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SERMON DXXXVIII.

A NEW YEAR'S SERMON FOR 1851.
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CONFESSIONS OF DYING MEN.

“It is appointed unto men once to die.”—HEBREWS 9 : 27.

THE fact asserted in this text is admitted by all ; but how few appear to feel its practical influence. Who would infer from the conduct and conversation of most men, that they believed themselves to be mortal, or that they expected anything less than that their residence on earth is to be perpetual? They live as carelessly, plan as confidently, and pursue the world with as much eagerness, as if they were exempted from change, and could set at defiance the attacks of disease and death. Yet they must die—must die soon, and may die suddenly ; and after death cometh the judgment. This is the appointment of God, and in this war there is no discharge. It is wise, then, to consider our latter end, to be familiar with the thought of dying, often and seriously to consider what will be our feelings and views when we shall come to lie upon our death-bed, and feel that we are going into eternity. This is a duty which especially demands our attention now, as we have just taken leave of the old year, and are entering upon the unknown, untried scenes of a new one, which, to some of us, no doubt, will be the last year of life.

Let us, then, endeavor to bring the closing scene near, to think of ourselves as having reached the end of our earthly course, and about to take our final leave of the world and all its busy cares. The question arises, what, in such a case, would be our feelings, what the reflections that would press upon our minds with the greatest weight and solemnity? We may, indeed, die so suddenly, that we shall have no time to think till we think

be closed forever, and converse with the world to come—with death, judgment, and eternity. Go stand upon the shores of that dark, vast ocean you must sail so soon, and listen to the sound of its waves till you are deaf to every sound besides, and then with those solemn scenes around and before you, endeavor, with all earnestness and diligence, to gather about you those resources of faith and piety which you will assuredly need in the day when you shall be called to meet that enemy whom you must conquer, or die forever.

SERMON DXXXIX.

THE POWER OF CHRISTIANITY.

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"I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."—PHIL. 4: 13.

THIS is one of those comprehensive declarations which we occasionally meet with in Scripture, and especially in the writings of Paul, in which the whole system of Christianity seems to be compressed into a single sentence. For what is Christianity but a revelation of the all-sufficiency of Christ to meet the impotence of man? Paul, with all his native and acquired intellectual energy, was, as a sinner, the heir of moral death; and even as a saint, he was the heir of an undisputed moral weakness; for we have his own testimony to the fact, that when he "would do good, evil" was "present with" him. Nevertheless, through Christ, he was mighty. In proportion as he was baptised with the Spirit of Christ, there was vigor in his thoughts, there was heroism in his heart, there was nerve in his arm, for the accomplishment of anything, for the endurance of anything to which the honor of his Master called him. And as it was with Paul, so it is with all Christ's followers. In themselves they are compassed about with many infirmities; they are often oppressed with a sense of their own weakness, and yet in Christ they have a tower of strength; they are mighty, through him, even to the pulling down of strongholds.

The inward exercises of the Christian, not less than the doctrines which he believes, bear, in no inconsiderable degree, even to himself, a mysterious character. The proposition contained in our text every Christian knows to be true as a matter of experience, and up to a certain point he comprehends it, and is

able to explain it; but beyond that point it is enveloped in deep mystery. The life of the Christian is a hidden life; and we cannot say but that the mysteries which are bound up in it may engage his admiring scrutiny through eternity. Still there is much connected with it that is capable of being explained; and, if I mistake not, an attentive consideration of the passage which I have just read to you, will bring before us the substance of all that has been revealed on this wonderful subject. "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

The Christian's strength—the source from which, and the medium through which, it is communicated—this will form the subject of our discourse.

1. *The Christian's strength.*—Paul expresses it in the phrase, "I can do all things." The expression is limited by the subject to which it relates; for to understand it literally, would be nothing less than to impute to the Apostle the impiety of claiming one of the Divine attributes. He is speaking of the peculiar difficulties and trials to which he was subjected in the cause of Christ, and his meaning is that he is able to meet them successfully, victoriously; he is adequate to anything to which his duty, as a follower and an ambassador of Christ, might call him. And in its application to Christians in general, it is to be understood as implying their ability to obey Christ's commands in all things; their resolution not to yield to any obstacle which they may find in their path, provided they are sure it is the path which the Master has marked out for them.

1. More particularly, I remark that the Christian is mighty to labor. It is at once the sin and the shame of a large part of the world, that they fritter away their lives in indolent inaction; and of a still larger part of it, that, though they exercise their faculties vigorously, it is for mere worldly objects. They labor hard enough for the meat that perisheth, but not at all for that which endureth to everlasting life. But the true Christian differs widely from both these classes;—from the former, as he is awake to earnest and diligent effort; from the latter, as his efforts are directed to beneficent and spiritual ends. Let him occupy whatever part of the great field he may, he will find enough to do, and if he have the Christian spirit, he will be in earnest to do it. See how inventive he is in devising plans for sustaining the great interests of truth and piety; for sending abroad the glorious Gospel; for bringing all within his reach under the benign influence of a pure Christianity! See how ready he is to keep on laboring in spite of difficulties; how he takes advantage of everything that can, in any way, be rendered tributary to his work; how he even sometimes presses into his cause the most adverse circumstances, causing that to

become the minister of good which was designed to be the minister of evil. I think I hear some one ask, "Where are we to look for such Christians as these?"—and I know it is a cutting question; I know what multitudes there are who bear the Christian name, who have no better character than that of drones in the church; and I know, too, how wretchedly most of us fall short of our Christian vows and obligations; but I also know that there are Christians, and not a few, to whom we may point triumphantly for an illustration of our position; men and women, whose desire to live in the world is identified with their desire to labor for Christ. A nobler example there never was, than the man from whom came the declaration in our text. Every faculty of his great mind was kept in intense exercise; his ruling passion was to honor Christ as a follower, in proportion as he had dishonored him as a persecutor. In the act of his conversion, he breathed forth the prayer, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and the whole record of his subsequent life shows the sincerity of that prayer; for it shows him always engaged about his Master's business. Do you say that the world has never seen but one Paul; that his conversion was an extraordinary conversion, and his character an extraordinary character, and that therefore he is not to be taken as a sample of what Christianity, acting by its more ordinary influences, can accomplish? Look, then, at Brainard, with his heart beating so high for the salvation of the poor Indians, that neither the persuasion of his friends, nor his own manifest approach to the grave, could keep him out of the wilderness; labor he would, labor he did, till his physical energies were so nearly gone, that he felt that nothing remained for him but to go away and die. Look at Henry Martyn, nothing wearied by the keen and sagacious opposition of his enemies; nothing discouraged by finding barrenness where he had hoped for a harvest; nothing intimidated by the progress of a disease which was gradually wearing out his constitution, he kept on laboring to the extent of his ability, till death took him away to occupy a more glorious field. Do you say that even these are extraordinary cases, and that I am still lingering among the greatest names that adorn the Christian record? Then let me ask you to look at the lives of most of our modern missionaries; notice the self-denial and heroic spirit that breathes in their communications; see how evident it is that they do not count even their lives dear to them; see them adventuring upon great and hazardous enterprises, evincing an intrepidity that no obstacle is powerful enough to overcome; and finally see them holding on in their course of diligent and earnest effort, till they go to render up their account with joy. Nay, you need not look across the ocean to find these glorious examples—you may find persons, I doubt

not, of both sexes, in your own community, who have learned the secret of not living to themselves; who, without neglecting their worldly business, find no little time to give to the spiritual interests of their fellow-creatures; and some who make it a part of the economy of their life to go around at regular intervals among the habitations of wretchedness, as ministers of peace and consolation. No, brethren, notwithstanding the general apathy that prevails in the church, and the multitude of cases in which its members openly and flagrantly dishonor a Christian profession, I have no fear of not being able to illustrate my position, if I should be called to do it, by living examples. There are in the bosom of the church now, even now, when the love of many waxes cold, some at least, who are not weary of well-doing.

2. The Christian is mighty to *resist*. The spiritual life, so long as the natural life lasts, is an uninterrupted scene of conflict. The Christian would fain be at peace; but his enemies will not let him alone. He may be in the world engaged in his lawful business; he may be at home in the bosom of domestic quiet and comfort; he may be in the church a devout and earnest worshipper; he may be in the closet, where no eye sees him but that of his Father in Heaven; and yet in any or all of these conditions he is accessible by his spiritual foes. The world is one of these foes, in every attractive form into which it can throw itself: the prince of the power of the air is another; and he associates with himself we know not how many kindred agents: and last, though not least, that set of enemies which he harbors in his own bosom, his own inward corruptions, sometimes act upon his comfort with most terrible effect. But be his enemies what they may, and be they where they may, the true Christian, with his armor on, dares to encounter them. With the sword of the Spirit, with the breastplate of righteousness, with the guide of truth, with the helmet of salvation, he enters the conflict with confidence, and he retires from it with triumph. I do not say that he always triumphs; but it is his own fault if he does not; and in general the life of the true Christian is made up, in a great measure, of a succession of victorious conflicts.

3. The Christian is mighty to *endure*. What else is the whole record of Christian martyrdom, but a record of glorious triumphs in connection with the dying agony? See that man dressed for a conflict with the fire. The terrible arrangement for the last scene is now fully made. The stake to which he is to be bound, the faggots which are to take hold of his flesh, and the fire which is to set them at their work, are all in his view. And now he is asked for the last time, whether he is willing to abjure Christ; and he answers, as if he spoke from the depths of a lion's heart, "No," and that "No," is gratefully responded

to by a voice from the crowd, the voice of one who stands ready to die with him, the voice of his own beloved wife, bidding him be courageous, and play the man in his martyrdom. And there he stands, calmly, triumphantly, perhaps even praising God in the fire; and there *she* stands, with her eyes lifted to Heaven, and suffused with tears of thankfulness, that her husband is enabled to die so glorious a death.

And this is only a specimen of a multitude of cases that show what strength there is in the heart of a martyr. But we need not go to the history of martyrs to illustrate our position: in the more ordinary scenes of suffering we are often surprised by an exhibition of fortitude that would seem adequate to the endurance of anything. I have seen the naturally timid female, so courageous in the passage through the dark valley, that I have said to myself: "There is a spirit of noble daring there that death in any form is too feeble to vanquish; that heart would keep on beating courageously even amidst the tortures of the rack." I have seen a mother dying with a cluster of little children at her bedside; and their father was there too in the wretchedness of a vagabond and a sot: and her eyes had not seen the light for many years before the darkness of death came over her; and yet her dying hour was like an hour of jubilee; she lay upon that bed of straw, and clasped her withered hands, and moved her sightless eyeballs, and the last expressions that escaped her lips were expressions of thankfulness, of triumph, of transport. You must keep away from such scenes as these if you would doubt the Christian's power to endure; but scenes at least similar to these in their general character are occurring everywhere: and each of them is a witness to the truth which I am endeavoring to present to you.

II. Thus much may suffice to illustrate the Christian's strength; we will now, secondly, contemplate the *source* from which, and the *medium* through which, it is communicated. The apostle, in our text, refers it immediately to Christ—"I can do all things through *Christ*, which strengtheneth me."

Christ is here, no doubt, to be contemplated in the character of mediator. In this character he has all power in heaven and on earth committed to him. Hereby he is qualified to be the head of the church, and to guard all its interests, to manage all its concerns, to supply all its wants. Hereby especially he becomes, not only to the church at large, but to every individual member, the fountain of all strength. It is through the working of his mighty power that each becomes a subject of his kingdom on earth, and ultimately reaches such a spiritual stature as to be admitted to his kingdom in heaven. The administering of strength to the saints, then, belongs peculiarly to the Saviour: it is part of the reward which crowns his mediatorial sufferings. I remark, then,

1. In the first place, that Christianity, by which I here mean the system of truth revealed in the Gospel, appeals to our sense of obligation by the authority which it claims. If an individual should require any service at your hands, which you knew he had no authority to require, you would of course deny his right, and would feel no obligation to yield to the requirement; but if the command, besides being reasonable in itself, should come to you clothed with a legitimate authority; if, for instance, it should be a command from a parent to a child, or from a magistrate to a subject, you could not fail to recognize the obligation to obey; and while this sense of obligation would embarrass you in the purpose to disobey, the spirit of obedience would as certainly find in it an important auxiliary. Let a man feel that what he is about to do is right, that it is in full accordance with his inmost convictions of duty, and it will nerve him with a resolution and energy which he could scarcely look for under other influences. Now remember that Christianity claims a Divine authority—all that *it* commands, *God* commands—the God who is our Creator and Preserver and sovereign Proprietor, and whom therefore we are bound to obey by the strongest possible obligations. In doing what he requires of us, we know, beyond a peradventure, that we are acting right; that we are acting in accordance with the dignity of our nature; acting in a manner that will abide the strictest inward test, either now or in any future period of our existence. And who needs be told that in the consciousness of being governed by such high motives, must be bound up the elements of mighty power? What made Daniel so fearless to encounter the lions' den? What made the three young men so fearless to be cast into the furnace? What made the martyrs so fearless when they sung upon the rack? What makes many a man at this day so undaunted, so persevering, in following the Master through evil report? Ah, the secret of it all is, the inward consciousness that they are doing right; the voice from within, witnessing for them that that dark path, as the case may be, that bloody path, is the path of God's commandments.

2. Christianity appeals to our fears by the terrors which it announces. Fear is one of the most active of all the passions; it was designed by the Creator to put us on our guard against evil; and no small part of our safety in the present world depends upon its operation. Of the powerful influence which this passion exerts, there are practical illustrations passing before our eyes every day. Yonder is an individual who is afraid of losing his property. See how intensely and continually it keeps his faculties in operation; how readily he deprives himself of rest, and even of food, in order to neutralize the influences which are at work to render him a poor man. Yonder

is another who is in danger of losing his good name: notice the watchfulness, the earnestness, the deep anxiety with which he labors to defend himself against either the just or the unjust imputations that are made upon him. Yonder is another who has committed some desperate deed, for which he knows that he is liable to extreme punishment: how the fear of being brought to justice tortures him by day and by night—how it keeps him upon the alert to observe everything that would seem to indicate the probability of detection—how it reconciles him to making his bed in the bosom of the forest, and carries him through the darkness of the night, as if on the wings of the wind, into far distant regions! And if fear operates so powerfully in respect to these lesser evils, what must be its operation in respect to those greater evils, which the Bible assures us are to constitute the final portion of the ungodly? All these evils are concentrated in one—the loss of the soul: but what untold misery, what depth of anguish and wailing, the loss of the soul involves, it must be left to the ages of eternity to reveal. But you will say, perhaps, that this consideration can exert no influence upon the Christian, inasmuch as he, in virtue of *being* a true Christian, is beyond the reach of these tremendous evils. But is he certain that he really sustains the character? Is it not true in respect to the great mass, even of those whose religious character shines the brightest, that they never have that full assurance of hope that casts out all fear; while not a few are habitually in doubt concerning the evidences of their discipleship? Did not even Paul himself fear lest, after all his labors and sufferings in the cause of Christ, he should prove a cast-away; and has he not exhorted Christians to fear lest a promise being left of entering into rest, they should seem to come short of it? If then the professed followers of Christ have just reason to doubt whether theirs be the genuine Christian experience, they have the same reason to fear lest they should find tribulation and anguish awaiting them in the next world. Must not the reflection that this is even possible, stimulate them to the highest efforts of which they are capable, in order to avoid it? Whose ear does not tingle, whose heart does not tremble, at that terrible declaration, "Who can inhabit everlasting burnings!"

3. Christianity appeals to our hopes by the rewards which it proposes. Is not the hope of reward the spring of a large part of the labor which men undergo in the present life? What makes that poor man so patient and steady at his daily work? It is the hope of being able to return home with bread for his wife and children. What makes that student so intensely occupied with his books; even wasting his physical energies, and preparing for himself a premature grave, because he *will* not relax from intellectual toil? It is the hope of acquiring large

stores of knowledge, and of having a bright name in the walks of literature and science. What makes that politician so anxious, and busy, and patriotic, and complaisant to everybody, in the prospect of an election? Why it is that he hopes a good use will be made at the polls of his own name; and he thinks how gracefully he shall wear those laurels, if they can only be obtained. But all that the mere man of the world can hope for, compared with the object of the Christian's hopes, fades into insignificance. The peace, and the joy, and the triumph, which the Christian has a right to anticipate, in life and in death, were worthy to be an object of most diligent seeking; but the glory that is beyond the veil, some beams of which now and then fall upon the eye of a vigorous faith; the glorified faculties, and the glorified employments, and the glorified society, and the glorified wisdom—all, all that is included in the idea of heaven—oh! who can measure the value of such an object of pursuit as this? And yet nothing less than this is embraced by the Christian's hope. And shall the baubles of earth set the men of the world upon a course of the most laborious effort, and do you suppose that the substantial and immortal glories of heaven shall not waken up the inmost energies of the Christian's soul? Believe me, there is that in the heavenly portion that will not suffer the heart that longs for it to beat sluggishly—there must be, there will be, active and earnest effort awakened in view of it; and where no such effort is actually awakened, we need no higher evidence that the heart has never been quickened to heavenly impulses.

4. Christianity appeals to our confidence by the aids which it proffers. If an individual has projected a great enterprise that requires a vast amount of earnest thought and laborious effort, and yet he finds no one coming to his aid for the prosecution of it, but feels that he must address himself to it single-handed, depending entirely upon his own resources, he is very likely to be deterred from entering upon it at all; or, even if he does enter upon it, he will probably soon become discouraged and abandon it altogether. But if, on the other hand, he finds himself surrounded by all the necessary aids for the prosecution of his work, he sets himself to it with zeal and alacrity; and the consciousness that all the means which he requires to carry it forward are at hand, nerves his arm with unwonted vigor, and conveys not only to himself but to others a sure pledge of success. Now, how is it with the Christian? Is he called to perform a work, without the adequate means being provided for him? Let the ordinances and institutions of Christianity answer. What is going forward here at this hour? Why you are listening to that very truth in which the power of God unto salvation resides; you are mingling your

prayers and praises before the throne of mercy; you are doing that which is eminently fitted to increase your spiritual strength; and when you return to your dwellings, you will find the Bible there, which you can read and study for yourself: there, too, you may find the closet of prayer, where the gentlest whisper, or even the silent outgoings of the soul, are sure to find a domestic altar, from which a grateful offering ascends to Heaven, morning and evening: and when you go out into the world, you meet with others who are bound heavenward, with whom you can take sweet counsel, and who are glad to greet you as fellow-helpers unto the kingdom of God. In short, leaving out of view the special influences of God's Spirit, which are pledged to the Christian, you have all the external aids in the religious life that you could desire; and they are present with you always, so that you can use them at your pleasure. Can you contemplate these gracious assistances, Christian, without feeling strong? In the hour of temptation, in the hour of sorrow, in the hour when arduous duties press, what say you of the encouragement that you gather from looking to the closet, to the sanctuary, to the communion table, to all the means of grace, and reflecting that God has ordained them for the very purpose of insuring to you help, victory, salvation?

5. Christianity appeals to our gratitude by the beneficence which it exhibits. None but the frozen, the adamantine heart can be insensible to the bestowment of great favors. Who is that that has just gone away from your door pronouncing your name gratefully and with tears? It is a poor woman, to whom you have given a piece of bread to carry home to her half-starved children. Who is that individual whom perhaps you never saw before, who is pressing up to you with the face of a stranger and the heart of a friend, and who is struggling against his own emotions as he attempts to speak to you? It is one whom your charity rescued from the deepest degradation, and surrounded with advantages for intellectual and moral culture, which, by being faithfully improved, have made him a man—a useful man—perhaps even a great man. And who is that son of Africa, upon whose face sunbeams are playing while tears are streaming, as he falls at your feet and acts out feelings which his tongue cannot express? Why he is a man whom you have redeemed from slavery; and as you could not see him separated from his wife and children, you have redeemed them also; and he has come himself, and brought them along with him, to stand before you as the monuments of your generous interposition. And what is there, or rather what is there not, to awaken this same principle in the heart of the true believer toward his heavenly Benefactor? Christian, *thou wast that slave;*

and yet not *that* slave, but one whose bondage was infinitely more degrading and terrible. Thou wast a slave to thine evil passions; a slave to the false maxims of the world; a slave to the very prince of darkness; and yet thou wast willing to remain in slavery, although it must have its issue in an eternal death. God so loved thee that he gave his Son to redeem thee; and that redemption has involved the death of the cross; and now, instead of being a slave, thou art one of God's freemen; thou art walking at liberty even in this vale of tears; and the heavens will open soon to announce to thee that thy redemption is complete. Here, Christian, lies the grand secret of your strength. It is the love of Christ that constrains you. You look to the cross, and you say, "What do I not owe, what shall I not owe forever, to that all-gracious, all-suffering, Benefactor?" Your heart beats to loftier purposes, and your hands are strung with fresh vigor. I wonder not now at the triumph of martyrs. The love of Jesus is stronger than the consuming fire. That crucified, enthroned Saviour is the glorious object upon which their eye fastens; a sense of the blessings of his redemption overwhelms their grateful spirits, and their tongues move in rapture to his praise so long as they can move at all. Oh, they were never so strong as in the act of dying! and the reason is, that they never before had such a sense of what it was for their Redeemer to die for them.

6. And lastly: Christianity appeals to our holy emulation by the examples which it records. It results from the constitution of our nature, that examples, either good or bad, exert a prodigious influence; and no small part of what men do, or neglect to do, is in consequence of the examples with which they are brought in contact. Hence parents who look well to the interests of their children, endeavor, as far as possible, to surround them with good examples; and hence, too, our gracious Master has surrounded us, his weak and too often wayward followers, with many illustrious models of Christian character, that they may have their influence in helping us forward in our religious course. These examples show us in the most impressive manner what it is to which we are to aspire: they give us the practical embodiment of the great principles of our faith, and then they assure us that a commanding spiritual stature is attainable, inasmuch as it has already been attained. And finally, they seem to call upon us, perhaps from their daily walks of labor, perhaps from the silence of their graves, or the glory of their thrones, to rise up continually to a more vigorous tone of spiritual action. There are eminent saints now on earth, some no doubt within the range of your daily observation, whose example appeals to you with mighty power as often as you contemplate it. There is a yet greater

multitude in heaven: there are Abraham and Moses, and Isaiah and Paul—all the prophets and all the apostles, and a multitude who have gone since their day, some from the rack and the stake—all from a world of sorrow—all in a chariot of glory. All these are your examples, Christian; but I am not yet at the end; for above all and over all, is the incarnate Son of God himself, part of whose errand into the world was, to set us an example, that we should walk in his steps. And can we keep these examples in our eye; can we look around us upon the devoted on earth, or look above us to the glorified in heaven, without earnest desires and diligent efforts to become like them? Hear what encouraging words the great apostle hath spoken—"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us; looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Now, just review the ground we have gone over, looking at the several points as they have been successively developed, and see whether it is not as clear as the light, that Christianity is the depository of an all-quickening energy. It appeals to our sense of obligation by the authority which it claims. It appeals to our fears by the terrors which it announces. It appeals to our hopes by the rewards which it proposes. It appeals to our confidence by the aids which it proffers. It appeals to our gratitude by the beneficence which it exhibits. It appeals to our holy emulation by the examples which it records. Is it to be wondered at, then, that it accomplishes such mighty results? Does not the Christian stand acquitted of arrogance, when he exclaims with the great apostle, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me?"

How glorious is the triumph which arises out of our subject to true Christianity! The test by which Christianity offers to be tried, is the power that dwells in it. You have seen what it can accomplish, and what it can resist, and what it can endure; and you have seen, moreover, that it accomplishes nothing, resists nothing, endures nothing without being able to give a substantial reason for it. I will say nothing here of the various forms of Paganism, ancient and modern; for notwithstanding they have often rendered their votaries mighty to suffer, yet it was by means that not only contradict but outrage all the dictates of sober reason; and among ourselves, at least, there are none who will claim for *them* a divine original. But let Deism, or any other false system, be brought to this test, and see whether the

genuine gospel does not cast it into utter darkness. Reigning spirits of error, we challenge you to show us what you have done, that we may thereby know what you are. Show us your long list of martyrs, who have glorified your systems with their expiring breath, and who have felt that those systems were a cordial to their souls while their bodies lay writhing upon the rack. Show us the great multitude of benefactors to the world who have been found in your ranks; especially those who have counted it a privilege to live and even to die for the spiritual interests of their fellow-men. Show us your missionaries, to whom the exile from country, and the separation from friends, and the exposure to a sickly climate, and all the perils among heathen, are accounted as nothing, in comparison with the grand object of causing the wilderness to blossom, and of bringing many sons unto glory. Show us these fruits of your systems, these monuments of their inherent power; bring forth your men of moral might, your noble army of martyrs, or else acknowledge that you are leaning upon a prop that is nothing better than air. Or rather take refuge in the sanctuary of a pure Christianity; and become yourselves not only the depositories but the channels of divine strength; for then you shall get rid of this degrading weakness, and through Christ shall be able to do all things.

I thank the great Apostle for having penned, and the greater Saviour for having dictated, that noble declaration, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;" for here is the point at which all the light, and strength, and triumph of the church are centred. When I feel oppressed with a sense of weakness, hither I can come and feel strong. When I am growing timid in the prospect of danger, hither I can come and feel courageous. When I see the waves of adversity, mountain high, fiercely approaching me, let me station myself beneath the cross, and be as quiet as a child. And there too let me stand, and gird myself for a conflict with the last enemy: if the spirit of the cross may but come over me, to death's terrors I will oppose a serene and triumphant smile. Oh, brethren, the cross is but another word for Christianity itself: by its healing, strengthening virtues, may we all be nurtured for immortality!