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By CLELAND B. McAFEE

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Studies in the Sermon
" On the Mount

By
CLELAND BOYD MCAFEE, D. D., PH. D. 1866-
Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn



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Foreword

Riverside First Methodist Church 1-13-58
DURING the spring of 1910, I greatly enjoyed several Sabbath mornings with my people, expounding the familiar Sermon on the Mount. It is their suggestion that the notes of what was said be published. If it turns the thoughts of others to so great a manifesto of so great a King, I will be well rewarded.

CLELAND BOYD McAFEE.

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I

The Sermonizing of Jesus

I

THE SERMONIZING OF JESUS

IT is hardly fair to speak of Jesus as a preacher in our modern sense of the word. For the most part, He simply talked. Most that He said was suggested by questions of His disciples or by incidents which were brought to His attention. Much of it was said to individuals. The profoundest word that He uttered about God was said to a woman at Jacob's well. His statement of the new birth was not made in a sermon but in a talk with Nicodemus alone at night. Only occasionally do we see Him in the synagogue as a preacher. Generally He is walking along the way or sitting in a boat near the shore, or in some house at a meal or at a bedside, answering questions and making profound observations on current events.

Of course all that is preaching in the true

sense. Our common speech makes preaching a more formal, set, prepared effort. You hear men approve a pastor sometimes by saying : He does not preach ; he only talks. They tell their minister : Your sermons are good, but we like best of all your prayer-meeting talks. That distinction does not obtain in Scripture. We have degenerated. There is room in preaching for flights of oratory, doubtless, but there is more room certainly for the colloquial element. Indeed, the colloquial method, the question and answer method, has such advantages that the more formal method can redeem itself only by a kind of intimacy between minister and people which insures his knowledge of their questions before they are asked. Great preachers always know human hearts so well that they hear their unspoken inquiries, and know what hearers are thinking. Many people have said that the best part of Henry Ward Beecher's work was his prayer-meeting, for then he used often to sit comfortably on the platform and answer questions, as they were suggested by the people. He

learned that method from Jesus. It is preaching, as truly as the pulpit work is preaching.

This method of Jesus helps to explain the impression He made on His hearers. They felt the directness of what He was saying. On one occasion, the Pharisees resented His word about them, though He had not once mentioned them! They knew and all the people knew that He was dealing with the lives immediately before Him. He drew no imaginary portrait. His parable figures were not fanciful. In His stories no one does anything which men were not doing every day around Him. There is no strain of the imagination. He was always in intimate touch with human life. Movements on His horizon were quite certain to affect the message of the hour.

Most of us who preach to-day (absurd as it seems to mention us while His name is still in mind!), most of us are compelled to lay out carefully beforehand just what we shall say and how we shall say it. We do not dare allow ourselves to be diverted from

that line by slight occurrences such as Jesus used. Yet our only salvation as preachers must be in a fuller sense of the present need for our eternal Gospel. The making of a sermon which has no reference to the life of the people who will hear it is diverting and profitable exercise, but it is poor preaching. The sermons that are great are certain to deal with some abiding need of the human life, not abstractly considered, but concretely handled.

Most of the preaching of Jesus has not been recorded for us. In very few hours one could read all that is left of His three years of talking. There are only three extended talks reported. Of the others we have the barest fragments—enough to make one wish for more, as artists wish for Grecian statues of which only the torso or the limbs are left. Of the three given, all are really conversations with the disciples, two of them certainly in private, the other private for the most part. One is the farewell talk in the upper room or along the way to Gethsemane. If the intercessory prayer is included it is the

longest. It is recorded in the fourteenth and following chapters of John. Another is a talk on the side of Olivet overlooking Jerusalem, which deals with the signs of the end and the destruction of Jerusalem. It is recorded in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew. The third has received the title of the Sermon on the Mount, and is given in the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of Matthew.

Even in the more formal and extended talks there were questions which directed in part the course of thought. They are definitely recorded in the case of the two former ones. They are to be understood, as we shall see, in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus seemed to care more to get a few things understood than to say a great many things. He followed the line of men's needs more directly than the line of His own thinking.

Two questions arise regarding the Sermon on the Mount. First, Is it a continuous discourse at all, or has the evangelist only gathered together a sheaf of the teachings of Jesus spoken at different times? Sec-

ondly, What is the relation of the Matthew Sermon to the similar one more briefly recorded in Luke?

The first question is not a vital one. Certainly the presumption on the surface of the account is that it is a continuous session held with the disciples. It has few abrupt changes of thought, and those are easily explained either by omission of the connecting ideas or by questions which are raised in our own minds by something that has preceded and which would naturally be voiced by men like ourselves when the talk was first heard. We have only about twenty minutes of what was doubtless the fellowship of two or three hours on the hilltop. The burden of proof must lie with those who doubt the continuity of the Sermon. Until the contrary is proved the natural presumption must remain.

The one argument against it is the fact that we find in the other Gospels the same ideas uttered under other circumstances. It is urged that we must reconcile them. So we set out on the task of "harmonizing the

Gospels." That is a helpful task, of course, but it must not be undertaken with the presumption that all similar expressions are from the same occurrence. What has ever given us the idea that Jesus could not have said the same thing a great many times? Why need we "correct" one evangelist's quotation from Him to make it match another's quotation, when the two may not be the same utterance? Here was our Lord going up and down the country for three years, talking with His disciples and with the crowd, meeting conditions in one place similar to those in another, answering similar questions from different crowds, and having many occasions to utter the same teaching, the same warning. If the Sermon on the Mount was in any sense a manifesto for His disciples, it would be natural that He should often utter its substance in the succeeding years. They were as forgetful as we, and needed repetition as much as we. We waste our effort in trying to bring about a minute harmony. There are three years of a varied, busy, eager life to deal with, three

years of utterances of a heart-burdened Preacher whose message is a simple one. We shall not succeed in crowding all into a few words and we do poorly in trying to force all similar conditions and utterances into identity. I have heard laboured attempts to reconcile the feeding of the four thousand and the feeding of the five thousand, when they are distinctly recorded as two events, which need not be reconciled. We need not argue whether Matthew is more accurate than Luke in quoting a saying of Jesus until we are sure they are reporting the same saying.

That suggests the answer to the second question regarding the relation of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew and the briefer report in the sixth chapter of Luke's Gospel. In spite of much critical opinion on the other side and with at least some knowledge of its argument, my own mind is quite clear that they are two accounts of two discourses. The Matthew Sermon is the account of a talk with His disciples on the mountain. Only at the end do the people

come up, and their coming closes the quiet session. As the group go down the mountain, or at some stopping place on the way occurs what Luke records, a talk much more adapted to a general crowd of people, far briefer, and much less intense. The effort to decide, for example, which form of the Beatitudes Jesus actually used, whether that given in Matthew or that given in Luke, seems to me purely gratuitous. He used both and for aught we know half a dozen other forms beside, which are not recorded, but which were determined by the conditions and by the times. So with the Lord's Prayer. It comes in naturally in the Sermon on the Mount, suggested doubtless by a general question regarding prayer. The Luke account in the eleventh chapter is different, but the occasion is different, as a reading of the story shows. Here are fixed principles of prayer. There is no conceivable reason why they should not be many times stated in the same general terms. So with the familiar Ask-seek-knock paragraph. It is a striking saying. If it

was used in one connection on the mountain in talking with the disciples, there were many reasons why it should be used again in other connections. It is not what is said once that most impresses a group of men. It is what becomes characteristic that remains with them. I doubt not there were many such characteristic sayings of our Lord, used many times and affected in their utterance by the circumstances.

This is not to imply for an instant that there is no such work as "harmonizing the Gospels." There are several accounts of the same occurrences, certainly. The plea is only against a slavish effort to force a harmony where none was intended.

Counting this, then, a talk with His disciples, it is only in the most general sense that we can speak of its "theme" or its "outline." Its theme is only that of the whole ministry of Jesus. We are told that He went about teaching and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. His first and outstanding text was: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." That

would naturally be implicit in what was said in His first long session with His disciples. It is not strange, therefore, that it keeps cropping out as the talk goes on. Only in that sense is it fair to speak of the theme of the Sermon as being *The Kingdom of Heaven on the Earth*. So it is fair only in a general way to speak of its outline. It was no set or framed discourse, planned from start to finish. But minds move on in discoverable paths. Now that the session is over, let us look back and see how those minds actually did move. The outline we discover would not have occurred to them at the beginning nor during its progress, but if our analysis is correct, the disciples would have recognized it at the end. You can do the same thing with a delightful evening that you spend with a keen-minded man. You have no plan at the first, you follow no line consciously, yet when it is over, you can look back and see the path you have taken. That is all we seek to do with this Sermon. Here it is, the notes of a talk of the greatest Preacher with His disciples. How did the

22 THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

talk run on, what line did it take, not consciously but unconsciously? With this meaning and this meaning only, we trace the following outline :

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ON THE EARTH :

- | | | | |
|------|--|-----------|---------------|
| I. | The Quality of Its Members,
Their Influence, | Matt. v. | 3-12
13-16 |
| II. | Its Relation to the Laws of the
Former Kingdom : | | |
| | Not Destructive, | | 17-20 |
| | But Interpretative, as illustrated
in the law regarding | | |
| | Murder, | | 21-26 |
| | Uncleanness, | | 27-32 |
| | Communication, | | 33-37 |
| | Retaliation, | | 38-42 |
| | Love, | | 43-48 |
| III. | The Conduct of Its Members. | | |
| | 1. They covet God's Favour
rather than Man's: | Matt. vi. | 1 |
| | <i>a.</i> In Almsgiving, | | 2-4 |
| | <i>b.</i> In Prayer, | | 5-15 |
| | <i>c.</i> In Fasting. | | 16-18 |
| | 2. They serve God rather than
Mammon, as is manifested: | | |
| | <i>a.</i> In the Matter of Re-
wards, | | 19-21 |
| | <i>b.</i> In the Unity of Their
Life Principle, | | 22-24 |
| | <i>c.</i> In Their Unanxious
Daily Life, | | 25-34 |

IV. Its Members Safeguarded.

1. Regarding Quick Judgments, Matt. vii. 1-5
2. Regarding Religious Reserve, 6
3. Regarding Religious Poverty, 7-12
4. Regarding Religious Sloth, 13-14
5. Regarding Religious Pretense, 15-23
6. Regarding Religious Instability, 24-27

II

The Members of the Kingdom

(*Matt. v. 1-16*)

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain : and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him : and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,

Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy.

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

Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven : for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.

Ye are the salt of the earth : but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted ? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand ; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men ; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

II

THE MEMBERS OF THE KINGDOM

AT the outset of the Sermon on the Mount, we discover that the essential fact about the kingdom of heaven on the earth is not a set of laws or a system of government. The essential fact is the people who make up the kingdom. Here we are told what their quality is, what blessings come to them and what service they render. So we find at the very beginning the Beatitudes. There are eight given. Five of them refer to inner condition—poor in spirit, meek, hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, pure in heart. Two of them deal with experiences—mourning and persecution. One of them only has any reference to activity, the peacemakers. That itself is suggestive. The principal element in membership in the kingdom of God on earth is not the work that a man does; it is

the inner character of the man. That character is, of course, certain to express itself in outer conduct. The man who is genuinely poor in spirit, or meek, or merciful, is certain to show his character in an outward way. But the essential fact about the members of the new kingdom is the inner condition which is developed.

Observe another fact, that all these are plural. Whatever the kingdom is, it is social. Men develop it together, though they enter it and have its experiences individually. And the irresistible suggestion is that whoever refuses to take his place in the kingdom as a whole hinders by that much its progress. You get that same suggestion in the plural of the sayings in the latter part of our passage. No man is the salt of the earth, and no man, after Christ, is the light of the world. The members of the kingdom are all together the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It takes everybody to make it true of anybody at its fullest.

Note another thing about these virtues. They are not the militant virtues. They of-

fend certain belligerencies in us. We are quite sure they would not work to-day ; perhaps they will work in an ideal future ; perhaps they would have worked in some earlier day, but we know our own day too well to think that these are the marks of real desirable citizenship. Regarding some of them we are entirely comfortable. The merciful do obtain mercy ; we feel they should ; we are hurt when they do not. The visiting nurse is safe anywhere in the city. A Salvation Army lass is safe and free anywhere in the vilest places. Merciful, she obtains mercy. Nothing would more outrage the city than to find that some one who had been honestly seeking to render mercy had been cruelly treated. The pure in heart—certainly they should see God, not in the far future, but here and now. The impure in heart ought not to see Him, we feel. If we have lost sight of Him, and all sense of Him, because of a heart-sin, we know that it is as it should be. And peacemakers ought to be called sons of God. Trouble makers deal in a potion of the devil's own brewing. The

lot of the peacemaker is not an easy one; his task is often a thankless one, but he is on God's errand and he ought to be called His child.

But there we end our instinctive approval. We are inclined to be skeptical about this being poor in spirit. Yet that may be largely from misreading of the word itself. It is not far from our word *unassertive, unarrogant*, and when it is so read we more nearly agree to it. The man without arrogance, the man without self-assertion, is blessed even according to our poor accounting. But what can be the justification for saying that the meek are blessed since they inherit the earth? As a matter of fact, they do not seem to inherit the earth. It is the aggressive, assertive man who inherits the earth. Or those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; what can be the ground of saying that they are blessed? The fact that theirs is the kingdom of heaven seems very small return for the fact of their persecution. We have an instinctive feeling that no man ought to be persecuted for

righteousness' sake, and that it argues against the vigour of the righteous that he will allow himself to suffer for it.

Well, we must remember that in this Sermon Christ is declaring the development of a kingdom, which is not to be according to our natural inclinations. It is to be a kingdom which will at some points reverse even the best thoughts that have been in the past. It cannot be asked to fit into an arrogant, boastful civilization. It will be at war with that civilization. Manifestly, then, its members will not be praised for their righteousness; they are quite certain to be persecuted. Grant a civilization in which unrighteousness is counted profitable, in which unrighteousness is counted pleasant, the man who stands out for righteousness is set for persecution. That will be quite inevitable, and the reward which comes to him is that he is to have the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of earth he may not have; but it is at least to be said for the kingdom of heaven, that it lasts longer.

When you look, however, at the third Be-

attitude, in which it is declared that the meek are blessed since they inherit the earth, the situation seems different. Is that actually true? The fact is that nothing else could possibly be true. There are few principles of science or history that are more plainly marked than this. Let any man come to nature in arrogant, forceful way, let him come telling nature what it must do, what its laws must be, and see how nature deals with him. So long as men were telling nature out of their own heads what it must do, nature kept all its secrets to itself. Long before Galileo, it was taught that the world is round, but no man knew it, because men did not come with humble heart to nature and ask to know its secrets. They came instead saying: Everything perfect must be in form of a circle or a sphere, and since the world is perfect it must be in form of a circle or a sphere. So long as men took that attitude they could never learn the truth about the simplest fact of nature. You cannot command nature; you cannot come to it with an iron hand and control it. No man ever laid a railroad across

any mountain, nor ran a ship across any sea, nor mined the metals out of the earth except in the spirit of childlike meekness. He may not have been meek towards his fellows, but he inherited nothing from his fellows either. In his attitude towards the earth, he was meek or he got nothing. The meekness we are afraid of is affected meekness ; meekness afraid to assert itself. But true meekness, readiness to take second place, to learn what are the laws of the conditions under which one must live, and abide by those laws, has always been the spirit that has inherited the best things there are to inherit. If you say it will not go in Wall Street, or on Broadway, I remind you that nothing else goes in either place. The man who means to inherit what Wall Street has to give must find the laws of Wall Street and live by them, must learn the laws of men's minds and obey them. Let him assert himself against them for one instant, let him tell the minds of men what they must do, let him tell the laws of finance how they have to act, and we shall soon see whether the man can inherit Wall Street

without meekness. Let him try it in the commercial field, let him try to make commercial laws himself and govern commercial forces instead of finding them and obeying them, and we shall see whether anything but meekness with reference to its laws shall ever succeed in that sphere in which one hopes to inherit. The Beatitude simply says, then, that the meek are the ones who find the laws of that sphere in which they are hoping to inherit, and live by them. They inherit the earth, indeed they inherit everything there is to inherit. The other men constantly struggle and fight and gain advantage, but nothing is ever poured into their lives.

So the other virtues only express great underlying truths of all life. And yet they are the humbler virtues, and that is why they are the virtues of the kingdom of heaven. These humbler virtues are the abiding ones. The world may have a kingdom in which the opposite virtues rule, but it is a passing one. Return to that Beatitude of the meek for a moment. It is the meek men who inherit. The arrogant men get hold of things

but they lose them too. A speaker at a banquet said recently that he had observed that all the great men of New York were born and brought up at Jones' Corners. The wording was exaggerated, but the meaning is true to the fact. For a permanent kingdom there must be these homely, humble virtues. If you think not, try their opposites and see what kind of kingdom they would develop. If it seems that the poor in spirit are not blessed, then ask yourself whether it is the arrogant in spirit who are really blessed. Do you say that those who mourn are not blessed? Well, ask yourself whether that man is truly happy who knows none of the sorrow of the world. Is he the man whose life is richest who has never known sorrow, who has never had the sorrow of the world pressed upon him, who has never known the suffering of little children or the distress of the afflicted? You say it does not sound right to declare that the meek are the happy ones. As a matter of fact, are the proud the happy ones? Is the man who is necessarily always on the lookout for his own rights,

seeking to assert his will against everything, is he the happy man? Will you say that the man with a passion for righteousness is not happy? Then who is? Is it the man who does not care for righteousness at all, is he the happy one? Merciful,—let us say that he is not the happy one, then is the unmerciful the happy one? Is Scrooge in his cold office on Christmas Eve happy, unmerciful and bitter, or is Scrooge flying about London on Christmas morning with arms full of packages the happy one? Merciful or unmerciful? Are the pure in heart happy or the impure? Is there any man who has allowed impurity in his heart, who does not know that when he opened his heart to it he opened a door to seven legions of devils? Peacemakers or trouble makers, which are blessed? The man who has so stood up for righteousness that he has incurred the sneer or the contempt or the contumely of his fellows, or the weak man who has no such zeal for righteousness that he ever provokes the enmity of evil men,—which is the happy one? It was a familiar argument in my

logic classes, this argument of the contrary. Reverse these Beatitudes, see if you will stand for the opposite of them. If they trouble you as they stand, see whether you do not put yourself in an impossible position by denying them. No, they are not the militant virtues; they do offend certain belligerencies in each of us, but they are the fundamental ones.

Note another fact about them. These are universal traits. Here are no secrets for a class. Here are no blessings for the king which the subject may not have, or for the subject without the king. Here are no priestly benedictions which worshippers seek in vain. Here are blessings available in the pew as well as in the pulpit, as easily attained in the pulpit as in the pew and no easier. They level us up, not down. What are we when we go in at the church door? We are doctors, lawyers and merchants, or servants or mistresses, teachers, students—everything, many things. We hold our heads high or we hang them before those who seem nobler than ourselves. But we

leave that at the door. Within, we bow before the unseen. We meet on common terms or we may as well not be there. The same blessing is available for us all. Who are they that shall be comforted? The rich, the poor, the merchant, the modest householder, the social factor? No, they who have passed through one common experience, they who have mourned. Death carries no calling list, does not consult the blue book. Death calls by the directory. Street or avenue, hovel or palace—it is all one. Sorrow knows the way there. Write your restriction in your deed—no cheap houses in your city “addition,” no saloons, no tenements, no factories, any restriction you please, but waste no time writing “no sorrow.” Are the rich happy? Some of them and sometimes. Are the poor happy? Some of them and sometimes. But they who mourn, and have the balm of God’s comfort poured on their souls, they are blessed. Look in vain through all these for accidental conditions of life. Nothing about education here, nothing about wealth, nothing about

social standing. Those may be, or may not be, so far as this is concerned. Those trifling incidents have nothing to do with standing in the kingdom. Here we find universal traits of character. The passion for righteousness, the true hunger and thirst, we shall find it in the home of wealth and the home of poverty both. We shall find the son of the palace and the son of the hovel meeting on common ground there. We shall find men so eager for righteousness as to accept the contempt of their fellows on the boards of banks, and on the wharf yonder unloading the ship. Persecuted for righteousness' sake,—that is not a matter of any incidental condition. All these are matters of character, and wherever they touch conduct they are as open to each man as to any man.

Go on to a further suggestion. These Beatitudes all challenge us with their opening word. For what does that word mean? There are two words in Scripture translated *blessed*. One is the Greek word from which we get our word *eulogy* and means "well spoken of." It is this word that is used at

the time of the triumphal entry : Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord ; that is, He is to be praised, to be well spoken of. It is the word used with reference to Mary : Blessed art thou among women, most to be praised of all. It is the word used in the epistle, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let Him be praised, it means. But the other word is the one used here, which has nothing to do with praise but means *happy*. As when it is said in Revelation : Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord—they are happy. Or, It is more blessed to give than to receive, there is more happiness in it. Or as when Mary herself says : All generations shall call me blessed ; that is, shall realize my happiness. The first word refers to the opinion of others. This word means an inward condition—Happy. The poor in spirit are happy, for theirs is the kingdom of God. The merciful are happy, because they obtain mercy. Happiness, then, is to be the normal state of the members of the kingdom. Whatever is to be said of the members of the new kingdom,

they are intended to be happy. Swinburne said that the pale Galilean had conquered, and that the whole world had grown gray with His teaching. But Swinburne saw the world out of eyes that were made gray by his pessimism. In this kingdom there is no room for pessimists. The normal state of the members of the kingdom is that of happiness. It has been the charge of some of our later writers that paganism is a faith of joy, while that of Christianity is of shadow, because the feasts of paganism are those of flowers and dances and merry sunshine, while those of the Christian faith are quiet and subdued.

You get some hint of that abiding paganism in the excesses to which we go in our Christian celebrations. Our Christmas is not simply a time of reverent appreciation of the birth of our Lord ; it must be a time of excesses. Our pleasures must run far on into the night ; we must vie with each other in gifts and amusements. That is, we must make a pagan effort to find joy in our celebration of an event which itself

carries enough joy with it. So with our Easter joy. We are constantly complicating our happiness. We cannot be happy except in rivalry with our fellows. To be happy according to the inner spirit seems impossible for many.

Now into that mood comes the kingdom of God, to remind us that we are expected in this world to be happy, that a gloomy member of the kingdom of God is missing the essential meaning of his membership in it, that a depressed and unhappy life is never a worthy Christian life, and that, on the other hand, a happiness that is dependent on conditions that can be changed, conditions that are not inward but outward, conditions over which one has no control one's self, is never a happiness that belongs within the kingdom. The members of the kingdom are meant to be happy, but they are made happy by conditions that no one else can remove. I may take away from you your possessions, but by no chicanery which I can practice, can I rob you of your quiet spirit. I may keep from you the

supply for many of your tastes and desires, but can I deny you the righteousness of God, which is your chief passion? I may browbeat and maltreat you, but can I keep you from being merciful? Is there anything I can do to prevent your being a peacemaker? Indeed, if I lay most malicious plans against you, I only deepen the grounds of your happiness, for it is the poor in spirit and the meek and the persecuted for righteousness' sake who have the essential happiness of the kingdom. The very activity of the enemies of the kingdom is serving the purposes of the members of the kingdom. I grant you, this is high ground, but it is the ground of the Beatitudes. The members of the kingdom are in the world to display true happiness. God gives them their happiness in such wise that it can never be taken away from them.

That brings us by natural stage to the other part of this first section, which tells us of the influence of the members of the kingdom. It is suggestive that they are

not to be taken out of the world. They are not here simply for their own sakes, nor for the sake of the kingdom. They are manifestly here for the world's sake. They are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. One thinks instinctively of that scene in the earliest part of the Old Testament in which Abraham pleads the cause of Sodom, praying that the city may be spared for fifty righteous people, having his prayer instantly answered, growing bolder, lessening the number of the saving force until he came finally to the plea for the saving of a whole city for the sake of ten righteous ones. That early story represents a tremendous fact in history. Carlyle was cynical enough to say that there are only a few men worth saving, but it is quite impossible to save them without saving others, so all the forces of nature conspire to save for those few really worth while. Beneath the cynicism of that there is a great truth. It would be difficult to prove that some lives which surgery saves are worth the saving in themselves. It might

be difficult to answer the argument of those who oppose charitable hospitals, as a few still do, that they save alive a good many who had better be allowed to die. Even though that were true, yet all these ministries are of immeasurable value because they save alive some who should be kept, some whom the world yet needs. That is meant only to illustrate that the members of the kingdom of heaven are left in the earth because there is a ministry to the world which they are intended to perform. The privileges of the Christian are the world's necessity. Light and salt, the world needs them both. The members of the kingdom are both. They are called the salt of the earth; they have preserving and flavouring power. They are called the light of the world; they have illuminating power.

But the necessities of the world are the necessities of the Christian as well. That preserving power must be maintained. It can be lost, and then the Christian is just so much worse than others as he might have been better than others. If the salt have lost

its savour, it is good for nothing except to be cast out and trodden under the feet of men. The Christian who has lost his distinctive character is not simply a worldling again ; he is worse ; he is in some true sense an outcast. Let no Christian man who has become valueless as a preserving power in the world, who has caught the general tone and taste of the world, let him not suppose that he escapes the contempt of his fellows. No man, not even the worldliest, likes to see another inconsistent. We would rather see a man absurdly consistent than comfortably inconsistent. Let me betray an indifference in my Christian life, let me profess that I love Christ and mean to obey Him and then live without regard to Him, and I lose my own respect and the respect of my fellow Christians and the respect of my non-Christian friends as well. They may not often speak of it, but whenever it comes to mind they quietly scorn me. I have lost my savour, and I am good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under the feet of men.

So the place of illumination must be ac-

cepted. The lamp which is so modest that it must needs be under a bushel is not modest, it is disgraced. Let it not deceive itself. The lamp which has no purpose to shine may be what you please of ornament, but it is no lamp. When a man is set for a lamp, he is like that city which was in Jesus' eye at the time He spoke these words. Perched on a hillside with its white walls against the dark background of the hill, you will see it fifty times as you ride in and out among the valleys. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. When men light a lamp they do not put it under a measure; they let it stand out free. They do not hide it behind the door, nor in some inconspicuous place. They put it on a stand so that it lights all that are in the house. That is the place of the Christian. He is not out in the public glare because he chooses to be there for his own uses, but he is there because that is the only logical place for him to be. He is in the world to illuminate it, to brighten it, to cheer it. If he seeks to hide in it, he is making himself ridiculous.

The whole section closes with a fair answer

to the unspoken objection that for a member of the kingdom to assert himself, to be placed on a stand where he may shine, is to imperil himself with egotism, to arrogate to himself more than his right. The answer is swift and natural. Even so, let your light shine before men, that they may see, not you, of course, but your good works, and glorify, not you, God forbid, but your Father who is in heaven. We shall find after a while that great saying about not letting the left hand know what the right hand does, but we must not allow it to keep us from the meaning of this verse. The light of the Christian is his good works, representing his whole character and that light must shine to be seen. The Christian who is not willing that his good works shall be seen may be beautifully modest, but he must remember that he takes away thereby in some part from the glory of the Father in heaven. Better that we should not be seen than that we should shine for our own sakes. But if we will not be seen, then the Father will not be glorified. If our light shines so that men see our good works, then they have the op-

portunity to glorify our Father who is in heaven.

Surely you have noticed how all these qualities of the members of the kingdom are gathered up in the Person and Nature of our Lord. Poor in spirit, sensitive to sorrow, meek, passionate for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemaker, persecuted—where was ever a man who more fully gathered up all these traits into his own character? Was there one like Himself so much the salt of the earth, so much the light of the world? Did any one ever so let his light shine before men that his good works were seen and his Father glorified? So it comes about that the members of the kingdom of heaven on earth are only duplicates, each in his own small way, and all of them together in the large way, duplicates of Him who is the head of the kingdom, and who in the Sermon on the Mount issued His Manifesto to all His followers.

III

The New Kingdom's Relation to
the Old

(*Matt. v. 17-48*)

Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire. If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the last farthing.

Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell. And if thy right hand causeth

thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell. It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement : but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress : and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.

Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths : but I say unto you, Swear not at all ; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God ; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet ; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thy canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay : and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.

Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil : but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy : but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you ; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye ? do not even the publicans the same ? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others ? do not even the Gentiles the same ? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

III

THE NEW KINGDOM'S RELATION TO THE OLD

THIS is a section of the Sermon which is never in mind when men say lightly and easily that they have no use for creeds or churches and think the Sermon on the Mount sufficient. Verily it is sufficient—sufficient to appal any man. There was never a church nor a creed which put a man's life to such severe test as does this section of the Sermon of Christ. Do our Lord the justice to remember that He has given fair warning of the high demands of His kingdom. He wants all men, but not on just any terms. We shall see something of His terms as we go on.

This section of the Sermon is intended to show us His attitude towards the recognized facts of the kingdom which existed when He came. He was not to destroy them, neither

the law nor the prophets ; He was to give them their full meaning. The jot and the tittle, as we would say the dotting of the i or the crossing of the t, should in no wise pass from the law till all things are accomplished. That means simply the fullest and finest details. His is the new kingdom but it is true to the old, and the old will come to its best in the new.

There have always been two groups of men in such matters. Some are conservative, they are fearful of the new because they see such value in the old. Innovations frighten them. They are not narrow ; they are simply assured of the loss that will come if the old is taken away. Others are radical ; they are eager for the new thing, they see the limitations of the old and the value of the new. The newest idea, the newest method seems to them necessarily the best. The truth of the progress of history makes appeal to them. In the nature of the case, they feel, whatever is latest in thought is best in it. And Christ comes to both these groups, for, as always when honest men dif-

fer, both are right. To the conservative He comes with reassurance. Nothing of the old that is valuable or strong shall be lost. Examine the new, and you will find the old at the heart of it. Study the channel where the new current is running and you will find the water of the old channel there. That is a very suggestive fact; it appears everywhere. Study the real forward movement of thought and you find it true. There will always be petty disturbances, offshoots here and there which have no reference to the real advance of thought; they may cut loose from the old truth, but they are short lived and passing. In the main movement, down the main stream, the old is never lost. All that was valuable and helpful in the old teaching of the earth as the centre of the universe, all that ever helped men who believed it and made them able to live their lives better, is carried over into the new teaching of the relative place of the earth in the universe, and is coupled there with larger truth. And so with all other truth. The conservative is right, the old must be

conserved. But the radical is right too. The old is not enough, and in every department of truth there tend to develop false emphases, mistaken inferences, wrong additions. It is not enough that the old be conserved ; it must be fulfilled. The error of the radical is that he would destroy the old. The error of the conservative is that he would forbid its fulfillment in the new. Such a word from our Lord ought to work in us, if we are conservative, a fine courage and confidence, destroying all fear or dread of the future, and if we are radical, a fine honour and respect for the truth which has come to us, ending all contemptuous superiority on our own part.

But that fulfillment only increases the difficulty of these laws. There is something very attractive to most of us about a religion which accents form instead of spirit. It is the easy religion. Suppose you felt that there is some one to whom you could go after wrong-doing and have him tell you just the thing to do to make up for your offenses, do you not see how it would

simplify matters? Or suppose there was some definite thing you could do to insure your being absolutely right with God. Or take Sabbath observance. Suppose you had a faith that bade you go to church in the morning and then do as you please the rest of the day—get your religion out of the way early enough to leave you plenty of time for what you may want to do. Do you not see how easy that would be?

But when Christ comes to put all that formalism where it belongs, to tell me that the thing I have to do is inward, and religion is not a thing I can attend to and be done with early on Sunday or any other day, and to say that there is really no time in any day when I can do just as I please without certain definite and important limitations, you see how the matter gets more serious. Yet that is what this section of the Sermon does. It puts religion back into the inner life. To take Jesus' illustration: I cannot bring my gift to the altar, go through a ceremony and so make good my offenses against my brother. I must get right with him and

then do my part at the altar. Or put it this way, I cannot safeguard my character by safeguarding my reputation. What you think of me is my reputation; what God knows I am is my character. The two may agree or they may not. But reputation is based very largely on external things, on what I do or what some one else says I do. It may be better or worse than my character, for the critical elements in character are hid from other men. The law looks out chiefly for the external things. It tells me not to kill my brother. Let me control my hands, and I will gain the reputation of the law. When I come into the new kingdom, however, that becomes a very cheap matter. The kingdom goes beyond my hands, beyond my face, pushes aside every veil, and measures me, my real self.

Of course there is comfort in that as well as warning. Over the mantel of an old building is a motto: "They say; what do they say; let them say." There is no protecting a reputation. Lies are developed by being pursued. Bitter tongues cannot be

controlled. Reputation is made behind one's back. People are making it whom you never see, putting in good or bad elements. But character—no one can interfere with that. Tongues may wag, gossips may rage, even courts may convict; but a man's character moves on a different plane, a plane where just he and God walk together. That is very subtly put in the striking saying of this section, that unless one's righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees he cannot even enter the kingdom of heaven. No one's reputation for righteousness could possibly exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees of that day. No one's accent on the externalities of righteousness could possibly be greater. But Jesus brushes all that aside and declares that when you get past reputation into character, past externals into internals, you find nothing at all. And yet that is the only place where it is important to find anything. This is the principle involved then: the new laws do not destroy the old system, they simply fulfill it. They go back of everything external and strike into the in-

ternal life. All the rest of the section is intended to illustrate that.

Five items are instanced, not as though they were all but as being intended to illustrate what is meant. Doubtless they were brought out by questions of the disciples, and were accompanied by discussion of the bearing of this new enterprise on common life. The five illustrations which are recorded deal, first, with murder, showing that whereas in the former kingdom murder was an external act, in the new kingdom it is an internal one, which may be absolutely between God and the man himself. Secondly, with the matter of uncleanness, which shows that whereas in the older law impurity might be an external thing and excusable within limits, in the new law it is internal and inexcusable. Thirdly, with the matter of communication, where in the old law men were commanded to keep their oaths, and in the new law are commanded to use none. Fourthly, with the matter of retaliation, where the old *lex talionis* is interpreted in large terms, and men are urged to live generously

instead of revengefully. And finally with the matter of the spirit that one shall have towards one's associates, whether of love or hatred. It will not be necessary to go into minute detail in all these, but some suggestive things may be taken out of each of them.

In the first illustration, where one of the most serious laws is taken, Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment, Jesus points out that it is possible to have in one's spirit conditions which would never lead one to outward murder, but which would yet lay one liable to the punishment which is set for murder. He urges the development of a spirit of due consideration for one's brother. You notice the three possibilities, being angry with one's brother, calling him by a term of contempt, *raca*, which means simply empty headed, or calling him by a term of condemnation, fool. All of these are unjustifiable in a member of the kingdom. They mark an unworthy spirit, and since the kingdom is concerned with spirit and not with deed, they lay one liable to the same punishment.

But the change of the feeling is no easy matter. It cannot be made by act of will. No man can say, My feeling towards my brother is wrong and unchristian, I will change it. Minds do not move along those easy lines. There must be positive action. The difficulty that caused the feeling must be cleared. He must be reconciled to his brother by his own act.

So the argument moves on to a simple corrective of any such differences between a member of the kingdom and his brother. A quarrel, or a difference, must be adjusted as early as possible. It is generally easy at the first, Jesus reminds us; it increases in difficulty as it goes on. Alone with the adversary, the matter can be adjusted, but when the magistrate comes in as a third party, one is at the beginning of a long and hard road, with the judge, the officer, the prison, and the absolute severity of justice to meet. That is based on human nature and its limitations. The man who fights hard for his own rights is apt to demand more than his rights, and then to receive at men's hands only exact

justice. And whatever we say in our bragging moments, not one of us is prepared to receive simply cold justice at the hands of our fellows. We are always receiving from somebody something better than we can claim, and it is generally the best of what we receive. But contumacious people, men with hard hearts towards opponents, who must fight everything clear out, are apt to receive as little consideration as can be given them, may get their rights shaved to the last line. Which is what that verse means: Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the last farthing.

Take the illustration about purity. Social relations have been the problem, almost the despair, of civil officers and moral leaders in all periods. The best the law can do is to demand an outward decency. But Jesus makes the matter vastly more difficult. He puts the whole problem back in the inner, the unseen life, and He will not hear any cheap excuses. At any cost, the life must be kept pure. If an eye causes one to stumble it should be plucked out and cast away. If

a hand causes stumbling, it should be cut off and cast away. Not because that is a real sacrifice; it is an ultimate gain. It is profitable for one to be limited in this life if thereby he may be unlimited in the next. And every yielding to sin ties one's life for the future. We need not look to Christ to find release of the social strain. He will demand far more of us than social reformers, far more than any law that was ever framed. But His demand will be in the inner life.

We need not stop long with the illustration about communication. Our Lord is not dealing here with legal oaths. You will remember that when He Himself was put upon oath He answered. Up to that time in His examination He had not answered any question. The taking of legal oaths is not under consideration. He is dealing instead with the wretched habit of current adjurations, and light and trifling expressions with which so many people interlard their conversation. It was prevalent in His day and has been since. Twenty years ago I was riding through Palestine horseback. I did not know

Arabic, and spoke to my horse as my dragoon and all others did. When we came to the northern part of the land, my missionary friends were horrified to hear me uttering long and loud blasphemies in Arabic. But they were the common speech of the country, used on the most trifling occasions. Any quick ear will discover that we need the same warning to-day against expressions sometimes profane, sometimes only trifling and meaningless. So current has it become and so scandalous that even for the sake of pure speech one might lift a voice of protest. The members of the kingdom at least ought to learn to be simple in their speech, to say what they mean and let it go at that, instead of attempting to buttress everything that they say with some qualifying oath or slighting expression. If we have something to affirm let us simply affirm it, letting our speech be, Yea, yea ; if we have something to deny, let us simply deny it, letting our speech be, Nay, nay, knowing that all sputtering and breathless support or defense of what we are saying endangers us, is of the evil one.

When you come to the illustration from the law of retaliation, you find very much larger dispute. Over against the law, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, Jesus sets the command that we are not to resist him that is evil, and then gives instances of being smitten on the right cheek and turning the other, of giving up the coat at the law and the cloak also, of going two miles instead of one, and of giving to those who beg and borrow. It ought to be said that the *lex talionis*, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, was never given as a personal law in the first place. It was intended instead as a law for the judges, and it still has its value for them. Punishment ought in some sense to fit the crime. In its judicial aspects the law is not set aside, and still determines somewhat the attitude which society must take towards those who offend against law.

There is, however, large difference between the attitude which a Christian may take towards wrongs which are personal to himself, and his attitude towards wrongs to others or to the whole social circle. So far as they

are purely personal he is least worthy when he resents them or magnifies them into importance. The most unchristian motto that could stain a personal crest is the Latin one which means: No one wrongs me with impunity. It is fitting that the symbol with it should be a serpent. That is a serpent feeling—until you lift it entirely out of its personal meaning. For that is the motto of Scotland, and is not at all personal. Men are not plotting revenge for personal wrong under that motto. They are sacrificing life for the protection of a kingdom where are homes and little children and institutions which serve the need of the world. At once you find the meaning changed and the motto may become a true and worthy one. I say it may be, even though it may not be. Nations that are foolishly sensitive and ready to see slights and to magnify occurrences into undue importance may be as unchristian as men.

But Jesus is here making plain that personal retaliation is unchristian. We are not here to get our rights; we are not to defend ourselves; we are here to render our service.

We are to give rights—not to get them. So we may feel the injustice done to others, where we will not allow ourselves to feel the injustice done to ourselves.

One of the most painful phases of our civilization is the necessity which it seems to force upon certain classes to protect themselves against other classes. It is pitiable that so many of the rights of the depressed have had to be wrung from the unwilling hands of those who could have done them justice willingly. Men who are looking for their own rights are the most dangerous with whom a Christian civilization has to do; men whose chief concern is the rights of others are its principal bulwarks. Our social system is not yet fully and thoroughly Christian, while employers think of their own rights and are indifferent to the rights of others, nor while employees claim their rights without fair judgment of the rights of other people. Recently I talked with the agent of a large industry about the conditions of some employees, suggesting a readjustment of their plan for better terms

of living. Almost with a sneer, certainly with a patriarchal contempt for my childishness in such matters, he said that of course I could not expect the company to do such things unless it had to, and he gave as quite sufficient reason for the terms on which some employees were required to work, the fact that if they cared to leave the positions there were plenty more to take their places. Almost every recent attack on corporations has been on the theory of their selfishness. We must have the Public Service Commission on the theory that the rights of the people in general will not be fairly considered by the interests involved. We must have Pure Food laws and inspection on the theory that men who make and sell will be willing to gain something for themselves, even if they do actual damage to others. On the other hand, there is hardly a great strike introduced by employees which does not move in entire indifference to the obvious rights of people who are not involved in the blame. The transportation strike—who suffers for that? Well, the employees suffer

somewhat ; the employers suffer rather less, but the people who suffer most are those who had nothing whatever to do with it, the travelling public whose condition is used simply to force submission by one side or the other. That is, a small group are demanding their rights, but they are demanding them in bland indifference to the larger rights of other people. Now that is the horrible situation Jesus is fronting here. It does not take the form He saw, but it is the same situation. The rights of the other man are more important than our own. We do not and we must not fight for our own rights. We may fight irresistibly for the rights of others. The soldier does not go to the war for his own sake. He may profit by going or he may not. If he goes for his own profit, he is disgraced and unworthy. He offers his life for others, and while war is hell, warriors are not devils.

Then Jesus leads us farther still, lets us see how duties are to be generously performed, how the demands of men are the privileges of the kingdom. The two main

illustrations are from conditions not familiar to us. It was provided in the Mosaic law that the outer garment of a man, his cloak, could not be attached or accepted as security for any loan; the inner garment, his coat, could be so attached. Jesus supposes a case wherein a legal suit is to be brought for the inner garment. The presumption is that the claim is at least debatable. It is not sheer robbery. He is not saying, If a highwayman comes to you and demands your coat you are to give him your cloak. The whole case is that there is going to be a suit at law, which implies instantly that there is something to be said on both sides. Jesus says: Forestall your opponent, do more than he demands; give what he could not demand, accept his version of the controversy and go farther, let him take the coat which he can take by law, and let the cloak go along with it. When it is a personal matter between you and him, go beyond his claim, be ready to do more rather than less.

➤ The other illustration is based on a gov-

ernmental custom, which came into Roman use from Persia. When a courier was sent on an important mission, he was authorized to impress men or animals for a limited distance on the road, could call a man out of his field or shop and require him to go with him for a certain distance, either as guide or as carrier of some part of his load. Dr. Jessup in his "Fifty-Three Years in Syria" tells that as late as 1860 the law permitted the Druse or Maronite chiefs to impress almost any number of the common workmen into their service, requiring a journey of ten or twenty miles without compensation. In Palestine, in Jesus' day, let us suppose the legal limit of that impressment was one mile. It was often a great hardship and men avoided it whenever they could. No payment was made. It was forced service, rebellion was out of the question. Jesus said, Do not take it as forced service, be generous in it; do more than your share; you must go a mile to do your sheer duty; go another for helpfulness' sake; take somebody else's share; if you stop at the end of your mile, some

one else must be impressed ; do not say at the end of the mile, That is my share and I will do no more ; do part of other people's share ; live a generous life, not an exact one. You see the reasonable, decent limit of it. Do not go ten miles. Do not be absurd even in your goodness. Within reasonable, decent limits, go beyond your share.

So with the giving to one who asks, and the granting of what one would borrow. There is no hint of absurd, or foolish or weakening charity. What is asked may be withheld out of regard to the man who asks it. It is not to be withheld selfishly. There is simply a demand that the members of the kingdom shall live on the generous and not the petty basis, that we shall not be forever looking to see where our rights are, to see to it that no one ever gets any of them, but shall be lavish with ourselves for the sake of other people.

That is not absurd. Whenever we see an instance of it we recognize its beauty. Jean Valjean steals the silver plate from the Bishop. He has no right to it, unless on the ground

that it belonged to the poor as the dear old man declared. But when they bring Jean Valjean in, arrested for his stealing, the old Bishop totters over to the mantelpiece and gives him the two candlesticks, saying, These are yours, too, why did you not take them? And you love him for it. He has gone beyond any possible claim on him. Moreover, it is the salvation of the ex-convict. He never gets away from it. Wherever he goes those silver candlesticks are along, very beacon lights that show him the path he ought to tread.

It is the thing that a man does not have to do, the thing that he adds to duties already heavy enough, that endears him to people who are around him. The man who stays within the limit of his duties is doubtless often revered and esteemed, but he is never loved. It is the man who frankly goes farther than he could have been asked to go, and does more than could have been expected, who wins the love of people.

And that brings us to the climax of the

illustrations, that of the law of love, which is the dominant law of the kingdom. And this illustration furnishes interesting instance of the easy way in which inferences come to have authority. The law says plainly : Thou shalt love thy neighbour. The accent was meant to fall on the verb. Your spirit towards your neighbour is not to be one of criticism or suspicion, but of love. But suppose you accent the noun : Thou shalt love thy *neighbour*. What shall be your spirit towards him who is not your neighbour? The teachers said, Manifestly, you are to hate your enemy. It is a fair inference from the law, love your neighbour, hate your enemy. Now just as a matter of logic, the inference is not fair. You see it is an inference of the opposite and illogical on that account. Hate is the opposite of love, but enemy is not the opposite of neighbour. Your neighbour may be your enemy so far as that goes. But Jesus did not quibble with the logic. He swept the inference aside. The command of love has no inference of hating. The law said, Love your neighbour ;

the rules of the kingdom made everybody a neighbour. They even put the enemy into curiously close relation. He must not only be loved, he must be prayed for, and honest prayer never comes from a bitter heart. It is not pretended for an instant that that is the easy thing but is not less essential on that account. Two grounds are given for demanding it. First, That is the spirit and method of the Father in heaven, whose sons we claim to be. He does not approve the evil and unjust, of course He does not, but His sun shines on the evil as well as on the good; His rain falls on the fields of the unjust as truly as on those of the just. There are some blessings, of course, which He does not give to all but He offers them all the while, and all men can have them on the same terms. Yet large blessing He is giving without any reference to character because He loves men. If we are to be His sons then our lives must go out helpfully to enemies as well as friends.

The other reason is that the love of enemies will distinguish the members of the

kingdom from other people. They ought to be so distinguished. You say this law is not feasible in the world. Well, the members of the kingdom are not intended to be feasible in the world as it stands to-day. They are intended not to fit into it at certain points; that is the only hope of the world. We must not reduce these sayings of Jesus to simple pious commonplaces. Of course the world does not live by this principle, but we must. We are not to take the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees for our standard. We are frankly and definitely to go beyond anything they would do. Here is a chance to show that we can do it. We are to love our enemies. We are not to measure ourselves by what the publicans do nor the Gentiles. We are to measure by the heavenly Father. We are to round out our lives, to become perfect as He is perfect. The last verse of the section, Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect, is not so much a command as a promise. Obey the laws of the new kingdom, as they are given here, in the inner life,

and they will round out the lives of the sons as the Father's life is rounded out. And in the spirit of the kingdom they become perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect.

IV

Coveting God's Favour

(*Matt. vi. 1-18*)

Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them : else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth : that thine alms may be in secret : and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites : for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee. And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do : for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them : for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye : Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance : for they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen of men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face ; that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father who is in secret : and thy Father, who seeth in secret, shall recompense thee.

IV

COVETING GOD'S FAVOUR

THE illustrations of this section are more Oriental than any other part of the Sermon on the Mount. But as with everything which Jesus teaches the meaning is world-wide. This section points out that the members of the new kingdom of heaven on earth covet the favour of God rather than the favour of men. That is gathered up into one saying in the first verse of the sixth chapter. In our ordinary version we read, Take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen of them. The revised version is right in changing the word *alms* to *righteousness*. For this is a general statement, Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men. Then come three specifications, three instances of righteousness, not as though they were all, but as though they would illustrate what was in mind. The three illustrations are, first, almsgiving,

generosity, as an expression of righteousness; then secondly, prayer or devotion as an expression of righteousness; and thirdly, fasting or self-denial as an expression of righteousness. None of these is to be done before men for their praise; each is to be done for the eye of the Father. When you remember the verse in the first section, which bids us let our light shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven, you realize that our righteous deeds may need to be done before men, but never for the sake of their observing us in the doing of them. We take all the beauty out of them if we do them to be seen of men. Jesus says, Men must see your good works to glorify the Father, but if you do them to be seen of men then there is nothing more due you and you get no more.

There is a great deal in the lure of the lime-light. There are men who wear the carpet on the centre of the stage threadbare. They live on the praise of men. One of the dangers of any position of prominence is that the praise of men gets to be an important factor

in the doing of the work. The enforced publicity of some lives, the fact that some part of every life has to be lived before men involves a constant peril, and the warning of Jesus is of immense importance.

At the outset of the study, then, you will observe the accent there is on reward in connection with righteousness. The connection is not a simple one. We cannot dismiss the whole matter of rewards. We never do it even when we pretend that we have done so. There is an irresistible justice at work in the matter. No good deed goes unrewarded; that is essential in a moral universe. This whole section proceeds on that supposition.] Take that first verse, Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven; the immediate inference being that if you do your righteousness before the Father there will be reward. In each of the three instances rewards are expressly recognized. The hypocrites who sound a trumpet in giving have their reward in receiving the praise of

men, while the man who does his alms in secret is seen by the Father and is rewarded. So the hypocrites, who love to offer their personal prayer in public places, receive their reward when men see them and praise them; on the other hand, he who enters into his chamber, and shuts the door, and prays to the Father in secret, is rewarded by the Father who sees in secret. The same thing is said about fasting. Reward and righteousness go together. Good deeds and reward go together. Every good deed gets its reward somewhere. Jesus simply makes clear the two sources of reward and gives us option on them, letting us know frankly that we cannot hope for reward from both sources. We may actually get reward from both, but not if we seek it from both. There are, He points out, two observers of all good deeds. Men are watching and God is watching. Neither will allow what he calls a good deed to go unrewarded. And a man can have the reward he seeks, only he cannot have the higher reward if he seeks the lower. There are whole ranges of good

deeds which the world praises, but the world never knows *why* a man does a deed and God cares for nothing else. The world actually praises the deed; God praises the man. If I do my righteousness at all, I must do it before men, some part of it at least, but if I do it before men to be seen of them, I am not doing it because it is righteousness and I need not expect recognition from God with whom righteousness is the only matter for reward. The world rewards deeds; God rewards men. The world knows nothing but deeds actually. It judges men by deeds; God judges deeds by men. Whether I am good or not, the world knows by my deeds; whether my deeds are good or not God knows by me.

Men will recognize and reward good deeds. In each case, Jesus said, Men who do their deeds of piety to be seen of men actually get their reward. It is not difficult to get a name for generosity, or for devotion, or for self-denial, and the world will applaud just so far as the world approves those traits. But there are eyes looking deeper which do

not depend on popular opinion. Those eyes find the truth. Whether we are generous and devout and self-denying, or not, is vastly important, but it is most important who is deciding.

It reveals a curious trait of human nature that these very safeguards have been quietly adopted as excuse for not doing the things that are suggested. There are men so fearful of being known for their generosity that they are actually stingy and mean. There are men so afraid of letting their devotion be seen of men that they practice no devotion. They are so fearful of being known for their self-denial that they do not practice self-denial. These words of Jesus instead call us to generosity and devotion and self-denial. They only safeguard us as to the sources whence we shall seek our reward for them. We may do them before men but we are to do them for God's seeing and not for men's seeing.

We have been saying that these things must in some measure be done before men, even though never to be seen of them. Yet

observe that in all the public phases of our religious lives there is peril of hypocrisy.

Stop just a moment on that word "hypocrites" which Jesus uses three times in this section. It is His most cutting word of reproach. There seems to have been nothing in the life He was facing which stirred Him more. He warns us here against the methods of hypocrites in almsgiving and prayer and fasting—all three. And certainly if the new kingdom is to be one of the inner life, any pretense or deception is folly. When it is between man and man there may be some explanation of it. But how shall a man escape simple folly if he *puts on* before God?

But do not overlook the important fact that hypocrisy is always conscious. Every hypocrite knows that he is a hypocrite; other people may mistake about it; the man himself never does. There are only two who know whether or not I am a hypocrite: I know it and God knows it. There are only two who know whether you are a hypocrite or not; you know and God knows. Other people may be sure one way or the other;

they may be confident or suspicious. But every man knows it if he is a hypocrite. For hypocrisy does not mean appearing better than one actually is ; it means consciously assuming that appearance for the advantage it brings, while one means to be worse than one appears. It is not wearing the livery of God to do the work of God ; it is wearing the livery of God to do the work of Satan. Men who decline to join the church, for example, for fear they will be hypocrites ; people who decline to teach a Sunday-school class for fear they will be hypocrites in pretending to be so much wiser than others, miss the meaning of hypocrisy. No man will ever be a hypocrite while he fears to be one. Hypocrites always want to be hypocrites, could cease to be any minute they want to do so.

We are not made hypocrites by having other people think better of us than we are. We cannot control their thinking, for one thing. For another thing, in every one of us who is honest there are elements which justify the good opinion of people. They are not the only elements. There are doubtless

elements which would justify the poor opinion. But it is no more honest to put forward our worst elements as though they were all than to put forward our best as though they were all. There is a period in the lives of most boys when they are hypocrites on the other side. They want people to think them worse than they are. One form of hypocrisy is just as unfair as the other.

Add this also, that the charge of hypocrisy is the last charge one man ought to bring against another. It is never lightly used in the Scripture. Except in the Gospels where Jesus uses it about twenty-five times, it occurs only four times in the whole Scripture in this sense, and in only one of those cases is it applied to individuals. Paul uses it twice, once applying it in the form of a verb to the dissembling of Peter, who changed his conduct and fell into manifest cowardly hypocrisy under circumstances of danger. It is not used in the entire epistle to the Romans, nor in either of the Corinthian letters. It is used once in Galatians, not at all in Ephesians, nor in Philippians, nor in Thessalonians, once in

the first letter to Timothy, and not thereafter until the first epistle of Peter, where it occurs once as a noun and with no reference to individuals, and once in the epistle of James where it is used in the negative, and it is said that the wisdom from above is without hypocrisy. It is never used in John. It is never used in the Old Testament in the sense in which we find it here. It is a word reserved for the lips of Jesus, the most serious word of condemnation that He uses.

And yet it is a common thing for men lightly to charge other men with being hypocrites. What do we hear more frequently from men outside the Church than the excuse that they will not unite with the Church because the people in the Church, so many of them, are hypocrites? Only God knows a hypocrite certainly. Not a man whom you can safely accuse of being a hypocrite without knowing that there may be yet some disclosure which will put you to shame for the charge you have made. It would be well for us to rescue this word from any light uses and hold it for the most solemn uses. Let

no man, unless he is sure of the insight of Christ, and the spirit of Christ, accuse his fellow man of hypocrisy.

I. The members of the new kingdom, we were saying, covet the favour of God and not that of man. Three instances are given to show how that appears. The first is in the matter of almsgiving, generosity. The instance has nothing to do strictly with the amount of giving, nor the best mode, but only with the manner of giving. It is to be genuine giving, not the purchase of popular approval. Here appears a striking Orientalism. The sounding of a trumpet before men in the streets is not to be thought of as the blowing of a horn. It is a figure based on the custom of giving alms for the poor in the days of Jesus, and obtaining somewhat still. At the door of the synagogues and on the street corners, there sat boxes to receive the gifts. These boxes had funnel shaped metal mouths, which led down through slits in the cover into the box. It was possible, of course, to make a very noisy gift by throwing the coin against the side

of the trumpet. A very small coin violently thrown could make a very large noise. That was the custom of hypocritical givers. A handful of Oriental coin really does not amount to much, but it can be skillfully thrown against a brass trumpet until it would arrest the attention of people for a considerable distance around. Jesus warns the disciples against that mode of giving, tells them instead that as they pass along the street they are to let the coin slip in from the right hand so quietly that its fall cannot be heard as far away as the left, and the left hand shall not know what the right hand does. Nobody in the street will know that any gift has been made then, but the Father who sees in secret and has followed every movement will see and will understand and will reward.

Take the whole matter out of the figure, and it means that publicity in giving, which is for the sake of attracting attention, is unworthy a child of the kingdom. There is a right use of publicity in giving. Paul uses it in urging the people of Corinth to do their

full share in his benevolent scheme for the people in Jerusalem. He tells them in the ninth chapter of the second letter that he has been boasting of them all through Macedonia, telling that the people of Achaia have been ready with their gift for a year past, and goes on to say that the zeal of the people of Corinth had stirred up other churches so that the gift was going to be larger because they had made their gift, and he had given publicity to it. But that was a very different thing from their giving publicity to it, and infinitely different from their making their gift for the sake of publicity and for the good name that they might have. It is well for the cause of Christ that generosity be known, provided always the people who are generous have their mind rather on the approval of God than on the approval of the world.

While such gifts must be made at times, public gifts, and men must know of them, yet the gifts that do our hearts most good, and have fullest reward from heaven, are those that slip from us without the knowl-

edge of others, unnoticed kindnesses that bring relief where only God can see.

There is another reason why the real meaning of giving is between the giver and God: God measures a gift not by what a man lets go but by what he keeps. I cannot know whether you are a good giver or not, except in the broadest way, for only you know how much you have kept. You cannot know how much I have kept, even though you might know how much I have given, so you cannot judge my generosity. If we are to take the incident of the widow and her two mites as stating a principle, then the principle is, that the bookkeeping of God is not in flat figures but in percentages. The widow's two mites were not so large, and, of course, could not do so much as the larger gifts of other people. Measure by flat figures and her gift is not large, whatever anybody says about it. But that only means that it is not large as men see it; as God sees it, it is not a matter of how much was given, but of its proportion to what she had. Of course Jesus knew what she had left; He

could count her gift the largest that was made that day. It was actually the maximum gift possible. There could not have been more given that day than she gave. If the richest man there had given his whole fortune, it would not have been more than her two mites on the percentage basis.

Figure it out in this way. In flat figures ten cents and \$5,000 are a long way apart, but ten cents is exactly the same percentage of \$1 as \$5,000 is of \$50,000, and if the man who gave ten cents had only a dollar to begin with, then his gift on the percentage basis was exactly as large as that of the man who had \$50,000 to begin with and gave \$5,000. There is no escaping the assurance that it is exactly on that basis that Christ measured the gift in the case of the widow and her two mites. That is the way gifts are measured still in God's economy. On that account it is perfectly evident that the true beauty of giving is always between God and the giver. He is the only one who knows whether anybody has given worthily or not. He does not

suggest that there ought to be a gift of one hundred per cent. in every case. Only, it is very evident that He measures how much a man has given by what the man has to give, and not by the actual amount that he lets go.

On every count, therefore, the giving of the members of the kingdom of heaven must be for the eye of the Father. If other men see it, very well; it must not be for the sake of having them see it; it must be for the sake of the Father's seeing. And the true reward of giving is not the applause of men, though that may come, is not even the inspiring of other men to give, though that also is helpful, but the approval of the Father in heaven.

II. The second illustration of the principle that the members of the kingdom seek God's favour rather than man's is in the matter of prayer, which we may read in the general term of devotion. Canon Liddon called prayer the characteristic act of religion. It is the natural expression of devotion. You observe our Lord does not tell us to

pray. "When ye pray," He begins. At no point in all His teaching does He command us in so many words to pray. Some things He tells us to pray for. But He does not cover the whole matter of prayer with any command. Indeed, it cannot be so covered. Commanded prayer would not be real prayer in any case. Professor James is right in his saying that the question is not whether men ought to pray or not, but why they do pray, since inevitably they pray. Jesus does not, therefore, command prayer. He only points out how we shall pray.

He describes two kinds of prayer. One is personal; the other is social. The sixth verse makes a striking change in the number of the pronoun. Everything else in this illustration is plural—ye. In this one verse it becomes singular—But *thou*, when *thou* prayest, and so on. Do not miss the significance of that. The condemnation in verse five of the hypocrites who stand praying in the synagogues and in the streets is not a condemnation of public prayer. It refers to personal prayer in public places, prayer in

which no one else was expected to join, which was not offered for the help of other people, nor in any meeting of any sort.

A minister may stand in the pulpit and lead in public prayer, or he may go to the street corner and lead a group of people in prayer, and meet none of the rebuke of this verse. But if he stands ostentatiously in the church in an attitude of prayer, in which the people do not join, and for the purpose of displaying his devotion, or if he goes to a public place and strikes an attitude of prayer while everything goes on as usual around him, in order to pose as a devout man, he is condemned by this verse. And that was common in Jesus' day, is common in that part of the world still. The same distinction applies to Jesus' word in another place about making long prayers. They were not public prayers but personal ones, in which a man posed for prayer, and people gazed on him and considered him peculiarly devout because of his manner. Over against this Jesus sets the sixth verse where the change of number occurs. "But *thou* when *thou*

prayest," when it is a personal matter, do not display it. Do not ask people to measure you by the amount of your private prayer. It is not fair, it is even impertinent, for a man to rise in a group of ministers and ask them to tell how many minutes they spend in private prayer every day. That it is sorely neglected is true enough, but no man is wise nor right in parading or announcing the amount of time he spends in private prayer. It is to such prayer that all the earlier part of this illustration refers.

Then, including that personal prayer, but covering also the social and public prayer, Jesus gives a warning against mere repetition of words. There has always been a feeling among some people, you see it especially in paganism, but it is carried over into the Christian faith in some quarters, that there is merit or advantage in saying a prayer a great many times. Against that Jesus warns us. There is nothing whatever gained by saying the Lord's Prayer twenty times in succession, unless a man's heart calls for twenty times, and you know the heart of

man well enough to know that it is a rare heart that does so. In addition, there are phrases, whole petitions, which get into one's speaking, which are meaningless because they are used so often. They are empty repetitions. Indeed, it is interesting to observe how quickly we leave all *forms* of prayer, all repetitions, when spiritual interest grows strong. One of the devout ministers of the Established Church of England keeps his church at white heat of spiritual interest. He finds it impossible to hold himself to the written prayers, closes his sermon with voluntary prayer, which he frames exactly as others of us do who are not in ritualistic churches. Most men cannot hold themselves to *form* when spiritual interest grows strong. There is an almost pathetic humour in the fact that when an emergency arises, the leaders of the great ritualistic churches are so often compelled to write and authorize the use of a special prayer. Nothing could reveal more fully that real prayer may use form, but must be free at any instant to dispense with it without human authorization.

Instead, we are to take our requests to the Father as children would do, knowing that He already understands what we need.

To show more fully what that means, and answering the question which does not appear here, but does appear elsewhere, Jesus told His disciples how to pray. The instruction takes the form of the Lord's Prayer, which is His only in the sense that He taught it. At least one petition in it He could not Himself have offered on His own behalf. Here, you observe, the singular pronoun is dropped. The plural, now. In the sixth verse, But thou, when thou prayest; in the ninth verse, After this manner, therefore, pray ye. This is not a guide to personal prayer so much as a teaching about that prayer in which we are associated, one leading the other, or all sharing the petition.

Look at the prayer itself for just a moment. Observe that the familiar doxology: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen, does not occur in the revised version of this section. That is because it does not occur in the old-

est and most authentic manuscripts from which necessarily our later versions are taken. Leaving that out for the present then what is the "manner" of this prayer? Well, first it is filial, it is a child's prayer, not the prayer of a subject. There is no note of fear except of the evil into which one might fall. The members of the kingdom when they pray are to pray like sons, not like subjects. But, secondly, there is in the prayer no note of presumption. The Father is a King. He is in heaven. His name is holy. The will of the Father is the supreme law. The ideal of life is not having daily bread, or pleasure, or anything short of getting the will of God done. And then, thirdly, the prayer is proportioned between service and need. There are six petitions: three, and they the first ones, are for the kingdom of which we are a part, and involve its extension everywhere—Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. The other three, which close the prayer, have to do with our own needs as members of that kingdom.

The prayer for daily bread, strength for the day ; the prayer for forgiveness, release from obligations which we are failing to bear ; the prayer for escape from temptation and the evil one, protection against coming temptation. Or, put them in other terms. They are petitions for power, pardon and protection. That really leaves out nothing.

True prayer instinctively follows those lines. The kingdom first ; God's will first. Then our own needs : strength, forgiveness, safeguarding—what else is there ? Every prayer for the overthrow of a giant wrong that flaunts itself in the face of God is the prayer : Hallowed be Thy name. Every prayer for comfort before or after sorrow is like the Gethsemane prayer : Thy will be done. Every prayer for nations and their rulers, for the progress of missions and the Church is only another wording of Thy kingdom come. When a weak man cries for strength, when we kneel by a suffering one, when we set out with a petition for power for a hard day, what is it but that petition for daily bread ? When we come with a burden of sin and

shame, our own or the nation's, to throw ourselves on His mercy, what can we say but, Forgive us our debts? When young men and women are fronting life, girding themselves for fine living, for an outlay of life and strength that shall be worthy of them, they are praying: Lead us not into temptation, deliver us from the evil one. It is a wonderfully inclusive prayer.

Observe also that the clause on which Jesus stopped for comment is that one on forgiveness, as though He had seen that the disciples were arrested by the saying and must be cleared in it. Why that condition, As we also forgive our debtors? Again Jesus points out that we must forgive our debtors because that is the method of the Father. It is the hardest of all the petitions for some of us. Sometimes we say that we cannot forgive men their trespasses. Jesus declares that the Father can always forgive and that His Fatherhood constantly challenges our sonship with grace to give as we always receive forgiveness.

III. The third illustration need occupy us

only a moment. It deals with fasting, hinting at the whole subject of self-denial. In Jesus' day fasting was a current method of expressing religious devotion. There was only one annual fast, to be sure, but it was common to have fasts for times of emergency, as in the early days of our own country fast days were called for national emergencies. The stricter Pharisees of Jesus' day fasted every Monday and Thursday.

In the life of Jesus, we are told that He fasted at the beginning of His ministry for forty days and forty nights. After that, though we suppose He observed the annual day of fast, and perhaps the occasional ones, we are not told of His fasting. Effort was made at one time to have Him make a rule for His disciples, which He refused to do, making it plain that fasting must be a requirement of the heart and that no one can be required to fast. For ourselves, it means this, Keep the strain of your soul to yourself. There are experiences which we can share helpfully but they are not the voluntary ones; they are the heavy loads laid on

us by divine hands. Those we may share. Fasting is a task which we set ourselves and it is best kept sacred and secret. So far as the world knows that strain is unknown. There may be a close, intimate circle of friends who do know it. Though there is the cutting bearing of the cross in the inner life, there is no mark of it in the face. The children of the kingdom go out brightening the world, as they are set to be lights of the world, doing it because the Father does it. They go with a heart pained with the sin of men, pained as His heart is pained, yet His sun shines and His rains fall and the beauty of the spring comes again. The Father carries the ache of His heart by Himself. He shares it only with His intimates. So it must be with the members of the kingdom. They must not ask the world to approve their fasting or their self-denial. The world may applaud or not. The Father is the one to know. And the members of the kingdom covet the favour of God and not the favour of men.

v

Serving God and Not Mammon

(*Matt. vi. 19-34*)

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal : but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal : for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also. The lamp of the body is the eye : if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness ! No man can serve two masters : for either he will hate the one, and love the other ; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment ? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they ? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life ? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat ? or, What shall we drink ? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed ? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek ; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow : for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

SERVING GOD AND NOT MAMMON

THIS section is all in one paragraph in our Bibles; its ideas are closely united. Indeed, there is one leading idea in it with several illuminating instances. Still thinking of the conduct of the members of the kingdom, we are taught from this section that they serve God rather than mammon.

Mammon—that arrests attention. It is a word taken over letter by letter from the Greek, a transliteration rather than a translation. The Greek took it in turn from the Chaldaic, where it meant riches, wealth. The Greek broadened the meaning to cover the whole of worldliness, which for most people is represented by riches and the kind of pleasures they give. It was never a proper name, though Milton uses it as the name of an archangel before his fall, making him the least erect of all the angels, who as he walked had

his eyes down for the gold of the streets rather than up for the glory of God. Here it is not used directly with reference to wealth. Jesus did not have before Him any considerable number of wealthy men. They were, for the most part, poor men. And while it is true that poor men have a more exaggerated idea of the value of wealth than wealthy people have, this is not so much a word about money as about all that money means to most of us, things of this world over against the future world, the things of time over against the things of eternity, in whose light only we can understand the things of time.

The entire section puts in sharp contrast the service of the heavenly Father and the service of this world. The members of the kingdom are to live in the world; they are to have to do with all of its affairs, but they are not to obey it. They are to obey the Father. So it is not a word of contempt for the world, for its wealth or its ease or its power. It only insists on the world being kept where it belongs, in the service of the

child of God, never over him. The things which the world wants are the right of the members of the kingdom, but they are not the object of their living. They are seeking as the world is seeking, but they are to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and let God see to it that other things come to them. Put it in a phrase: What the world counts initial, they are to count incidental. Whatever extends His kingdom, and brings them and the world into harmony with His righteousness, that is first. Anything that crowds that out of first place in the life and passion of the members of the kingdom is unworthy of them.

Three arguments, which fall into the form of instances, are given. It is pointed out first that the members of the kingdom obey God rather than the world in the matter of their rewards, laying up their treasure not on the earth but in heaven. And the logic of this is plain enough, for this is the kingdom of heaven, and since one's heart follows one's treasure, manifestly the treasure must be laid up in heaven for the members of the king-

dom of heaven. Then, it is pointed out that the members of the kingdom obey God rather than the world because only so can they have a unified life principle. And finally it is shown that only by the obedience of God as against the world can the unanxious daily life be lived. Any unrest of the members of the kingdom is always a reflection upon the permanence and value of the kingdom of which they are part.

➤ First, then, the members of the kingdom obey God rather than mammon, because the service of the world is insecure where godliness is permanent. The figure is of a man slaving for possessions. According to oriental custom, those possessions must necessarily take the form of gold, or jewels, or of fine armour, or garments, or such things, or else of animals, beasts of produce or of burden. How common the laying up of wealth of this sort was you will remember from the parable of Jesus, in which guests were impressed from highways and hedges, but for whom the lord of the feast had wedding garments provided. Such a parable

would seem natural to the people who heard it; it was the common way of accumulating wealth. But of course all this wealth had to be stored somewhere and the animals had to be kept. Whatever the man stored, however, became liable at once to the forces of nature, animate and inanimate, moth devouring the garments, rust laying hold upon everything else; liable also to the malice of men, thieves digging through the earthen wall of the houses and stealing. That is true of all kinds of treasure laid up on the earth. But if a man lives for God he runs no such risks. The forces of nature are with him, not against him, for goodness tends to propagate and increase as truly as evil and the malice of men cannot reach what he has stored up with God. Treasure stored up in heaven is not liable to moth, nor rust, nor thieves.

There is an exquisite touch in the last of the letters of Paul, the second to Timothy, which illustrates the confidence this belief works. Paul is old and about to die. He has suffered and has not seen the victories

for which he had hoped, but he is not discouraged; he has lost nothing which he could not afford to lose. So he writes to Timothy the familiar verse: I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. Read that in our fuller, English form, and it means this: I know whom I have trusted, and am persuaded that He has power to guard, to garrison my deposit until the day of my need. Remember the Greek phalanxes of soldiers. The word "keep" in the text is the Greek word phalanx. God can throw phalanxes around our treasure deposited with Him. Thieves cannot dig through and steal it. As the apostle grows old he finds great satisfaction in the feeling that he has deposits that cannot be lost, treasures for which he can hold God responsible. Jesus gives us warrant for that feeling. There are things to live for which are eternally worth while. Treasures deposited in heaven are safe until the deposit is called for.

But it is true of nothing that is temporal. The moth and rust of the world are at work on everything, and everything is liable to the digging through of thieves. Erect your house and nature begins at once to decrease its physical value. All of you who own factories and buildings have very soon to begin charging off sums for deterioration, and your repair bills slowly grow. The forces of nature are at work reducing values.

A railroad man said only recently that the wear and tear of a railroad, "the unappreciable daily depreciation" of the physical possessions of the road is one of its most troublesome elements. He was calling the attention of stockholders to the demand for constant and immense outlays in order to overcome depreciation. You cannot escape it by turning to nature. You buy timber land. Up to a certain point it increases in value, but nature keeps reminding you that it cannot go on too far. Your young trees—yes; but walk through your land and see where animate and inanimate nature are at work destroying value. A fire starts in the

dry leaves, a heavy snow breaks the trees, a hurricane lays great trunks flat, and away go values. Every ounce of coal taken from a mine lessens its value. Nature is constantly sounding the warning that temporal values are insecure, that it guarantees no deposit.

So it is with treasure with which men have to do. At once its security is qualified by the limitations of men who deal with it. The limitations may be purely natural. The human brain and body cannot endure limitless strain. Great interests, financial and commercial, are finding it hard to secure men who are equal to the terrific load of responsibility put on them. When this modern and amazing development of institutions began not many years ago, a large interest in this city called to its head a robust man and made him responsible. In five years he was dead. Another was called; he died in five years. Another was brought in from fresher stock, with country blood still in his veins. Five years killed him. And a reorganization, which divided the responsibility, was

simply forced. We are approaching the limit of responsibility which any man can safely carry. When any man passes that limit, the treasure laid up with him is insecure. Now add to that the malice of men, the robber spirit, which makes values simply pawns in a game to be played fairly or not, and you get abundant justification of the saying of Jesus that earthly treasure is insecure.

And if that treasure is not in possessions but in what they bring us, the pleasures, the enjoyments which are of time and time alone, then they also are insecure. The disgusts of pleasure are very real. Nothing is more tiresome than unbroken enjoyment. Nothing cankers worse than having nothing to do. Nature is against it, and human nature is against it. Moth and rust and thieves are God's constant argument with us that treasure laid up on earth is insecure. While we control it, while we keep our hearts free from it, while, that is, it is not our real treasure at all, but only our instrument for wise living, it has blessing in it for us. But when we live

for it, and get our hearts wrapped up in it, we are only trifling, however seriously we take ourselves. The members of the kingdom, therefore, are not to find their full reward, nor to lay up their treasure here in the earth, though a measure of reward, a degree of treasure, they may have here. They are to realize always that their true treasure is laid up in heaven, deposited with God where it is absolutely and forever safe.

Then, secondly, Jesus points out that the service of the world is distracting and narrowing, while the service of God is unifying and broadening. There are two illustrations. One is from the eye. The lamp of the body is the eye, whatever light gets into the body comes into it from the eye. If the eye be single, in good condition, so that the two eyes act as one, then the whole body is full of light. But if the eye be evil, if it be out of condition, so that the two eyes focus differently, then everything is blurred. The body gets no proper guidance, the light is simply darkness, and how great that darkness is! That is current enough among us.

When the eye loses its exactness, it does not disturb us at some one point but everywhere. We cannot choose what things shall be obscured to us. Everything grows obscure, and the whole life has to be readjusted to the changed conditions. It is not possible to take both points of view in looking at life. We have two eyes, but they must act as one. It is not possible with one eye to see things from God's point of view, and with the other eye to see from man's point of view. The effort to do that simply introduces confusion into the life, takes away all its harmony and all its illumination.

He goes on at once with another illustration from the commonplace of life at that time and familiar enough to us, on the singleness of service. No man can serve two masters, He says, because no man can follow two wills. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. So no man can serve God and mammon. That is true to life. Let me yield myself to the claims of the world and the claims of eternity begin to bore me.

I am absorbed in temporal things, let us say, —business, social activity, anything. Well, if I yield myself to them without a constant and firm control of the situation in the interests of higher things, it will not be long before the greater things, the things of eternity and God, get tame and tasteless to me. They become uninteresting. As I love the one I hate the other. The word is not that no man ought to try to serve two masters ; it is simply that he cannot do it. It will be purely incidental if, in serving the one, he does the will of the other. Two masters are not one, and while I may do the thing that two men tell me to do, I am doing it because one man tells me whom I think has better right to command me than the other. There will evidently come collision between the two wills, and then it will be brought out plainly that I was not serving both masters. A man may be doing what the world desires done. But as a member of the kingdom he is not doing it because the world desires it, but because God desires it. It is purely incidental or accidental that the will of the

world and the will of God chance to cover the same course. The service of either is absorbing and exclusive. Serving mammon gives one no power with God ; serving God gives one power over mammon. The mammon service is the lower one, and if a man chooses it he cannot enter the higher service. The service of God is the higher one, and if a man chooses that, he is lifted above the other service and it becomes his servant instead.

Nothing is more distressing than the effort to serve God and mammon. It is never successful. But a large part of the disturbance of our lives comes from the effort to do both. In Jesus' figure, it is like the distress that comes from trying to see different ways with the two eyes, or from trying to obey what two different masters tell one to do. One never does succeed but there is a great distress in the effort. One of my old preceptors used to say that there was nothing more uncomfortable than a little religion, when a man had just enough religion to know his duty but not quite enough to do it, where he was

really serving the world with an uneasy sense of the right of God in his life, or was pretending to serve God while as a matter of fact his whole heart was with the world. That is Jesus' illustration here. It cannot be done. The effort to do it only distracts the life. The only escape for the members of the kingdom is to give themselves wholly to the service of God.

But the climax of the teaching in this section is the most familiar part of it, where Jesus shows us that the service of worldliness makes for unrest and anxiety, while the service of God brings peace and quiet. You have noticed of course that our usual version has the word "thought" in the old sense, which is properly replaced in the revised version by the word "anxiety," so that the twenty-fifth verse reads: Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink; and the twenty-seventh verse, And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? and the twenty-eighth verse, And why are ye anxious con-

cerning raiment? and again in the thirty-first verse, Be not therefore anxious. So in the thirty-fourth verse, Be not therefore anxious for the morrow : for the morrow will be anxious for itself. This is no plea for the neglect of temporal demands ; it is only a plea that they be kept in their proper place. They are not to beset us and be magnified into first and fullest place. Our thoughtfulness for them is worthy ; our anxieties about them are unworthy. And, indeed, we feel that for others. People whose chief thought is of their eating and drinking, or of their clothes, are set low in the scale of all of us. When travellers return from a European trip, and in their talk show that their chief remembrance of one place is that they had such delicious or such atrocious things to eat, and of another that the water was so bad, and of still another that this or that dressmaker was there, we listen respectfully but we cannot rate them very high. People whose main remembrance of Switzerland is the kind of hotel in which they lived, and whose thought of Paris is the shops, of

course have the same right to live that other people have, but they show at once what is the level on which they live. Meat is more than life, and the raiment is more than the body to them. Yet everywhere it is important what one eats or drinks, and important how one is clothed ; this only insists on its being made secondary. "Civilized men cannot live without cooks," but there are few more miserable systems than that in which cooks are the chief factor in life.

And while we feel that for other people and are ashamed when we find ourselves falling into gross forms of such concern, yet it is a constant problem to keep our proper interest and thoughtfulness for these latter things in its proper place. We shall not accomplish it by an act of will but by taking into account something which will put these things into their proper position. That something is the assurance of a heavenly Father and His care and love. Jesus gives two illustrations to show how it can be done.

The first illustration is from the birds. They have a life to sustain which keeps them

very busy, but they do not carry to-morrow's load in to-day. In some matters they do make provision for the future, of course, as when they build the nest for the entire season and not for the day. But they are here illustrating the fact the Father has food for them each day as it comes. Then you note He does not say, *their* heavenly Father feedeth them, but *your* heavenly Father. The argument is that if He will care for them when they trust for the future, not sowing nor reaping, nor making what is a reasonable provision for the future, we ought to trust Him when He gives us power to make this reasonable provision. We do sow ; we reap. It is proper we should, and if without that care, the proper care for the future, the birds are cared for by the Father, surely we who do give that proper care to the future, will be cared for by Him. When they trust for the future, we ought to do the same thing. And, indeed, we are compelled to depend on Him, though we may refuse ourselves the comfort of it. The effectiveness of all our sowing and reaping and gathering

into barns is dependent on the heavenly Father. He carries the final responsibility of it. We carry the fall anxiety in the spring with no advantage to ourselves or to any one else. My father used to tell of a man who was walking a dusty country road, staggering under a heavy bundle. A kind farmer overtook him and picked him up in his wagon. The traveller was very grateful but kept his bundle on his shoulder. "Put your bundle down in the wagon," the farmer said. "Oh, no," the man replied, "I could not do that. It is enough for your horse to have to haul me without having to haul the bundle also." Generations of students have laughed at that folly. But anxiety about the future which goes beyond a trustful thoughtfulness is just that thing. We can sow and we can reap and we can gather into barns, but the effectiveness of any one of those things depends on what the Father does. We cannot control conditions to-morrow. God carries that. It is simply gratuitous for us to carry it. We can do to-day's duty with reference to to-morrow,

as the birds gather to-day's food and so are strengthened for to-morrow's busy life. But anxiety or worry never helped to-morrow. God must carry that. Trusting Him is only letting Him do what He must do anyway.

It is in that light that we understand the twenty-seventh verse, Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? It does not refer to physical height. It would never be suggested that one might mean to add a foot and a half to his height nor would that be called a little thing. Jesus says, Which of you by any amount of anxiety could lengthen your life line, the measure of your life, by so much as a cubit, which would not carry you far? He might have said what we all know is true, that anxiety often takes off cubits from the measure of life. It never lengthens life, it shortens it. Birds would not be helped by anxiety. Their life depends on their doing each day what they can do, and trusting the Father for to-morrow's possibilities.

The other illustration is from the lilies and the grass, where life is not so important as appearance. Jesus asks where they got their beauty. Not by toiling or by spinning but just by daily growing. A lily does not choose to be beautiful; it simply lives its life, a very short life at that, and God sees to its raiment. You catch an out-of-door note in Jesus saying that one lily was more beautiful than Solomon in his gaudiest robes. No city man would ever have thought of that, and there are city men and women who do not believe it still. But again Jesus applies the argument to us. He contrasts the beauty of the lily and grass and ourselves, to their advantage: but He contrasts their importance and ours, to our advantage. The argument is very familiar. If God will care for the things of a day while they are simply living their lives each day, neither toiling nor spinning, will He not much more care for us who are of eternity while we do toil and spin? Shall we be anxious while we are making reasonable provision for the body, while He cares for the

lilies and the grass which make no provision for their bodies? So He challenges us to the unanxious life. Toil and spin, but never anxiously, never fretfully, never with worry, but always with assurance of the Father who will care for us as He cares for the lilies and the grass which do not toil nor spin.

And again we find the plea of Jesus, that we must live this life of mastery of the world because other people do not live it. We say that it is not practicable, that others do not live so. Certainly not. The Gentiles are seeking second things first. The world—of course it is worldly. To the Gentiles, it is of supreme importance to look after this temporal life; to the members of the kingdom it is important, but never for an instant of supreme importance. We are here to be different, to live a life which challenges the world. We have a heavenly Father who knows our need, we are to trust Him. The world will not trust, and when we grow anxious about to-morrow and its temporal needs, needs which no worry helps to supply, we are adopting the way of the world.

Wherein then would the kingdom be new in the world? Carlyle said that "the extent to which we have put fear under our feet is a good measure of our manhood." It is a good measure of our membership in this kingdom, provided fear is under our feet because the Father is over our heads. An honest care for the future, of course sowing and reaping and gathering into barns, of course toiling and spinning—yes; but never as though these were first, never as though the Father were dependent upon these things. The Father's source of supply is only tapped by these things. We are dependent on Him and not on our own feeble efforts.

So the section closes with a word fresh from life: Be not anxious for the morrow, for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Every day has evil enough in it. We cannot do justice to to-day if we try to carry to-morrow's load. To-day's care for to-day. The day's strength is not sufficient for itself and another day. We have just prayed for a day's bread. No day has more of burden than can be borne on that day itself. It is

bearing to-morrow's burden with to-day's strength that overburdens us, and it is letting many to-morrows heap on the shoulders of to-day that finally breaks us. But the members of the kingdom learn to accept to-day's need and to-day's strength from the Father, assured that to-morrow's strength will match to-morrow's need. When the new day breaks there will be new power. The Father knows. We are obeying, not the lash of the world, but the law of His love. When I was a student in this city I often attended the church of Dr. Charles F. Deems, and I remember the Sabbath in which he gave us two simple little stanzas, which have been so widely quoted since, and which seem to bring what I am saying to a point.

The world is wide
In time and tide,
And God is Guide,
So do not hurry.

That man is blessed
Who does his best,
And leaves the rest,
So do not worry.

And that is what Jesus means in saying :
Seek ye first—*first*, His kingdom and His
righteousness, and all these things shall be
added unto you.

VI

Characteristics

(*Matt. vii. 1-12*)

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged : and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye ? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye ; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye ? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye ; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you.

Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you : for every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone ; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent ? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him ? All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them : for this is the law and the prophets.

VI

CHARACTERISTICS

THE remainder of the Sermon on the Mount, the entire seventh chapter, is occupied throughout with the safeguarding of the members of the kingdom. There is less of unity and coherence in this section than elsewhere. We are to imagine between the paragraphs an interested group of disciples breaking in with questions, diverting the stream of thought. It is a common experience. With a group of friends talk simply runs on, specially when there is one present whose opinion is particularly wanted. A phrase suggests a new line of thought, and minds wander off in another direction, then come back to the original line again. When you imagine Jesus sitting in the midst of His disciples and talking familiarly with them, you can easily see how one and another would propose prob-

lems which had been suggested by something that had preceded. It is not necessary, therefore, that we find running through this seventh chapter any more definite line of thought than this which has been suggested. Six items are given us, all of which are as much needed to-day as ever, and all of which will be needed so long as the kingdom is on the earth.

The first point of safeguard is a very sensitive one. It is in the matter of quick judgments, scaling people up or down in offhand fashion, arbitrarily. Hasty and partial judgments are still the bane of social life and equally of the religious life. That first saying, "Judge not," is better put if we realize that it refers not to an act but to a habit. It is repetitious in its form. "Do not be always judging." It is a warning against censoriousness, against the spirit which passes judgment on others freely and recklessly. We are warned against it on three grounds; on the ground of safety, on the ground of fairness, and because sooner or later that habit of mind will make one a hypocrite. It

is not safe because every standard we use in judging other people will inevitably be applied to ourselves. It is not fair because no quick judgment takes account of conditions in ourselves which unfit us for judgment. You catch that in the saying: "Why beholdest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam in thine own eye?" The word for "beholdest" means the quick, passing glance; the word for "considerest" means the more thoughtful study. It is always easy to see something wrong in other people, but no one sees the actual guilt of his own wrong except by more careful thought. Then, also, we are warned against quick judgment on the ground that sooner or later it will make a hypocrite out of any man. He will presently be more concerned to see faults than to correct them, though he will always pretend that his chief desire is to have the evils corrected.

Of course this is not a prohibition of all judging. No one so controls his mind that he has no opinions. And the last thing a member of the kingdom should strive after is

to be colourless. Dr. Hitchcock's word has become familiar: "When a thoroughly bad man stands revealed, only lightning is logical." It would be weak and not Christian to refuse to call bad things and bad men by the hard names they deserve. It would be weak not to be able to draw plain lines between good and evil. Jesus did that Himself. He called men hypocrites oftener than any one in all Scripture; that was judging. He called Herod a fox; He told some people they were children of their father, the devil; within five verses of this warning, He characterizes some men as dogs and some as swine. All that is judging. He did not mince matters. He shot lightning when a bad man came near. So did Paul and so did the beloved apostle. They did not toy with words; they struck out from the shoulder. They were not afraid to call things and men what they were.

But with neither Jesus nor His disciples was it hasty or trifling or mean judgment that was passed. They were ready, Master and disciples all, to be judged as they were

judging. They were hiding nothing in their own lives or character which they were condemning in others. The measure they used in giving blame to others they were ready to have used upon themselves.

And we must often, seriously, deliberately, thoughtfully pass judgment on men and measures. The warning of Jesus is that we are not to pass judgment unless we are sure of our standards and are ready to have them applied to ourselves. Judge not, when you are not willing to be judged. Use no standard of judgment which you are not willing to have applied to yourself. And, further, we are not to do it unless we are sure of ourselves, that our own lives are free enough to make us clear visioned. The figure of the beam and the mote is from the rabbis, and is, of course, hyperbole. It means, as we all understand it, that we can be zealous to cast out a small thing from somebody else while there is a large thing of the same sort in us. The mote that has gotten in the brother's eye is of the same sort as the beam that is in our own eye.

Any smallest fault of mine is a more serious thing for me than any great fault of others, that is the meaning. Whatever the world says of it, whatever abstract morality says about it, so far as my own responsibility is concerned, the lightest lie of mine is a worse offense than the most monstrous lie of yours. My small theft is a greater thing for me than your largest theft can ever be for me. Whether my beam or your mote be larger by linear measure, makes no difference. That it is mine makes it for me a beam. That explains the striking saying of the Apostle Paul about his being the chief of sinners. Put Paul and Nero together and you will say without hesitation that Nero is the greater sinner; Paul will not. He will see his own fault as every honest man comes to see the faults that are his own, the greater because they are his. Until we are sure that we are making honest effort to be rid of the things in our own lives that make us faulty, we need not set out to remove things that are much less serious in the lives of others, at least so far as we are concerned.

Is there any more subtle temptation than this? To be always on the watch for a chance to find fault, to be always ready with an adverse word?

Let men and measures be discussed among small groups of men. In most groups there will be some who seem to pride themselves on seeing a danger in any measure proposed, some subtle intention to do damage, being able to point out adverse features, knowing always some adverse word of every man mentioned. Speak of a prosperous church and one of these men will say, Yes, but I understand things are not so favourable as they say. Speak of a man: Yes, but they tell me he is hardly holding his own; of course you will not repeat this, but—and so on. You find that among Christian ministers. You find it more still among other people. The thing that presently impresses you, as you come to know these men, is that they are generally covering up some defect of their own. That mote and their own beam are of the same order. They are not really seeking to

be rid of the wrong. They criticize it in others but they know it is in themselves.

So I am to sit in judgment on my life before I judge others. And finding need for it, I am to correct my own life. Note that. I am not to let wrong in my life be an excuse for not helping others. If I find anything in my life that is in the way of my helping other people, I am to put that thing out. There is no escape from responsibility offered here. We are not to be so concerned with the mote in the brother's eye that we cannot realize the beam in our own. But the largest reason for getting our own eyes cleared is that we shall then be in position to help clear our brother's eye. It is only a mock humility which keeps us from judging others, or trying to help others, because our own lives are not right, when we are really treasuring our faults. It is pride and not humility which hinders most of us from casting the mote from our brother's eye. We do not want to take the trouble of casting the beam from our own eye. Christian consistency is

a great virtue, but the largest value it has is in the strength it gives us in the service of other people. And there is no merit in refusing to proffer help to our brother on the ground of our own deficiencies, unless we are making eager effort to cure our deficiencies so that we can help. There is always danger of keeping a few deficiencies available as excuse for our failure to challenge evil wherever we see it. A beam is worse than a mote, but a mote is bad for all that. We are under obligation to help clear our brother's eye. With our own eyes cleared we shall then see clearly—no bungling now, but real help. It is the corrected eye that can see to correct the eye. The man who has fought the evil in his own life is he who fights it in another's life without bitterness or blunder. The only safeguard against hypocrisy in judging other people is to be always scrupulously fair and severe with one's self. That will always keep one from being a hypocrite.

Experience bears out what Jesus says about it. He does not say that we deserve

to be judged as we judge. He simply points out that it actually is so. We are judged as we judge. The people whom we know who habitually speak well of others are habitually well spoken of. People with sharp tongues, or sarcastic manner, or severe speech, are sharply dealt with, at least in their absence. Nothing will make one more surely an object of suspicion than for him to be suspicious. The measure we use is used for us. I do not go on to point out how this could be carried even into the realm of God's judgment, and that He in some true sense adopts the standards which we use in our judgments of others, for the essential meaning is rather the judgment which we pass on each other. There is one safe principle for all, that judgments shall be habitually kindly—one even dares to say favourable. In more cases than we realize, favourable judgment, the kind we would like to have passed on ourselves, is possible and fair. It only requires a little more thought. Our deliberate judgments are generally to be trusted. It is our quick judgments,

especially any habit of censoriousness, which imperils us. This is the first safeguard then, that the members of the kingdom are not to be censorious, critical of each other, or of the world, but are to be fair and honest in the judgments that they pass, beginning with themselves always, but going on always to the help of others in correcting faults.

Evidently that provoked a question. The disciples heard Jesus say that they were to help to cast the mote out of the eyes of other people, they were to judge favourably rather than adversely. Now a question would come at once. Are we to try to help everybody? Are we to take the motes out of all eyes? Take these Pharisees, what is to be our attitude towards them? And so was brought out the second safeguard. It is regarding religious reserve. Jesus answers those questions: no, you are to observe both the fitness of things and the possibility of success. You are not to feed the dogs from the altar and you are not to cast pearls before swine.

We are not to read this verse with our own feeling about dogs. In Jesus' day, and

in that country to this day, dogs belonged to nobody. They are not friends of men ; they are snarling, snapping, lazy, simply roaming around the streets. Riding in a carriage in Constantinople our driver several times had to stop his horse and run ahead and rout out a pile of sleeping dogs that were blocking the narrow street. The horse would not dare step on them. They were the scavengers of the city. I suppose at the time Jesus spoke here, there was not a man in all Palestine who owned a dog, and yet dogs were everywhere. You will guess in what esteem they were held, when you realize that there is not a favourable word about a dog in the whole Bible. This term of contempt that Jesus uses for them, then, you must understand in view of the time and the country in which He was speaking. Anything that came off the altar was always to be burned, or else eaten only by the priests. And Jesus was giving an extreme figure here, that it would be unfit to feed the dogs with that which was holy.

Then when you remember that the pearls

of Palestine were a good deal like the grains of barley that were used to feed the swine, you will see what Jesus means in the other part of the figure. He tells the disciples that it would not be fitting to take a bag of pearls and pour them out before the swine. They would leap upon them greedily expecting to eat them, but finding them tasteless, the swine would trample them into the mire. They may even turn on you fiercely and rend you. They do not want pearls; they want corn. You waste the pearls; you do not feed the swine; you endanger yourself. Luther has a parable about it. He says that once the lion invited all the beasts to a banquet; he set out the very finest and lordliest dishes, in which they were all rejoicing except the sow, and she grunted out presently, Have you no bran? This figure means that in our effort to help, in our effort to serve the world, we are to observe the fitness of things, and also the possibility of success.

The dogs and the swine are not the poor, nor the uneducated nor the sinful. There is

no suggestion here that there are some people who are so ignorant that you must not speak to them of the great things of God, nor that there are some truths that are fitting to utter in handsome parlours but not fitting to utter in the slums. The men whom Jesus is characterizing as dogs and swine are quite as apt to live in fine houses as in poor ones. They are as readily found in fashionable congregations as in humbler places. We have an English word that comes directly from the Greek and covers the whole ground. The Greek word for dog is *Kunikos*, and you see in that our word cynical, if you look at it carefully. Cynical people, contemptuous people, are the ones here characterized. They never treat holy things as they ought. They have always a sneer for them.

The time comes when we discover that before men who are cynical, mean, contemptuous, there must be only reserve. The holiest and best things never get to them, and it is not proper that they should be put before them. We instinctively regard that. We do not talk to cynical people about the

finest things in life. We know they would be scoffed at. Any man who sets out to be a cynic takes his place in this verse. The man who is always critical and severe and contemptuous, always believing the worst, and demanding proof of the best, determines at once for any thoughtful man that he must be fed with scraps. He cannot have things from the altar. So the predominant characteristic of swine is greediness, selfishness, low living, uncleanness, living by and for the hour. When a man comes to the point of preferring uncleanness, of satisfaction with low tastes and desires, when he settles down into a selfish life, then he shuts himself out from the holiest things. So does he, when he refuses to take any far views, and lives for his present pleasure and profit. Almost alone among animals, swine make no provision for the future. Even a dog will hide a bone that he may find it to-morrow. Horses and cattle will not spoil what they do not want for food. Swine have no sense of the future. This hour is their only hour. They live it not in trust like the birds, but in idleness and sloth.

The deepest things of our lives we share only with those who will understand. We are not treasuring them for ourselves; we gladly share them, but only with those who can enter into their meaning. Failure to observe this has helped to bring contempt upon some forms of religious life. Confessions of sin are not for everybody. The habit of laying the heart bare is not a wise one. It should be reserved for those groups where it will be understood. Disclosures of the inner life only harm the worldly, for they grow scornful and derisive. The cynical man makes sport of them. The selfish man uses them to tear down the character of the men who have honestly tried to help. There are circles where such things belong. Sometimes it is the circle of the prayer-meeting when the Spirit of God is manifestly present. Then hearts can be opened. Sometimes it is not even there but in smaller circles still, with the pastor only or alone with God. But we do not well when we throw open our hearts to every one, or when we try to deal with the highest and holiest things in the pres-

ence of the cynics and the selfish of the world.

There is something about a Christian life which the world does not understand. It may write books about it if it pleases ; it may put it under the microscope of psychology, but it never gets the secret of it, and when it does come near it it makes it only a subject of ridicule. Here is an evangelist who is deeply stirred and deeply stirs a great gathering of men. As you walk away from the meeting, or as you read your paper the next morning, you see how much of the cynic there is still left in the world ; you see how much of selfishness there still is in the world. Men trample under foot what he has brought and turn and rend him. There are enough men who do this to make us all thoughtful. Every man needs to ask himself, when he tends to be cynical and severe regarding things that are to other people holy, whether he is not laying himself liable to the contemptuous word of our Lord.

The third part of the seventh chapter, the third item of safeguard, that about ask-

ing, seeking and knocking, is not understood until we read it as a command. There is a promise buried in it, but essentially it is a command. You get its setting readily if you imagine that some disciple had all the while been thinking of the word which closed our former study, that the members of the kingdom are not to be anxious for the morrow, not to be anxious about raiment and food, but are to live each day as it comes along. A question had been lurking in the mind of some disciple ever since. Finally he asks, How is that unanxious condition possible? How can one live as though to-day's duty were enough and there were abundant strength for it, and when to-morrow comes there will be duty and strength for that as well?

Answering, He points out that the only way it can be done is by keeping the life full and rich. Religious poverty must be guarded against. Children in a Father's world must not live as though they were orphans; the sons of a king must not live as though the king were dead. There are two paths to those spir-

itual riches. One path is by keeping one's self sure of the Father, by keeping open a channel between one's self and the Father. Here again the verbs are not verbs of acts but of habits. Keep asking and it shall be given you, keep seeking and ye shall find, keep knocking and it shall be opened unto you.

Lest that seem to us incredible, the eighth verse simply repeats it. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. That is a very startling saying. On the face of it, it is not true in most realms. It is not so in business, except in a very limited way. It certainly is not so in knowledge, except in a limited way. You strike limitations instantly in all these realms. It is hardly even true that only those who seek find, and certainly it is not true that every one who seeks finds in most things of life. Where then is it true? It is true in all those matters that concern the relation between the members of the kingdom and the Father, in all the matters of the spiritual life, and it is true of course in all the out-

reachings of that life. The essential point is not that if we ask, something will be given us ; it is that we are under obligation to ask. We have no right to go poverty-stricken in the world of the Father. We have no right to go without a constant finding of new treasure, and no right to go without constantly finding new doors which we can enter.

Jesus emphasizes it by what follows. I remember reading this sermon at the place where the wise men think it was originally spoken, on a low mountain that overlooks the Sea of Galilee. When we came to the verse about the bread and the stone, the fish and the serpent, we observed lying about us small round flat stones, very like the bread of the land in size, shape and colour ; we saw the lizards and small thick serpents running in and out among the rocks, while down in the Sea of Galilee were boats fishing. Remember now, that Jesus sat here with men who were fathers. It is as though He said : Suppose your boy asks for a piece of bread, will you give him

one of these flat stones which looks like a piece of bread? Suppose he asks for a fish, will you catch one of these lizards or one of these serpents and give to him for a fish? No, you will do the very best you can just because you are a father. And if the boy should think that this stone was bread and ask for it, you will not give it to him, you will give him what he really wants. And if he sees one of those serpents, and does not know any better and asks for it, thinking it is a fish, you will not give it to him, you will give him what he really wants.

And in that same way, Jesus goes on to say, the Father in heaven will give good things to them that ask Him. If we should ask for something that we thought was bread and He knows it is stone, He will not give it to us. We may be greatly grieved because we think our prayers have not been answered, but we find that He has given us the bread in some other way. And if we have been attracted by the body of some serpent, and we think it is a glistening fish, and plead for it, He

will deny us, but only that He may give us what we really want and not what we ask for. All this is given as encouragement to us. Keep asking and seeking and knocking. We are in a world where the Father is in control, and because it is the Father's world we ought to live a full and rich life, a life that does not hesitate to ask nor to seek nor to knock.

That is one way of guarding against religious poverty, keeping a channel open between ourselves and the Father by a constant dependence on Him, a constant seeking for something more than we have, a constant knocking at the doors that are yet closed to us, and being sure that that is worth while because this is the Father's world. Then follows one of the master-strokes of Jesus. It is always masterly to clear a case of a multitude of details and make its one central fact stand out. You want a full rich life, so that you may be able to live unanxiously and unconcernedly. Well, here come the law and the prophets; they offer the way. But the law and the prophets are hopelessly

complicated. The multitude of their details is simply overwhelming. So Jesus takes a negative maxim, familiar enough in that day, and making it positive, declares obedience to it will make a man fulfill the law and the prophets.

It is the Golden Rule. All things, therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them. You gather up in that one simple maxim all that the law and the prophets are aiming at. Be in this world the kind of men that all men need to be ; measure your manner towards men by the standard which you feel all men ought to adopt ; whatever you would that men should do to you, whatever attitude you think any man anywhere ought to take towards you, be sure that you take towards him. Make yourself in this world a standard man, take the attitudes that you want taken, reveal by your own conduct what you think ought to be the law of life. If any man thinks the Golden Rule a simple matter, let him put it to himself in this way : Am I the kind of man that I think every man ought

to be? Suppose everybody became like me in spirit, would this, then, be the kind of world that would be the very best that men can make it? That is the Golden Rule. I am to be in my place whatever I would like any man to be in his place.

This is the second path to the full and rich life, and safeguards any man against religious poverty. Keep a life open to the Father—that is the first. Keep a life open also to His sons on earth. Receive largely from Him, and then give out largely to men, and life is safeguarded from all forms of poverty, and becomes rich and full.

VII

Truth and Falsehood

(*Matt. vii. 13-27*)

Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall thereof.

VII

TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD

AS we approach the end of the Sermon on the Mount we observe a growing solemnity in the sayings of Jesus. Some of the words of this closing section are the most solemn that our Lord ever uttered. No man dares take them upon his lips lightly.

The last word of our former study was the Golden Rule. These were thoughtful men; they could not accept such a word glibly and smoothly as careless men do. They saw what an immense requirement it was. It looked simple. It was a masterful condensation of the whole law and the prophets, but it was no more easy than they are. To be a standard man, to be before all men all that you expect men to be before you, to be the kind of man that would satisfy the need of the world—that is no simple

thing. You may be sure there were thoughtful men who looked their dismay. Doubtless one of them voiced it: Ah, but this makes us standards for the world, and that is hard. And at once comes this reply, Yes, hard, but what did you expect? The gate of the way of life is narrow and the way itself is compressed. The way that leads to destruction is broad and its gate is wide; follow the crowd; you shall hardly know when you enter the way or how you pass along it. But you shall know if you are living the life of a member of the kingdom. Enter ye in by the narrow gate, for narrow is the gate, and straitened the way that leadeth unto life. Religious sloth, taking life easily, is the peril against which the Head of the kingdom warns us.

There is a point of view from which it is fair to say that the Christian life is the easy one. It is easy because it is in harmony with the nature of the universe. If God is the ruler of the universe and if the Christian life is the life which He commands, then the forces of the universe will be on the side of

the man who lives that life. It is easy because the power of God is pledged to the man who sets out to live it. It is easy because it ends internal discord. It is the life to which the peace of Christ is promised. As is said in the Proverb, the ways of wisdom are the ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace; and as our hymn says, "Full of beauty is the path of duty." That is true from one point of view.

But there is another point of view which gives just as far an outlook, from which we see the truth quite as plainly, that the Christian life is not an easy one. No high and fine life is easy. That is true in the realm of the intellect. The intellectual life of the newspaper is easy enough. Any one can read a dozen lines or a short editorial which makes one point. But the strong intellectual life is the hard one. The life of the great books is not so easy. Fond mothers say of their boys that they read everything, yet they could not be made to settle down to any strong and serious reading. The commercial life is easy where most men

are ; but for the man who lives it in a high and fine way, the commercial life always is difficult. This plea of our Lord is justified in the sight of all of us. There is a certain element of striving, of entering in by the narrow gate, of pursuing the hard path. As He put it in another place, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. It is easy to be anything that is cheap ; costly things are always difficult. The worthless life is the easy life ; the life that is worth while is the hard life.

The other day it came about that I was sitting by the bedside of a Scotch woman who had sat under the ministry of the great Scotch preachers of our earlier time. The physicians had told her that she must die. She felt that she was not good enough to face Christ. I told her that she certainly was not good enough, that no one is, but that Christ is good enough, and that our whole part is in accepting His righteousness and trusting His love, and that the worst of us goes safely into His presence exactly as the

best of us does, in childlike confidence in Him. She turned to me when I had finished and said, "Ye mak' it too easy for me." There spoke out the Scotch training, for which God be thanked. What I had said was true enough, as I could easily point out to her, but what she meant was a fair warning for every minister of the Gospel and for every Christian for his own life. Do not make this thing too easy. Do not suppose that being a Christian is such an easy thing that there is no cross about it.

Jesus' figure of the narrow way and the broad way would be especially suggestive to the men who heard Him. He was sitting among the mountains, and any one who has been in the mountains, especially in the Alps, will realize one form of this figure that is very suggestive. When you leave the great roads to go up the Alps, much of the way you go between stone walls, up over stepping-stones, on narrow ridges between the fields, having to watch your way carefully, and going almost always single file. Single file—that is what Jesus means by His word of the "few"

that find it; they find it one by one. Your narrow path, once in a while, however, goes across a broad way that sweeps down the mountainside, from which the trees are cut away, and down which sometimes you see boys leaping and laughing. That is the broad way that is spoken of here. It is the way which has been cut for sending down in winter the logs from the clearings above. You could use it for going down; you could not use it for going up. It is a broad way, many people could go abreast in it. You can go laughing and leaping your way down. But that broad way leads down into the valley while this narrow way leads up into God's sunlight. The man who takes his life easily, not willing to take up the cross that has been set for him, is going the broad way. The broad and easy way takes one down the mountain; the path of the cross takes one up the mountain.

And we go single file into the finest things of life. We do not go in great masses. You see it in education—your lower classes crowded, numbers steadily decreasing as the

demands of scholarship grow more rigorous, until presently you have a small group of three or four in the higher seminars. You see it in business—plenty of clerks, few heads of departments, fewer heads of houses still.

The figure is true to life in other senses also. The way of duty is narrow. There is but one way to do one's duty, there are thousands of ways of not doing it. There is one way of obedience, there are myriad ways of disobedience. The gate of life is so narrow that we go in one at a time. Fathers cannot go in for children, wives cannot go in for husbands. We may lead each other; we may help each other through; we may help each other at all the hard places of the narrow way as we go up. One at a time we go in. But the way that leads to ruin—ah, that is the broad way. We can go in that way in great companies, following the crowd. If, therefore, any man's way has in it no cross, no hardship, and all is easy, let him ask in all earnestness whether he is surely in the way of life. Let him look honestly for his cross, that cross which he is meant to bear as

the mark of his right in the way. Every man owes it to his moral life to ask about anything that becomes the popular, universally approved thing, whether it is not thereby proved to be a thing not meant for him, whether following the crowd will not lead to destruction rather than to life.

With this warning in their ears against religious sloth the disciples were brought to careful thought again. Does this seem fitting? they say. Who will be drawn by this? When Jesus once spoke of the cross in His own life, Peter said to Him, This be far from Thee, this shall never come to Thee. So they felt here. A hard way, a narrow gate? they ask. It is not so that our teachers have taught. This is not the message that catches the waiting ear. The popular prophets have not voiced this. This seems severe. Not a minister, I suspect, who does not know what they felt: not a minister who does not hesitate to preach from those verses which we have just considered lest they estrange men instead of winning them. The disciples felt this, be sure of it. But their Master, loving

as always, but honest, did not relax the severity of the word. The popular prophets have not voiced this, that is true. But beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, while inwardly they are ravening wolves. Sheep's fleece sometimes hides the ravening wolf. The treacherous Jacob simulates the first-born Esau. False prophets appear wherever the true are. They will make it easy, easy at the first; they will tell you that the gate of the way of life is broad; they will tell you not to take your religion too severely—but they are not honest with you, they are inwardly devouring you.

And you may not know them by any mystic test. You may not detect the wolf within the sheep fleece by any keen philosophic insight. Ah, yes, there are men who can catch the hollow note, who can tell when the prophet is speaking more than he feels. It was a woman of rare insight who heard Tauler and said to him: "I bid you in God's name preach no more till you have submitted yourself to God." It was not what

she saw of fruit, or missed of it, but what she heard with the inner ear that made another godly woman tell Mr. Moody that he had not yet the power of the Spirit, and send him into the secret place to receive it. Such rare souls there are who catch the voice of the wolf though the fleece be softest wool. But for most of us the test is simpler, more prosaic.

The figure changes abruptly into one of the field, Jesus' favourite figure. "By their fruits ye shall know them," He says. Not by appearance and not by claim. You shall not know them by appearance. Sooner or later the nature will assert itself. Thorns will not reveal grape nature, and the power of figs does not lie in thistles. Here stands a gnarled, knotty tree. You would cut it down, but your gardener who knows the place forbids. The fruit, he tells you, is the most luscious of all. It is a good tree, whatever its appearance. And this finely formed tree in the midst of the row, heavy with foliage, symmetrical, graceful, surely this is the best tree of the orchard. Your

gardener checks you. This tree bears no perfect fruit; somewhere it is out of condition. It only cumpers the ground. Appearance serves not in the orchard. Fruit is wanted here. This tree appears well; it is corrupt; it brings forth corrupt fruit. Firewood it may be; a fruit tree it is not. We shall not know, therefore, by appearance, but only by fruits.

Nor shall we know by claims. The false prophet may not be known by what he says. Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. The profession of the lips is not the test to which the prophet is to be put, but the obedience that he shows to the will of the Father in heaven. One reads the twenty-second and twenty-third verses with quiet and almost anxious heart. The amazement that awaits us at the judgment! Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by Thy name, by Thy name cast out demons, and by Thy name do many mighty works? Have we not been known for what we did by Thy name?

We talked our religion, we used its power ; have we not claim upon Thee? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you ; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity. You used My name ; you had My power ; you never accepted My purpose. We were never friends. I never knew you. Did you catch that word? Here is the most loving of all men looking forward to a time of august meaning. In this day, there is one invitation—Come. I have voiced it, mightier men have voiced it, the whole Church voices it in His name—Come. But “in that day” those same lips that have here always said Come will frame that other word—Depart ! Then, at any rate, pretense will be ended. What men have said which has not been the expression of their own hearts, what men have claimed that has not been honest, will be of no further value. Then Jesus appears as the Judge. He looks forward here to that day, the day of the world’s assize. The testing time comes then. And if some one says, But I do not believe in the judgment, may it not be said in utmost tenderness that

believing or not believing in judgment has nothing to do with the fact? It is not made nor unmade by what I think. At that time I pass into other hands than my own. And if some one says lightly, But I will take my chances, let it be said with equal earnestness, There are no chances to take. There is nothing but infallible certainty here. No pretense has any value, no trifling is thinkable. Here the hearts of men are displayed, and men who have prophesied by His name, and cast out demons by His name, and done mighty works by His name, but have not done the will of the Father in heaven, and never have been friends of His, will be revealed in their true light, and—one says it with bated breath—will be banished from Him as those who work iniquity.

This after all is only in line with the spirit that Jesus put into His disciples. You find throughout the New Testament a strong contempt for deeds that we men count good, which do not proceed from the inner spirit. It is frankly put in the verses which open the familiar thirteenth chapter of First Corin-

thians. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. There is not one of us men who can quite credit that. No one of us who would dare apply it to other people. Yet it is the test that is to be applied by infallible wisdom to ourselves. So, this test of Jesus no one of us would think of applying to any one else. It would be arch and inexcusable impertinence for any man to go to another who is working in the name of Christ and say, You do not know Jesus Christ. It need not be a matter of slightest concern to me whether you would say this to me; you need not waste a moment considering whether I would say it to you. No one of us dare say it to any other—you are not a friend of Christ, He does not know you.

But every one of us must be mightily concerned with the fact that he must face the test at the hands of One who makes no mistake, and who becomes the Judge "in that day." Many who say, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but not all. And they who enter are there, not because they have said, Lord, Lord, but because they have done the will of the Father in heaven and have been friends of Christ.

Having uttered this warning against religious pretense, the time drew near to go down the mountain. The waiting people, who were gradually coming up, sat on the hill and were hearing this last part of the Sermon. I think silence fell on the group at the end of this twenty-third verse. What follows is conclusion of the whole Sermon. I can imagine questions that provoked it, but I think there was no question. Jesus was now to put the solemn conclusion on all He had said before. The "therefore" of the twenty-fourth verse looks back, not to the paragraph which we have just studied, but to the entire Sermon. This greatest of all

preachers felt at the end of His discourse as many of His unworthy followers have felt when they have preached with all their earnestness and might. Hearers have sat quiet and attentive. They have seemed thoughtful. They have heard the words that were said.

But the preacher knows that this will not be enough, that this will never establish them in the holy faith, that this will never change lives that need to be changed. And the wonder of his heart is whether those who hear are going, also, to do what they have heard. After a service once as the people passed into the street some one met a friend who said, "What, is the sermon done already?" The reply was, "No, only the preaching is finished; the sermon is yet to be done." The Sermon on the Mount is about to be finished. It is important to have it understood that the hearing of it is not the great thing. The words that had been spoken must yet be worked into the lives of the men who heard. So there comes a warning against religious instability in Jesus' fa-

miliar little parable of the two men who built their houses, one on the rock and one on the sand. Instantly we hear of the foolish man, we exclaim that it is an impossible condition; no man would be fool enough to do this, build a house without a foundation. Well, if not, then men who will not do such folly in business are doing it in religion. And actually in Jesus' country to-day, as then, men are doing all this, building their houses too near the watercourse, without sufficient foundation, carelessly forgetting the certain danger of a changed season, building it as men sometimes insist on building their summer cottages in the Alps, against the warning of experienced mountaineers, only to have them caught by an avalanche of snow which comes down over the beautiful spot which they have selected.

What then is the true test of wisdom? How shall we know wise men from foolish men? Is this man a member of the kingdom, of which so much has been said? We cannot know by outward appearance, not by the creed he professes with his lips, not by

the face he wears nor his manner towards the world. The two houses in the parable may be exactly alike, only the foundations are different—but saying that you have said all. Tell us this first, Is your man one who does what he hears from Christ? His approval of the words of Christ is not to the point, not even important. You know nothing of a man when he tells you that he approves the teaching of Christ; his obedience is the only important thing. Indeed, it is not far from impertinence for a man to talk about approving Christ. As though I, a creature of to-day, should pass judgment on God! When Margaret Fuller Ossoli declared she accepted the universe, Carlyle said, “She’d better.” Nothing is more pitiful than the superior patronizing spirit of some men as they come into the presence of Christ. They approve the Church. They think the churches are all doing good work. They have nothing against religion, but they are not prepared to obey. That is, they hear the words, but they do them not, and they are the foolish men of this parable.

And the severe test, because the unavoidable one, comes when storm breaks upon the man. How does he bear it? Is the foundation cut from under him? Even the details of the figure are suggestive in their order. First the heavy rain, which any house may bear, until it is met by the floods washing up from the sea, or the floods in the narrow watercourse leading down from the mountainside, where also the rain has been falling; then after the sand is cut from under it, the wind beating upon it. That is the true order: the sand is cut out first, then the wind has fair chance. There is even a difference in the verb which describes the action of the wind. In the description of the attack of the wind on the house of the wise man the word involves a persistent blowing, a continued sweep of the wind. The verb used in connection with the destruction of the house of the foolish man simply involves a gust of wind. It does not take long and persistent attacks to overthrow that house. One short, sharp, violent gust of wind and it is over. Lives that go down in the

world's storm do not fall until after the foundation has been softened, then a blast overthrows them, which they should have resisted with ease. Young men who come to the city and go wrong never do so until after the foundations have been cut from under their faith. It is never the final blast that explains a fall. There is a process of undermining going on long before. Jesus' figure expresses what happens in every city.

The case is familiar enough. A family accustomed elsewhere to do Christian duty as well as make Christian profession come here to strange surroundings. They do not undertake any service; they do not attempt any Christian work; they no longer *do* His words, as Jesus puts it, and inevitably there begins a sapping of the foundations. It is gradual, as the rain falls and the flood rises; it is not violent. The family would not for a moment deny their Christian faith. They expect fully a little later to become part of a church, to resume activity, but there is one reason or another which makes it unwise now. Presently there comes a

definite, severe ordeal. The family must resist a blast of wind. It is a sudden joy or a sudden sorrow, swift prosperity or swift adversity. You know what happens. The worldly part of our city is constantly being recruited from families which once claimed the name of Christ. Their sons and their daughters no longer doing the words of Christ, but only approving them, neglecting obedience to them, have no foundation, and the whole edifice of their faith falls. In the figure of Jesus, obedience is the foundation of faith and of membership in the kingdom. Whoever will do His will shall know of the doctrine. It is not the faith which we accept, it is the faith which we live, which stands us in hand when the storms of life come upon us.

As we close the Sermon, we catch one great and amazing note. All young preachers are taught that every sermon ought to close with a word of hope and consolation and assurance. That is wise teaching. Our sermons should close so because we are frail men and our voices of warning may have

been hard and not loving. But this Sermon closes with a note of warning. What are its last words? The house fell, and great was the fall thereof. And with those words the greatest preacher of all history closed the greatest Sermon. In the hearing of those words we cannot be other than solemn. That the kingdom is to spread until it takes in unreckoned thousands of men we joyously believe, but that there are men who will fail of that kingdom we cannot doubt while we believe Him who is the Head of it. That there are houses of faith being built which grip the rock and which no storm can overthrow, we know with a glad assurance. But we cannot be indifferent to the fact that there are houses, attractive, beautiful, which have no foundation, and which when the final storm comes will go down with a great fall.

VIII

The Expectation of the Kingdom

(Luke xxiii. 51)

Joseph of Arimathea . . . who was looking for the
kingdom of God.

VIII

THE EXPECTATION OF THE KINGDOM

HERE is a man of whom we get the barest glimpse, but it sets him out in clear lines. This sentence is a lightning flash in which we see him. Joseph of Arimathea, the man in whose tomb the body of Jesus was laid, who is said by John to have been a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews—what do we know of him? Well, the little town from which he came is not important. We know that he was rich. We know that he was a thoroughly respected man. He was an honoured counsellor. He was exceptionally influential, one of the Sanhedrin, and the Jewish nation had no higher place to which it could call a man. Moreover, in personal character he was a good man and righteous. He was one who stood out in the Sanhedrin against the condemnation of Jesus. The strong probability is that he was not even present at the time

of the condemnation, either for fear of the Jews again or else in protest against the action. Unless we count the secrecy of his discipleship and the suppression of his faith against him we know nothing unfavourable about him. And yet, though he was rich, respected, influential, of finest character, nothing satisfied him. He was a man with an expectation. All he had gained made him sure there must be something more. His heart was still restless. He was looking for the kingdom of God. The word means two things : first, that he was expecting the kingdom to come, but secondly, that he was serving his own expectation. He not only was looking for it as a coming fact, but he was looking for it in an active sense, seeking to bring it.

There were other such souls in his day. They kept themselves assured of a future kingdom, of which they could see very few signs. Specially at the time when Joseph lived, the signs were dead against that kingdom. The kingdom idea runs through all the Old Testament. It is almost invariably

connected with the exaltation and elevation of the Jewish people. In the days of David and Solomon, the expectation was that the actual temporal power of the Hebrews should extend over the entire world. That continued even during the division of the kingdom. Then the expectation increased that Jerusalem should become the capital of the world. Every smallest indication was taken as encouragement in that belief. It was to be the kingdom of God, but God must be first the God of the Hebrews. The prophets came emphasizing the fact that the kingdom while it might be external would certainly be markedly internal. They pointed out that there was no hope for the elevation of the Jewish people by a fiat of God until the people themselves were worthy to be exalted. You find, therefore, in all the prophets a challenge to that faith of the people in the coming of the kingdom. Then came the captivity and the scattering of the mass of the Hebrews over the entire world. The hope of the kingdom was a definite one only in the minds of the choicest souls. They

were living their lives in the expectation of the appearance of the kingdom. When the child Jesus was brought to the Temple He was placed in the arms of the aged Simeon who was looking for the consummation of Israel. When the aged Anna saw Him she spent the rest of her days speaking to all them that looked for the redemption of Jerusalem.

These souls, and gradually following them a great crowd as well, with whom the hope was an indefinite one, were challenged by that note in the preaching of John the Baptist which spoke of the kingdom. He dealt with it in terms of an outward kingdom, to be sure, but pointed out to each group of men who came what they could do to advance it. Once when Jesus was passing through Galilee He performed some striking miracles, and found that the people were preparing to make Him a King. When the day of the Triumphal Entry came there were hundreds in Jerusalem who were inspired to think that at last the King had come, and that the temporal kingdom would be established. Even after the resurrection, and on the eve

of the ascension, the disciples asked Him whether it was now His plan to restore the kingdom to Israel.

But meanwhile there is no more characteristic phrase in the entire teaching of Jesus than this—the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven. It is a phrase which He uses increasingly in His ministry. The Sermon on the Mount has for its especial theme, The Kingdom of Heaven on the Earth. Almost the whole of it is taken up with teachings about the qualities and conduct of its members. The larger number of the parables have to do with that kingdom. It was not the kingdom of the early Jews nor of the popular belief. It was not to be an external, temporal government. It was instead to be something internal. Jesus taught His disciples that the kingdom of God was already among them, and gave them such characteristics of the members of the kingdom as were utterly indifferent to racial lines. The kingdom with which He was dealing had nothing more to do with the Jews than with other peoples. All people of

all sorts who would allow the spirit of the kingdom to be formed within them had equal right to it. It is such a kingdom as this that we are intended to expect. Our first concern is not with the characteristics of the kingdom that Joseph expected. We are more concerned to see that this man lived under discouraging circumstances but kept always looking for the kingdom of God.

No Christian was ever expected to settle into a dull acceptance of existing conditions, which are not the conditions of the kingdom of heaven. Notably, he was never meant to despair of the victories of the future. His faith in the coming of that kingdom may or may not be encouraged by what he sees. He may or may not be able to point out in the news of the day the progress of that kingdom. They tell of a young foreigner who was socially received in New York City and repaid his obligations before sailing by inviting his friends to a large hotel for dinner. In the course of the dessert an uncut watermelon was brought in. His experience had never gone beyond muskmelon before, so

he carefully cut open the melon, took out all the red inside and served the rind! There are some of us who read our newspapers in much the same way. The thing that is most valuable in them we very often miss and feed ourselves on the rind. We can read our papers to find the ravages of sin or to find the victories of the Gospel. In one day I met two men who independently described their newspaper reading in opposite terms. One said his newspaper always depressed him, sin seemed rampant, good men were failing from the earth. He could not even take the satisfaction of some of our friends that so much evil heralds the coming of the end and the reign of Christ over the wreck of our civilization. That was one side; that was one way of interpreting the news of the day. My other friend declared that his paper abounded in the news of the kingdom of heaven and its advances. True, you get a column of the story of the killing of a boy in the East, and the escapade of a young girl in the West, but you get also a note at least of great world conferences of missions, the

most significant gatherings in the history of the Church. You get note at least of a congress of thoughtful men and women considering the welfare of little children. True, you find large space devoted to a prize-fight, but you hope an old pugilist is right when he declares that the thing that has "queered" honest prize-fighting is that the church folks have got down on it for some reason he cannot understand. We may even be encouraged when we remember that *news* is always the unusual thing, the thing that is not always happening. I asked a city editor why he never reported our prayer-meeting, but would certainly do so if one of the elders and I should have a fisticuff during the service. He replied that prayer-meetings are not news, they are part of the regular life of the community, but he would welcome a fisticuff between myself and an elder because so far as he and the community knew it did not happen often. It would be real news. If the great evils which are so commonly described were actually the rule they would not be featured in the paper. If legis-

lators were all tarred from the same barrel, if it did not shock the moral sense of the people for any of them to be so tarred, nothing would be made of it. The very publicity of such things may fairly be read in terms of encouragement.

Or one may find one's encouragement in the long view. A gentleman brought to me recently the title page of a book of which he had seen a copy. The title was, "An Impartial Survey of the Ruins of the Christian Religion." But the book was dated in 1669. Our fathers were a good deal concerned over the attacks of Voltaire; he seemed so confident of the fatality of the blows he was dealing to the Christian faith that there were some who took him quite seriously. Some of you have been in Madame Tussaud's exhibition in London and you will remember the chair that belonged to Voltaire, which is among the curiosities of the place. One day Peter Mackenzie, the Cornish miner and evangelist, was passing and noted the chair. He leaped over the railing and seated himself and began

to sing in a full voice, "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun doth his successive journeys run." Voltaire had been gone a good while and Jesus was still reigning. In my own early ministry the outstanding opponent of the Christian faith was Mr. Robert G. Ingersoll, a name almost forgotten to-day. In one of his lectures he said, "The churches are dying out everywhere; they are struck with death." Bishop McCabe read that sentence on the train. At the next station he sent Mr. Ingersoll a telegram that read: "Dear Robert: All hail the power of Jesus' name. We Methodists are dedicating more than one church a day and we hope soon to make it two." The Methodists have long since made it two a day, and the kingdom of God as it is represented in the churches, and they are only part of its representation, is developing more rapidly to-day than it was in the days of Ingersoll.

But even when that is said, the expectation of the kingdom does not depend on the indications one may find. It depends instead on a distinct and unshakable faith in the suc-

cess of the plan of God. It would keep clear and strong in the faithful heart if all the indications were against it.

What are the distinguishing marks of that kingdom for which we are steadily to look? We need not expect to have it defined to us, reduced to a diagram. No two men can agree on all the distinguishing traits of even our petty earthly kingdoms. One of our American wise men tells the French what are the elements of our American spirit. Other men say, Yes, but he has omitted this or that trait; Yes, but he has overemphasized this or that element. No mind can analyze any living fact and be done with it. Certainly no mind can analyze the greatest of all living facts, the kingdom of God. Volumes have been written about it—all true, no doubt, but none ending the story. Not even Jesus tells us directly what it will be in its fullness. He tells us in parable after parable what it is like. He leaves us to find out what are its characteristics. In the fullest statement of all, in the Sermon on the Mount, He deals far more with its member-

ship than with its constitution. The marks of the kingdom are rather hinted than declared in the Sermon. Some of those hints may help us to see what it is we may expect.

In the first place, the kingdom of heaven is to be one of the personal authority of God, exercised through Christ. The will of God and the favour of God are the chief concern of its members. They covet the favour of God rather than that of man: they serve God rather than mammon. The King makes the kingdom. The new kingdom is possible because Christ is real; He has come to be the nucleus around which the kingdom can form. The kingdom itself is the result of a long process, the flowering of forces long at work. But the King of the kingdom is not the outcome of a human evolution. He is not the product of His times. He is not the flower of the race, in any such sense as is ordinarily stated. The human race as a race is far finer to-day than it was in His day, but it produces no such character as His. If He were the climax of the human race He would stand at the end of the proc-

ess. Instead, He stands near the beginning of the process. For this new kingdom He is the source of evolution, not its product; its fountain, not its outlet.

The kingdom of heaven will be the developing on earth of the relation between God and man which Christ established. That is the essential meaning of the kingdom. We are to expect that to be brought about. The relation between God and man which Christ Himself displayed, and which He taught, is to be the distinguishing characteristic of that kingdom. That means that it is the kingdom of His own personal authority. The Church is not the kingdom. The churches as a whole are not the kingdom. They exist only for its sake. Jesus mentioned the Church twice, the kingdom many times. The disciples planted the Church to serve the kingdom. It was the kingdom that Jesus founded. And the essential characteristic of that kingdom is that the authority of God is to be willingly and lovingly accepted by men.

A second fact of the kingdom we are to expect is that it will gather up into itself all

the good of the past. The new kingdom does not come by revolution alone. There are certain forces that must be destroyed. But everything that is good in all the past is to be gathered up into that kingdom. We are to expect the preservation and salvation of everything that we know is according to the mind of God in the things of to-day. We are to expect the destruction of everything else. All that is good in the past is to be gathered up into this kingdom. It comes not to destroy but to fulfill. The general attitude of the Christian towards the world as it exists to-day is not to be one of wholesale denunciation or unbroken antagonism. He is to rejoice in all that can be used in the kingdom of God, keeping himself assured that the kingdom will gather into itself all that is good in past and present.

So it will end all confusion between the good and the evil. We are to look for the time when tares and wheat will not grow together. We are to expect the period when true and false foundations will be revealed. That will come because the traits which

mark the members of the kingdom are inner ones inevitably working out into the outer life. That takes time; that takes opportunity. Doubtless Joseph of Arimathea expected chiefly that the kingdom would be a visible one. The Christian faith makes it also a visible one, but it becomes visible after its first period as an invisible kingdom. The moral confusion of the present day is not to continue. The standing side by side of well framed houses, one with a foundation and the other without, is not to continue. There will come a time when saying, Lord, Lord, will confuse no one, unless it be accompanied by obedience. We are to expect the coming of that time.

So this kingdom will magnify the element of service and its members will find their happiness in service. "Whatever else the kingdom is to be, it will be social." The old saying that "God made the country and man made the town" is only half true. God made both. There are certain fruits that come to their speedier perfection in the country and we are nearer to nature's heart there.

But it is born in the human race to be social, to be in contact with each other, and that social instinct is simply brought to its natural fruit in the town. The Golden Rule is a rule of service. It is impossible to execute it except in the midst of society. No man can live by the Sermon on the Mount in isolation from his fellows. He must be with them. The Sermon on the Mount has the tang of outdoors in it, but it has also the taste of the city about it. We are coming into a fuller realization of that to-day than we have ever known before. Our humourist, Mark Twain, who was one of the most serious men, made the striking comment that "the present Christianity makes an excellent private Christian, but its endeavours to make an excellent public one go for nothing substantially. He has sound and sturdy private morals, but he has no public ones." He goes on to urge that Congressmen should be persuaded to use none but their private morals hereafter. Now it is that distinction between private and public morals which the kingdom of God must be constantly fighting. Until that

distinction is entirely overruled the kingdom of God cannot come.

And that gives opportunity to point out that it is possible for any man to come into the kingdom, even though the kingdom has not come. We come to the kingdom, and when it has worked its way with us, and others like us, then the kingdom itself will come. So, gradually and steadily as man after man submits to the authority of the will of Christ, the kingdom advances. It will come when that submission is the law of life.

We are to expect that time to come, we are to look for that kingdom. It is the essence of the Christian faith that it will come. We pray for it in the Lord's Prayer. We declare our faith in it in the creed. It is at the heart of our missionary enterprise. It is the very core and kernel of our faith. We are meant to be men like Joseph of Arimathea who are looking for the kingdom of heaven. Any question of it, any despair of it, is unworthy our Christian profession. "To doubt would be disloyalty; to falter

would be sin." In the great eleventh chapter of the Hebrews is the striking saying that the great men of faith were always desiring and seeking something better, and so God was not ashamed to be called their God. The inference is irresistible that He is ashamed of the man who does not keep looking and expecting, who is satisfied with things as they are before they have become what they ought to be.

This expectation had two influences on Joseph of Arimathea—it brought him restraint and also inspiration. It was this expectation that held Joseph of Arimathea back from the counsel of the Sanhedrin in destroying Jesus. He was so looking for the kingdom that he could not encourage anything that disregarded its coming or blocked its way. He was not entirely convinced that Jesus was part of that coming kingdom, but he knew well, as any reasoning man knows, say nothing of a righteous man, that the kingdom will not come by the destruction of men who are preaching it. So this hope laid restraint upon him, held him back from

some things which otherwise he might have done.

Every great hope puts restraint on a man, and the greater the hope the heavier its restrictions. For the greater the hope the more demanding are its claims and the harder seems the road to it. You can almost measure a young man's life by the power of the hope he has. He enters a business house, let us say. If his ideas are vague and he has no particular purpose he will chafe at the restrictions, he will find excuse to be away from business, games will attract him frequently from his place. He has no expectation, or only a small one, and it has only small restraining power upon him. But when he enters, suppose he gets into his head the hope of being the head of the business some day, or, at any rate, of being a masterful business man. Older people smile at his youthful enthusiasm, but if they are wise they know that there is power in it. Under the influence of it he will presently be giving his life to the gaining of the end which he hopes to see accomplished. You

know what happens, how he gives himself to his business, how purely social demands are neglected, how his reading turns in that direction, how seriously he takes himself, how he holds himself down in the games and pleasures he enjoys, what restraint his hope lays on him.

It is so in the intellectual life. There come times to most students when other courses are very alluring. Positions are offered to boys, pleasure seems promised to girls, that would draw away from studies. Many boys and girls yield and set out half educated. Their immediate success adds to the difficulty of those who remain in their courses. But if there is a real hope for the educated life, it will lay restraining hand on a student. He will say many a No. He will deny himself many a pleasure, many an engagement which otherwise he would take. His hope has in it a great restraint.

That is what his hope for the coming of the kingdom did for Joseph. That is what it must do for us. There are courses of life, there are ways of living, which are forbidden

us because we expect the kingdom to come, and we know we are unworthy of it if we put anything in the way of its coming.

So the expectation of the kingdom brought inspiration to Joseph. Criticize what he did not do before the death of Jesus, but do not minimize what he did after His death. Joseph was inspired by his hope to do a brave and kindly thing. He imperilled himself. Tradition says that he was taken after this and thrown into prison for complicity with the friends of Jesus. At any rate he forgot himself, committed himself to a costly kindness and broke with those who had been his friends. John says that up to this time he had been a disciple but secretly for fear of the Jews; now he came out into the open. He no longer stood aloof, suspicious and critical. He became in the eyes of one who knew of it, part of the movement which gathered about Christ. That is partly what this word means—looking for the kingdom. Literally it means that he took the kingdom to himself. He counted it part of his own responsibility.

Is not that, after all, what our lives need? We believe the great kingdom is coming. Manifestly it will not come, save as it inspires us to do our part to bring it. Every man who lives the life that the kingdom requires, and puts his life at the service of others in the lines of that kingdom, helps to bring it. Others may talk of expecting it; only he looks for it in the sense in which Joseph looked for it.

When Handel wrote the Messiah he was himself almost overcome by his Hallelujah chorus. He said that he seemed to see the very angels of God singing the music he was writing. And what are the words that bring that chorus to its climax? They are the words with which the Bible comes to its climax. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever." We are to expect that, we are to look for that, we are to live for that.

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