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**SERMONIC.\***

**NATURE'S TRAVAIL AND TESTI-  
MONY.**

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*For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creature groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*—Rom. viii : 19-23.

THE theme of thought and topic of remark most common among you during these last few days has been that of the oppressive and monotonous heat. And this morning, particularly, it cannot fail to suggest the atmospheric reserves : the forces that lie latent in inanimate Nature. When, however, we speak of "inanimate nature," we scarcely ourselves understand what we say. Nature throughout its ranges is an incessant animation. If we assert the dogma that man alone is a rational creature and assume that there can be no consciousness other than that which translates itself to human intelligence, we merely confess, in a tautological way, that we are unable to trace any

method of consciousness which is not akin to our own.

Nevertheless, we begin at once to use figures of speech, which ascribe thought and volition to the whole material realm, as when we say that the skies smile or frown, that the winds whisper or rave, that the brook laughs or murmurs, that the sea rages, roars or rests.

And the literal and philosophical statements in regard to the motions of material force, which we describe as acting by law, furnish as real an evidence of an instinct, and so far forth of an intent, as does the play of the fish in the sea, or of the bird in the bough.

The ancients were more positive in their interpretations. They recognized an "anima mundi," a soul of the world. They assigned to every substance, to every element, its resident or inherent spirit, controlling it within the general harmony. It was the perversion of such an idea to idolatry which filled the world with foolish forms of mythology. The spirit of the air, the spirit of the fire, the spirit of the water, which corrupt imagination made into deities, primarily expressed the sentient volition everywhere evident in the material realm.

This sentient volition meets a broad

(\* The first several sermons are reported in full, the remainder are given in condensed form. Every care is taken to make these reports correct ; yet our readers must not forget that it would be unfair to hold a speaker responsible for what may appear in a condensation, made by another, of his discourse.—ED.]

wrong though they leave you standing alone.

3. Be true to your own nature as against imitation. To seek to be benefited by suggestion is one thing and by imitation is another. In the whole round of men none are weaker than the imitator.

4. Be true to yourself in not allowing the associations which surround you to carry you away from your education. The world's direst need is *tried men*.

5. Be true to yourself as a rational being—cultivate your mind.

6. Be earnest.

7. Be true to yourself as a son of God. Here you are safe. What bow can send a shaft into the pavilion of God?

No man can do your work. You are the monarch of your own will. The responsibility is individual.

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### ONE THING.

By T. L. CUTLER, D.D., IN LAFAYETTE AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BROOKLYN.

*One thing thou lackest.*—Mark x : 21.

*One thing I know.*—John ix : 25.

*One thing I do.*—Phil. iii : 13.

THE one thing I wish to speak about this evening is the great thing, the one thing needful.

I. The one thing *lacking*. The first passage speaks of one who came to Christ as an earnest enquirer. Christ points him to the laws of Moses. Those, he declares, he had kept from his youth. He holds up his life like an artist his picture, and with pride says: What lacks it? He courts criticism. Christ destroys the picture at one blow. Selfishness was there. He lacks one thing, but that one thing was the indispensable thing. He is like the man who is without the wedding garment. If a young man seeking employment lacks only the one thing, trustworthiness, what matter his other qualifications? That one lack is fatal. "Leave all, come with Me." That was the test which unveiled the heart of the young man. The path Christ walked was one

of self-denial. Young men, are you willing to enter that path? Do you ask what you lack? That young man lacked a new heart. Had he obeyed Christ, his name might have been known to the end of time. I never read this story but that I feel like stretching forth my hand and stopping him in his retreat. He little knows what he is throwing away.

II. The one thing *known*. This introduces a scene in Jerusalem. A blind man meets Christ and is sent to the pool to wash and he comes away seeing. The one thing he lacked was sight. When he returned, the one thing he saw which must have impressed him above all others, was the simple clad Christ. He was tried by the carping Pharisees, etc. He told them that the one thing he knew was that whereas he was blind he now saw. It was a *personal* experience. The power of Christianity in the world is positive, personal experience. It is the "I know" that is potent above all things. One who is grounded in experience is no more moved by the attacks of skepticism than is Gibraltar by the striking of a pebble at its base.

III. The one thing *done*. This introduces us to that grand, noble Apostle Paul. Here is a man of education, of ideas, of position; yet, says he, this one thing I do. The great men of the world have been devoted to single ideas. If told of danger, of want, of crucifixion, Paul had but a single answer: this one thing I do.

1. Now in these three texts we see the power of this one thing. It is a one thing which a rich man threw away and a beggar accepted and became rich. Paul made it the one object of his life and became great.

2. The secret of a useful life is to keep Christ in the conscience; not in the affections merely. The restored beggar, in spite of the opposition of the wealthy and the influential, remained true to Christ.

3. Do not these three texts describe us all? Some have rejected Christ, have preferred wealth, or friends, or pleasure to Him. If you lack this one thing all

your possessions will avail you not. Do you say I would like to possess Christ, but how? Let Christ possess you.

I come to you with the old truth in a new form. There is but one thing needful, accept Christ. You have but one life to live, one soul to save and but one way in which to save it. As you go to your homes think of this one thing.

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#### REPORTS IN BRIEF FROM THE ENGLISH PULPIT.

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An English Homiletic publication recently offered a prize for the best sermonic outlines. The following obtained the award as *first in structure*.—ED.

##### The Supreme Possession.

By REV. WILLIAM JONES, HARROLD, ENGLAND.

*He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.*

—1 John v : 12.

In these words the Apostle expresses—

I. A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. "He that hath the Son."

What are we to understand by these words? What is involved in them?

1. *Realizing faith in Him.* (1) In His *existence*. Saving faith in Christ is faith not in His historic reality only, but in His present existence—that He is. "He ever liveth." (2) In His *perfection*. It will profit me nothing to believe in Jesus as in an ordinary man, having the imperfections, weaknesses and sins of our human nature. Faith in such a being would not result in any accession of life to the believer. Faith must be exercised in Him as "holy, harmless, undefiled," etc. (3) In His *interest in us*. Faith in His existence and perfection will not benefit us unless we believe in His regard for us, that He cares for us, desires to bless and save us. Now we need what I have called a *realizing* faith in Him. The faith of which St. John and St. Paul wrote, and the faith which our Lord required in Himself was a far greater and deeper thing than intellectual assent. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." "When the soul in very truth

responds to the message of God," says Canon Liddon, "the complete responsive act of faith is threefold. This act proceeds simultaneously from the intelligence, from the heart, and from the will of the believer. His intelligence recognizes the unseen object as a fact. His heart embraces the object thus present to the understanding; his heart opens instinctively and unhesitatingly to receive a ray of heavenly light. And his will, too, resigns itself to the truth before it; it places the soul at the disposal of the object which thus rivets its eye, and conquers its affections." With a faith like this, the Christian apprehends Jesus Christ as a grand, living, spiritual Person; enshrines Him in the heart's innermost and holiest temple; offers to Him humblest and deepest reverence; thus the Christian "has the Son."

2. *Acceptance of His teaching.* The Christian is intellectually and practically loyal to the teachings of Jesus Christ. In a very true and important sense Plato may be said to have had Socrates. He had so studied his utterances, so mastered his method, so thoroughly acquainted himself with his views, and theories, and principles, moreover he held him in such high esteem, regarded him with such reverence that we may, without exaggeration, say that he possessed Socrates. "We have the mind of Christ." By means of His teaching we have intellectual communion with Him. His precious utterances, His glorious revelations, we believe; they are ours. All that He spake we receive as true, so His mind becomes ours, and in this sense we have Him.

3. *Supreme sympathy with Him.* He gave Himself for us, and in return we give ourselves to Him. "We love Him because He first loved us." By reciprocal affection we have Him. This is the truest, completest, highest way in which one person can have another. He by whom I am truly loved, and whom I truly love, is mine indeed. Thus we have the Son. He dwells in us by His Spirit. His teaching, His presence, His love, His life, His spirit are ours; Himself is ours, inalienably