

## ARTICLE IX.

## THE SOCIAL LAW OF SERVICE.

BY THE REV. NEWELL DWIGHT HILLIS, D.D.

THE waxing name and fame of Jesus Christ is the most striking fact of our era. His star is causing all others to pale and disappear through his increasing flood of light. Indeed, the time seems rapidly approaching when society will have but one Hero and King, at whose feet humanity will pour out all its songs, its prayers, its tears. In the triumphal procession of the Roman conquerors, kings and princes walked as captives. At last an era has come when literature, learning, art, statesmanship, philanthropy, are all captives, marching in Christ's triumphal procession up the hill of time. Hitherto, if political economy has followed Christ at all, it has been a disciple that has followed afar off. But let us hasten to confess that to-day, the science of wealth is being entirely rewritten in the light of the Sermon on the Mount. Our best economists are now ceasing to look upon man as a mere covetous machine, with one hand raking in wealth, by buying in the cheapest market, with the other hand heaping up treasure, by selling in the dearest market,—both processes being as innocent of ethical considerations as is the iron rake that pulls the stray coin out of the gutter. Happily for society an age has dawned when all economists are coming to recognize that the centripetal law of getting is balanced by the centrifugal law of giving. Students of the problems of the market-place are becoming preachers of righteousness, and are emphasizing increasingly the debt of strength to weak-

ness, and the law of social sympathy and social liability.

Among the modern humanists and prophets who have a message for the children of this generation, let us hasten to inscribe the name of Professor Ely, whose new book on "The Social Law of Service"<sup>1</sup> makes us all his debtors. Perhaps it was Christlieb that first said that society would never witness the reconciliation of science and religion until God raised up some great soul who should unite in a single personality the training of an expert in both those realms where warfare reigned. Professor Ely's "Outlines of Economics" has passed through so many editions at home, and been read so widely in foreign languages, as to establish his reputation as a student of the problems of wealth. But to his fame as an economist must now be added his fame as a student of the problems of Christian thinking and living. His former volume on "The Social Aspects of Christianity" appealed to a single class, and was chiefly helpful to pastors and teachers. This new volume, "The Social Law of Service," is in the interests of that great multitude, of all classes and ages, included in what is called "the Chautauqua movement." Fundamentally, this book is a study of the second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It exhibits strength as a debtor to weakness; wealth as having an obligation to poverty; wisdom as a trust in the interests of ignorance. Not to love one's self at all is foolishness; to love others more than one's self is love gone daft; but to love and serve one's neighbor as one's self is exhibited as safe, wise, and Christian. This instructive and stimulating volume needs not our praise as to its aim, spirit, and methods; it rather asks us to consider anew the principles of social sympathy, social service, and vicarious suffering as the divinely ordained method for securing society's happiness, comfort, and highest welfare.

<sup>1</sup> New York : Eaton & Mains. Pp. 276.

Having made much of the principles of the solidarity of society, not Christianity alone, but science also is now engaged in emphasizing the principles of vicarious service. The consecrated blood of yesterday is seen to be the social and spiritual capital of to-day. Indeed the civil, intellectual, and religious hope and freedom of our age are only the moral courage and suffering of past ages, reappearing under new and resplendent forms. The social vines that shelter us, the civic boughs whose clusters feed us, all spring out of the ancient graves. The red currents of sacrifice and the tides of the heart have nourished these social growths and made their blossoms crimson and brilliant. Nor could these treasures have been gained otherwise. Nature grants no gratuities. Every wise law, institution, and custom must be paid for with corresponding treasure. Getting is only an exchange of goods. Thought itself takes toll from the brain. To be loved is good indeed; but love must be paid for with toil, endurance, sacrifice—fuel that feeds love's flame. Generous giving to-day is a great joy, but it is made possible only by years of thrift and economy. The wine costs the clusters. The linen costs the flax. The furniture costs the forests. The heat in the house costs the coal in the cellar. Wealth costs much toil and sweat by day. Wisdom costs much study and long vigils by night. Leadership costs instant and untiring pains and service. Character costs the long, fierce conflict with vice and sin. When Keats, walking in the rose garden, saw the ground under the bushes all covered with pink petals, he exclaimed, "Next year the roses should be very red!" When Æneas tore the bough from the myrtle-tree, Virgil says the tree exuded blood. But this is only a poet's way of saying that civilization is a tree that is nourished, not by rain and snow, but by the tears and blood of the patriots and prophets of yesterday.

Fortunately, nature also in manifold ways doth witness

to the universality of vicarious service and suffering. Indeed the very basis of the doctrine of evolution is the fact that the life of the higher rests upon the death of the lower. The astronomers tell us that the sun ripens our harvests by burning itself up. Each golden sheaf, each orange bough, each bunch of figs, costs the sun thousands of tons of carbon. Geikie, the geologist, shows that the valleys grow rich and deep with soil through the mountains growing bare and being denuded of their treasure. Beholding the valleys of France and the plains of Italy all gilded with corn and fragrant with deep grass, where the violets and buttercups wave and toss in the summer wind, travelers often forget that the beauty of the plains was bought, at a great price, by the bareness of the mountains. For these mountains are in reality vast compost heaps, nature's stores of powerful stimulants. Daily the heat swells the flakes of granite; daily the frost splits them; daily the rains dissolve the crushed stone into an impalpable dust; daily the floods sweep the rich mineral foods down into the starving valleys. Thus the glory of the mountains is not alone their majesty of endurance, but also their patient, passionate beneficence as they pour forth all their treasures to feed richness to the pastures, to wreath with beauty each distant vale and glen, to nourish all waving harvest-fields. This death of the mineral is the life of the vegetable.

And if now we descend from the mountains to explore the secrets of the sea, each Maury shows us the isles where palm-trees wave, and man builds his homes and cities midst rich tropic fruits. There the scientist finds that rich coral islands were reared above the waves by myriads of living creatures that died vicariously that man might live. And everywhere nature exhibits the same sacrificial principle. Our treasures of coal mean that vast forests have risen and fallen again for our factories and furnaces. Nobody is richer until somebody is poorer. Evermore the vicarious

exchange is going on. The rock decays, and feeds the moss and lichen. The moss decays to feed the shrub. The shrub perishes that the tree may have food and growth. The leaves of the tree fall that its boughs may blossom and bear fruit. The seeds ripen to serve the birds singing in all the boughs. The fruit falls to be fruit for man. The harvests lend man strength for his commerce, his government, his culture and conscience. The lower dies vicariously that the higher may live. Thus nature achieves her gifts only through vast expenditures. It is said that each of the new guns for the navy costs one hundred thousand dollars. But the gun survives only a hundred explosions, so that every shot costs one thousand dollars. Tyndall tells us that each drop of water shields electric power sufficient to charge one hundred thousand Leyden jars, and blow the House of Parliament to atoms. Faraday amazes us by his statement of the energy required to embroider a violet or produce a strawberry. To untwist the sunbeam and extract the rich strawberry red, to refine the sugar, to mix the flavor, represents heat sufficient to run a train from Liverpool to London, or from Chicago to Detroit. But because nature does her work noiselessly we must not forget that each of her gifts also involves tremendous expenditure.

The law of vicarious service holds equally in the intellectual world. Each author buys his poem or his song with his life-blood. While traveling north from London, midst a heavy snowstorm, Lord Bacon descended from his coach to stuff a fowl with snow, to determine whether or not ice preserves flesh. But with his life the philosopher purchased for us the principle that does so much to preserve our fruits and foods through the summer's heat, and lend us happiness and comfort. And Pascal, whose thoughts are the seeds that have sown many a mental life with harvests, bought his splendid ideas by burning up his brain. The professors who guided and loved him knew that the

boy would soon be gone, just as those who light a candle in the evening know that the light, burning fast, will soon flicker out in the deep socket. One of our scientists foretells the time when, by the higher mathematics, it will be possible to compute how many brain-cells must be torn down to earn a given sum of money; how much vital force each Sir William Jones must give in exchange for each of his forty languages and dialects; what percentage of the original vital force will be consumed in experiencing each new pleasure, or surmounting each new pain; how much nerve treasure it takes to conquer each temptation or endure each self-sacrifice. Too often society forgets that each song, law, reform, has cost the health and life of the giver. Tradition says that, through much study, the Iliad cost Homer his eyes. There is deep meaning in the fact that Dante's face was plowed deep with study and suffering, and written all over with the literature of sorrow.

Milton, too, to gain his vision of the hills of paradise, lost his vision of all earth's beauteous sights and scenes. In explanation of the early death of Raphael and Keats, and hundreds like them, it has been said that few great men who are poor have lived to see forty. They bought their greatness with life itself. A few short years ago there lived in Iowa a boy who came up to his young manhood with a great, deep passion for the plants and shrubs. While other boys loved the din and bustle of the city, or lingered long in the library, or turned eager feet toward the forum, this youth plunged into the fields and forests, and with a lover's passion for his noble mistress gave himself to roots and seeds and flowers. And while he was still a child he would tell on what day in March the first violet bloomed, when the first snowdrop came; going back through his years, could tell the very day in spring when the first robin sang near his window. Soon the boy's collection of plants appealed to the wonder of scholars. A lit-

tle later, students from foreign countries began to send him strange flowers from Japan and seeds from India. But one midnight, while he was lingering over his books, suddenly the white page before him was red with his life-blood as the rose that lay beside his hand. And when, after two years in Colorado, friends bore his body up the sides of the mountains he so dearly loved, no scholar in all our land left so full a collection and exposition of the flowers of that distant State as did this dying boy. His study and wisdom made all to be his debtors. But he bought his wisdom with thirty years of health and happiness. We are rich only because the young scholar, with his glorious future, for our sakes made himself poor.

Our social treasure also is the result of vicarious service and suffering. Sailing along the New England coasts, one man's craft strikes a rock and goes to the bottom. But where his boat sunk, there the State lifts a danger-signal, and henceforth, avoiding that rock, whole fleets are saved. One traveler makes his way through the forest and is lost. Afterward other pilgrims avoid that way. Experimenting with the strange root or acid or chemical, the scholar is poisoned and dies. Taught by his agonies, others learn to avoid that danger.

Only a few centuries ago the liberty of thought was unknown. All lips were padlocked. The public criticism of a baron meant the confiscation of a peasant's land; the criticism of the pope meant the dungeon; the criticism of the king meant death. Now all are free to think for themselves, to sift all knowledge and public teachings, to cast away the chaff and to save the precious wheat. But to buy this freedom blood has flowed like rivers, and tears have been too cheap to count. To achieve these two principles called liberty of thought and liberty of speech, some four thousand battles have been fought. In exchange, therefore, for one of these principles of freedom and happiness,

society has paid—not cash down, but blood down—vital treasure for staining two thousand battle-fields. To-day the serf has entered into citizenship, and the slave into freedom, but the pathway along which the slave and serf have moved has been over chasms filled with the bodies of patriots, and hills that have been leveled by heroes' hands. Why are the travelers through the forests dry and warm midst falling rains? Why are sailors upon all seas comfortable under their rubber coats? Warm are they and dry midst all storms, because for twenty years Goodyear, the discoverer of india-rubber, was cold and wet and hungry, and at last, broken-hearted, died midst poverty.

Why is Italy cleansed of the plagues that devastated her cities a hundred years ago? Because John Howard sailed on an infected ship from Constantinople to Venice, that he might be put into a lazaretto and find out the clew of that awful mystery of the plague and stay its power. How has it come that the merchants of our Western ports send ships laden with implements for the fields, and conveniences for the house, into the South Sea Islands? Because such men as Patterson, the pure-hearted, gallant boy of Eaton College, gave up every prospect in England to labor amid the Pacific savages, and twice plunged into the waters of the coral reefs, amidst sharks and devilfish and stinging jellies, to escape the flight of poisoned arrows, of which the slightest graze meant horrible death, and in that high service died by the clubs of the very savages whom he had often risked his life to save, the memory of whose life did so smite the consciences of his murderers that they laid "the young martyr in an open boat, to float away over the bright blue waves, with his hands crossed, as if in prayer, and a palm branch on his breast." And there, in the white light, he lies now, immortal forever.

And why did the representatives of the five great nations come together to destroy the slave-trade in Africa, and

from every coast came the columns of light to journey toward the heat of the dark continent, and rim all Africa around with little towns and villages that glow like light-houses for civilization? Because one day Westminster Abbey was crowded with the great men of England, in the midst of whom stood two black men who had brought Livingstone's body from the jungles of Africa. There, in the great Abbey, faithful Susi told of the hero, who, worn thin as parchment through thirty attacks of the African fever, refused Stanley's overtures, and turned back toward Ulala, made his ninth attempt to discover the waters of the Nile, and search out the secret lairs of the slave-dealers, only to die in the forest, with no white man near, no hand of sister or son to cool his fevered brow or close his glazing eyes. Faithful to the last to that which had been the great work of his life, he wrote these words with his dying hand: "All I can add in my solitude is, May heaven's rich blessings come down on every one who will help to heal this open sore of the world." And why is it that in the next ten years Africa made greater advancement than in the previous ten centuries? All the world knows that it was through the vicarious suffering of one of Scotland's noblest heroes. And why is it that Curtis says that there are three American orations that will live in history—Patrick Henry's at Williamsburg, Abraham Lincoln's at Gettysburg, and Wendell Phillips' at Faneuil Hall? A thousand martyrs to liberty lent eloquence to Henry's lips; the halls of Gettysburg, all billowy with our noble dead, exhaled the memories that anointed Lincoln's lips; while Lovejoy's heart, newly martyred to Alton, poured over Wendell Phillips' nature the full tides of speech divine. Vicarious suffering explains each of these immortal scenes.

Long, too, the scroll of humble heroes whose vicarious services have exalted our common life. Recognizing this principle, Cicero built a monument to his slave, a Greek

who daily read aloud to his master, took notes of his conversation, wrote out his speeches, and so lent the orator increased influence and power. Scott also makes one of his characters bestow a gift upon an aged servant; for, said the warrior, no master can ever fully recompense the nurse who cares for his children, or the maid who supplies their wants. To-day each giant of the industrial realm is all compassed about with a small army of men who stand waiting to carry out his slightest behests, relieve him of details, halve his burdens, while at the same time doubling his joys and rewards. Lifted up in the sight of the entire community, the great man stands on a lofty pedestal builded out of helpers and aides. And though here and now the honors and successes all go to the one giant, and his assistants are seemingly obscure and unrecognized, hereafter and there honors will be evenly distributed, and then how will the great man's position shrink and shrivel!

Here also are the parents who loved books and hungered for beauty, yet in youth were denied education, and went all their life through concealing a certain hunger and ambition, but who determined that their children should never want for education. That the boy, therefore, might go to college, these parents rose up early to vex the soil, and sat up late to wear their fingers thin, denying the eye beauty, denying the taste and imagination their food, denying the appetite its pleasures. And while they suffer and want, the boy in college grows wise and strong and waxes great, and comes home to find the parents overwrought with service and ready to fall on death, offering a vicarious sacrifice of love.

And here are our own ancestors. Soon our children, now lying in the cradles of our state, will without any forethought of theirs fall heir to this great region and city, with all their treasures material—houses and vineyards, factories and cities; with all their treasures mental—li-

brary and gallery, school and church, institutions and customs. But with what vicarious suffering were these treasures purchased! For us our fathers subdued the continents and the kingdoms; wrought freedom, stopped the mouths of wolves, escaped the sword of savages, turned to flight armies of enemies, subdued the forests, drained the swamps, planted vineyards, civilized savages, reared school-houses, builded churches, founded colleges. For four generations they dwelt in cabins, wore sheepskins and goat-skins, wandered about exploring rivers and forests and mines, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, because of their love of liberty, and for the slave's sake were slain with the sword—of whom this generation is not worthy. "And these all died, not having received the promise"; God having reserved that for us to whom it had been given to fall heir to the splendid achievements of our Christian ancestors.

No deeply reflective nature, therefore, will be surprised that the vicarious principle is manifest in God, man's father, in Jesus Christ, man's saviour. Rejecting all commercial theories and judicial exchanges, let us recognize the reign of this principle in the moral realm. God is not at warfare with himself. If he uses the vicarious principle in the realm of matter, he will also use it in the realm of mind and heart. It is given unto parents to bear not only the weakness of the child, but also his ignorance, his sins—perhaps at last his very crimes. Nature counts it unsafe to permit any wrong to go unpunished. Nature counts it dangerous to allow the youth to sin against the brain or nerve or digestion, without visiting sharp penalties upon the offender. With God also it is unsafe to blot out all distinctions between the honest citizen and the vicious criminal. Penalties are sent, therefore, as warnings. Punishments are thorn hedges, safeguarding man from the thickets where serpents brood, and forcing his feet back

into the ways of wisdom and peace. For man's integrity and happiness, therefore, conscience smites, and smites unceasingly. For each David weeping bitterly for his sins, for each poor Magdalene sobbing out her bitter confession, there is a pity that is infinite, and a pardon that is measureless. For the law of service, that affirms the debt of strength to weakness, hath its culmination in this scripture, "Faithful and just to forgive our sins," as if for God not to forgive man would be the part of injustice. The implication is that purity is under moral obligations to pardon iniquity, for God is the great Burden Bearer. Calvary is the eternal heart-ache manifest in time. Groping, hoping, trusting, we fall blindly on the stairs that slope through darkness up to God. But falling, we fall into the arms of him who was slain from the foundation of the world.

We return from our survey of the nature and scope of the principle of vicarious service, with the conviction, that if the problems of our generation are to be solved, the solution must be found in the application of this law of social service to the duties of the home, the school, the market and forum. Confessing to the wish that Professor Ely had emphasized more fully the philosophic ground and sanctions of this divine principle, we hasten to make recognition of the value of his study in the practical realm. The young people of the Christian Endeavor society, not less than those who belong to the Chautauqua movement, will do well to read and ponder this book, and seek to realize its ideas. Should this law of social service be immediately incarnated in all our social and industrial institutions, what a transformation would result! No more trusts, no more grinding monopolies, no more strikes and lockouts, no more bitter hunger, but each bearing another's burdens, and wisdom and wealth, serving ignorance and poverty in the noble effort to fulfill the law of Christ. A beautiful dream! Yet ideals alone are omnipotent. Christ's law of service is the prophecy of that golden era of good-will, which is the far-off divine event toward which the whole creation moves. Selfishness and greed may postpone the consummation—they cannot prevent it. That Divine One whom God hath lifted to the world's throne shall yet lift the world to a place beside him.