do not want to do, to secure the things we want to have. Necessity does not humour us, and that is the reason the world owes so much to necessity. We may be very "superior" about dogmatism in theology, but well for us that dogmatism will have no such nonsense in life. It is just doing the duty that tasks us most, whatever our feeling about it, which makes the difference between the worthy and the unworthy in character; between the numerals and the ciphers in the human world. It is doing, not what we would, but as we ought which changes reluctance into interest, and the sense of futility into the joy of achievement. It is doing what we know to be true which illumines its ever-lasting significance. "You could write stories which people would read," said Lecky repeatedly to George Eliot. She did not believe him, and, strange as it may seem, she had almost a morbid shrinking from making the attempt. But she did make it, and we know with what results. The attempt to write a story had not only to precede the belief that she could write one, it had to reveal the gift.

And so Jesus, who came to manifest God, says to you and me: My brother, My sister, there is that in you which, brought out and cultivated, can achieve in you the highest order and quality of life in this world, and fit you for whatever environment lies beyond. Believe me. Just take me at my word when I say to you, will to do my will, and doing it you shall come to love it—and that is to be saved; for it is to be at one with the Father in me. Leave your past, however unworthy it may be. What I have done and suffered for you has atoned for all. Do your part, and you, too, shall testify: "I live, and yet not I, but Christ that liveth in Me."

This, then, is my position; and whether or not it answer to fact and to Scripture, I leave with your judgment. I ought to have accomplished something if I have made myself understood. It probably overlooks much that many of you hold to be integral to the nature and meaning of salvation. I have only to repeat, that what has been advanced is a setting of this great subject; and I venture to urge it upon your consideration. It now remains for me to notice very briefly one or two further questions as I draw to a close.

What, I may be asked, are we expected, as young people, to understand about the doctrines and dogmas of Christianity as necessary to an intelligent religious faith? And what about feeling or emotion, which is usually represented as a vital part of the driving power of Christian life and conduct? Well, speaking for myself, I make no pretension to the lofty disregard of doctrine which in so many quarters seems to be regarded as the hall-mark of enlightened thinking. We do well to beware of a so-called "breadth," which is but a pet euphemism for thinness.

But after all, we can hold a thing for true, and yet find no explanation of it which quite satisfies us.

Theories about the heavens have come and gone, but the stars remain. Christ was, before creeds gathered about Him; and it is because He is, that men must formulate doctrine to explain Him. I have long had the conviction that in religion nothing really matters but the Spirit of Christ. This is not to say that if we have, or claim to have, the Spirit of Christ, it makes no difference whether we do, or do not, believe in the "historical Christ." To my thinking such a position is nonsense. We may as well talk about an effect without a cause. Spirit must needs clothe itself with body. The "external may come in at different points of the process, but the internal without the external cannot exist." I am simply saying, that everything we need to know in a general sense about Christian doctrine becomes intelligible and reasonable, not when we approach Christ through our doubts and difficulties about doctrines, but our doubts and difficulties through Christ. In Him is life, and the life is the light of men. I care not for the moment what dogmas about Christ you accept or reject; I ask you to think, and then say, what heaven worth entering, of state or place, could close against us, were we in the Spirit of Christ walking in the footsteps of Christ?

Then about feeling: Is there one of us who can say, that he, or she, has never had the impulse that should lead to Christian decision? Long as we make it possible for God to appeal to us, He will find His own way. From Him is the impulse, whichever way it comes, but it is ours to put it in practice. But just as we do not wait for feeling to take us out to earn our bread, and keep a roof over our head, so it is a far nobler thing to turn to God from a sense of duty, and conscience, and spiritual need, than it is to depend upon feeling to make us do, what not to do, with or without feeling, is our loss and our shame.

Do not wait for feeling. Begin your part in the work of your own salvation. If feeling carry you into decision, and it sometimes does, well and good. But for one case where feeling leads to decision there are probably a score where feeling must be made by what follows decision. Take care of doing, and feeling will take care of itself; and as we rejoice in its inspiration, we shall realize that, perhaps for the most part, it can come no other way. To have the joy of doing good, we must do good. We cannot have the tonic and bracing sense of vigour by saying we will climb the mountain. It is when we have scaled its heights that we have the experience of a new physical creation.

Why wait, then, for what is waiting for us? The Divine Spirit is universal and infinite. It is the mother-soul of the universe, with eternal power and sweetness and beauty, and glory, shining down upon all men, stimulating them to be nobler, to go up higher. And when we accept the influence of the Holy Spirit seeking the divine in us, and co-operate with it, we have found the answer to the question: What must I do to be saved?

Does any one say, I ask again, that he has never had this impulse? As truly can he say that he has never felt the sun. Let him take heed. The sun sets, and it is night. There can be a night of the soul—the darkest, blackest, most hopeless night of all.

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." To be saved is to live; and only to the life above us can the life within us respond. Out of Christ we do not live; we but exist. And existence at its highest estate has no power inherent in it to cast out the selfishness and death that build a hell's despair, in what might be the kingdom of heaven in our human life and world. Do we want to be saved? Do we desire life? Then pray, and begin at once to do what our heart and conscience tell us the Christ would have us do. Will to do the will, and doing it we shall enter, gradually at first, and then with more royal progress and joy unspeakable, into the truth of His word: "Because I live, ye shall live also."

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DOES GOD HAVE FAIR-PLAY?

"Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God."—Deut. vii. 9.

X

DOES GOD HAVE FAIR-PLAY?

A professor in one of our colleges, who is an acknowledged authority on the prophets of the Old Testament, gave a course of lectures lately on his own subject to a summer school of theology. His aim in one of these prelections was to show how the prophet Jeremiah developed himself by debate and discussion with God. At its close an elderly clergyman, shaking the lecturer by the hand, said to him: "I was delighted to hear what you said about Jeremiah. I myself have for forty years preached the right and duty of men to stand up to their Maker."

It was, to say the least, a crude way of expressing himself; but the man had a meaning, and I think I know what it was. We may, to a large extent, have grown out of the old Calvinistic representation of God; but its reflex influence abides in a greater degree than we perhaps realize. This representation puts its emphasis, not so much upon the Fatherhood as upon the Sovereignty of God. It holds man responsible for the moral quality of his actions to God; but all reference to man's claims upon God are met with the stern question: "Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?"

Whatever the Apostle may have meant, this question has been used to support an intolerable position, and the clergyman spoke out his revolt against it. His divinely implanted instinct of justice assured him that a God, who is to command our intellectual confidence and heart-trust, must, while exercising the prerogatives of a Sovereign, accept the responsibilities of a Father. Family life would break all to pieces if we as fathers did not carry our recognition of the claims and rights of children past a severe, however just, parental authority and control into the larger realm of wise liberty and undoubted affection. And it is out of the best and highest we know of our relations to one another, that we are to understand what we ought to be to God, and what God has promised to be to us.

For God not only affirms His responsibility to us, He challenges us to say, whether, having done our part, we have weighed His part in the balance and found it wanting. It is the declaration of the Scriptures from beginning to end, that the Lord our God is a faithful God. Through the mouth of one of His prophets He confronts us with a question which, were it not His own question, would hurt us as almost profane: "What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they have gone far from me?"

We need not shrink, therefore, from talking reverently about the responsibility of God, for He asks us to build our trust, not only in His promises, but upon our experience of the faithfulness with which He has kept His promises. What, then, is our testimony? Has God been faithful to us; and if so, are we justified in assuming that the same faithfulness is the experience of others?

"Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God." Take this affirmation on its lowest grounds—as touching material things. It is not said that man does not live by bread, when it is said that he lives not by bread alone. We may insist upon it, that material concerns are not worthy to be compared with the things of the spirit; but this does not affect the truth, that while we are on this planet we must have material things. Jesus has told us that, "Our Heavenly Father knoweth what things we have need of before we ask Him." It does not follow that the things we desire are the things we need. Christ does not pledge the divine faithfulness to our desires; it is pledged to our needs.

And how is it redeemed, even in the case of the latter? Think for a moment of the poverty there is amid all our plenty. Think of the evils and misery that are the consequence as well as the cause of poverty. There are thousands of men, and women, and children dying every year in India from want and sheer starvation. We are told that, in each case, a penny a day would mean comparative plenty. They are God's creatures, willing, and indeed eager, to work themselves to skin and bone for a penny a day, and they cannot earn it. Think again of the untold human beings nearer home, locked in a warfare from which there is no discharge but death; the grim struggle for a bare existence, with its chances at every turn of sickness, accident, no work, and then the abyss. When we have reckoned off the probable proportion of those who have done much to make the conditions in which they find themselves, we have a large percentage of people who are no more responsible for the poverty and suffering they have to endure than they are responsible for the fact that they are in the world which uses them so harshly.

For my part I can offer no explanation of these things, that can give a sensitive heart and an honest mind more than a very moderate degree of satisfaction. There are communities, and even races of people, whose existence in this world appears to have no immediate relation to their own personal happiness and well-being. They come and pass away as phases of what we must believe is an evolution towards higher things. But this is the question: Have they who compose this lonely and sombre procession no claims upon their Maker in the meanwhile?

I do not believe that one human soul will fail of absolute, abundant, and rich compensation, in those eternal years that are at God's right hand. I have a word to say about this later, but for the present I may say that I answer many questions by my conviction that what we call death does not end all. Columbus is reported to have said: "I must have another continent to keep the earth's balance true." And I must have the personal conscious future, which is to right the wrongs of the ages, if I am to

believe and preach the faithfulness of God. But we must guard against an impatience which is our littleness. In the immense times of the Almighty, every dark mystery of human being can move away, and leave the "sky of Providence at last, arching over the soul with not a cloud to dim its stars." For my present faith I hold it true with one who trusts—

"That nothing walks with aimless feet,
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete."

When any man confronts me with the inequalities of our human lot, with the suffering many have to endure from causes they have not instituted, and circumstances over which they have no control, I may be, and often am, obliged to make him a present of much that he has to urge. But there are two things to be said, on the other side, which I can only briefly indicate, and ask you to work them out in your own mind.

I affirm as the first of the two, that the good in our life far outweighs the evil. When all is said, happiness is the rule of our normal experience, and not misery. We hear much, for example, about the suffering which is part of the order of the animal creation; how a stronger beast feeds upon a weaker, and is in turn the prey of another stronger still. While again we are told that the joys of these myriads of sentient creatures are immeasurably greater than their pains. They have pleasure more than sufficient to justify their call into existence, in spite of the drawbacks to their happiness incident to the conditions of their existence.

I am satisfied that the latter representation is true of the animal world, as I am convinced that it is true of the human. Let what may be said to the contrary, life is a mighty boon. When men bring in a verdict of unsound mind in a case of suicide, the instinct may have more to do with it than the order of evidence on which the verdict is based. We have to conclude that a man was insane before he could lay violent hands on himself. Look back upon our life, we who have travelled some distance into it, and let us say whether so far we do not account it a blessing to have lived and to be living. We have had our hard lines, and we have known the pleasant places; we have had our sorrows, and we have had our joys; we have been under the clouds, and we have lived in the sunshine. Nay, I dare go further and say, that for a day we have had of the former, we have had a week of the latter.

It is a narrow and unworthy conception of happiness to invest all our chances of it in the accident of circumstances. There is some force in the saying, that heaven is here or nowhere. If we have any thought of happiness worth turning into a fact, our life may be filled with it though the hardest possible circumstances be surrounding us. Not where we are, but what we are, makes our much or little whether of good or ill. It is an ungrateful proceeding to go through life consuming as much as possible of the fruits of a gracious present, and yet with only plaints and complaints about the legislation which tempers the blessings with the little severity needed to teach us what the blessings are.

Some one has remarked that it is the whole tragedy, and ultimately the whole power of the Christian religion, that it is attacked from every side. It is accused of faults that are hopelessly inconsistent with each other. One day it is charged with making man too responsible; the next, with not making him responsible enough. The truth is, that we need not try to make man too responsible in order to make him responsible enough. It has often been pointed out, that the Christian religion is by turns optimistic and pessimistic. St. Paul is pessimist enough where he says: "For I know that in me—that is, in my flesh—dwelleth no good thing." But who so optimistic as the same Apostle when he declares: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Much of the secret of it, under God, is in a cultivated and consecrated will. Every matter, says Epictetus, has two handles, and you can choose which handle you will take. Every man has in him some promise of the gradual supremacy of character over the accidents, happenings, forces and factors of circumstances. These may be his tests; they need not be his fate. "The real vital division of the religious part of our Protestant communities," says Wendell Holmes, "is into Christian optimists and Christian pessimists." I would rank myself among the former and say again, that the good in the conditions of our life far outweighs the ill. And while maintaining this position, I would also, as the second of the two things to be urged, have us face the question, Who is responsible for the ill there is?

George Meredith, in a reference to this subject, declares that no man can *think*, and not think hopefully. Whether or not this be true in the case of every man who thinks, this can be said—it ought to be true. Instead of multiplying words to no profit over the old question, Why all this misery and suffering? let us think for a moment in another direction, and we shall perchance be encouraged to think hopefully.

It has been said that human wisdom has arrived at no juster and higher view of the present state, than that it is intended to call forth power by obstruction; the power of a life that is perfect and entire, by the responsibility of choice between the things that make or mar it. If God can rank in us nothing higher than character, and if character on the man side can be achieved only out of right choice translated in its kindred action—then it must follow that the power to choose the right is the power to choose the wrong. Which means in the fewest words, that sin, and all the ills and suffering that proceed out of its selfishness, are the issue of this possibility of fatal choosing. If it be asked: "Why the possibility at all?" I answer that without it men would cease to be men and become something else; and what that something else would be need not enter into our speculation. It is because we can do wrong that we can do right; and if we think about this, may we not think hopefully?

It is the fashion in our day to write and talk as though heredity, and the effects of the accumulation of heredity, were somehow sinister enough to drape the heavens in black, and silence all the songs of the angels. This law, we are told, can have no moral interpretation consistent with freedom and responsibility. The more than tendency of much that is being written and said is to depress the mind with a sense of the relentless force of general laws and influences, and to diminish in the individual the conviction of his power to contend against them. I would avoid dogmatism about this matter and simply say that this seems plain to me: for one drawback we meet along the pathway of inheritances, we have a very legion of resource and help through the gains of time, and of the race. The penalties we have to pay for transgression against law are not a just indictment of the law, they are the penalty of its transgression; a by-product, which is always a decaying product as the character of the race heightens.

The purpose of God in us is character, and once we have it, established in divine grace and ensphered in the human will of a sufficient number of us, we shall soon make our new and better world. Without this character we may hope for nothing, with it we need despair of nothing.

Granted then for a moment that we had but a little more of this God-fibre running through our individual and our collective life, such an experience as physical want would become but a memory of a hideous past. This good old mother-earth can yield us, not only enough to go round, but enough to go round in generous abundance. Why is it that a few have so much more than they can use, and so many have less than they need? Do we think that God wills it? Can we conceive of it as having any part in the economy of the Kingdom which Jesus came to establish on the earth? It is not God, but our selfishness that wills it; a selfishness that has its length of days and its malign power in the widespread folly and culpable ignorance that play into its hands.

Think again for a moment about the effects on society as a whole of the intemperate use of strong drink. They are incarnated in horrors, look where we will. The injuries which simply swarm out of our licensed temptations to drunkenness are not exceptional and irregular; they are, as one of the most eminent of our publicists has said, "uniform as the movements of the planets, and as deadly as the sirocco of the desert or the malaria of the marshes." There is not a profession round which drink has not thrown the spell of its sorcery; scarcely a household that has not been despoiled by its leprous pollution. And who is responsible for it? Does any one doubt that if the Christian Churches looked at this accursed traffic through the eyes of God, and attacked it with faith in His omnipotence, that we could not break its back within the next ten years?

Long as we are content merely to run the eyes of our intelligence over the episodes of this great battle of wrong against right; to mark down its critical moments, and to analyse its issues while careful above all things not to implicate ourselves in the agonies of its crises, then let us not challenge the faithfulness of God for wrongs and sorrows brought into the world, and kept here by our selfishness. Those of us who have part or lot in this selfishness—and most of us have—let us, at any rate, play the game, and accept our own responsibility.

I do not wonder at the severity there is in the human world; for hard as it falls in places, it is yet the sign-manual of its uplifting and hope. We sometimes talk bitterly about the crucifixions in our life; but believe it when I say, that a world without them would be a dark and terrible vision. If we could do evil with impunity, if its punishment were a mere peradventure, it would mean that evil was the heart of the world. We may be profoundly thankful that wrong and suffering are cause and effect which nothing can break. Were it not so, it would mean that under skies dark and pitiless, a brutal scramble to survive would be the law, as in the animal world it is said to be the instinct. I know that many come into the world and leave it, never having had the chance to be all they might have been in more gracious circumstances. But I can trust them with Him who is too wise to err, and too good to be unjust.

This, then, is as far as I have got with the general merits of the subject before us. To say there are experiences in the lives of individuals, and even of communities, which we cannot explain, is no proof that the universe is immoral. I submit to you, that the good in our lot infinitely outweighs the ill for which we are not directly responsible; and that the consequences of the ill for which we are directly

responsible are intended to chastise it out of existence.

May I counsel you to think about what has been said? Remember there are some things God cannot do for us, and yet leave us men. He cannot make a better world without the consent of our individual obedience and the co-operation of our will. I should, I trust, be the last man to ask people to be content, or even patient, with things as they are in the life that now is, on the assumption merely that they are to be better in the life that is to be. I do not say that heaven is here or nowhere; but I do believe that it ought to be here, in its degree, as truly as anywhere else. If we can think of contempt as part of the Being of God, surely this must be His feeling for much of the wrong and suffering that finds a place in the human world. It is so gratuitous, so insensate, so unnecessary. Is it not a terrible reflection upon some of us, that after the Cross has been silently teaching the world these well-nigh two thousand years, it can yet be said with some show of reason, that the two forces that keep society, as we know it, together, are the ignorance and the patience of the poor? Why should they be so long ignorant? Why should they be so chronically patient? The sorrow of God must be, not only that they suffer, but that they are so patient under it as to make it scarcely distinguishable from content. And why are they so patient? This is the question God is asking through every thoughtful and humane man of us; and one day—man with God speed its coming—we shall be numerous enough, and in earnest enough, to establish some real harmony, some true correspondence, between the inner dignity and the outward lot of the individual, and, through him, of the community. In the meantime, then, instead of asking, how can God be God and permit wrong to be in the world? let us face the truth, however it may smite us, the truth that wrong is in the world for this reason—that we permit it.

Growing out of what has been advanced, suffer me to press the subject a little further, under one or two statements. I purpose to do little more than indicate them, and to ask for them your good consideration.

God is faithful: therefore good must be possible. I was talking some time ago with a very intelligent man, who has a well-known name in the world of letters, and he said to me: "I admit that we have made something that answers to progress in material things, but I deny that we have made any advance in moral attainment. A few rise above the average level, for the rest it is the old story of cycles of abortive effort with no lasting good to the race. We may theorize and idealize as we like," he went on to say, "but Bebel is right when he tells us that 'every man is the product of his times and the instrument of his circumstances.'"

It was talk that exactly expresses much of the "time-spirit" of our modern day. It is a doctrine with no God in it, and no invisible world. It assumes that man has no vision and no volition; that he is a mere billiard-ball in the game of existence, which goes whithersoever the cue of blind fate sends it. That one man rises, and another falls, is neither the virtue of one nor the vice of the other, but the necessity of both. We follow the better if we have the accident of certain gifts, or we take hold of the worse, if we have not. In either case we are no more responsible for our direction than we are responsible for the fact that we have to take a direction at all.

I shall not build up words in trying to answer this position. I can conceive of no man who has some conscience left, however he may seek a refuge from himself in this doctrine of moral irresponsibility, who, at the soul of him, does not know it to be a lie. We commonly use the terms evil and sin as interchangeable; and in doing so we are apt to fall into confusion. Evil is, as it were, embedded in our nature; and for that we are not accountable. Sin, as I have said before, is in yielding to the evil, and that is our responsibility. St. Paul speaks of the evil he found in his nature, and while he admits its malignant power, he does not represent himself as powerless to contend against it. He accepts no responsibility for the fact that evil is there; but he does accept responsibility for what he does with it, or what it does with him.

"Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
Another thing to fall."

I know with any man the power of evil in my heart; and while it may come, as it were, in spite of myself, I can determine the question as to whether it shall stay. It is the vilest heresy of our day to preach and believe that circumstances can absolve us from our duty; or that they can prevent us from following the right. The battle is hard, at times very hard, but what battle is not hard that is worth winning? Put religion out of the question, and do we find that the prizes of the world offer us easier terms?

It is the greatness of the Christian religion, that it not only tells us what it were good to do, but it offers to us the power to do it. The great teachers of the world have said to their disciples: "Accept our ideas"; Christ says: "Accept Me." "He makes everything centre in His Own Personality." And the men who have helped to make what so far in our human world is grand and glorious, have shown us that

Christ's word is a real word, meaning a real thing.

One who has the right to testify has told us that, when we do the will of God as if it were our own will, we realize that God is doing our will as His own. There is a great truth in this. We so often fail because ours is a broken obedience. We expect God to do His part, while we keep back part of the price of our own, and what response we have is the sense of being mocked in ourselves. We have to find out that we cannot serve two masters. However we fall short in practice, the intention must be all for God, or it will be none. But let us be genuine co-workers with Him in this great work of personal character-building; and we find that we have a power not ourselves, and infinitely greater than ourselves. Our achievements are not so much a question of gift, as of dynamic. They are not in the machinery, but in the driving power.

"How is it"—was a question recently asked concerning one of the most useful men in the Christian ministry—"that with his obvious limitations he has accomplished so much?" And the answer was: "Because he has made it possible for God to use him for all he is worth." Failure is impossible in the man who can say: "I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." We cannot explain the power; but it is there, and we all may have it by obedience to the conditions through which it can be given. "I have been down deep in the hell of moral failure," writes one, "and by the grace of God I have come out of it. I may not be able to explain His grace to the satisfaction of others; but will others explain me to my own?" Our lives may be the living evidences of this power. The world asks for no more; the world will accept no less. Our day, we are told, has ceased to believe in such miracles. It were truer to say that it has ceased to believe in anything else.

Goodness is possible; and not to achieve it is to defeat the purpose for which we were born into this world. Let us believe in goodness. Let us learn to love goodness because it is goodness. Let us say, and live our word, that there are no charges we can pay which we are not prepared to pay to be, and to do, that which is possible to us—and God will not fail us. Any man who is putting out all his strength in work and prayer to build up his higher nature need have no devil-fear that his strength will not be equal to his day. He may not be able to choose his circumstances; but he can show that he, and not the circumstances, is the master. He can offer to the world the living proof that the triumph of good is possible to him whose power is the faithful God.

And once more: Because He is faithful who has promised, we may safely leave the issues of our life in His keeping. If by the help of God we are trying to do the will of God, nothing else really matters. The crooked places of to-day will be made straight to-morrow. After all, it is not more knowledge we need, but more power to use the knowledge we have. Much of our unrest only means that we want to know more than the silent God sees fit to tell us. We know enough for the wise ordering of life; and the highest, holiest thing any of us can do, is to do the wisest and best we know, in whatever honest sphere circumstances have placed us. The riddles of the universe, and the perplexities and heartache which come out of our attempts to reconcile much that we know and see with the rule of an Almighty, an all-wise and faithful God—these will be here long after we are gone. We must just take the Master at His word when He says: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

"We cannot," says a wise teacher, "take up a drop of water, and find in that drop the flow of the tides, and the soft and then loud music of calm and storm. To see the ocean we must grasp it in all its rocky bed, bordered by continents." So before the very present troubles of life, we cannot see all the government of the faithful God. It has boundaries wider than these. Human life is but a fraction of the sum of life. The tides of the mind, the music and the tumult of human waters, cannot be heard and felt in this drop of existence.

We may believe that the moral government of the world is in the hands of Him whose love and law are both the same; and we may, at the same time, have to recognize the fact, that so many suffer grievously from forces they have not called into being, and which they are almost helpless to control. We may have to reconcile as best we can, a general Providence, with much apparent severity in its particular operation. Unless this be understood, some parts of this address will appear inconsistent with each other. I leave this order of suffering—not its causes—with the responsibility of God; and, for myself, I am persuaded that our last word about it will be one of praise, and not of reproach—

"Right for a while may yield to wrong,
And virtue be baffled by crime,
But the help of our need and the might of our creed
Are faith, patience, courage, and time."

But to say that the faithfulness of God cannot be fully measured now is not to say that it cannot be measured at all. Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God, and our life will not only come out right at the end, it will come out right all the way. The lesson for us to learn is to labour and to wait; to

give God and ourselves space to work in. Whether God is in His heaven or not, of this I am sure, that, given time, right always comes to its own, and all wrong, sooner or later, is defeat and disaster. Time forgets nothing, it omits nothing which God requires at our hands. It may not be ours to choose our task, but we can choose to do it well. What is really everyday religion is to do common things in an uncommon spirit. There is nothing for us in the world that needs a lie; nothing that excuses us from the wise admonition—

"Count that day lost whose low descending sun
Views by thy hand no worthy action done."

Then let us just go on doing the highest we know, and the best we can. The reward may not seem to be to-day, nor yet to-morrow; but we shall see that it was everyday and all the way, when we look back upon it from the shores of the life eternal. Let us trust the faithful God, and we shall be taught to regard the troubles that test, and the limitations that perplex us, as the agents of His Providence through the courses of time. And as we see in each new revelation of His goodness and mercy towards us an added circle of splendour in His halo of light, we shall learn to say of ourselves, and the race of which we form a part—

"The God of Truth and Love,
The Ancient Friend of man,
Makes every age an onward stage,
And has, since time began;
Sing ye praises, oh, sing praises,
God has a glorious plan."

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MEN IN THE MAKING ***

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