

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE VI.
SCIENCE AND CHRIST.

BY WILLIAM W. KINSLEY, WASHINGTON, D. C., AUTHOR OF "VIEWS ON VEXED QUESTIONS."

BY following out an entirely different line of inquiry, I find that this self-same necessity for the coming of a God-man becomes manifest, and that science thus witnesses a second time, and with added emphasis, to the reasonableness of the Christian's creed.

There is no theme of such universal interest about which there is so much confusion of thought as that of the nature of real liberty and the conditions of its maintenance. There is a multitude of forces of widely different orders at work in the world. We cannot see them, and we know absolutely nothing of their real nature, and are made aware of their existence only by certain effects produced on matter. Experiment has disclosed that under certain conditions there follow certain effects. Both are uniform and unchangeable. The forces lie inert and hidden until the precise conditions are reached, and then work unswervingly in accordance with certain pre-established laws of their being. To set a force free, then, is simply to fulfil certain conditions, and thus remove whatever hinders it from rendering in its thus awakened energy an implicit obedience to the laws established over it. *We* cannot free it from such laws, and it manifests neither power nor disposition to free itself, to mould matter into any different form or for any different purpose than that prescribed in its divine commission. Between the particles of water, for example, we can discover no cohesive attraction or but the slightest; yet remove a given amount of heat that now holds this force bound and hidden, and it will spring

at once into full activity, and the water will become a block of solid ice. Another force, and a marvellous one, also makes its appearance. Those particles not only cohere but are arranged in set patterns along predetermined lines of symmetry, forming geometrical figures of great beauty and exactness. In the forms of snowflakes we recognize a divine fineness of touch and flawless finish. The crystalline architect just as often as its delicate frost-palaces are torn down will build them again untiringly after precisely the same models and under precisely the same conditions, so prompt is its obedience to law, so unswerving its fidelity to the plans and specifications entrusted to it by the Great Master Builder.

Pass that water as vapor through a heated tube of platinum, and the water will be at once resolved into its original hydrogen and oxygen gases, and another force still, one of repulsion, will bound into being, and so titanic is it you will fail to crowd the infinitesimal atoms of these gases together again though you apply twenty tons' pressure to the square inch. But touch them with fire, and they will fly back into each other's chemical embrace instantly, and become water, as before.

We thus see that to free any of the lower forces is not to release them from law, but simply from what prevents them from acting in strictest obedience to the laws which have been established over them.

We shall find the same principles holding true in the history of other and higher forms of force. Inside the walls of a seed lies concealed a germ-fairy which remains inert, a chained captive, until definitely prescribed conditions are complied with. Place that seed in the proper environment, surround it with dew, air, soil, and sunlight, and those prison walls burst asunder, and out of the crude material which nature furnishes the awakened and freed force constructs for itself, with an architectural skill that is marvellous in our eyes, a charming palace-home,—it may be the pure white

chalice of a lily, or the richly tinted and perfumed petals of a rose, or the stalwart, storm-defying form of a forest oak. There is such perfection in its work, such profundity of thought in it, that we recognize at once that it is carrying out plans not of its own contriving but matured in the deep councils of Jehovah. To set it free is simply to remove whatever hinders it from energizing in ways predetermined for it, from strictly obeying the laws of organization that pertain to its special sphere of work. It is never restive under divine command. We mortals can never tempt it, nor can we drive it into disobedience. The germ-force inside an apple seed will never fashion for us a grape vine or a sunflower, but a tree rather of a species like that which bore it. That tree will, through successive growing seasons, throw out its banners of leaves and add branch to branch and then, when the time is ripe, burst into bloom and at last bend its boughs with fruit golden with the rich colorings of autumnal sunset skies. Through just such faithful re-embodiments by law-abiding forces have God's creative thoughts been transmitted in all their freshness down the long lapse of ages.

It will be further observed that this germinal force, if it would accomplish its purposes, that is, be set free and kept free, must not only be placed in its proper environment, but be absolute master of all the under forces that can in any way either help or hinder it in its work. It lifts its material right against the force of gravity, fifty, one hundred, two hundred feet into mid-air, and then summons the force of cohesion to hold it there, in some instances for long centuries together. In its laboratory, the leaf, it takes a sunbeam, and with it tears in pieces carbonic dioxide,—the most stable chemical compound known to nature,—reversing the process of combustion. When you burn coal in your grate, the carbon of the coal and the oxygen of the air unite and cling together with so firm a grasp that to tear them apart again the chem-

ist must employ the most powerful agents, carry on the processes in his strongest vessels under most startling manifestations of light and heat, and at the last bar and bolt the refractory oxygen in a strong prison by itself. That the vegetative force accomplishes this in each one of the thousand diminutive and delicate cells of a single leaf, taking the carbon for its own use and restoring the oxygen to the air, demonstrates to us how absolute is its sovereignty over the under forces that enter into the borders of its kingdom. Its freedom, indeed its very life, is found to depend upon this sovereignty; for, the very moment it relaxes its hold, they rise in mad riot and, like communists, proceed to tear down into shapeless heaps of dull dust again the very glory-touched palace they have been forced to construct and maintain.

If we extend our inquiry into the phenomena of animal vitality, we shall find that liberty means the same, is won and held in precisely the same way. Within the shell of an egg, as within the walls of a seed, a germ-force lies hidden. To arouse it and set it free the egg must be kept at a predetermined temperature and for a predetermined period. These conditions none but He who prescribed them has power to change. When the time is up, the shell cracks open, and out steps a wondrously organized living creature fashioned by the germ-force out of a mass of seemingly structureless jelly.

There is such perfection in its work, such wealth of contrivance, such profound knowledge of this complicate world, such clear vision of prophecy, we can but conclude that within its tiny windowless workshop it has been strictly following out the instructions of a Divine Master, that it has been free simply to render implicit obedience to divine law. And in its subsequent history we learn, also, that it remains free to follow out further the divine plan only on condition that it maintains a mastery over the under forces; that these forces are hostile to it, and will perform their new strange tasks only so long as they are held down by the strong arm of a

master. There must be no divided throne, no toleration of insurgents. The vital force must reign throughout the body without a rival, or it will be trammelled in its action and eventually pushed out of being. So soon as food enters our bodies and is set flowing through certain appointed channels, it is made to undergo gradual vitalization. As it passes through the mouth into the stomach, then through the duodenum and down the smaller intestines, different solvents are poured in upon it,—saliva, gastric juice, bile, pancreatic fluid, and mucus secretions. Whatever stubbornly refuses to dissolve under their influence is at once carried further on and expelled from the system. The remainder is taken up into hair-like tubes called the lacteals, and by them emptied into the thoracic duct, thence carried through the aorta to the heart. This great force pump, after first sending it to the lungs for oxidation, distributes it, now thrilled with vital power, along the widely branching arterial courses everywhere, far and near, to replenish bone and muscle and cartilage and tendon and nerve fibre; for every time we move, every time we evolve a thought, we break down some tissue, and its waste must be made good from the nutritive principles in the blood. Every atom that thus loses its vitality, that has been wrested from the grasp of the organizing force and has fallen under the sway of the under chemical forces, must be driven out, or pyæmia, blood poisoning, will ensue; and if any local insurrection is not promptly put down, it will widen into revolution, and eventually end in death. To effect this expulsion, the body is interlaced with a network of canals, called lymphatics, forming an internal, decomposing, absorbent system, some of which empty into the great veins, but vast multitudes open their discharging mouths at once on the surface of the skin, three thousand to every square inch, so essential is it to afford ready and swift exit to whatever the organizing force can no longer control.

If we pursue further our investigations, and enter the

region of animal instinct, so full of the marvellous, we find the same general principles prevailing. Liberty is secured and maintained in precisely the same way. Animals are born specialists. Their mental and bodily furnishings are complementary and specific. The sphere of each is a narrow one, but it knows precisely what to do and how to do it, and has just the tools to do it with. When a bee, for example, sallies forth from its cradle, it is provided with a full business outfit,—wax pouch, pollen basket, honey stomach, trowel-shaped mandibles, a tireless wing, a discriminating and most powerful scent, and complete working plans for those hexagonal storage cells that in point of capacity and economy of wax and strength of wall bear the most searching test of the Differential Calculus. There is not a creature that is not either equipped with some peculiar organ or with some organ peculiarly modified accompanied with a correspondingly peculiar instinctive impulse for using it. The impulse and the organ are but complementary parts of a single plan, and that plan divine. The thinking has been done *for* the creature, not *by* it. Should it step outside its prescribed circle, fail to follow the lead of its instinct, it would become a helpless prey to hostile forces, its only strength and safety and real freedom being found in strict obedience to the laws of its organism. Should it not do what God has appointed in God's prescribed way, in God's chosen time, and with the tools God has himself furnished, it would become the helpless slave of circumstance and meet with certain and swift destruction.

Let us now direct our inquiry to our own complex spiritual life of meditations, sensibilities, and moral choices, and see of what liberty consists, how it can be obtained, and how in these highest known forms of force it can be made a permanent possession.

When man stepped upon the scene, I believe there was a radically new departure in creation; that he came endowed

with that of which before there was only a semblance, a dim prophecy, on the earth; that to him alone was vouchsafed self-consciousness, the clear light of reason, perfect freedom of choice, moral discernment, and a sense of accountability. These, however, are but superadded gifts; for man is closely linked with all the lower forces, forms part of the same general plan we have been considering, indeed was designed in the divine councils to be its grand culmination. Note the features of this plan, first in the nature and history of the soul's meditations. We find that certain predetermined conditions must be fulfilled before the currents of living thought are set free from their fountains; for, through one or more of the five senses, communication must be opened with the outside physical and mental worlds. This done, the mind thus awakened and liberated, its subsequent activity is, as we have already shown, as rigidly regular as that of the chemical or crystalline or germ forces already considered, the processes being carried on under a system of unchangeable laws divinely established, the prerogative of the human will reaching solely to the choice of themes, to the selection of the fields of labor. There is no other liberty of choice than this, and even this depends for its maintenance on the control exercised over the under forces, upon the healthful condition of the delicate tissues of the brain and all the other bodily organs that are linked with it, and upon the degree of moderation secured among that eager throng of appetites, passions, and propensities which, for far-reaching moral purposes, have been placed in our keeping. We have found upon experiment that we are wholly powerless to stop the flow of thought once begun, that all we can do is to change the course of the current. We have power to direct and hold the attention, that is all. Our thoughts of meditation and reflection are generated under the laws of association and suggestion wholly independent of any direct act of the will. The bodily senses are, as I have said, the mind's only avenues of com-

munication with the world outside. They become available solely through strict obedience to physical law, which we have no power either to abrogate or modify, and what thus comes to the mind from nature or art, social intercourse or literature, depends upon its natural receptive capacity as modified by culture. The same landscape painted on the retina of a poet's eye conveys a message of widely different import from that conveyed when it is painted on that of a plain, matter-of-fact man of affairs. The laws of suggestion and of association will determine what that import shall be. It is under these laws that the vanished past of circumstance or of thought is called back into consciousness; it is under them that the imagination, which can combine, but not create, gathers its materials for its castles, determines how those materials shall be placed in the walls and what styles of architecture those walls shall assume. Processes of reasoning are carried on in precisely the same way. Our control over our mental operations reaches no further, as I have said, than directing and holding the attention. Here our power and our responsibility both begin and end. The measure of this power is the measure of mental liberty; with its decline begins our mental enslavement. If we concentrate our thoughts too intently and too long on any one theme, we incur the risk of losing our power of directing them into other channels and dangerously verge on monomania. On the other hand, if we indulge in inattention, suffer our thoughts to wander aimlessly, we weaken our concentrative power, and are in danger of losing it altogether, and thus sinking into mental imbecility. The golden mean of healthful self-poise lies between these two extremes. It is sadly true that this perfect intellectual liberty is rarely, if ever, reached on this planet. Bodily diseases, business perplexities, financial losses, family bereavements, passionate longings, feelings of envy, jealousy, or revenge, the many undue excitements to which our lives are liable, have made every one of us at

times victims of morbid moods, certain thoughts taking possession to the exclusion of everything else, and ruling us as with a rod of iron. How often, too, we suffer our minds to go wool-gathering, through sheer indolence or shiftlessness, until we find it well-nigh impossible to call our thoughts in from their aimless wanderings and give needful heed to the stern duties of the hour.

If what I have stated of our intellectual life be true,—and anyone can readily verify it by recalling his own experiences,—thoughts are evolved and grouped about any chosen theme with as perfect regularity, as strict conformity to unchangeable law, as is observed when salt-atoms crystallize, or the structureless contents of an egg are changed into the organized body of a bird. To set mental force free, then, and keep it free, is not to release it from divine law, but, by fulfilling certain prescribed conditions and by securing and maintaining sovereignty over the under forces, to remove whatever hinders it from energizing in those precise modes established at the first by Him whose fiat brought it into being.

Within the soul lie dormant, also, wondrous germinal affections and aspirations, purposes and far-reaching hopes, waiting compliance with certain fixed conditions before their fetters fall and they begin to grow into the permanent moral traits of the soul. There is required for this quickening the gentle influences of sunbeams of sympathy. To the joy-light of a mother's smile, to the distilling tears of her quick pity or of her overburdened solicitude, to the brooding acts of her ever-watchful care, to the tender tones of her affection, the spirit promptly responds. The greater the confidence inspired in the child, the deeper the intimacy and the more free and frequent the interchange of thought and feeling; and if this close spiritual union is continued, if the mother holds the confidence and love of the child through the years, she becomes to him a heroine, a model, an inspi-

ration, her influence reaching down into his innermost desire, vitalizing his whole spiritual being. He tells her everything, and in return receives the smile and tear and counselling word. Under the law of spiritual assimilation, which is dominant when soul is linked to soul, he gradually grows into her moral likeness. Here is no compulsion, no deadening of nature. His whole being is roused rather into intensest life, into the fullest freedom, her sympathetic response calling out the deepest emotion and motive. Reserve and indifference are all gone. The charm of her personal presence is farthest removed from a feverish fascination. His soul is simply quickened and freed as is the germ-force in the seed when planted in a sun-kissed soil.

These promptings to hero-worship, this quick response to sympathy, this moulding of the character by the subtle influences that go out from intimately communing souls, this directive power of the stronger spirit over the weaker and less mature; this enlargement of liberty, this quickening of impulses, this wondrous vitalization, thus begun in the child through companionship with the mother, is repeated over and over again in the intimacies of after life. The friendships and love-unions of the soul, the choosing of great leaders in peace and war, in church and state, the canonizing of the objects of affection, the wonderful transforming power these chosen heroes of hearts have displayed in the world, the intense enthusiasm, the profound devotion they have enkindled, the quickening they have caused of the world's pulse, show beyond question that it is a universal and deep-seated instinct of the heart to idealize those who have won their way to intimate companionship, or have become enthroned as loved leaders, and that, because of this instinct, hero-worship has ever been, and will ever be, under the law of spiritual assimilation, the greatest plastic power at work in the world.

As, in the intellectual life, we can by the will direct and

fix the attention, but not stop the flow of thought or change the modes of its generation under laws of association and suggestion; so, in the spiritual life, we can choose who shall be our intimate companions, to whom we will uncurtain our inner lives. But once chosen, the intimacy once begun, we shall inevitably grow into each other's likeness, the stronger, more mature spirit, the one of more pronounced positive personality, having the greater plastic power. Just so soon as the free interchange begins, the process of assimilation begins under laws that are immutable.

As soon as the soul feels vitalizing power from communion with a pure and benign spirit, it at once sets about self-mastery, control over all the under forces, the passions, appetites, propensities, every form of selfishness whose tendency is to enslave, and the growth is upward and outward toward a likeness to the superior and freer spirit. The converse is equally true. Intimate communion with lower spirits, in whom ignoble thoughts are cherished, will result through the same law of assimilation, if continued, in increased enslavement and finally in moral death.

In view of these laws that thus control in the development of character, is it not very significant that the historic Christ asked to be received into intimacy, to become the chosen hero of hearts? As the affections cannot be enforced, freedom being their vital air, he has ventured no further than to stand at the door and knock, asking simply to have us uncurtain to him our inner lives. Is it not significant that he thus manifestly craves our affections, assures us that he is deeply interested in every worthy thing that interests us, offers in return his loving presence, and desires all barriers to be forever torn away? Is it not because he is profoundly aware that when he is thus received into intimacy, soul touching soul, the germinal spiritual forces will at once begin to build up character, through processes of assimilation, under the immutable laws of growth. Does he not evidently

desire this close relationship, that he may transform us as soil is transformed into rosebuds, and eggs into plumed songsters, knowing full well that, if we once let him into our hearts and cherish his presence there, the growth into his likeness will as inevitably ensue as, when we drop the seed in rich, moist, sun-warmed soil, or place the egg in a befitting atmosphere, a plant or an animal is built up by the constructive forces within? Is not such a world-wide need a most sure prophecy of the coming of some one fitted and willing to supply that need? What pilgrim spirit so worthy of a welcome as the historic Christ, has ever visited this earth, and knocked, and waited at the door of the human heart? What spirit so worthy of admission to its most sacred inner sanctuary? What one into the charmed circle of whose presence it has been so distinguished a privilege to enter, who has come so admirably fitted in so many ways to draw all men unto him? Who but he could answer to this need, and thus fulfil the prophecy? He has, in the first place, shown an interest in us under such varied and trying circumstances that we can never for a moment question its genuineness, its depth, or its permanency. He has given evidence that he is moved not merely by some general feeling of friendliness for the erring, suffering, longing multitudes that throng this planet, but assures us that he knows each one personally, and that, because he does, he stands ready to brave danger, endure fatigue, suffer privation, and actually desires to meet us face to face, to look through our kindling or tear-dimmed eyes in upon our very souls, to watch the sunshine and shadow of our most secret thoughts. He wants to be welcomed warmly, to have us feel that everything that is of interest to us is of interest to him. We all know that no intimate companionship can exist without an assurance of this personal attachment; that just so soon as we suspect that any of our earthly friends have lost their relish for our society, listen listlessly and grow wooden in

their voices when they make reply, a death-like chill, a spirit of reticence, comes over us, the meetings grow less frequent, the conversation drops into empty, conventional commonplace, the friendship cools into formal acquaintance, and, it may be, terminates in bitter estrangement. Who has not had the iron thus enter his soul? There is always more or less of prudent reserve in earthly friendships, a questioning of how far one may presume upon the affections of another, so painfully mindful are we of our limitations. No such barriers can ever exist between us and Christ. He takes pains to assure us that there is not one of such low degree as to be unworthy of his personal regard. Our deficiencies, however great, in bodily attractions, or social rank, or worldly possessions, in mental endowment or culture or conversational power, need not in the least discourage us from aspiring to intimacy with him, for he asks for our loving trust and fellowship, not because of what we are now, but of what we may become, ages hence, under the marvellously transforming power of his personal presence. Here is a vantage-ground no earthly friend can have. Christ looks at us with the piercing eye of a God in the white light of eternity. The grand possibilities of the spiritual germ-forces locked up within us are definitely outlined in his far glance of prophecy, as if they already were accomplished facts. He can see the flashing diamond into which the loose dust of carbon at his feet can be compressed. He can see the delicately fashioned flower petal, with its faultless lines of grace and exquisite coloring, into which the rude elements in soil and air may be moulded at the talismanic touch of life. To us it does not yet appear what we shall be. He, however, not only sees, but assures us that he sees, even in the humblest of those who truly love him here, the coming heirs and joint heirs with him to fadeless crowns. Under his plastic power, through this law of spiritual assimilation, he is confident that he can so develop our possibilities, if we will seek

his society, as eventually to render our companionship with him both delightful and lasting. What soul does not stand in pressing need of such a friend? Through whom else can such a need be met?

We are assured not only that Christ is thus personally interested in us, but that he knows us through and through. In his public ministry he frequently demonstrated his power to discern the most secret intents of the heart. How imperfectly we know our friends, or they us. We try to draw aside the hiding curtains, but cannot; and because of this unavoidable partial concealment, the interchange of sympathy is seldom, if ever, full and free. This element of embarrassment never enters into our friendship with Christ.

Again, he by his self-sacrificing spirit inspires in us a degree of confidence our earthly companions never can. We feel perfectly safe in trusting our most cherished secrets with him, fear of coming estrangement or of any advantage ever being taken of anything spoken in confidence never once entering our thought. By his absolutely unselfish devotion, he naturally awakens in his true disciples a love transcending every other. This explains his saying, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." He felt that he had those special gifts which brought him naturally into closer personal relations with those worthy of him; that he had by his sacrifices commended himself to their confiding love more fully than any other. He desired only his natural place in our hearts. His purpose was not to supplant home affections, but to so vitalize and sanctify them that they would not only weather the storms of time, but outlast the grave. This supreme affection, this complete self-surrender, in that it is cordial and according to nature, instead of enslaving, liberates us. Do we curtail our freedom when we give our hearts to our friends, our heroes, or our saints? Are not our souls thus stirred as never before, all their forces aroused into most pleasurable activity? Indeed,

only a Christ can truly set us free; for in none other do we find so perfect an ideal, a life without a flaw, a living revelation of God's yearning love. With no other one can we come into such close personal relations, whose heart-felt interest in each one of us is so unmistakable, whose insight into our inner-selves is so complete, to whom we feel that our intimate friendship will be so welcome and so unselfishly cherished. We are constitutionally social beings. We cannot stand alone. Companionship and hero-worship are the inborn demands of our nature. The purer and more unselfish the one whom we admit to intimacy, the more complete through his influence becomes our self-mastery; the formative spiritual powers within us the more sovereign over the under forces and the more subject to the upper and divine. How imminent the danger to which we are exposed, how imperative the necessity for the power of a Christ's personal presence!

We have seen how the under chemical forces within our physical organisms are slaves, not willing servitors, and that they seem to be on the watch for any weakening of the sovereign vitality; for so soon as it in the least loses its control, they break out into open rebellion, bent on devastation and death. Hostile forces also wait outside, ready to rush in at any unguarded portal. The air is full of the eggs and seeds of parasites, which find a rich nexus in any part not thoroughly vitalized to hatch out, and multiply by myriads, into miasmatic fevers and contagious diseases. Scientists have discovered sixty-six different species of these parasitic foes that prey on human flesh. Nothing but a most vigorous vitality can repel and destroy these attacking armies.

In our intellectual life we have found ourselves equally exposed, symptoms of disorder constantly appearing,—lack of power to hold or direct the attention, thoughts crowding themselves into undue prominence, loss of mental perspective, a weakened memory, a confused reason, a wild and wayward

fancy. But especially in our emotional and moral nature have we realized the need of the watchful eye and the strong hand of a master. This supremacy can be maintained only by a willing obedience to the higher law of the conscience and the revealed will of God through the inspiring, vitalizing power of Christ's pure life and sympathetic presence.

Philosophy and history both affirm this. Every individual from the first, as we have remarked, needs outside assistance. Every mind and heart must have kindred minds and hearts of wider culture and higher virtues to instruct and incite. A recluse from birth would be a drooling idiot or a wild bushman. History has no record of any tribe of savages ever lifting itself unaided into civilization. Surely the moral world is now too seriously diseased, and has been as far back as we have any knowledge, to throw off the incubus by the strength of its own vitality. All are enslaved, and all may be freed, but only through some life-touch with a Christ. Under his benign influence the progress of the world is toward this higher sovereignty. Sciences and arts are discovering and conquering and utilizing nature's forces. Diseases are becoming more thoroughly understood, and are being checked by more efficient remedies, or guarded against through wiser sanitary regulations. Literatures and schools are throwing off the incubus of ignorance and superstition, governments are advancing towards larger social and religious liberty, and there is to-day among the leading peoples of the earth a more free and healthful development than ever before of that individuality which is a divine and priceless gift to every man. It is to Christ's influence we can look, and to that alone, for a final and full unfastening of the human spirit from the enthralling power of all the under and the outer forces.

What a proffer Christ has here made us,—a confidential companionship with himself, the uplifting power of his personal presence, the nourishing sunshine of his sympathy,

privilege to grow into his likeness! We are at a loss to explain this condescension, except on the ground of our immortality and his far look into the eternal future.

His invitation is to everyone. In this universality of sympathy, and power to help, he stands alone. He comes to those of sick and bruised bodies, saying to them, "I too have passed through like bitter experiences, have been racked and torn with pain, and know how hard it is to bear, but I also know what wholesome discipline there is in it, what power to purify. Keep good cheer, for 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.'"

His invitation is to the neglected, whose hearts have been saddened by lack of appreciation, who feel themselves walled out from those whose love and companionship they crave. Upon their wounded spirits his words fall like balm. "I came to my own, and my own received me not. My good deeds were evil spoken of. Despite my oft-repeated explanations, my miracles of power and acts of love, I was lamentably misunderstood and maligned until after my death. When my dark trial hour came, those whom I had chosen as my disciples and bosom friends forsook me and fled. Wait patiently, for I can assure you there will be a glorious uncurtaining by-and-by."

His invitation is to the poor, the unsuccessful, the persecuted, those whose plans have failed from causes which they could not control, those who have struggled with a worthy purpose but struggled against a resistless tide. His earthly career had many things in common with theirs, too, for he was by his cotemporaries very naturally pronounced a failure. He added nothing to his worldly stores, had not a roof to cover him, gained no social position, was unpopular with the powerful and rich. He endured privation, won none of the world's reputed prizes. His very faithfulness blocked his way to personal preferment. His persistent determination to reclaim the fallen, rebuke sin, courageously to

state and stand by his convictions, finally cost him his fair fame, brought down upon him the anathemas of the very rulers of the synagogue, and at last nailed him to the cross, to suffer and die between convicted thieves.

His message is to the tempted. He had many a desperate struggle with appetite and passion. He fought no mock battles. His soul was racked with many misgivings at thought of the terrible ordeal through which he knew he was destined to pass, and these misgivings never permanently left him until the very morning of his crucifixion, after an all-night agony in Gethsemane.

He comes to those who mourn, with a heart that has felt bereavement, with eyes that have filled with tears for the dead. He comes to the timid, the sick and the dying, this time with reassuring power, for in his many miracles he proved himself Lord over nature. Her forces were ready servants of his sovereign will. By his touch, fevers fled, the lame walked, lepers were cleansed. At his word, disordered minds were blessed with returning reason, and even the dead heard his call and felt the thrill of life again. From the grave he himself rose victor. He proved that he indulged in no idle boast when he said, "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." Christ is thus not only a sympathizing but an all-powerful friend. Whatever the nature of the need, he can supply it. There is no pain nor danger nor disaster from which he cannot free us, and will when it is best. Just as soon as we turn toward him with loving confidence, and say, "Thy will be done," whatever chills or cripples or enslaves our spirits, clogs their powers, or hinders their development, melts away in the sunshine of his sympathy. No exigency for help so pressing that he is not able to meet it. He thus becomes our great liberator, rock of defence, inspiration, comforter. He enables us to beat down the restive under forces which lie in wait to enslave and destroy. He does not free us from the

pain, but from its power to dull the sensibilities; not from poverty and care, but from their tendency to narrow and harden; not from calumny, but from the maddening poison in its sting; not from disappointment, but from the hopelessness and bitterness of thought which it so often engenders.

We attain unto this perfect liberty when we rise superior to untoward circumstances, triumph over the pain and weakness of disease, over unjust criticism, the wreck of earthly hopes, over promptings to envy, every sordid and selfish desire, every unhallowed longing, every doubt of God's wisdom and love and kindly care, when we rise into an atmosphere of undaunted moral courage, of restful content, of childlike trust, of holy, all-conquering calm. We should welcome the discipline God sees fit to send. Christ could not escape the cross and wear the crown. It is enough for the servant that he be as his master, the disciple as his Lord. We must fight, at times fight desperately, and wear battle-scars. In that ever-memorable farewell, Christ said, "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth." This was the fruit of struggle, the calm that comes only from the perfect obedience of consecrated love.

How priceless that trustful serenity in the midst of life's reverses and dangers and cares and separations! How does the freed soul rise on wide-spread pinions till the clouds of time roll their wind-driven billows beneath it, and it basks in the bright smile of God's promise! Do you ask, doubtfully, Who have attained to this liberty? Many have: those early Christians who, driven by relentless persecution, dwelt in the catacombs of Rome; martyrs who died with songs on their lips; the sainted Stephen, whose face shone as the face of an angel; Paul, whose ringing words of cheer have for eighteen centuries been heard round the world. All may. It is offered to all. Life's storms have broken over the souls

of men, and will break again, but a Christ has proffered an all-sheltering love.

A flood of light is here thrown on two most remarkable sayings of this marvellous Being: "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed;" "He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter, more than me is not worthy of me." Only Christ then can give true freedom, and he only to those who are worthy of him; and those only are worthy who make to him a complete self-surrender, according to him a supremacy in heart and life over every affection and aspiration known to earth. The revelations made by the science, not only of physics, but of metaphysics, to which we have here called attention, enables us to see now how self can be set free by an absolute surrender of self to another, provided that other is not only perfect man but very God, this apparent contradiction proving to be but apparent, the assertions to be in complete accord betokening a most intimate acquaintance with the deep foundation principles on which this world is built.

In what perfect keeping with the exigencies of this world-organism is the fact that he who assumes to be its very central heart should demand that every soul be in this threefold attitude toward him of implicit obedience, full consecration, and devout trust. He stands alone among all the leaders of mankind in the sweeping nature of his exactions. No radicalism of any religious zealot ever equalled this. He accepts nothing less than an unconditional surrender of the entire being, with all its loves and longings. He recognizes no limitations and no exemptions.

His rewards are as unprecedented as his demands. They are embodied in that last strange bequest to his disciples to which we have alluded, "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth." No promise of any of earth's prizes, its wealth or ease or power or social preferment or trumpeted fame, but he had the courage and candor to disclose

to them that poverty and contumely, scourgings and imprisonments, tortures and death itself, await them; that he sent them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Who that hath not the outlook of a God would hope thus to disciple a world? would demand such devotion and in return offer simply an inward peace? His call is as wide as the race, and lasting as the soul's eternal years.

If we believe Christ simply a man, we can but regard with the profoundest amazement his unparalleled impudence; if a God, then in the revealing light of the science of physics and of metaphysics we can perceive how he could consistently demand nothing less; that only when the soul is brought into such relationship with himself can the vast plan of providence, which has been unfolding since the dawn of time, reach final consummation. Do you ask, why the obedience, the consecration, and the trust must be so absolute? It is, as I have attempted to show, this very feature of the demand which stamps it divine. Christ has in his own history exemplified the very spirit he enjoins, not only in his human soul but divine nature as well, a view rarely understood, still more rarely entertained. The God-man requires of us no more than he exacts even from his higher self. It is a very common error, yet a very grave one, to suppose that the great foundation principles of moral obligation had no existence until God created and established them, that his acts are wholly arbitrary, that he is amenable to no law, but is and always has been a law unto himself. It seems to me that on careful reflection it must be perceived that there can be no moral life unless there exists a moral law, a fixed standard of right by which to gauge motive and test character; that as far back as there was any moral quality in God's acts there must have been this fixed standard to which he made his acts conform; that these principles, this standard, must have been coexistent with his ever living self; that the Bible in its moral

code has simply revealed and applied to the various exigencies of the complicate inter-relationships of human life these self-existent principles, that these principles God could not only not originate, but not even change in the slightest degree; that by no pronouncement of his can loving self-sacrifice, chaste desire, dauntless fidelity to inward conviction, be degraded into revolting forms of vice; nor, on the other hand, can cold, selfish greed, falsehood, lust, or murderous hate be exalted and transformed into the nobilities and manly virtues of the soul; that when he brought us into being he could do no more than endow us with moral discernment and with perfect freedom of choice, leaving us utterly characterless, and necessarily so when we came from his creative hand; and that the responsibility of the nature of our future moral development rests wholly with our own sovereign selves, according as we choose to place our lives in harmony or in discord with these eternal principles of the true and the good, in harmony or in discord with this all-reaching, unchangeable law of order in the great world-organism of which he has kindly purposed that we shall form a part.

[To be concluded.]