

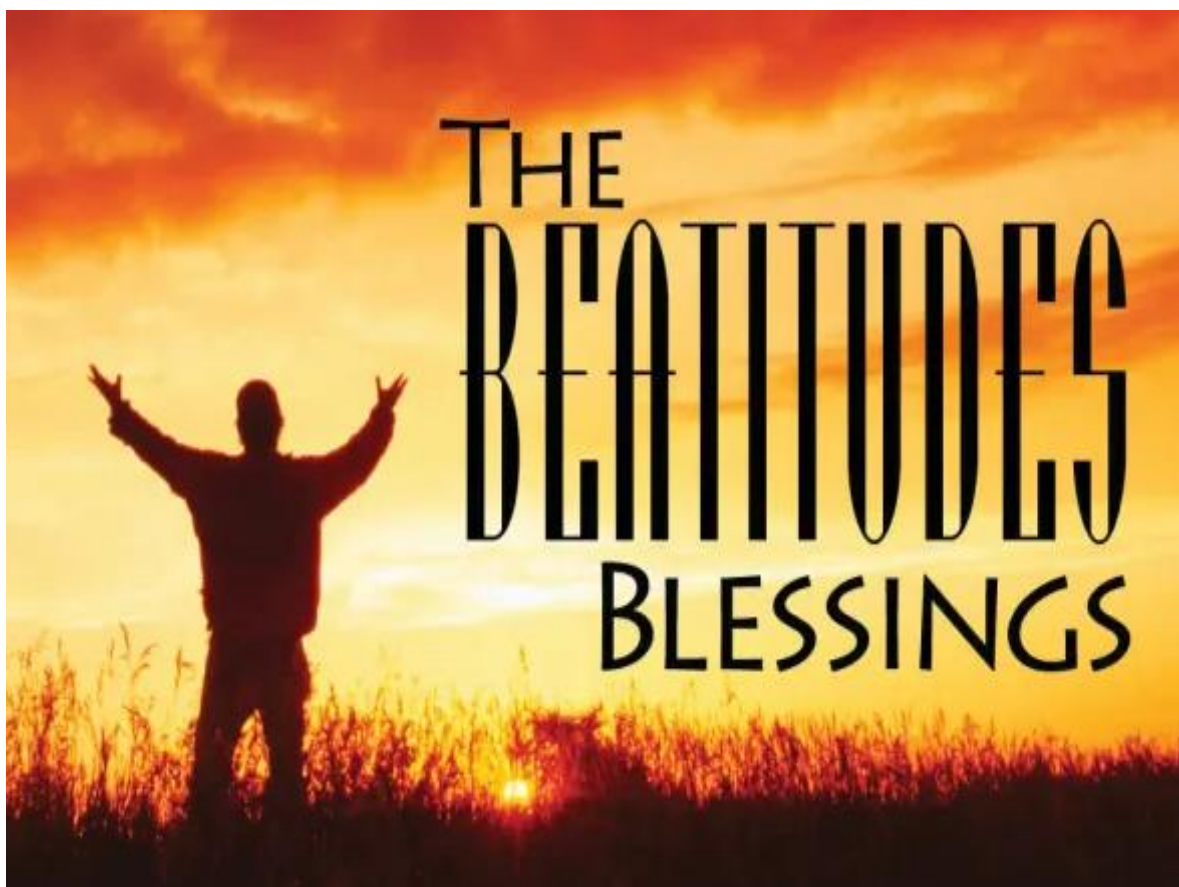
HEAVENLY BLESSEDNESS

What it is and How Attained

DISCOURSES ON THE BEATITUDES

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1. The Law of Human Blessedness

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD! Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart!" Psalm 119: 1,2

HAPPINESS is the end which every human being seeks. This is so by the very constitution of man's nature. Love, is the motive power in the soul. The attainment and possession of what we love is the end we seek and the only mode of obtaining happiness.

This is in accordance with the divine purpose as it is embodied in man and in the creation. The Lord created man for the special purpose of blessing him. He preserves him for this purpose. His wisdom and power are solely and unremittingly exerted for the accomplishment of this purpose. Everything from the least to the greatest, from the first to the last, was created for and is directed to, this end.

The Lord did not create man, as it is generally thought, for His own glory, to make a display of His power. He has not peopled a universe with intelligent beings that He may, everywhere in the heavens and on the earths, have worshippers. The Lord does not seek glory and honour from man, according to our ideas of glory and honour. He takes no delight in our worship as such, as so much homage rendered to Him. Our obedience to His laws, merely as obedience, as the acknowledgment of our dependence upon and subjection to Him, gives Him no pleasure. Where He surveys the vast creation and sees the countless and ever increasing multitudes, who depend upon His bounty and acknowledge Him as King, no thought of His own power and glory enters His heart; no feeling of delight that so many human beings render Him enforced or voluntary homage. On the contrary, His only thought is: "Here are so many beings whom I can bless;" and His only delight consists in blessing them.

Every man, when blinded by his selfish and worldly loves, thinks he knows how to obtain his own chief good better than the Lord does. We all think so and all our sorrow and misery come from our attempts to carry out our own false notions in opposition to the ordinations of infinite wisdom. But the Lord does not

cease to care for us because we are foolish and wicked. He does not turn from us because we turn from Him. He remains unchangeably the same, loving us, caring for us, living for us and in all ways and degrees of life seeking to bless us.

But this truth is so general and comprehensive and there are so many things in the prevalent doctrines of men, in the allusions of appearances and in the pain and misery that everywhere prevail in the world, which seem to conflict with it, that it is necessary to view the subject in the light of its principles and in some of its particulars.

From the very nature of love and wisdom, it is evident that infinite love and infinite wisdom could seek no other end than to communicate blessedness, in the wisest possible way and in the fullest degree. If the Lord had any other end than the highest good of all, His love would not be infinite; and if we admit that He could seek His ends in any better or in any other way than He does seek them, His wisdom cannot, be infinite; for it is the part of wisdom to seek the attainment of its ends by the best means.

The more we investigate the physical and spiritual nature of man, the more fully we shall be confirmed in the truth, that every part of his form, from the least to the greatest, from the lowest to the highest, was designed by infinite wisdom to promote man's happiness. His whole organization points to that. Man is really a form organized for the reception of life from the Lord. He is the answer which infinite wisdom makes to the wants of infinite love. Love, from its very nature, must go out of itself; it must communicate itself; it must bless. It burns to communicate itself. If the Lord is a being of infinite love, He could not dwell alone in His own eternity. He must have an infinite desire to communicate His life; to give of His own, of Himself. As there were no beings coexisting whom He could love, He must create them. As He could not create another being having an independent, self existing life, for the very idea of creation involves beginning, dependence, He created an organized form capable of receiving His life. He made this form in His own likeness and image; and, as He could not give it independent life, He made it capable of receiving the divine life in such a manner that it should seem to be man's own and, to all intents and purposes, should be his own. He gave to this organized form which we call man, the power of receiving and reciprocating His love and life as of himself and, by its reception and exercise, He blesses him. He finds beings out of Himself upon whom He can lavish the riches of His infinite love. To accomplish this end is the use of everything in the universe.

A very little knowledge and reflection will enable us to see, that the instrumentalities by which this end is attained are innumerable and are all adjusted to each other and to the end sought, with the nicest accuracy; and that they work together with a harmony surpassing all finite wisdom. The material body, for example, is organized with reference to all material things on one side and to the spiritual body on the other. The sense of touch is organized to receive delight from the actual contacts of the material world and it is perfectly adapted to the force, resistance, roughness, form and hardness of matter. If the sense of feeling was much more delicate and keen than it is, it would be a source of continual pain. Every contact would hurt us. If it was much more obtuse than it is, we should receive little or no sensation from physical contact and one fruitful source of earthly and corporeal good would be cut off from us.

Suppose we had no relish for our food, how much of earthly good would be lost. The Lord has so formed us, that the substances of the material body require to be continually replenished and He has filled the world with the greatest abundance and variety of meats and the most delicious fruits, to meet that want. Think, for a moment, of this single way in which the Lord has provided to bless man with a sensuous good! The grape, the apple, the pear, the berry, wheat, rice, corn and every fruit that is good for food, is a form of the divine love, created for us and sent to us and specifically adapted, not only to supply a necessity, but to communicate a delight.

The same is true of the eye and the ear in their relation to light and air. They are organized with a wisdom which not only surpasses man's wisdom to conceive, in the first instance, but even to understand, when their forms and modes of operation are before him. Every sense is an avenue through which the Lord approaches man to bless him. His love streams into us through eye and ear in every pleasing form of

beauty and shade of colour and harmony of sound. The Lord has formed the material world, so grand and beautiful, that it might be attractive to man. To go into details and show the wonderful methods by which the Lord blesses man as a mere physical being, would exhaust all science and all art.

But if the Lord has so accurately and wonderfully adjusted the organization of the material body to the material world, it is evident that we must keep within the laws of this organization and act according to them, or we shall derange these nice harmonies and the divine blessing, of which they are the embodiment, cannot reach us.

On the contrary, we may turn it into a curse. If we desire to receive the blessing, we must walk, in that law of the Lord by which alone the blessing can be communicated. The organization of the eye and its relations to light are all laws of the Lord and no one can get the blessings which the Lord intended to send to us through that form and by those methods, unless he walks in that law and keeps its testimonies.

So it is with every sense. If you desire to receive the blessings of appetite, you must walk in the laws of the Lord with regard to it. If carried away by its delights you violate those laws; if you indulge in excess, or turn aside from the divine methods, the blessing cannot reach you and the means by which it was to be communicated are turned into a curse. This must be so in the very nature of things, for if it requires the most accurate adjustment of the most complicated and delicate forms to secure a specific end, as the communication of a delight, it is evident that any violation of the order, or any violence done to the organization, would defeat the end.

Here we see a principle of universal application to all forms and degrees of the mind. The Lord accomplishes all His ends by the most various and complicated instrumentality and when we see how He effects a purpose, we see how infinite wisdom does it. We see the only way in which it can be accomplished and we must walk in that way if we desire to reach that end.

The human mind or soul is a form organized of spiritual substances; it is a spiritual body and it is subject to all the laws of organization; it is a form created to receive life from the Lord in a higher degree than the material body. But it is none the less a real and substantial form. The will is as truly an organic form as the material heart and the understanding as the material eye. The understanding is the eye of the soul, not in a metaphorical or analogical sense, but really in actual form; and it sees by the reception of spiritual light which is truth, as the material eye sees by the influx into it of natural light.

The Lord blesses man spiritually then in the same way that He does naturally. He cannot pour love into the heart and truth into the understanding, while man remains a merely passive subject. We must act as of ourselves, as we do in natural things. Love in every form of affection and wisdom in every form of knowledge and truth, are blessings from the Lord. The love of country and home, of friend and neighbour, of husband and wife and child and all our social and domestic affections, are forms of the divine love in us. They are blessings perpetually flowing from the Lord. They are His gifts to us. It is the same with all the delights of knowledge. Every truth of nature or spirit is a form of the divine love and it is sent to us from the Lord to bless us. Infinite wisdom has devised the form and the method of sending them and we can only receive them in that way. If we walk in it we shall receive the blessing. Every law of the Lord is a mode or way of communicating a blessing. If we walk in the law we shall receive the blessing He intended to send us by that path. If we miss the path we shall be missing. If we do not love our country; if we shun society; if we hate our fellow men; if we do not love wife or child; if we will not learn the truth, we exclude all the blessings that the Lord would send us in these forms. The Lord cannot communicate the blessings which come to us in the perceptions of beauty of form and colour and relation and the innumerable pleasing images which flow in through the eye, in any other way than by the eye. He cannot send them to us through the ear, or touch, or taste. According to the same law, He cannot send the blessings that flow from the exercise of spiritual affections and the knowledge of spiritual truth, in any other way than by the exercise of those spiritual faculties, which the Lord has made for their reception. We must walk in these laws of the Lord to receive these blessings.

These laws are laid down in the Sacred Scriptures. Their principles are embodied in the Ten Commandments. These laws constitute the subject of Revelation. The whole Bible is nothing else than various directions given by the infinite wisdom to teach us how to gain heavenly blessings and how to avoid their loss. The commandments, precepts, testimonies, statutes, judgments and ways, are all so many directions adapted to the various capacities and states of men, showing them how to obtain the divine blessings. They do not differ in principle, in the least, from the directions which the master gives the pupil in science or art, how to obtain a desired result.

When man had so far receded from the way of life, that neither the divine blessings, nor the instructions how to gain them, could reach him in the ordinary way, the Lord clothed Himself with a human nature and came bodily and physically among men, that He might teach them even through their bodily senses; that He might become an example which everyone could see and understand; that He might become to all who would follow Him, "*the way, the truth and the life*", the way to all divine blessings.

Now we can see why all heavenly and earthly blessings are promised to those "*who do His commandments,*" "*who walk in His ways,*" "*who keep His testimonies and statutes.*" We can see also why the Lord promises eternal life to all those who believe in Him. Because those who believe in Him will follow Him. These are the ways which infinite wisdom has devised to communicate heavenly blessings to man. There is nothing arbitrary about them. The blessing is not conferred as an external reward. The commandments are natural expressions of the eternal laws and order of infinite wisdom. The blessing stands related to the law as effect to cause. The real law as it inheres in the order of the universe, is the way and the only way in which the blessing comes or can come. They alone who walk in it can obtain the blessing.

Having considered the laws by which spiritual blessings come to us, let us look at the nature of the blessings themselves.

All blessings increase in extent, fullness and keenness of delight, as the higher degrees of the mind are exercised. There are corporeal, earthly and natural blessings. Of these we all know something. They also exist in various degrees. But there are spiritual and heavenly blessings, which no earthly power can give or take away. The merely natural mind knows nothing of them. The child and youth can know nothing of them. Even those who think they have tasted of their sweetness, can form only the most faint and remote idea of their fullness and extent.

Our spiritual organization is so intimately blended with the material body, that we cannot easily distinguish them from each other and all the activities of our spiritual forms are restricted, muffled and so blended with the material, that they have but little freedom. All consciousness of life is mostly in the lowest planes of sensation; and yet there are those who have been so filled with the sweetness and peace of the heavenly blessedness, even while in this life, that they say no language can express it. We know enough also of the rapid growth and amazing powers of the soul, even while in this world, to lead us to the conclusion that we can form no adequate conception of its capacities to receive knowledge and happiness.

The Bible exhausts the powers of human language and all natural imagery to describe the joys of heaven and yet they must in a great measure remain unknown to us while we are in this world. Here we have full scope for the exercise of our faith. If we will believe the Lord we cannot doubt but they will be great beyond our conception. And if we did believe Him we should walk in His law and keep His testimonies, waiting in perfect confidence that He will do all that He promises.

Another principle in the reception of spiritual blessings, of vast importance for us to know is that the higher faculties of our being yield, not only the richest blessings, but communicate their own fullness and richness to all the faculties below them. "As much as there is of heavenly and spiritual good in natural, worldly and corporeal good, so far they are genuine blessings." The higher principles dwell as a soul in the lower, preserve them and give them life. A merely sensual man does not get the same amount of delight from his appetites as the man who controls them and guides them by spiritual principles. The sensualist soon becomes debauched; his appetites control him; his whole frame is filled with disease and that very

organism, which was designed by infinite wisdom to convey blessings, is filled with pain and becomes a curse. The man who loves the world and seeks its wealth and honours and obtains them, does not get as much good from them as the man who fills them with spiritual life and uses them for heavenly purposes. *"The little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked."* So it is with every natural, corporeal and worldly good. Love to the Lord and the neighbour preserves our natural delights, keeps them in their proper place and order and gives fullness and sweetness to their enjoyment. This also is a law of eternal order which none can evade. To get the greatest amount of good from the lowest things, we must bring the highest principles down into them, or they will turn into curses. As the soul gives sensation and life to the body, so spiritual and heavenly principles preserve and give sweetness and fullness of delight to all natural good.

Finally, to obtain the deepest and richest blessings, we must not only "walk in the law of the Lord and keep His testimonies," but we must "seek Him with the whole heart." There is no blessing promised to knowledge or wealth or power alone, not even to the knowledge of the highest spiritual truths, for there is none in them when severed from the heart. As there is no blessing in light without heat, so there is none in truth without love. All delight, all blessings flow from love, without it there is no life and no joy. So long as you seek the Lord with the head alone, you will get no blessing. Seek Him with the whole heart and the divine purpose will be fulfilled in you. Every degree and form of your being will become enriched with the blessing of the divine love and you will become an embodied joy, whose fullness, peace and blessedness will increase for ever.

2. The Blessedness of Spiritual Poverty

"And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Mat 5:1-3

IN these and the following verses the Lord teaches us how we may attain the true end of our being. He created us to be the recipients of His life; and by its reception to bless us in ever increasing fullness to eternity. Here He teaches us how we may always be attaining those blessings. Surely no subject can be more worthy of our deepest interest and attention. These words are addressed to us: *"He went up into a mountain; and when He was seated, His disciples came to Him."* Therefore we must come to Him before we can learn how to be blessed. We cannot learn from the evil and false. We cannot learn from the world, or from any natural possessions or attainments. We must elevate our affections to the Lord in His Divine humanity. And the more fully we do this, the larger will be the measure of the blessedness we shall receive from Him. For the Lord is not only in the effort to teach us in what true blessedness consists, but to communicate it to us.

If we are His disciples, we shall come to Him and we shall listen with profound attention, while He opens His mouth and teaches us, according to the eternal purposes of His infinite love, in what true blessedness consists and how we may attain it. May we regard ourselves as in His presence today; may we come unto Him by the exaltation of our affections and thoughts and open our understandings and our hearts to receive His heavenly instructions. The Lord teaches us by His acts as fully as by His words and they both throw light upon each other. By going up into a mountain is represented the great truth that the Lord always teaches us from His infinite love. Every commandment, precept and warning comes from the heights of His divine love. Especially when the Lord would teach us in what true blessedness consists, does He go up into the mountain of His love. By this act is also denoted that all true blessedness flows from His divine love. There is no other source. It is the fountain of all peace and blessedness and even of all good natural delights.

You will notice that the grounds upon which our Lord pronounces the nine different classes of persons blessed, are very remarkable and such as would never occur to the selfish and worldly mind. They are,

indeed, the very opposites of what unregenerate men consider desirable. They are "*the poor in spirit,*" "*those who mourn,*" "*the meek,*" "*the hungry and thirsty,*" "*the merciful,*" "*the pure in heart,*" "*the peacemakers,*" "*the persecuted and reviled.*"

How remote from the common ideas of happiness are such conditions of life. But the doctrines of the New Church teach us very clearly how and why these classes of men are truly blessed. In the light of these doctrines and with divine assistance, I hope to be able to make it clear to the understanding and reason of all who desire to know, that these are the true and only grounds of real and permanent blessedness and that they are founded in the universal and unchangeable order of infinite wisdom.

It is important for us in the outset, to obtain a clear and true idea of what constitutes genuine blessedness. If, deceived by the illusions of the senses and led away by selfish and worldly loves, we have false conceptions of the nature of blessedness, our illustrations will be in vain; our reasonings will have no relation to the subject we treat and consequently no force.

"To be blessed," our doctrines teach us, "is to be enriched with spiritual and celestial good; and he is then enriched with such good when the things belonging to him are disposed of the Lord, into spiritual and celestial order, thus into an image and likeness of Divine Order."

The Lord made man to bless him. The whole organization and order of his natural and spiritual form look to that end alone. The material universe also, from the least to the greatest things, respects the same end. When therefore, man is in this order, he is in the centre towards which all the divine blessings tend. He is the ocean into which the rivers of life, whose springs are in the divine love, pour themselves. When he is in this order, he is in perfect accord with all the divine harmonies, every faculty in his whole nature vibrates in unison with them and he must be blessed. There can be no jar, no discord, no struggle, no disappointment. There cannot fail to be peace, rest and that sweet and thrilling delight which always attends the harmonious activities of our affections and thoughts. It is evident, therefore, that the essential thing in the attainment of blessedness is to have all our faculties disposed into true order for the reception of life from the Lord and if there is anything in us that perverts that order, disturbs the harmony and obstructs the influx of His life, it is necessary for our happiness to have it removed. The Lord desires to mould man's spiritual form into His own image and likeness; to make him a miniature of His heavenly kingdom. The Lord has given him capacities for the reception of every form of truth and love which constitute His heavenly kingdom and He is in the perpetual effort to develop those germs into actual existence that man may become the recipient of all heavenly blessings.

Therefore just in the degree that man permits the Lord to develop his spiritual nature and form His kingdom within him, he will be blessed. He admits into himself the cause of all blessing. He puts himself under the guidance of a power that will turn all things into blessings. No evil can befall him. Everything must work together for his good.

The blessing first in the series and first in importance is promised to the "*poor in spirit.*" It is first in importance, because it is the essential of all spiritual life, the germ of every heavenly grace. Our next important inquiry, then, naturally is:

What are we to understand by poverty of spirit? Spiritual poverty consists essentially in that state which leads us to acknowledge that we know nothing from ourselves, accompanied with a desire to be taught by the Lord. It is really an affection for spiritual truth; a desire not only to know the truth, but to be led by it, attended by an utter distrust of our own power or our own knowledge and a profound sense of our own helplessness in and of ourselves. It implies more than destitution of knowledge and power. A man may be utterly ignorant in natural and spiritual things and yet not feel the want of them. And he may feel the want, but if at the same time, he thinks or knows that he has the power of supplying the want, he does not feel poor. For when the want becomes urgent enough, he can use the means to supply it. But when the want oppresses him and he is utterly powerless to satisfy it, then he is poor indeed. Then he becomes a beggar, which the original word translated poor really means. He must go to the only source from which

his wants can be supplied. Spiritual poverty or beggary consists in a keen sense of our spiritual wants and the utter hopelessness of our own ability to supply them.

This is not an exceptional, but a universal principle. All poverty originates in affection and desire. An affection for knowledge makes a man, who has little of it, feel poor and he will be a beggar of it just in the degree in which he feels the keenness of its want. He will beg it from books and living teachers. He will pick it up in the streets; he will roam over the fields and beg it from rock and tree and blossom; he will eagerly seize even the crumbs which fall from nature's table. He will look up to the material heavens with the most devout and prayerful spirit; he will listen to the winds and look with wistful eyes to sun and cloud; he will stretch out his imploring hand to pebble and fossil and with docile mind and thankful heart he will receive alms even from insect and worm.

The same principle rules in all our natural possessions. The sense of poverty is not in proportion to our destitution, but to the strength of our affection for wealth. Thus we often find, that the more money a man makes the poorer he becomes, because his love of wealth increases with its acquisition. The half naked savage, wandering houseless and homeless through the wilderness, starving today and over indulging tomorrow, does not feel so poor as multitudes in our cities, who live in fine houses and revel in luxuries, because his desires and his power to gratify them are more nearly equal. Poverty then, always originates in our affection and desire for what we do not possess; and consists in the inequality between them and our ability to supply them. The same principle applies to man as a spiritual being and his spiritual wants are far more numerous and important than his natural wants.

Man needs for the spirit just what he needs for the body. He needs food, clothing, habitation, society and that power which continually sustains him, gives him existence and the ability to appropriate, use and enjoy his possessions. The laws for mental and physical development are exactly analogous. Our spiritual faculties grow by the appropriation of spiritual food. We must eat the bread of heaven and drink the water of life, or we can have no life in us. We must be clothed in the white raiment of truth; we must obtain a right to one of the mansions of heaven and we must acquire those spiritual qualities, which will associate and conjoin us with the angels. In a word, we must acquire that spiritual wealth and power which consists in the knowledge of goodness and truth; that spiritual wealth which alone can procure an estate, a house and home and all the necessities and adornments of life, in the kingdom of heaven.

It is true, the Lord offers us all these things as a free gift, but He does not force them upon us. We must accept them voluntarily. But this we shall never do, unless we feel the want of them. If you are satisfied with this life, you will feel no interest in another; if you are wholly absorbed in the attainment of selfish and worldly ends, you will find no time for any others; or if the mere possession of the knowledge of spiritual things without its application to life contents you, you will think yourself rich, however miserably poor you may be. If you trust to your own righteousness, or your own reason, or your own power, you will never go to the Lord. This is a truth of individual experience, of observation and of universal law.

This is the reason why such woes are pronounced upon the rich. This is the reason why it is said, that "*it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.*" We never make an effort to obtain any good or any possession, until we feel the want of it. Therefore want in its most comprehensive sense is the universal stimulant. If we want wealth, we labour for it; if we want power, we struggle for it; office, we plan and beg for it; society, we seek it; skill in any art or profession, we learn its laws and practise it; knowledge, we study for it; sensual delights, we taste them wherever found. If we want heaven, we shall seek all those truths which lead to it and those spiritual graces which constitute it; and whatever mistakes we may make we shall, in the end, seek them where alone they can be found and in the only way in which they can be obtained.

Now we may be able to see to what blessed results spiritual poverty naturally leads us. Suppose you have obtained some correct idea of your spiritual wants, of the amazing capacities for happiness of your spiritual mind and see how utterly helpless you are, of yourselves, to provide the means of obtaining it. You see that your own wisdom and power fail; the possession of the whole world cannot help you. Neither

honour, power, knowledge, nor troops of dearest friends can give you the bread and water that will satisfy your hunger and thirst. No human skill can weave and no wealth can purchase the garments which will cover your spiritual nakedness and no earthly architect can draw the plan and construct the dwelling which will be an eternal shelter and home for you; which will satisfy your ideals of comfort and beauty. There are no men or women, however learned, however adorned with every personal attraction and social accomplishment who can satisfy your desire for spiritual sympathy and companionship.

What will you do? Where will you go? The urgency of your wants goads you on. You catch bright glimpses of the blessings you might obtain, but you do not obtain them. What can you do of yourself? Nothing, nothing, nothing. All heaven, with its spiritual glories and celestial blessings, is before you; and you have no power to gain one of them. Poor, miserable beggar!

Overwhelmed with a sense of your destitution and helplessness and despairing of any human aid, you cast yourself at the feet of the Blessed Redeemer and Lord. You make no conditions. Sinking in the waves of mere natural knowledge and power, on which, like Peter, you once trusted you could go to the Lord, you cry, "*Lord, save me, I perish.*" Utterly distrusting your own wisdom, you cry, "*Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes and I shall keep it unto the end.*" "*Give me understanding and I shall keep Thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.*" "*Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments. Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies.*" You are willing "*to walk in the law of the Lord,*" "*to keep His testimonies,*" and "*to seek Him with the whole heart.*" In a word, you are willing to conform to the divine order; to put yourself into right relations to the Lord.

Now He can bless you. The river of life, which issues from Him and whose waters contain all divine blessings, can now flow through you. It is not obstructed by selfish and worldly loves. The vessels of the mind are not filled with natural and worldly treasures and there is room to receive the water of life. The halls and courts of the soul are not thronged with mere earthly friends. The angels become your guests. The Lord Himself stands at the door and knocks; and you open it and He comes in and sups with you and you with Him. He gives you the bread of heaven and you eat it and live forever. You drink the water that He gives you and it becomes within you a well of water, springing up into eternal life. You find heavenly society and conjunction with the Lord and thus you are in the way to receive all blessings.

But our Lord says the poor in spirit are blessed, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven consists of all those principles of goodness and truth, those laws of heavenly life and order which constitute heaven. It is the same in principle as the kingdoms of nature in this world. The mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms embrace all the principles, forms, orders, qualities, relations and life of each particular thing in nature. So the kingdom of heaven in its largest form embraces all the principles, forms, order, qualities, relations, activities and delights which constitute the life of the angels. It is the same as the kingdom of God, for heaven receives its laws, order and life from the Lord, it is indeed, His life in lower forms.

To gain possession of this kingdom, it must be formed within us, or perhaps, speaking more exactly, we must be moulded into the form and order of that kingdom; we must become it. We must be created in the image and likeness of the Lord and then the kingdom of God is within us. It is life according to spiritual and divine laws.

The Lord is ever seeking to form this kingdom within us that He may communicate to us all the blessings that belong to it. As He formed the bodily senses, that man might enter into, possess and enjoy the kingdoms of nature, so He seeks to create within us spiritual senses, that we may enter into and enjoy all the blessings of His spiritual kingdom. The organs of material sense were formed while we were passive and unconscious; but our spiritual faculties can only be formed by our consent and cooperation, according to the divine order and laws.

However our consent and cooperation do not change the law, or in the slightest degree relieve us from dependence upon the Lord. As the farmer has no power to make a single grain of wheat grow, so neither have we any power to create a truth or to excite a single affection. We are as helpless in the one case as in

the other. The Lord also needs our cooperation in obtaining the natural good. He gives the farmer no harvest, unless he casts the seed into the ground; so He can give us no heavenly delights, unless we learn the laws of His spiritual kingdom and live according to them.

The poor in spirit enter into the kingdom of Heaven and gain possession of its power and glory and blessedness, because they feel the want of them and the want impels them to remove the obstacles which oppose the formation of that kingdom within them and to learn the truths and use the means to obtain it. The Jews were called rich, because they had the Word and in it the means of gaining full possession of the heavenly kingdom. But they were really poor, because they did not feel the need of spiritual riches. They were rich unto themselves, but poor towards God. Everyone must become poor in spirit before he will feel his need of spiritual riches. The poor in spirit see this and acknowledge it and are ready to comply with the only conditions on which they can gain possession of the heavenly kingdom. I have said that poverty of spirit originates in an affection for spiritual truth; all want originates in affection. Life from the Lord flows into our affections and through them into the understanding, into the rational faculties and down into the lowest senses. It communicates activity and gives power to all forms of the mind and even of the body; and so the kingdom is built. The spiritual and heavenly degrees of the mind become formed and made capable of receiving spiritual and celestial blessings.

The poor in spirit begin to see from a heavenly light. They hear finer and sweeter harmonies than fall upon the merely natural ear. They have meat to eat which the world knows not of. They have a power which sustains them in every trial and labour; a trust in the Lord's care and protection, which prevents every anxious thought for the morrow. They have "*a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.*" They have the companionship of angels, a calm and serene spirit, a peace and blessedness, which flow from unfailing fountains in the infinite mercy and wisdom of the Lord. Yes, they have within them the unfolding germs of every spiritual truth and heavenly joy.

They cannot enter into the possession of this kingdom in all its extent and fullness and clearness of perception in this life. Indeed it is so large and rich in beauty and blessing, that they can never fully explore or exhaust it. They may yet mourn and hunger and thirst and be reviled and persecuted, before all obstacles to their full and peaceful possession of the heavenly kingdom are removed.

But they have placed themselves in the power of the Lord and no one can pluck them out of His hand. They believe in Him and they have the sure promise of eternal life. They have cast their burdens upon Him and they will no more fall and be crushed under their weight. They have begun to walk in the law of the Lord and they can never go astray.

Utterly distrusting their own wisdom and power and throwing wide open the door of entrance to every spiritual faculty, the angels and the Lord come in, take eternal possession and fill them with the light, the fragrance, the beauty, the power and the blessedness of heaven.

Thus the poor in spirit become heirs of the heavenly kingdom. Not a few blessings here and there, through a long life of weakness, humiliation and suffering, but a whole kingdom. Not a mere earthly kingdom, with much labour and many cares, but little power and few joys; but a heavenly kingdom, an everlasting kingdom, into whose possession they cannot fail to enter, a kingdom without care, or labour, or sorrow; a kingdom in which they will find fullness of joy, peace and blessedness forever. May we all become poor in spirit and rich in every heavenly blessing!

3. The Blessedness of Mourning

"Blessed are they who mourn; for they shall be comforted." Mat 5: 4

THE blessings promised by our Lord are not isolated gifts from Him. Nor do they denote distinct classes of persons, some of whom possess one blessing alone and others other blessings. The states denoted by the poor in spirit, the meek, the pure in heart, the merciful, the persecuted, must all be found in each one. They all represent qualities of the truly regenerate mind; they are all steps towards the possession of the

heavenly kingdom promised to the "poor in spirit." Some may possess one quality more fully than others; they may possess it in such a degree that it is the prominent trait in their characters and this predominant quality of their spiritual mind may serve as a means of classifying them. But they must possess all the other qualities in some degree. Neither can exist without the presence of all.

The various Christian graces all belong to the same family. They are like the vital organs in the human body. There must be heart, brain, lungs, viscera, nerves, arteries, veins and many other things in every human body. If one is destroyed, all perish. So it is with all spiritual qualities. They are indeed, activities of spiritual organs corresponding to the material.

Nor are they mentioned in the Word at random. This we cannot for a moment suppose, if the Sacred Scriptures are the Word of the Lord. All that comes from infinite wisdom must be perfect in form and order, as well as in meaning. Therefore we find that those qualities which are essential to heavenly blessedness follow each other in the order of their development. The state denoted by the poor in spirit is the first requisite in regeneration; it is the germ of all the states which follow. They grow out of it as the trunk, branches, leaves, blossoms and fruit grow from the seed. Therefore while we are considering the nature of these states and the blessings which flow from them, we are learning the true order of regeneration and of the development of our spiritual organization. The state denoted by those who mourn and the blessings which flow from it, is the first effect of spiritual poverty.

When a man begins to feel a want for something more than this world can give and becomes conscious of his utter helplessness in and of himself to procure the means of satisfying the wants of his spiritual nature; when the pride of reason and the lusts of power become abased and he goes to the Lord with the prayer, "*Show me Your ways, O Lord: teach me Your paths,*" then the Lord can draw near to him and begin the work of forming His kingdom within him. Man turns himself towards the Lord. He opens the door of his heart to Him and the Lord can enter.

But this presence of light and life from the Lord reveals to him more fully his actual state. He sees not only his helplessness to gain the kingdom of heaven, but he discovers that there is much within him that obstructs the formation of this kingdom; much that he values and loves and that he must give up before he can enter into it. He sees that he has affinities for selfish and worldly things as dear and strong as those which bind him to father and mother, to brother and sister, to wife and children and he sees that these bonds must be severed; he must let the dead bury their dead; he must lay down his own life, take up his cross and follow the Lord. This is a painful discovery and it causes him to mourn.

Mourning is of two kinds, natural and spiritual. Natural mourning is caused by the loss of what we love and spiritual mourning by the consciousness that we possess qualities of evil and falsity that are hostile to the neighbour and the Lord and by the sense of our own destitution, our want of spiritual food, clothing, habitation, protection and association. These two states are very different in their quality, but the promise of comfort is made to both, according to their degree and nature.

As the Lord created man solely to bless him, all His providences ever point to that one end. He regards our happiness as much in what He withholds as in what He bestows. The Lord never permits us to be deprived of even a natural and sensual good, except for the purpose of preventing some evil, or of making way for some greater good. Our natural loves are so strong, that it is absolutely necessary they should be opposed and their force weakened before spiritual affections can rule. Consequently, we find few if any persons who go through this life with uninterrupted prosperity. Sooner or later all meet with opposition and crosses. The burdens and the cares of life multiply; those possessions they have gained with the greatest labour and upon which they have depended for happiness, are either removed from us, or they do not answer our expectations.

One man loses his wealth; another his office; another his social position; another retains his possessions, but is disappointed in their power to satisfy his wants. Wealth does not content him. The more his knowledge increases, the more he sees his own mental poverty. If he indulges in ease and luxury, he is

soon filled with disease and pain; if he sets his heart upon any worldly good, he finds he is leaning upon a reed which breaks and pierces him. This is the mournful confession of all ages and classes of men.

Sooner or later we are all called to mourn the loss of friends. No one can be exempt from this sorrow. The wave of natural life is continually breaking upon the shores of eternity and disappearing from this world for ever. Some must go before others and in the present disorderly state of society all ages die. Children mourn the loss of parents and parents of children. Death severs the most intimate and tender natural ties of husband and wife, of companion and friend. The poet has said with as much truth as beauty:

*"There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside, howsoever defended,
But has one vacant chair."*

*"The air is full of farewells to the dying
And mournings for the dead."*

There is no moment in the day or year that someone, dear to a larger or smaller circle of friends, does not die and fill some hearts with mourning. Who can measure the sum of human woe. A thousand millions of hearts and not one that must not suffer. Not one upon which some shadow does not fall, from the light cloud that for a moment obscures the innocent joys of infancy, to the settled pall of darkness which admits no ray of hope or joy. The mourning for loss of wealth, for defeated purposes, for disappointed hopes; the fear of poverty; the want of sympathy and comfort; the loneliness and dependence of the orphan; the desolation of bereaved hearts; the despair and agony of those who see everything dear to them passing away and feel their utter helplessness to prevent it. Who can escape from some one of these causes of mourning? No one. Like the shadow of the ever coming night, the dirge of sorrow from afflicted and mourning hearts perpetually encircles the earth.

But this mourning, which fills the world and darkens every home and rends every heart, is permitted by infinite mercy and serves a heavenly use. Men are so eager in the pursuit of selfish and worldly good; they are so absorbed in this life, that they would never give a moment's attention to their spiritual and eternal interests, if they were not arrested in their earthly career and led to see and made to feel, by painful experience, the frailty and uncertainty of every earthly good.

This is the great comfort, the great good, the Lord intends for us under the bitter and repulsive form of sorrow. He arrests our career in the pursuit of worldly good and this is the first step in turning our thoughts to spiritual and eternal things. The comfort is sure to come, though it may seem to be long delayed. No human being ever suffered a pang or a shadow of grief that was not in some way for his good. It is true, the comfort for merely natural mourning may seem to be very small. Its whole amount may consist in being saved from greater evils. It may not add one hope or joy to the heart. But it may prevent much misery.

Perhaps there is no sorrow so apparently destitute of comfort and hopeless, as a merely natural sorrow for the dead. Every other loss may possibly be retrieved. But those who have been removed from us by death can never come back to us. They leave a void in the heart which can never be filled. But this very want and the impossibility of satisfying it in this life, may arrest our attention and lead us to reflect upon the spiritual world and to try to learn something of the nature of its life and happiness.

But to the spiritual mind, the change we call death is full of comfort and hope. It is not death. It is a step in life according to the original order and intention of infinite wisdom. If the friend removed was evil, the removal was to prevent him from falling into greater evils; if he was young and innocent, or had begun to live a heavenly life, he enters more fully into that life. He escapes from all the sorrows of earth and enters upon a career of light, joy, peace and blessedness, entirely above our comprehension while in this world. He has lost nothing; he has gained much. Nor are they lost to those who love them here. They have really become more intensely and fully united with them. They have passed to a position where they can become the medium of richer and larger blessings, where they can administer a more enduring comfort. They stand between us and the angels and they open new avenues of communication between us and the

Lord, the source of all comfort and blessing. So the promise is fulfilled. The bereaved heart is comforted. But mourning for natural losses and bereavements is not real mourning and its comforts are only according to the degree of the mourning. It is not until we begin to look beyond this world and to see the obstacles which oppose the attainment of spiritual life; is it not until we begin to see our destitution of the goodness and truth which alone lead to it, that we begin truly to mourn.

It is generally supposed that all cause of mourning will cease as the work of regeneration advances. And it is considered as one of the darkest problems in human life, that the good are often called upon to suffer the greatest trials and temptations, while the wicked prosper in all their undertakings. But this problem is solved when we discover the true nature of man and the actual work that must be accomplished in establishing the kingdom of heaven within us. Our part of this work consists principally in repentance; in putting away the evils and falsities which oppose the upbuilding of the Lord's kingdom; and this is a most painful work.

In the joy of new born heavenly affections and new discovered truths, we think we have escaped from the torment of the evil and false and have come into a state of permanent peace. But we find that our evil desires are only quiescent for the time; they soon lift their hydra heads and infuse their deadly venom into our souls. The new truth brings new light, by which we discover new evils and falsities and see more plainly the infernal nature of those we have already discovered and this fills us with pain. We are disappointed and mourn over the fact and often feel that we make no progress in the regenerate life that all further effort is useless and we sink down in despair.

The progress of regeneration is not a continual and steady advance towards new light and conquest over our evils. It is advance and retreat: victory today and apparent defeat tomorrow. The changes in our affections are correctly represented in the changing seasons. There is no perpetual spring for the soul while we remain in this life. The heart has its summer and winter, its spring and autumn; and the understanding its day and night, its clouds and storms. The promise of seed time and harvest, summer and winter, is made to the soul. Such is the nature of the human soul, that it cannot be held continually in a state of affection and a clearness of light far above its real character, during the formation of a new will and a new understanding. It must come down to the earth. Like a pendulum, it swings between the old and the new and is in alternate states of light and darkness, cold and heat.

When we fall, as it were, from our new heaven of peace and light, the night of falsity and the winter of evil become more terrible to us from the contrast. We mourn our loss. We mourn over our cold and darkness. The Lord seems to hide His face from us; to shut His ears to our cry. Our Lord Himself passed through these states, during the glorification of the human nature which He assumed; and it was the consciousness of the separation and conflict between His divine and human natures which caused the bloody sweat in Gethsemane and wrung from Him the despairing cry upon Calvary, "*My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?*"

But as angels appeared to the Lord strengthening Him, so they come to us, to sustain and comfort us. These temptations are necessary to enable us to see our evils and to put them away; and those only are admitted into them who can be sustained. No one will mourn over a sin until he sees it to be a sin; and the number and enormity of the sins we discover in ourselves, will be in proportion to our knowledge and the degree of spiritual life developed within us. Thus a man, in whom the kingdom of heaven is being established, has causes of the keenest grief and mourning, of which the merely natural man knows nothing.

But the mourning is an evidence of spiritual life and will be followed by a comfort of which the natural man knows nothing. The evil whose discovery causes him so much pain, he seeks to subdue and put away. The conflict may be terrible; may be to the soul what a fierce civil war is to a nation. We must mourn over its necessity and the suffering it entails. But when the evils we have discovered are overcome, a great obstacle to our spiritual progress is removed. The Lord takes possession of every faculty we resign to Him

and we rise to more interior conjunction with Him and consequently to greater blessedness. In this way every one who suffers temptation and mourns over the pains of its conflict, will be comforted.

But there is a more interior cause of mourning than the pain of spiritual conflict and it will be rewarded with a corresponding blessedness. As our knowledge of the Lord increases and we see more of His infinite love and mercy; as we see more of His patience and tenderness towards us, while we are His enemies; of His ceaseless efforts to heal us of all our spiritual diseases and draw us nearer to Him, that we may become the recipients of larger measures of life and blessedness, those evils which separate us from so much goodness and place us in a hostile attitude to so much love and wisdom, become doubly hateful to us. We feel our uncleanness; we are ashamed of our folly and ingratitude; we are humbled; our love of self and the world becomes hateful to us. How could we offend so much goodness? How could we reject so much tenderness and mercy? How could we revel in such uncleanness and so over estimate the fleeting baubles of this world? How could we trust to our own blindness and ignorance when we had infinite wisdom for our guidance?

We are filled with shame. We mourn with an inmost, self abasing shame and grief. We give up our resistance to the divine influence; we resign all thoughts of merit; we make no excuse for our ingratitude and sin; we shun, we hate, we loathe ourselves. A keen sense of our utter unworthiness fills every faculty with mourning and shame. We do not so much as lift up our eyes to heaven, but with the publican, we can only smite upon our breasts and cry, "*God, be merciful to me a sinner.*" No thought of our own punishment, or suffering, or loss, enters our hearts. We are overwhelmed with shame, that in our immeasurable blindness, impunity and littleness, we should have opposed and rejected infinite wisdom and goodness. Can there be any deeper and keener mourning than this?

And can there be any better evidence that we have new light in the understanding and a new life in the heart? Can there be any better evidence that we have come into a state of submission to the divine will? and that hereafter we are ready to give ourselves up to the guidance of the divine wisdom? Surely there can be none.

But such a state of humiliation and submission must lead to every blessing, for it puts us unresistingly into the hands of infinite wisdom and omnipotent power; it opens every door of the soul to the entrance of the Lord in His divine humanity and permits Him to reform us into His own image and likeness and in this way to prepare us to be the recipients of His divine blessings in ever increasing fullness and perfection forever.

Thus every degree of mourning, from the momentary sorrow of childhood to the interior and agonizing temptations of the spiritual man struggling for life, has its measure of blessing. For every bitter there is a sweet; for every sorrow a joy; for every spiritual struggle a victory; for every effort a reward. There is full, satisfying, blessed comfort, for all who mourn.

4. The Blessedness of Mourning (cont)

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Mat 5: 5.

HOW improbable to natural apprehension and opposite to all worldly experience, is this promise of our Lord! Where do we find the meek inheriting the earth and entering into possession of their inheritance? It is the strong, the shrewd and the persistent, who gain worldly possessions. The saving and hard hearted, who grasp and keep. It is not the mild, the gentle, loving, tender natures, whose ears are open to every cry of suffering and whose hearts and hands are more ready to give than to receive. It is the self confident, the bold and daring that press forward in the keen strife for earthly honours. The meek shrink from public contests and love retirement and quiet pursuits.

The promise then, cannot be understood in the natural, worldly sense. All human experience disproves it. The Lord could not intend to say, that the meek hold the title deeds of the earth and enjoy the possession of its honours and power. There must be some other meaning clothed in the terms, "meek," "inherit," and

"earth," than the merely natural mind attaches to them. Let us endeavour to learn what the spiritual and divine idea of meekness is, that we may gain the blessings which the Lord has promised its possessor.

The Lord creates all things from Himself. Then the order of the procedure of His life and power is from above downward, from within outward. First the spiritual and then from and through that, the natural. The Lord has taught us to pray, that His will may be done on the earth as it is in heaven and what He has taught us to ask, He is in the perpetual effort to give.

This order is observed in the blessings; indeed, the circle of the divine operations always flows in the same order. The poor in spirit are blessed with the kingdom of heaven. When this kingdom begins to be formed within them and they begin to enjoy the blessedness of its love and light, they see more clearly the evil and false principles within them, which obstruct the full formation of this kingdom and they feel their utter destitution of all goodness and truth in and of themselves and this causes them to mourn.

But this mourning, again is blessed with comfort, for being caused by a sense of our alienation from God and our destitution of those qualities which assimilate us to Him, it is attended with humiliation and a yielding of ourselves to His divine power and guidance. And thus He is enabled to remove the evils which obstruct the entrance of His life, to soften the hardness of our natures and to enrich us with the comfort of heavenly blessings. The effect of this repentance and sorrow for sin, is to break up our natural opposition to spiritual principles, to subdue the hardness of our natures and to render us yielding and pliant to heavenly influences. It abases our pride, it weakens our self confidence, it subdues our arrogance, softens the hardness of our natures. It does to the natural degree of the mind, what the spring sun does to the earth bound in the chains of frost. It sets the imprisoned streams of the divine life free; it opens the earth of the natural man to be penetrated by the quickening warmth of the divine love. It makes his whole nature mild, gentle, soft, pliant, yielding to the heavenly forces, so that the Lord's will may be done on the earth of man's natural faculties, as it is in the heaven of his spiritual faculties.

Meekness then, is the orderly effect of the two preceding graces. Meekness is a heavenly principle brought down into natural. It is the sweetness and gentleness, the mildness, humility and kindness of angelic life brought down into the duties of natural life, into the activities of business, the pursuits of pleasure; into all social, civil and domestic relations, moulding them into heavenly forms and communicating to them heavenly blessings.

Meekness then, is a grace of the natural man, deriving its origin from a heavenly source and its rewards are the inheritance of all those natural blessings which flow from the orderly direction and activity of our natural faculties. But this we shall be able to see more clearly when we understand what spiritual ideas are involved in "inheritance" and "earth."

The general idea of an inheritance is that of something left to us by others, by ancestors or relatives. Children inherit the wealth, the form, the mental and moral qualities, the health and the diseases of their parents. The regenerate are called the heirs of the heavenly kingdom. "*He that overcomes shall inherit all things.*" This must mean that those who overcome the evils and falsities in their nature and life shall enter into the actual possession of all spiritual and natural good. As all heavenly good is gained by the exercise of heavenly affections and the knowledge of spiritual truth, so all earthly or natural good is gained by the orderly exercise of natural affections and the knowledge of natural truth.

There are two kinds of inheritance, a legal and a real one. A child becomes heir to the paternal estate by the one and to the paternal character by the other. The heir may or may not enter into the possession of the estate to which he has only a legal claim. But he cannot escape from the other, whether it is a heritage of joy or sorrow. Real inheritance implies actual possession and use. The inheritance promised the meek is of this nature. It implies the actual possession and use of all those qualities, or that wealth denoted by the earth.

As the kingdom of heaven denotes all those heavenly principles of goodness and truth which form a heavenly character, so the earth "denotes all those qualities which proceed from things internal and are

fixed and exhibited in things external, as being things natural." As meekness is the natural state corresponding to the "poor in spirit," so the earth is the natural state corresponding to the kingdom of heaven. The natural degree of the mind bears the same relation to the spiritual that the earth does to the heavens. Therefore man himself is called the earth, or heaven, as the one or the other plane of the mind is referred to. The promise to the meek then, is the blessedness which flows from a full and orderly possession of all our natural faculties, all the faculties of thought and affection we exercise in this world in the acquisition of knowledge, in the prosecution of our business; in our social, civil and domestic relations. In a word, it is the promise of the full fruition of all earthly good. Let us endeavour to learn how such blessings flow from such a cause.

Our natural faculties can only be properly exercised and fully enjoyed when heavenly principles dwell within them, as their life and regulating power. It is according to the order of our organization that the internal should control the external and give it sensation and the power of receiving delight. "From the Lord proceeds whatever is celestial, from this all that is spiritual and from what is spiritual all that is natural. This is the order of all created existences and hence is derived the order of influx." As all blessing must come from the Lord, it follows, "that as much as there is of celestial and spiritual good in natural, corporeal and worldly, so far these are good and so far they are blessed." This, in principle, is a matter of common observation, though very few are willing to admit it to the full extent of its operation. Everyone will admit, in principle if not in practice, that when the lowest appetites and passions are kept under the restraints of an enlightened reason and are regulated by it, they are the source of much greater blessings than when unbridled indulgence is given to them. The man who is temperate in his habits of eating and drinking, gets more delight from the gratification of his appetite, than he who gives himself up to self-indulgence. The man who eats and drinks that he may have a sound mind in a sound body; that is, who primarily regards the mind, gets greater blessings from his natural appetites than he who eats and drinks solely for their gratification. This all will acknowledge. The appetites and passions are imperious in their demands. They acknowledge no restraint but force and no law but gratification and when man suffers them to control him, they soon destroy both body and soul.

This is true of all our natural faculties, of the whole plane and degree of the natural mind. Man is by nature worldly and selfish, hard hearted, fierce, cruel and revengeful. There are no wild beasts so ferocious and cruel as man, when he is free from all fear of punishment and gives loose reins to his infernal passions. But even under the restraints of law, he is hard, cold, exacting and persistent in the pursuit of his own selfish and worldly gratifications. His self seeking and self indulgence enter into all his business; and, indeed, into all the relations of his natural life.

It is this unrelenting and cruel selfishness which makes human society such a boiling cauldron of fierce passions, such a wild conflict of opposing principles. And it is this conflict, this struggle for wealth and power, for social and political supremacy, which causes so much misery in the world, not only to those who are trodden under the foot of power; not only those who are robbed of their rights and freedom in the pursuit of happiness, but to those who inflict these injuries.

The result is the same as with the bodily appetites. They destroy themselves by their own lawless action. They were designed to be servants, obedient to the control of spiritual and heavenly principles. But when they throw off the reins of their government and riot in lawless indulgence, they not only kill all the spiritual faculties, but in the end, they destroy themselves. Thus the purpose for which they were created is defeated. They were made to be organs receptive of divine blessings in natural forms. They were designed by infinite love and wisdom to give and receive blessings in all our natural duties and relations. But, by their eagerness for self indulgence, they give and receive misery. They lose their heritage of blessing and become heirs only to pain and wretchedness.

The meek are those who yield their natural mind to the control of the spiritual. They are mild, gentle, unselfish, kind and obedient to the higher principles of their being. They are governed by divine and heavenly laws. All their faculties are duly subordinated and act according to the order established for them by infinite wisdom. They cannot fail then to reach the good which the Lord intended for them. He can

guide them, for they yield to Him. He can communicate His life to them, for they are willing to receive it. He can mould them into His own image and likeness, for their natures are pliant to the ever brooding and inflowing forces of His love. He can cause the germs of the heavenly principles He has planted in their minds to bud and blossom and bear fruit; for their natural minds are rich and mellow and well watered with tears, it may be of mourning for their sins; and with the gentle and refreshing dews of celestial truth which gather upon them and penetrate them with life from the invisible presence of the Divine Humanity. Their minds are open to the Lord and thus they are in a proper state to receive blessings in every form from Him.

If now we consider the state of the meek in their relations to men and material things, we shall find them equally adapted to receive the fullest and richest good from all human conditions and worldly possessions. In business they will be diligent and faithful. They will engage in some useful employment from a desire to be useful to others. And as use is the ruling motive of action it must greatly tend to keep the mind in a calm and peaceful state. They are not goaded on by an insane desire to accumulate a vast fortune for no definite purpose. They are not harassed by a multitude of cares and tormented with anxieties about the results of wild ventures. They may never succeed in accumulating a large estate; they may fail in their business operations. But they do not fail in their end, which was to perform useful work and thus they can never be overwhelmed with disappointment.

As they preserve a just regard for the interests of others and maintain a due moderation in all their desires, they do not engage in keen competitions and those collisions and rivalries which often end in strife, injustice and the most bitter and lasting regrets. They keep on the even tenor of their way; their hearts full of kind intentions and gentle sympathies; their hands ready to do good deeds.

They are not jealous of rivals; they are not envious of the success of others. They do not waste their energies and destroy their health in attempting to do the work of a year in a month. There is no need of undue haste. Every man has time enough to do his work. We all have an eternity before us in which to do useful work and enjoy its blessedness. The main thing is to do the work of today. It is as wrong to attempt the work of tomorrow today as it is to postpone the work of the present to the future.

The man who submits to the divine laws will be guilty of such folly. He will strive to embody the warm and bright purposes of his heart in some useful deed as the time passes. Who cannot see that those who labour with such motives and in such a spirit must inherit all the blessings of labour. Labour is not a curse to them. It is a delightful effort to execute the loving purposes of the heart.

The same character in social and domestic life will be equally fruitful in blessings. The Lord has planted men in families and organized them into societies, that they might be mutually interdependent and continually give and receive blessings. In true order the whole work for each one. Blessings from all are continually flowing towards each as rivers to the ocean. Our natures are developed and our happiness perfected by the unity of these harmonious varieties of influence. So intimately is the life of each one woven into the whole social fabric that when one suffers the whole must be affected by it. One discord destroys the whole harmony. The essential principle of this order is, that each must give of his own to all others and receive his good from all. He must be content to stand in his own lot and do his own work.

Now everyone must be able to see that the general state of our social and domestic affections, denoted by meekness, is perfectly adapted to secure the ends of this harmonious and unitary life and to lead us into the full possession and enjoyment of all social and domestic blessings. It is kind and it tends to beget kindness in others. It is modest and unobtrusive and consequently does not provoke opposition. It is gentle and wins its quiet way without injury to the most sensibilities. It is peaceful, it provokes no hostilities; it excites no fears, it creates no disturbance. It carries peace with it. It is oil to troubled waters. It is balm to smarting wounds. It soothes and heals and harmonizes discords. All its influences tend to unity and concord of action in the forces of life. It is unselfish and it awakens no distrust. It is generous and excites no envy. It is tender-hearted and inflicts no needless pain. It is loving and generous and scatters its blessings with a just and liberal hand. In a word, such a character is a blessing. Blessed influences continually and

spontaneously flow from it. It is fragrance and sweetness; it is concord and peace; it is warmth and light; it is the unity of all harmonious varieties.

When such a natural state exists, there is a full and unobstructed influx of spiritual life into the earth of the natural mind, bringing with it the peace and blessedness of heaven. Therefore it must follow that the meek will enter into the full possession and enjoyment of all natural blessings.

Imagine a society where such principles prevailed.

There are no jealousies, no rivalries, no envy, no detraction, no conceit, no distrust and no self seeking. All are kind, gentle, tender of each other's feelings, considerate of each other's rights, content with their own, liberal and generous in their gifts, ardent in their affections and delicate in their manifestations; each seeks the good of all and all are unselfishly devoted to each. Conceive of a family governed by such principles, actuated by such motives; of husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, all living for each other; and all seeking to give rather than receive; each one more desirous for the happiness of the others than his own. Would not each person in such a society, in such a family, inherit all the blessings which the Lord intended to flow from such relations? No one could fail to do so. For the exercise of every affection carries its reward with it. Such a family would be a heaven upon the earth.

But let us carry out the principle still farther and we shall see that the promise is fulfilled in a more literal manner than may be supposed. To inherit the earth, literally, means something more than to have a deed of any number of its acres. The inheritance consists in the actual possession and enjoyment of the blessings, which the Lord intended us to derive from the earth. 'Who inherits the most of these blessings? Is it the one who can show a little deed for the greatest number of acres? Who has the largest knowledge of natural science, or wields the greatest power? Attractive and dazzling as all these possessions are, no one is so foolish as to believe it.

Our enjoyment of natural blessings is not in proportion to our legal possession of them. A man can really inherit only what he can use and make conducive to his natural or spiritual life. And the very qualities which insure success in accumulating a large estate, or rising to high places of power, unfit him for their enjoyment. The severe and protracted labour of acquiring; the constant care of preserving; the anxieties and fear of loss; the struggles to maintain the favour of the great and to hold the power gained against all rivals, perpetually disturb our peace and unfit us for enjoyment.

Who sees the most beauty in the earth? Not the man who owns the most of it; who enjoys his food, clothing and habitation the most fully and keenly; not the man who has the greatest abundance and the most excellent quality. No! He enjoys all natural attainments and possessions, who sees the most of the goodness and provident care of the Lord in them. The meek think of their own unworthiness and of their Father's merciful bounty. In their food and clothing and habitation, in the beauty and glory of the earth, they see the kind care and lavish goodness of the Lord. Every natural gift is a message from their heavenly Father and they recognize His love in it. Not only their bodies but their souls are fed at these earthly tables. They are contented and happy, for they trust in Him and thus they enjoy every natural possession without fear of its loss and with a zest derived from a more delicate spiritual sense. Even the de-lights of the natural senses are fuller and richer, for there is a heavenly delight within them which preserves and exalts them. Thus the promise is fulfilled, the meek inherit the earth in all degrees from the highest to the lowest. They get the greatest good from every faculty of sense and from every earthly possession. The kingdom of heaven comes down upon the earth. And while it brings its own fears and blessings with it, it lays the foundation for a new life and a new circle of blessings.

5. The Blessedness of Spiritual Hunger and Thirst

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled." Mat 5: 6

WITH this beatitude we commence a new circle of blessings. The first three are comparatively passive rather than active. They refer more to those states of the soul, which are a preparation for the positive

establishment within us of the principles which constitute the kingdom of heaven, than to their actual exercise and the full reception of the blessings which flow from them. They are comparatively negative rather than positive; they are the clearing away of obstructions, breaking up the ground, planting the seed. This is the universal order of human progress and of all organic development. Ascent from the rock to the human soul is not regular and continuous, like that of an inclined plane. It proceeds by distinct steps. The leaf does not regularly and insensibly shade off into the blossom and the blossom into the germs of the fruit. The plant completes the circle of its life, the reproduction of itself by rising from one degree of organization to another. So it is in our regeneration. There is "first the blade, then the ear and then the full corn in the ear."

When man has discovered how destitute he is of all those qualities which constitute the kingdom of heaven and his total inability, of himself to procure them; when he has mourned over his destitution of goodness and truth and has been led to abhor his falsities and sins; and consequently, has become subdued, gentle and yielding to the divine forces, which seek to mould even his natural faculties into the image of heaven, then he begins to hunger and thirst for that goodness and truth which constitute the new life. New desires are awakened within him; he has wants entirely unknown to him before; wants which no natural possessions can supply. The soul "*hungers and thirsts after righteousness.*"

In endeavouring to gain a clear understanding of the conditions and nature of this blessing, these questions naturally present themselves, first, What is the nature of this hunger and thirst? second, What is righteousness? and third, What is meant by being filled ?

The Lord has so formed the human body that the substances which compose it are continually wasting away and must be perpetually supplied. The soul is always at work creating the body. It is perpetually weaving its tissues and reconstructing its bones, that it may maintain its communications with the material world. Hunger and thirst are the soul's call for the materials to accomplish its work.

This is not a special law applicable to the material body alone. It is universal. It applies to all organic forms. Everything that has life, even in its lowest forms, is continually wasting away and must be ever seeking and appropriating the substances necessary to supply its wants.

The plant and animal hunger and thirst. They eat and drink the substances that are necessary to their organization and the perpetuity of their existence.

The soul, or spirit of man, being a form organized of spiritual substances, is subject to this common law of organization. It must have its appropriate food. It must eat and drink or it cannot grow. The soul also, has a hunger and thirst peculiar to itself. And this hunger and thirst are in prayer for the means of preserving and increasing its own power and life. It is the method infinite wisdom pursues, to impel each individual being and organic form to preserve and perpetuate its own existence in freedom. The terms hunger and thirst, then, in our text and generally, wherever found in the Word, are not used in a figurative sense. They are the expressions in natural language of a spiritual fact. When our Lord said to His disciples, "*I have meat to eat that ye know not of,*" "*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work,*" He asserted a fact; He stated a law of His being. So when He declared that "*they must eat His flesh and drink His blood, or they could have no life in them,*" He stated a simple law of spiritual life. We may conclude then, that the force in plant, animal and man, as a physical or spiritual being, which impels the one or the other to seek and appropriate the substances necessary to its creation, preservation and growth, is the same in principle in all; originates in the same law of creation and exists for the same end. The body hungers for material food; the soul hungers for spiritual food. The hunger and thirst in the one is as real as it is in the other.

The plant selects from light and air, from water and earth, the substances it needs. It makes the selection by the force of its affinities. The animal is guided in its selection of food by its instincts. Man is so complex in his organization and has so many distinct degrees of substances in his form that he can range through the material and spiritual universe and select from all. He has something within, that answers to everything without. He also, to a certain extent, is guided by natural instincts in the selection of food for the body. But

his instincts are not an immutable law for him. They are often overborne by higher forces. They become perverted and they do not guide him with unerring decision.

In the higher range of his faculties it is still worse. The natural mind craves poisons and eats and drinks to its own destruction. Its appetite is no sure guide to what is good. It hungers for evils and thirsts for falsities and would ruin itself by indulgence, if not restrained by reason, or by some outward force.

If man had preserved the integrity of his being, his tastes and affections would have been a perfect guide for him, in spiritual and moral, as well as in material things. What he loved to think and do, would have been the best evidence that it was good and true. Thus he would have been led by his delights. Does this please me? Have I any desire or taste for it? Then it is good for me. This would have been the unerring conclusion.

But it is not so now. No human being can implicitly follow his own appetites and desires and go right. Everyone is compelled to keep the strictest watch over them, to restrain and compel them continually. If he does not keep a tight rein upon his appetites, they hurry him to destruction. He must look without and above himself. He must be taught. He must put himself under the restraints of law and be guided by an enlightened reason, until he forms new habits and acquires new tastes and the integrity of his nature is once more restored. Then he will "*hunger and thirst after righteousness*," and he may eat and drink to his fill.

Let us then, in the second place, inquire what righteousness is?

"Righteousness consists in doing all things according to divine order and reducing to order whatever has departed from it; for righteousness is divine order itself." "Righteousness is acquired in proportion as a man lives in the exercise of righteousness; and he lives in the exercise of righteousness in proportion as, in all his conduct towards his neighbour, he acts under the influence of the love of righteousness and truth; for righteousness dwells in the real good or the real use which a man does: and therefore the Lord declares that every tree is known by its fruit."

This is a most comprehensive definition. It is the right way of willing, of thinking and of doing. And the rule which determines the right way is the Divine order. It is no arbitrary enactment, no external law, such as a legislature might enact, or an absolute sovereign might impose. It is not something that can be transferred from one being to another, as we can transfer a sum of money or the title to an estate. No one can be clothed with it as with a garment. It is not a legal but a real state of the soul. It does not consist in the remission of the penalty of sin, but in a life according to true order. The word, as commonly used, has a narrow and technical meaning. It does not express so much a universal and ever present order of infinite wisdom, as the result of a special act of redemption by which the merit and righteousness acquired by our Lord by His sufferings and death are transferred to those who are willing to accept them by faith and thus become their righteousness.

But it must be evident to every rational mind that there can be no transfer of character as we can transfer a sum of money. A remission of the penalty of sin, as an executive officer can remit the penalty of a crime against the State, would not change the character of the sinner in the least. Suppose our rulers should open all the prison doors in the country and let every thief, robber and murderer go free would they be any less thieves, robbers and murderers than before? Certainly not. So if the Lord should say to all the transgressors of His law in this world and in all worlds, "I remit to you the penalty of your sins; ample satisfaction has been made to divine justice and now you may go free: enter heaven if you choose." Would that make them righteous? Would it make them any less sinners and devils than they were before? Not in the least. Righteousness is not external, legal, transferable. It is in true order; in the order of divine wisdom and so far as the principle is concerned, it is as truly a property of the plant and animal and the material body as it is of the spiritual man. It is in everything, action or life, according to the laws of its being.

It is evident that infinite wisdom must have an infinitely wise order in all divine operations, from the highest to the lowest. In the creation of the material universe, in the motions and relations of all planets

and suns, in the constitution of the matter, the order and growth and reproduction of plants and animals, we can see there an invariable order is followed. The organization of the human body and its relations to the material world and to the spirit within, is a miracle of order and wisdom surpassing all finite comprehension. How perfect this order is and how nicely adjusted in all its parts, we can readily infer from the fact, that the smallest things can disturb it. A mote in the eye may destroy its vision; the inhalation of an atmosphere impregnated with miasma, utterly inappreciable by any of the senses, may inflame and destroy its whole organization.

But without any reference to experience or examples, it is absurd to suppose that a being of infinite wisdom would not do everything in an infinitely wise manner. To fail in the least thing would be to fall short of infinite wisdom. The plan and order and means of existence, development, growth and reproduction, which the Lord has not only given to each thing, but which really creates and forms it, is the best possible for that being or thing. The fin and scales is best for the fish, the wing and feather for the fowl, the claw for the lion and the hoof for the ox. These are only particular instances of universal adaptation. The fish says water in its whole form and in every particular. The bird hungers and thirsts for the atmosphere in every feather and bone. The animal in its whole organization, has specific relation to the earth; and not only to the earth as a whole, but to the part of it where it is found; to latitude and surface and specific nature of soil. To keep in its own place, to preserve its own order, to move, to grow, to live according to its own nature, or what is the same thing, according to the divine order embodied in its nature, is righteousness for each living being or thing. It is righteousness in the planet to keep its orbit; in the plant to grow according to its own nature and to bear its own fruit. It is righteousness in the peach tree to bear peaches; in the vine to bear grapes. It is righteousness in the animal to obey its instincts. The fish can find no better element than water, the bird no better than air. So we might go through the whole creation and we should find the same principle everywhere in operation.

Man is a being of such a complex and various nature, that he comprises within himself all forms and modes of action and laws. He has something in common with the earth and the plant and the animal. He holds definite relations to all. It is righteousness in the body to keep in its place, to obey the laws imposed upon it by infinite wisdom, to maintain all its relations to the material world without and to the spiritual world within. The will and the understanding, the affections and thoughts, have their laws, order and relations to all that is above them and to all below them. To keep in their order, to act according to the law imposed upon them, or more properly embodied in them, is their righteousness.

Every human being sustains definite relations to other human beings and to the Lord. These relations have their ground in his nature and spring from it. They are, in no sense, factitious or arbitrary. All social, civil, domestic and business, relations have their origin and cause in human nature and in human wants; just as the relation of the fish to the water, or the bird to the air grows out of its nature. It is the divine order for man and righteousness consists in living according to it.

It is true man can violate the divine order, or live according to it, as he pleases, while the planet, plant and animal cannot. They are borne passively along in the currents of the divine forces. Man can resist them and depart from them. But this ability to violate law renders it none the less certain, that infinite wisdom has established an order for him and that he can never be righteous unless he lives according to it. The Lord cannot make him righteous, except in His own way and according to His own order.

Suppose the planets had the power to wander from their orbits at their own caprice, would it be any the less disorderly and unrighteous in them because they had the power and chose to exercise it? Suppose the fish should lust to live in the air and had the power to elevate itself into it, would it not find that its will did not change the divine law of its being? So it is with man. His power to act against the divine order, as embodied in his form and life, does not make one hair of that order white or black. It stands as immutable as the Lord Himself and he who violates it must suffer. There is then a right way, a true form, a perfect order, whether men believe and follow it, or not; and that order is righteousness for angel and spirit; for man and animal; for plant and pebble.

Now we can understand what it is to hunger and thirst after righteousness. It is a sincere and earnest desire to live according to the divine order, established in us. It is the prayer of the will and the understanding, to have all our relations to the Lord, to angel and man and woman and child, to animal and plant, such as the Lord in His infinite wisdom ordained them to be. It is a sincere desire to know our place and to be in it, to find our work and to do it. It is a thirst to find ways of being useful to others and a hunger to perform the use.

It is hardly necessary to say, that there is very little of this hunger and thirst in the world, either in the church or out of it. What is the great burden of the prayers and exhortations in the church? Is it not to urge men to escape from hell and to implore the Lord to save them! That is not hunger and thirst after righteousness, but a cry to be saved from punishment. It is the cry of fear and not of spiritual want. Where in the church do you hear the prayer, " O, Lord put me in my place; show me my work; teach me Thy way of doing it and give me strength and faithfulness to perform it", whenever you do see such a man, you find one of those deep, earnest, self forgetting souls which move the world.

It is a law of righteousness to do all we can to build up the kingdom of heaven upon the earth. Do we thirst to know the law of that order and hunger to live according to it. If we do, we are rare exceptions. On the contrary most persons seem to have little or no taste for such service. There is but little thirst for spiritual truth and less hunger for spiritual good. Instead of earnestly seeking to know what they can do, how much time, influence, money, they can devote to the accomplishment of this divine work, the common desire seems to be to see how little we can do, how much we can evade. Who hungers for work in the church? Who thirsts to find some practicable way of employing his money and his influence for the spiritual good of humanity, as he would seek for bread if he was hungry?

What do you hunger and thirst for in your business, in your social and civil relations? Is it for righteousness? Do you desire to be in your place, to do your work, the work you are the best fitted for by your nature to do? Is it to find some way of being useful to others? Is it not rather the almost universal desire to get the highest office, the most power, the largest returns for the least effort, to cast the burdens of life upon others that we may go free, to secure ease, abundance and independence for ourselves and in all things to get the most for the least? To hunger and thirst after righteousness in the state, is to learn the truth concerning man's civil relations, as far as we can and then to do all that lies in our power to secure the enactment of just laws, the election of the best men to administer them, that every man may have justice and the protection and freedom of equal laws?

Do you hunger and thirst for righteousness in social life? Do you seek to do your part to keep society pure; to have it so organized that the highest principles shall control its forms; that the purest influences shall flow from it? Do you desire to see the principles of heaven embodied in social life, subduing its pride and melting away its arbitrary and artificial distinctions; swaying its courtesies and making the whole sphere of its influence elevating, pure and favourable to everything that is true and good?

Do you hunger and thirst for righteousness in your business? Do you seek to make it a means of use to others rather than of gain to yourself? Do you thirst for the exact truth in it? Do you hunger for integrity and justice in it? Do you hunger to be honest in every trust, diligent and faithful in every work? In a word, do you desire to bring the laws of heaven down to earth and make them your guide in all your natural relations? Then you do hunger and thirst after righteousness and "you will be filled."

Our last inquiry is, what do we understand by "being filled?" The Lord created man to bless him. He made him an organ receptive of life, that He might give him life and bless him with it. Man is an organized want. He wants everything. He wants light and air and water; he wants animals and plants; he wants to make everybody work for him; he wants truth and love. There is nothing in the universe that he cannot use. He wants the sun and moon and stars, the clouds and mountains; and, if we could see his relations on the spiritual side of his being, we should find that he wants the assistance of spirits and angels and of the Lord Himself.

How wonderful! That so many wants can be comprised in so small a compass? That one being can be made to receive some good in some form from all beings and things. But this shows the Lord's wisdom and love. He made man so complex and capacious of reception that He might supply all his wants. He made everything in the universe to be tributary to man and all human beings to be tributary to each other. He accomplishes this perpetual miracle by a divine plan and order. When a man hungers and thirsts after righteousness, then he desires to get into the currents of this order and when he becomes a part of it, all the streams of the divine Providence flow into him and through him.

When we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we put ourselves in the way of obtaining the means of satisfying our wants. We are going on the errands the Lord sends us. Our natures are becoming modulated to the grand harmonies of the universe: We are at ease and at home; we are satisfied and contented. We know that we are in harmony with the divine order and we are lifted up and borne on in its currents, as smoothly and joyously as the planets in their orbits. All things favour us; all things minister to us. If we ask any good, we receive it; if we knock at any gate of joy, it opens, as of its own will and we enter freely into the desired delights. Ask what we will, it is done for us. For the Lord loves to give us. He made us to ask: He helps us to ask that He may give. Now He can give, because we have put ourselves in the divine order, in the channel of the divine blessings.

They meet us in whatever direction we turn and we are satisfied; we are filled.

The divine purpose of good is accomplished in us. The heart glows with love and is filled. We are at rest in the bosom of infinite love. Angels and men bring their gifts of peace and offer us their blessings. Our hearts are filled and run over with answering gifts. The judgment is sound, the reason clear, for it sees all things in their true relations. It is in the harmony of things and is itself a part of the divine order. All the natural faculties are meek, obedient, gentle, pliant. They offer no obstruction to the influence of the divine life; they respond with joyous alacrity to the behests of the powers above them; every heavenly, spiritual, natural, material faculty, from the highest to the lowest, moves in harmony with each other and responds in unison with the Lord above and the world below. The whole man is fed; is filled; runs over with the life that flows from the fountain of the divine bounty.

Have you attained this state? No. I know you have not. Is it attainable? Yes. For every one of you? There may be much that lies between you and this blessedness, but if you hunger and thirst for it, not for the blessedness, but for the righteousness, then you will attain it, then you will be filled. Out of the divine order, all the divine forces smite you. You are filled with cares and fears, oppressed with burdens. You are restless, excited, anxious, lean and tormented with an unappeasable hunger and thirst. In the divine order all the divine forces favour you. Every burden is cast upon the Lord. The soul is filled with contentment, joy and peace. It lives and acts and rests in the eternal harmonies of the Divine wisdom and is filled with the ever increasing blessedness of the Divine love.

5. The Blessedness of Mercy

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Mat 5:7.

THIS beatitude introduces us into another degree in the regenerate life and prepares us to receive blessings from the Lord, in a higher form and larger measure. When we begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness and to be filled with the delights and satisfactions which flow from being in the harmonies of divine order and having all the streams of the divine bounty centre in us as the rivers flow to the ocean, we cannot but desire to see others in the same order and partaking of the same blessings. Indeed it is one of the effects of that order, to dispose all who are in it to extend it.

This order was established by infinite wisdom for the sole purpose of enabling us to receive the divine blessings and communicate them to others. So far as we are in that order and move in harmony with it, we must desire to carry it out and to see all embraced in it. We must commiserate those who are not yet

within the pale of its blessings and we must be disposed to exercise the same affections towards others that the Lord exercises towards us.

Let us then, endeavour to gain a true and clear idea of what it is to be merciful, that we may enter into its state and receive its blessings.

Our first natural inquiry is, What is mercy? Mercy is love exercised towards the undeserving and miserable, towards the evil and unthankful; it is therefore, the highest form of love. The promise then is, that they who exercise this love towards others, shall receive it from the Lord and from the neighbour, with all its blessings. Taking this definition of mercy as our guide, let us notice some of the forms, in which it is to be exercised towards others.

It is important in the outset to correct a very erroneous and prevalent opinion concerning the nature of mercy. The general idea of mercy seems to be that it consists, principally, in not visiting upon others the punishment due to their evil deeds. The Lord is merciful because He does not inflict upon us the full measure of punishment we deserve. The judge is merciful who pardons the criminal; men are merciful who do not exact from others all that the law would give them.

But this is not mercy. It may be the greatest cruelty, both to the guilty and the innocent. The Lord proclaims Himself to men: "*The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin and that will by no means clear the guilty.*"

Men have mistaken the remission of the penalty of sin for the forgiveness of the sin itself. But the two things are entirely distinct. There is as much difference between them, as there is between alleviating the pain of a disease by some anodyne and curing the disease itself; or between releasing a thief from prison and making an honest man of him. The Lord is always in the effort to save men from their sins. He came upon the earth by assuming our nature; He underwent the most cruel temptations; He suffered in Gethsemane; He was crucified upon Calvary; He glorified the nature which He assumed, for the sole purpose of saving us from our sins. But He never remits the penalty of the sin so long as the sin remains. It is according to His divine and infinitely wise order that those who violate its laws must suffer and if He should withhold the penalty while the sin remained, he would be violating His own order and acting against Himself. He would be doing just what the sinner does, disturbing the harmonies of a perfect order; and that would not be mercy to men or angels. It is quite as much of the Lord's mercy that men suffer as that they enjoy.

The Lord in His infinite wisdom has created the universe and established the relations of all beings and things in it for the express purpose of communicating delight. When man gets out of this order and thus removes himself from the Lord's power to bless him, it is merciful to let him know it. And if he continues to wander still farther from the way of truth, it is merciful that the punishment should grow sharper until he is restrained by it. It would be the greatest cruelty to give him no warning.

We can see this truth illustrated in all the relations of human life. A father with a heart full of the tenderest love for his child, reproveth him when he finds him going astray. If reproof is not sufficient, he imposes restraints and inflicts pain. Is it not merciful in him to do it? Would it not be unjust and cruel not to do it? How many souls are ruined for time and for eternity, by parental indulgence. There is no greater cruelty than that weakness, which frees childhood and youth from proper restraints and withholds just punishment when deserved.

If your child had broken his arm, what would you think of the surgeon who should refuse to set the bones in their proper place, because he was so merciful and tender hearted, that he could not inflict the inevitable pain? Why you would say, it is to save pain I ask you to do it. If the bone is not set he may lose his arm or his life; at the best he must suffer pain or inconvenience from it as long as he lives. The pain of the operation is momentary; the pain it will prevent lasting as life. Have mercy on my son and save him.

Such instances occur every day and they are illustrations of the principle according to which the Lord acts in permitting men to suffer. He does not, indeed, really inflict pain upon them, but He permits them to suffer when they violate the laws He has established for their good, that they may cease to do evil and keep within the reach of His blessings. Therefore mercy does not consist in withholding the punishment due to sin.

On the contrary, it requires a much higher degree of affection to permit those we love to suffer, or to inflict pain upon them, than to give them present good. We are compelled to act in opposition to our natural sympathies. Pity and compassion lead us to save from present suffering and we shrink from inflicting it. It requires spiritual principle and a sincere and wise regard for the real good of others, to enable us to overcome these natural sympathies and to inflict a present though temporary pain for a permanent good. Natural sympathy, in its weakness and blindness, looks to the present alone, while true mercy takes in the whole of life and acts with reference to its good. The wisest and tenderest mercy probes the wound, amputates the limb, withholds delicacies, imposes restraints, suffers the spur of want to rouse up the indolent to industry; lets the penalties of violated laws fall upon the evil, knowing that it is for their good and for the good of all the innocent.

This truth solves one of the most difficult problems of human life. It shows how the divine mercy is not only consistent with human suffering, but it exalts that mercy far above mere pity or compassion and shows how it is controlled and guided by infinite wisdom for the highest good of man. The divine mercy is infinite. Its compassion is stronger than the highest angels; its pity and gentleness are tenderer than the most unselfish and devoted mothers; and in all its qualities it surpasses all human example and conception. The Lord yearns with an infinite tenderness and love to supply every want, to remove every obstruction to human happiness, to dispel the shadow from every heart, to solve every doubt, to lift every burden of care and sorrow, to soothe every pain, to heal every disease and to communicate every good, from the lowest sensuous to the highest celestial, in the largest and fullest measure which it is possible for man to receive.

Yet He permits us to suffer when we sin, because suffering alone will prevent us from going beyond His power to save and bless us. Though His mercy to us is so tender and compassionate, it is guided by His wisdom and in all things regards our highest good. Though burning with zeal to alleviate every pain and communicate every good, it can wait and see us wander far away from home and blessedness; be crushed under the burden of sin and put into the furnace of affliction and tormented with pain, because this is the only way in which we can be brought in freedom to seek our Father's house and receive His blessings.

Such is the divine mercy. How far exalted above all natural pity and compassion. The Lord can save no one from immediate mercy. If He could, all would be saved. Not only in the world to come, but in this life also, there would not be a sorrow or a pain. His mercy is not blinded by the present. It looks with the clear eyes of infinite wisdom; it takes in the whole life of each individual and of humanity itself and gives or withholds, permits want, temptation and suffering, or relieves, sustains and blesses, as may be best for the eternal good of each and all.

Therefore it is not merciful to withhold punishment when deserved, but it is merciful to remove all cause for it. Mercy in the Lord or in man, consists in doing what is for the best and highest good of others. If it is best for them to be punished, as it is for the evil, it consists in punishing them. It would be cruelty to them and to all the innocent and good, to withhold it.

Having shown that mercy does not consist in withholding deserved punishment, let us notice more particularly what its essential principles are. According to our definition, mercy is love exercised towards the undeserving and miserable; towards the evil and the unthankful. All that the Lord does for man then, He does from pure mercy; for man is undeserving and miserable, evil and unthankful.

If man had never sinned, the Lord could never have been merciful. He could never have exercised the highest form of love, for there never would have been an occasion for it; just as there never could have been pity or compassion in any human heart if there had been no misery and want.

Love is the general term for all goodness. Mercy is a special form of it. The Lord is love, but the forms which His love assumes and the special names it takes, depend upon the states of those who receive it. The essential quality of mercy which distinguishes it from all other forms of love is, that it is exercised towards those who have no claim upon us, nay, upon those who are hostile to us.

It is not in itself any evidence of great excellence of character to love those who love us. It is delightful to reciprocate affection, to give when you know your gift will be appreciated and you see the heart overflowing with gratitude. How sweet, how exalted and delightful is the intercourse between long tried and devoted friends. Their thoughts and affections flow together; they are drawn towards each other by mutual attraction. It requires no denial of self to confer favours. Your friend is your other self. It would require restraint and self denial not to give.

But here is a man who is a total stranger to you. All that you know about him is that he is miserable. He can make you no return. He is nothing to you personally. He may be in a very loathsome and repulsive condition. All your tastes and culture and habits of life are shocked by him. There is nothing but the bonds of a common humanity between you. Such sights meet us every day. Do you turn away in disgust? Like the priest and the Levite, do you pass by on the other side?

Or can you look upon him with compassion? Does the sight of his misery awaken within you a desire to alleviate it? and to remove the cause in him and in humanity, which produced it? As you see want and disease and misery, caused by evil habits, by idleness, improvidence and dissipation, does it awaken emotions of idle and useless pity alone, or does it arouse in your heart a determination to do all that lies in your power, by your example and practical aid, to purify the fountains that send forth these poisonous influences? You may not be able to relieve the particular instances of suffering. It might not be mercy even to do it. For to relieve the common wants of indolence and improvidence, is generally an encouragement to their continuance. It is not mercy to give from impulse or to importunity, or to relieve yourself from the presence of loathsome objects. You may give much and often, but not from mercy. But does it awaken within you a deep and settled purpose to throw your own example on the side of righteousness and to do all that lies in your power to cleanse the poisonous fountains from which these streams of misery and death continually flow?

If the sight of the want and wretchedness that daily meets your eye, does not awaken in you a profound desire and fixed determination to do all in your power to remove its causes and lead you to carry your purpose into act, then you have no mercy in your heart for the miserable. You may labour to provide for your own necessities and to secure the possession of the comforts and blessings of this life and be respectable in the eyes of men, but there is no mercy in your heart for suffering humanity.

It occurs more or less frequently in the life of all to be misunderstood and misrepresented. Men are opposed and injured in their business, in their social or domestic relations. They may be persecuted and hated. How do you regard those who have treated you in this evil manner? Do feelings of anger and revenge rise in your heart? Do you seek to return hate for hate and blow for blow? To inflict as great a wrong as you have received? Then there is no mercy in your heart. I do not say that it is wrong to feel indignant. I do not say that you may not seek such redress as the laws of social or civil life can give you. There are cases where you ought to do it. If a man wrongs you, he should be compelled to redress the wrong. Mercy demands that he should suffer for it. It is not what you do that determines the merciful temper so much as the motives that prompt you. How do you regard him? With scorn and contempt? Would it give you pleasure to see him suffer? There is no mercy in that. That is an infernal passion. Do you pity him? Would you do all in your power to make him a better man? Do you feel a profound compassion for him? Can you bless him though he curses you? Can you do good to him though he hates you? Do you not only consent reluctantly to do him good, but do you desire and strive to do it, even while you seek his punishment? Then you are merciful.

But you see darker and more terrible evils than those that afflict society or the state. You see multitudes of immortal beings around you with no thought or care for their eternal interests. You see them groping in

the darkness of ignorance; misled by falses into danger of eternal suffering. You see men selling their immortal birthright for a mess of pottage and capacities for happiness which no finite mind can fully estimate or conceive, casting them all aside and treasuring up for themselves measureless and endless woe. You meet persons who are guilty of this terrible folly every day. How does it affect you? What emotions, what thoughts, what determinations does it awaken in you? None but an idle pity, none but a self congratulation that you have light though others walk in darkness, none but the impious prayer of the Pharisee.

If you feel no yearnings to give the bread of life to the famishing, to open the prison doors of evil and falsity and lift the burdens from the weary and let the oppressed go free; if you form no deliberate and solemn purpose to do what lies in you to dethrone the powers of evil and build up the Lord's kingdom upon earth, then you have no mercy in your hearts for suffering humanity. Talk about truth and contend for doctrines as much as you please, there is no truth in your hearts. "Mercy and truth have not met together" in you, "righteousness and peace have not kissed each other." Give alms as you may, to satisfy a natural pity; to get rid of importunity; to gain a reputation for benevolence: engage in public enterprises with the hope that the reflex tide of influence in some form may advance your personal interests. None of these things are an evidence that you are merciful. Mercy is a profound, just, sensitive, tender regard for the good of others, without any reference to their character, or their relations to us.

The tender mercies of the Lord are over all His works. There is no being, however loathsome in his corruption, whom He does not regard with infinite tenderness. There is no rebellious subject against His government, who in his madness burns to dethrone the righteous King of the universe and bring ruin and death upon all His children, whom the Lord does not pity and for whom He does not do all that He can to save from the folly and misery of his sin and upon whom He would not gladly pour all His divine blessings. Such is the Lord's mercy, such in principle must be ours if we would obtain mercy from Him.

The forms which our mercy assumes must depend upon the condition, the needs and the character of those towards whom the mercy is exercised. It may be restraint, reproof, punishment; it may be the encouraging word, the helping hand, the tender ministries of sympathy, advice, instruction, support. It must be a sincere, deep and just regard for the good of those, whom we punish or save. To exercise this mercy it is not necessary to go out in search of misery and misfortune. You can exercise it in your business, in the privacy of home, in your pleasures, your worship and in all your social and civil relations.

No one can fail to see that, if the relations of society were governed by such principles, the sting of human passions and the bitterness of human resentments, would be removed. Tender eyed pity and gentle compassion, would yield themselves to the guidance of justice. The strong arm of justice would only execute the decrees of love. Stern truth and gentle mercy would meet and administer all the affairs of men. The blow of justice would fall upon the guilty, but mercy would measure its weight and direct it to save from guilt and anguish, rather than to crush. Justice would give the deserved reproof, but mercy would extract its sting. Justice would send the violator of law to prison, but mercy would go with him and labour to soften the obdurate heart; and to free the soul itself from its bondage to falsity and sin. And thus they would go hand in hand around the world, never sacrificing the future for the present, the good of the whole for individual comfort, but meting out mercy in forms of wisdom to all.

The promise is, that those who exercise this mercy shall obtain it. But how obtain it? If the Lord is mercy itself and is always exercising it towards us, how can we fail to obtain it whether we are merciful or not? Does the Lord demand conditions? Does He set His divine mercy up for sale or exchange? Does He say to man, give so much aid and homage and I will give you an equivalent in return? Forgive others and I will forgive you, to compensate you for such a sacrifice of natural feeling? Give to your needy fellow and I will give to you? Be merciful and I will show you mercy.

Such is the appearance, but that would not be mercy. Mercy does not ask for an equivalent; does not ask for gratitude even; does not seek any return; cannot think of itself for a moment. It has but one end in

view. It can see but one object and is utterly blind and forgetful of everything else. It can see only the evil it is to prevent; the suffering it is to alleviate; the good it is to do. Its eye is single to these heavenly uses.

The form in which this promise is made, is the appearance in natural life of a great law of the divine order, which men are slow to see and slower still to practically acknowledge. The law is this: man cannot receive any spiritual blessings from the Lord without exercising the faculties, which receive and constitute them. We receive the blessings of taste by eating; of vocal and instrumental harmonies and of that unwritten music which fills the universe, by hearing; the blessings of beauty, of form and colour, by seeing. Is there any other way of obtaining these blessings? Taste and enjoy the sweetness; listen and let the heart be filled with melody; look and the beauty and glory of the universe flow into the soul. No child is so absurd and foolish as to say, Give me the sweets and then I will taste, Show me the beauty and the wonder and then I will look.

The same law reigns in spiritual things. We can only gain the blessings of friendship by acting the part of a friend. We can gain the delights of knowledge only by knowing; the blessings of love only by loving. So we can only obtain the mercy of the Lord by being merciful. The Lord never withholds it, but man will not receive it. We shut our hearts against the Lord and then beg Him to have mercy on us. We might as well put out our eyes and then pray the Lord to have mercy upon us and give us light. In the exercise of mercy alone can we ever taste of its blessings. Therefore the blessings of mercy are not external and arbitrary rewards which the Lord can give or withhold at pleasure. They follow as a necessary consequence; they lie in the exercise of mercy. And those blessings can be given in no other way.

We are continually striving to evade this law of the divine order and we cheat ourselves with the vainest of all vain illusions, that we shall be able to do it; that by our knowledge, or by doing some things which we like to do, or by excuses, or finally by the infinite mercy of the Lord, we shall escape the miseries of sin without shunning evils and enjoy the blessings of heaven without living a heavenly life. We may as well hope to evade the laws of gravitation, or to enjoy this life, without any senses, without living in this world.

Decide the question then, decide it now and let it be forever decided; that you can only obtain heavenly blessings by the exercise of heavenly affections. Just in the degree you exercise them, just in that degree will you obtain and enjoy them. They will not fall short; but they cannot exceed the measure, which you offer for their reception.

7. The Blessedness of Purity

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Mat 5: 8.

THE blessedness of this promise is so remote from human experience and the purity by which alone it can be acquired, is such a stranger to the human heart, that it is difficult for us to understand its nature or the means of obtaining it. Therefore it will require careful attention and some illustration to enable us to see how the cause and the blessed effects which flow from it are related.

The promised blessing does not seem upon the face of it, to be so rich in the elements of happiness as many others. Merely to look upon God, even were it possible to a frail human being, as one man looks upon another, might gratify curiosity, or overwhelm the soul with the glory and majesty of His presence, but it might not fill it with peace and blessedness. The real good must consist in the change and elevation of our own natures, by which we become sensible of His presence and can see His goodness and loving kindness passing before us, in the provisions which He has made for our happiness and in the events of our daily lives. Let us then, try to learn what is meant by "seeing God," and to understand the condition on which He has promised to reveal Himself to us.

The condition is "purity of heart." By the heart is meant the will, the seat and source of all our affections, desires and loves. This is its general meaning in the Sacred Scriptures and its common use among men when applied to the soul. We are commanded to love the Lord with all the heart. He promises to write His

law upon the heart and to give us a new heart. By the heart in all these cases is meant the will, the ruling principle in the soul.

Purity is the state of any substance or form, when it is free from any foreign mixture, or any disturbing influence. Gold, silver, water, air and every form of matter is pure, when its substance is homogeneous throughout, when it contains nothing but itself. The heart is pure when it is in entire harmony with the divine will, when all its activities flow according to the divine order. The supreme law of life for man, as given by the Lord Himself, is, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart.*" Perfect purity of heart consists in living according to this law. When we do this, then all our affections, desires and thoughts will be pure and all our actions good. In this state, all the activities of the soul flow in perfect harmony with the divine activities and with themselves. There is no disturbing influence and all the faculties must attain the end for which the Lord gave them to man. They are pure in substance, pure in form, pure in all their activities and relations; and they must therefore, be pure or perfect in the attainment of their ends. The conditions then, on which alone we can see God are, supreme love to Him and to our neighbour. This is purity of heart.

But the question may be asked, Why will God reveal Himself to those who love Him and only to those? Is it an arbitrary and special reward for an act of homage or devotion? Does He conceal Himself from the impure as a punishment for their selfish and worldly affections and their lack of devotion to Him? Or does He act according to the principles of a divine order, from which He cannot depart? These are questions, to which I wish to invite your serious attention. I wish to show that the Lord promises this as all other blessings, upon conditions of immutable law and order, conditions from which even He cannot depart.

The Sacred Scriptures abound in passages, in which the Lord plainly teaches us, that His final end in the creation of the universe and in peopling it with human beings, was that He might have objects whom He could love and who could reciprocate His love. Jehovah assumed a human nature, that He might make Himself known to men. Speaking in His humanity, He says: "*I am come a light into the world. I am come that men may have life.*" He invites men to believe on Him, to come to Him, to follow Him, promises to show them His glory, to manifest Himself unto them. He desires to have them with Him, where He is, that they may see His glory and He declares that all heavenly blessings will follow a true knowledge of Him. To know Him aright is life everlasting. The whole tenor of the Word, indeed the very fact of its existence, implies a desire on the Lord's part to make known His nature and attributes to man.

Reason also teaches us that infinite love and wisdom could seek no other end than the communication of itself. It is the essential nature of an unselfish love to communicate its own to others; to give itself and to devise the means of doing it. We know this even from the imperfect and finite forms in which human love manifests itself. The purer and more unselfish the love, the more ardent the desire to give all its own to become another's, to give itself. What then, must be the desire of infinite love? It can have no other purpose than to reveal itself, to communicate of its own infinite riches to others; and this it must seek in all possible ways and in the highest forms known to infinite wisdom. Therefore It follows from the very nature of love, that the Lord can have no other end than the manifestation, the giving of Himself to men. He can do nothing; He can create nothing that is not in some way instrumental to this end. Turn your thoughts, then, in whatever direction you may, above, below, within, without, every form and form respects this end. The final meaning of every created thing is to reveal God to us and the final end of every intelligent being is to see Him. Thus we find that the Sacred Scriptures and reason both unite in declaring the same truth. If now we examine ourselves with any degree of care or wisdom, we cannot fail to come to the conclusion that we are organic forms, capable of being excited to action, by the inflowing of forces, whose purpose is to awaken sensation and make us capable of seeing God.

All the senses are such forms, as the eye and the ear. The whole body is an organized sense of touch. The lungs are made to receive the air from without and the blood from within. The heart, with its arteries and veins, the brain with its nerves, are all recipient forms; indeed, there is not the smallest microscopic cell in the whole body that is not formed to receive and give. The material body receives all its life from the spiritual body within it, is the mediator between the spiritual body and the material world and is perfectly

adapted to both. It is the grand and many chambered reception hall, where ambassadors from the Lord, of all ranks and degrees, from without and from within, meet and deliver their messages to the soul.

Every organ is specially formed by infinite wisdom, to report the divine goodness to the soul, in some special form. Thus the eye reports it in light, in the beauty and grandeur of form, motion and colour. The ear reports the same goodness in sound, in the ever flowing harmonies of the universe and the sweet tones of affection and truth. We give our thoughts and affections and conceptions of the divine goodness, to the winds and they bear them to others. The ear receives them and the understanding is enlightened and the heart made glad. In the same way every sense receives and reports its message, a message from the Lord which no one else could bring. God is infinite and He seeks all possible forms, in which to communicate Himself. Through the senses, He comes to us from without. He comes to us from within, or above, through the will and the understanding.

The will is a form organized of spiritual substances, to be a receptacle of the divine love and report it to man, the same as the ear is organized to receive sound. The will is the special dwelling place of the Lord in man, the mansion in which He abides in us. By the instrumentality of the will, He communicates His richest blessings in their highest forms. In it He gives us a perception of His love; and as love is life, the will is the first receptacle of life from the Lord and the beginning of life in man.

The will performs two most important offices, first, it is the medium by which the Lord manifests Himself to us in the highest and purest forms in which finite beings can receive Him; and secondly, it communicates life and power to all the faculties below it. It gives to each faculty of the mind its capacity to receive and report its message from the Lord to the soul. It not only gives life and power to the various faculties of the mind, but it employs them in its service and dictates the message they must bring.

The understanding is the eye of the spiritual man and performs the same office for him as a spiritual being that the natural eye performs for him as a natural being. The one reports the forms and relations of spiritual objects and the other the forms and relations of material objects. The will receives the message of life first from the Lord, or it is first acted upon by spiritual and divine forces and communicates it to the understanding. In the will the message is love; in the understanding it is truth; in the lower faculties it is thought, speech, action. In other words, the will hears the message, the understanding sees it, the thought and speech articulates it, the hand and foot execute it.

Therefore in whatever light we view the subject whether from the Word, the divine attributes (as they appear to the reason), or the organization and nature of man, we come to the same conclusion. It must be the sole purpose of the Lord in all His infinite activities to reveal Himself, to communicate His own life and blessedness to others; and man must have been formed to receive them. This divine purpose is written on every human faculty and embodied in every organ in the human body and soul.

From the nature of the will and the offices it performs; from its relations to the source of all life and the various faculties in man, which lie between it and the outward world, we cannot fail to see how essential it is to the whole life of man, that it should be perfectly pure; that it should preserve all its forms as they were created by infinite wisdom and that its substance should be kept free from any adulteration or foreign mixture. If the eye, a merely material organ, is so delicate and so accurately adjusted to all the qualities of the luminous ether, that the slightest derangement destroys its power, or so disturbs its activities that it brings a false report, what a miracle of perfection in substance and form must the will be to receive a message so much higher and correctly deliver it. The least imperfection, the least deviation from the form which infinite wisdom gave to it, must unfit it for its office and cause it to bring a false report, or to fail entirely in its duty. If it becomes inverted, it must misrepresent every message from the Lord, pervert every affection, obscure the understanding, destroy the reason, obstruct the influx of the divine life and subvert the order and harmony of all the faculties.

The will is to the spiritual body, what the heart is to the material body. Any want of purity in the heart, any defect in its organization or obstruction in its action, causes disturbance, feebleness and even death in the whole body. The eye cannot see, the ear cannot hear, the hands and feet cannot move and all knowledge

of the material world is shut out from the soul. In the same way, when the will is impure, when its form is perverted and its activities deranged, the harmony and life of all our spiritual faculties are destroyed. We cannot see the Lord, or hear His words, or walk in His ways. We are called by the Lord blind; deaf, dumb, lame and dead.

But, apart from all theories as to the nature of the will and from all reasoning concerning its operations, we know, from our own consciousness and experience, that our affections have a controlling influence upon all our intellectual faculties and natural actions. The will decides what we shall look for. It turns the eye of the mind, the understanding, towards the objects which it desires to see. It sharpens the sight and holds it by a kind of attraction and where the affection is strong by a kind of fascination and searches and penetrates the subject with the keenest and most patient vigilance.

Now, the Lord informs us that the first law of man's life is to love Him with all the heart. The end for which the will was formed was to receive the divine love; to perceive its goodness by reciprocating it and to employ all the intellectual and natural faculties in assisting it in accomplishing this end, in the fullest and most varied manner: When it is pure, it answers this end and attains this blessedness. It so controls and directs the understanding, that it sees God in everything. It is always looking for Him. The eye is single, it has but one purpose and the whole body is full of light. He who came to be a light illuminates it.

Having ascertained how it is that the will gives us power to see what it loves; and consequently, that the promise is based upon a law of the divine order, let us inquire what is meant by "seeing God?" Is it to see Him as a glorious Person, in His essential divine nature? or is it to see the divine goodness and wisdom as they are manifested in the creation, in human life; and, more especially, in the Sacred Scriptures and the Divine Humanity ?

There is abundant evidence in the Word, that no man can see God as He is in His divine essence. When Moses desired to behold His glory, God said to him, "*You cannot see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live.*" And our Lord Himself says, "*No man has seen God at any time.*" The apostle also declares, that the Lord dwells in light, which no man can approach unto: whom no man has seen or can see.

Reason will teach us the same thing, if we have any true conception of God. From Him perpetually flow all the elements and the power which creates and sustains the universe of beings and worlds. What awful forces! How intense beyond the conception of the highest angel must be the burning energies of His love. How blinding to all mortal vision the flaming splendours of His truth! Could any created form come into the immediate presence of such intense ardours and not be consumed by them? His love is infinite! How can weak and finite creatures receive it in its fullness and not be consumed by it? His glory is infinite, outshining all the splendours of all suns. Its light would blind us. It would consume us in a moment. No, only those, who have low and unworthy conceptions of God, can entertain the idle dream, that they can ever come into His immediate presence and hold familiar converse with Him.

How then, can we see Him? In what sense can we see Him? We can see Him in His works, for where we see His love and wisdom we see Him. We can see Him in man, who was created in His image and likeness; in the Sacred Scriptures, in which He has revealed Himself; and in Jesus Christ, the humanity He assumed for the express purpose of so veiling His divine nature that He might come near to man and not destroy Him, for "*God out of Christ is a consuming fire.*"

We may be able now, to understand more clearly why the pure in heart alone can see God. The pure in heart are those who love God and we are always looking for what we love. They will see Him in His works. To them the universe will be full of His presence; and in the least and greatest things they will see tokens of His wisdom and goodness. Look up on a cloudless night to the firmament of worlds that spans your dwelling. Science teaches you that that firmament encircles the earth and that it stretches away into infinite depths, that all you can see is as nothing to what you cannot see; that those little points of light are suns, the centres of vast systems and that the thin transparent veil of light that just obscures the blue, is the blended light of systems of worlds beyond. Beautiful, sublime, glorious, is it not?

But is this all that you see? Is your whole thought and affection absorbed in the grandeur and beauty of the material scene? Does it suggest nothing more than itself? If your heart is pure, if it beats with love to the Lord, your thoughts will spontaneously rise to Him. The visible scene will suggest the wisdom and love and omnipotent power of Him who created it. It may even vanish from your thought; you may seem to stand as in His presence and to see Him alone. You are humble, subdued and reverent. You have gained some new ideas of His wisdom and power and you feel the influx of a new life throbbing in your heart.

Someone whom you love with a pure unselfish affection, sends you a gift of flowers. How beautiful they are! What splendour of colour! What harmony of blending shades! What loveliness and symmetry of form! What delicacy of texture! With what delicious fragrance they fill the air! You see and enjoy all this loveliness and beauty. But is this all you see? Can you limit your thought to the gift before you? It is not possible. The affections turn the thoughts to the giver. They express something higher than themselves. You see the thoughtfulness, the remembrance, the delicacy, the pure taste of the giver. In some particulars you may see the character more fully than you could in any personal presence.

But if your heart be pure and glowing with love to the Lord, would it not lift the thought to Him, who wove the frail fabric of leaf and petal from earth's finest substances, with a skill surpassing all human conception and who clothed them with the many hued garment of light? If the friend who plucked and gave them, expressed taste, kindness and thoughtful regard, what does He express who made them? Can the loving heart fail to see His goodness, His kind remembrance and loving regard for His children? No, it is not possible! The Lord proclaims His love and wisdom in everything He has created; and there is no better evidence, that our hearts are filled with the impurities of selfish and worldly loves, that we see nothing more in the world than what will minister to them!

Men talk every day of the beauty and grandeur of the works of nature. The natural philosopher and the devotee of science study those works, and grow eloquent over the wonders and riches of beauty, order and harmony they discover. But there are no works of nature! Nature itself, in all its manifold forms, in the least and greatest things, is the work of God. He is ever present in nature, but we see Him not, because we love Him not. Nature is nothing but the thin veil He wears, which partly conceals and partly reveals His love and wisdom. It is the manifold form in which He seeks to come to us. He stands behind every leaf and speaks to us in every form and motion, through eye and ear and touch and taste.

There are no laws of nature. What we call law is the method and order according to which the Lord creates. The Lord did not create the world some thousands of years ago and then desert it, leaving it to drift passively in the currents of material forces. He creates it every moment. His creative power is as much in exercise now as it ever was. The earth, the sun and all that we possess, are a fresh gift to us every moment, a gift from the Lord. Your food, your clothing and comfortable dwellings, are a present from the Lord today. They are tokens of His love and providential care and if our hearts were pure, we should so regard them.

We should see Him everywhere around us. We should hear His voice in the many toned winds, roaring in the tempest and whispering peace and love in the soft evening air. We should see "*Him who clothes Himself with light, as with a garment,*" in the splendours of the sun; and in the heat which warms and quickens all things into life, we should feel His love. We should taste His goodness in all we possess and enjoy. If we were pure in heart, how full of meaning this world would be to us! The changing seasons and the ever varying forms of the earth and heavens would be a grand panorama, in which the Lord would be continually causing His goodness to pass before us.

If we were pure in heart we should see Him dwelling with us in our families. We should recognize Him in the various affections which bind families together. If those affections are pure, they are not ours. They are the various forms of His love in us. The mother with a pure heart would be perpetually looking up and saying, "Father, I thank Thee for the precious gift of the power to love my child." We should see Him in our daily duties. He walks with us when we go to our labours. He abides with us in the store, the counting house and workshop, if our hearts are pure; and we cannot fail to see Him. He will come to us and manifest

Himself to us; and we shall feel ourselves to be pervaded and surrounded by His presence. When we can see Him so near and ever present to us, what security, what confidence, what peace, what blessedness, must fill the heart.

8. The Blessedness of Purity (cont)

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Mat 5: 8.

IN the previous discourse upon these words, it was my purpose to show that the final end of the Lord in the creation was the communication of His own life and blessedness to man. This truth was confirmed: 1. From the explicit declaration of the Lord in the Word. 2. From the nature of infinite love. 3. From the nature of man and from his relations to the Lord and the material world. 4. From the nature of love and the relation of the will to the other faculties of the mind. 5. It was also stated that by seeing God is not meant to see Him as He is in Himself in His essential divine nature, for we have every reason to believe that no finite being can approach into the immediate presence of the Lord without being consumed. Therefore by "seeing God," is meant the recognition of His love and wisdom as they are manifested in the creation and in human life; as they are revealed in the Word and embodied in the Divine Humanity.

I invite your attention to some further illustrations of the truth, that the blessedness promised in the text is not an immediate personal view of the Lord, but rather a knowledge of His truths, as they are revealed in His works and in His Word. Indeed this is the specific promise of the text.

All the names of the Lord in the Word have specific meanings and they are never used interchangeably. Thus the name Jehovah always means the Divine Love and the word God, in the original, always means the Divine Truth. The promise therefore, is that the pure in heart shall see, or acknowledge and understand the Divine Truth.

There are many who think that the joys of heaven will consist mainly in offering perpetual worship to the Lord in His immediate presence and in holding familiar converse with Him as friend with friend. Such persons feel disappointed when they are told that they will never, not even in heaven, come into the immediate presence of the Lord and that although it may be possible for the angels to see the Lord in His glorified Humanity, yet this will not be common, even in the highest heaven.

There as here, the Lord is seen in His love and wisdom, which the angels continually receive from Him. A little reflection will show us that this must be so.

The Lord as He is in Himself in His own infinite purity and in the intense ardours of His love, must be utterly inapproachable by any finite being. Consider a moment what it is to approach a divine being. It must consist essentially in coming into a similar state. It is not an approximation in space. If we should visit every planet and sun in the material universe, we should come no nearer to the Lord than we are now. If the blind man could visit the sun itself, he would be as far from the light as he would be in the remotest planet. It is change of state and not change of place that is necessary to introduce him into the light. What he needs is not journeying, but eyes. So to see God, it is not necessary to go to any place in the material or the spiritual universe, but to come into a state to be able to recognize Him. He is omnipresent. We cannot escape from His presence. But we cannot see Him until there can be some relation and conjunction between us. The stone cannot see the sun and has no knowledge of the stone that touches it. So man may be in the presence of God and be utterly unconscious of it; and in no way can he become conscious of the divine presence, except by coming into a state in which he can be acted upon by the divine as it is in itself and react from it and that is impossible for any finite being. We do not even see each other as we are in ourselves. In this world we only see the material body. We see the spirit only as it is clothed and veiled with the body. We never see anything but the mask the spirit wears. And when we throw off the mask and appear in the spiritual world, we shall then see only the spiritual body in its lowest and grossest form. We shall see only a mask of a finer and more perfect nature. The will and the understanding in their essential

substances and forms are still within and remote from direct approach. Therefore how impossible that we can gaze directly upon unveiled and infinite divinity; what finite eye could bear the aspect?

But even if we could look directly upon God, unblinded by the excess of light, we could not learn as much of the divine nature as we can from His Word and works. The knowledge we gain of men by merely looking upon them, is very small and generally erroneous. Let us hear or read their words or see their works and then we can learn something of their knowledge and character. The tree is known by its fruits and not by looking upon it. Who could learn by looking at a vine that it could bear such delicious fruit? We can form a much more accurate idea of the real nature of men, who have written books, or have taken an active part in the public affairs of the world, than we could by merely seeing them, or by much personal intercourse. The Lord has declared that man is to be judged by his deeds. That is the divine method of judgment and it should be man's. The book, the picture, the statue, the machine, the deed, reveal the wisdom, the genius, the skill and the character of the man or woman, in many forms and much clearer light, than any personal interview. No one can tell by looking upon a man whether he can paint a picture, or write a book, or make a machine. This principle of judgment is therefore universal and we must accept it in our relations to the Lord.

We have better means in our power of seeing the Lord as He was in His humanity, when on the earth than the men who lived in His day, had. He appeared to men "as a root out of the dry ground, He had no form nor attractiveness and when men saw Him there was no beauty that they should desire Him." They could see nothing divine in Him. The proud self righteous Pharisee and the sceptical Sadducee, could see nothing but the despised Galilean, the setter forth of strange doctrines; and even His disciples could not be made to understand the nature of His claims and kingdom. Even after His resurrection and ascension some of them doubted.

It is as difficult to see an object correctly when it is too near the eye as it is when too remote from it. We must get the right point, from which to see the beauty and true nature of anything. As much and fatally as our Lord's nature and mission are misconceived, still they are better understood today than they were when He was upon the earth in the flesh. Never, until within the last century, have men had the means of forming a true idea of His real nature and of the work He accomplished. Therefore there is no probability that man could gain a more correct or adequate idea of His divine person and character by being admitted into His presence and personally beholding Him.

But even if it were possible to gain this immediate access to Him and by doing it to obtain a more correct knowledge of His nature, it does not follow that it would be of any advantage to man. On the contrary, it is evident that it would oppress and overwhelm him. It would take away his freedom. How could any human being feel at ease and at home in the immediate presence of the awful purity and the blinding splendours of the Divine itself! We cannot look at the unveiled brightness of the material sun without injury to our sight; we cannot expose ourselves to its extreme meridian heat without danger to our life. How could we look and live in the presence of a glory compared with which the sun is dim! How could we bear the fervours of that love which creates and sustains the universe! Can you imagine that any human being could feel at ease and at home in the presence of such a being as John describes in the Apocalypse. It would be impossible.

Those who expect to dwell in the immediate presence of the Lord and to hold familiar converse with Him, have very low and unworthy ideas of Him and very imperfect and erroneous notions of their own natures and of the conditions necessary to their happiness. No one can ever give free and easy play to his thoughts and affections, in the presence of those who are much superior to him, or far removed from his attainments in knowledge and culture. But we must be in freedom or we cannot be happy. We must be associated with those whose attainments are in some degree on the same level with ours.

You have seen how awed and constrained children sometimes are in the presence of those whom they have been taught to revere! But the difference between the knowledge and power of a child and the highest angel is as nothing compared with the difference between the highest angel and the Lord. How

impossible then that we should ever feel at ease and at home in His immediate presence! Eastern nations have been educated to regard their rulers as of divine origin and the common people revere them almost as gods. They fall prostrate before them and do not dare look them directly in the face. This fear and awe is due in a great degree, to education and their own imaginations. But there is a real majesty and glory in the Lord that must inspire every created being with the most profound and all subduing awe.

Therefore it is one of the ordinations of the Lord's providence, that every approach to Him should be carefully guarded. The Lord withdraws Himself from man that he may not be hurt by too near approach and that he may be left in freedom to learn the truth and to act out his life according to his affections. He comes to man only as he can receive Him and in such forms as are adapted to his state. This law will not be changed when we pass into the spiritual world. We shall not be ushered into His presence. We could not live a moment in it.

We shall be left in freedom there as here; and He will come to us only as we can bear His presence and in such forms as are best adapted to our state. The wicked will be more remote from Him than they were in this world; and the pure in heart will see God, because they are in a state in which He can reveal Himself to them more fully and in higher forms.

Therefore we must not look for a personal manifestation of God to us. It would not be for our happiness if it were possible. We must look for His presence in everything. We must try to discover manifestations of His love and wisdom in the creation and in all the relations and duties and delights of life. There is no least thing in which He is not. There is no event of life so trivial, that it may not reveal Him to us in some useful form.

But God, or the divine truth, is fully manifested only in the Sacred Scriptures and in the glorious Person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Sacred Scripture is divine truth, clothed and expressed in the forms of natural language and human institutions. The Lord has embodied infinite truth in His Word. It is a statement in human language, of the divine love and wisdom as they exist in their infinitude in the divine nature. It differs from all other books as the Lord's works differ from man's works. The natural idea is only the clothing for the spiritual idea and that again is only the form of the divine truth which dwells within it. Its real meaning then does not lie upon the surface. It has infinite depths.

The relation between the natural and the spiritual meaning is not an arbitrary one. It is of the same nature as that which exists between affection, thought and action in man. The Lord comes down to us in the Word, clothing His divine ideas with spiritual and natural ideas and these again in the forms of a material language.

The natural and civil events recorded in the Bible, can be understood in the same sense and in the same way that all history and every natural truth and every material and every scientific fact is understood. The principle is the same. The same faculties are employed. They are and must be purely natural. And all that has been said, or that it is possible to know, concerning the authenticity of the various books which compose the sacred record, the truth of the facts stated, the circumstances, the topography, the natural history, the philology of the language in which the books are written, is purely natural and is subject to the same laws and principles as the language of all other books.

If it were possible for any man to know every fact concerning the human authors; when, where and what he wrote; if he knew every change and variation in the manuscripts; if he could exhaust all knowledge concerning the letter of the Word and safely deposit it in his memory, so that he would know for a certainty that every book in the sacred record is authentic and was written by the reputed author and that everything recorded was true, he might not see God in the Scriptures at all. He might see Him in a faint and remote manner as he sees

Him in nature and in human history. It requires something more than the natural mind, to see spiritual truth. As we can gain no sensation of light from touch, or taste, or hearing, so we cannot gain any knowledge of the Lord, as a spiritual and divine being, merely from the letter of the Word. It requires a

spiritual faculty to discern spiritual things. Purity of heart is this spiritual and heavenly faculty. In its highest form it is love to the Lord.

Love is the life of man. It is the life of every faculty. It gives to every faculty its power of apprehension. It is a matter of universal observation and experience that men look for and see what they love. The thoughts are carried along in the current of the affections and are directed to their ends. Affection also gives them a delicacy and acuteness of perception to discern those things which please it, or help it to attain its desires.

This is a universal truth. The pure in heart are looking for God. This pure and intense love of Him turns the attention and thought towards Him and awakens every faculty to discover the indications of His presence and the attributes of His nature. The understanding made alive, sensitive, delicate and keen by love, penetrates the cloud of the letter and discerns the true glory within. It sees that all the Lord's words are spirit and life; that they have a spiritual and a divine meaning; that they partake of His nature and are a revelation of His love and wisdom. The history of the creation and of the Jews is a grand and manifold parable, in which the Lord makes known His wisdom, His relations to us, the reasons for, His incarnation and the various steps and methods by which it was effected. He is continually passing before us in the various forms of His love and wisdom and justice and providential care. And the pure in heart see Him.

The particular event or circumstance is vital with interest, because it is a means of revealing to them the infinite goodness of the Lord; and the purer the heart, the keener its perception and the more earnestly it looks for what it loves and the more fully the whole attention becomes directed to the one end.

It is well known how many persons will look upon the same natural object, the same outward form and each one will see something which the other does not see. One will see only the mere outlines of the natural form; another will see its use, or relations to other natural things: one will look only to the texture of surface, another to the form. The thought of another will not rest upon the object at all, but pass on to something else suggested by it.

This is especially the case with language. What any word says to us depends more upon us, upon what we have in our minds, than upon its original or specific meaning. It is much like the wind that passes into the pipes of an organ, the sound produced depends upon the form and size and quality of the pipe. The same words communicate entirely different ideas to different persons. To the child they are a mere sound. In the wise they suggest long trains of thought, or awaken memories buried in the past. The mind receives the idea and gives it something of its own nature, clothes it in its own hues and animates it with its own life.

This is a universal law, but it is more fully exemplified in the Sacred Scriptures than in any other book, because they are written in a form adapted to the state of every mind. They represent the Lord as He appears to man in his various states. To the wicked He appears as an enemy, He seems to be full of wrath; He comes to punish and consume. To the good He is a Being of love and mercy, of goodness and truth; and He comes to bless him.

It is in accordance with this universal law that the pure in heart see God in the Sacred Scriptures. They are looking for Him; their understandings are in a state to take cognizance of Him in whatever form He appears. To see God in the Word then, does not require vast learning, an intimate acquaintance with many languages, or a profound knowledge of many philosophies. These things often obscure and hinder. A love for Him and an earnest sincere desire to find Him is the true and only state in which we can see Him. God is everywhere present; but men are blinded by their falsities and evils and by much human wisdom. But those whose eyes are single can see Him in His works, in the dispensations of His providence and especially, fully, gloriously, in His holy Word.

But the pure in heart will see Him in His true form, in His power and glory, in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a remarkable fact, but one that is full of significance, that there have always existed such various and contradictory opinions concerning Him. The history of His life during the Incarnation is more familiar to most minds than that of men whose names have survived their own age; and the means of estimating His character and His place in human history are as abundant as those of any other historical

personage, yet the conclusions that have been made concerning Him, are as various as the characters of the men who have made them. To the learned and cultivated men of His own age, He was the ignorant and despised Nazarene; the friend of publicans and sinners; a pretender and usurper and breeder of sedition. To others He has been a great and good man, with surpassing wisdom and exalted virtues, but still with many of the imperfections and prejudices of His age. Others again, exalt Him to angelic and superhuman excellence, as the vicegerent of God and partaking more largely of His nature than any other created being.

To others and especially to New Churchmen, He is God. The fullness of God dwells in Him bodily. They see in Him, the fullness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. The human nature which He assumed from Mary and with which He clothed His divine nature, was full of hereditary evil, which obscured the divine light, as clouds obscure the light of the sun. It was infirm and finite and consequently incapable of being a perfect medium for the infinite love and wisdom of the Father within. But He gradually dispersed these clouds; He put off all that was weak and finite and made His human nature divine. The humanity became the full and perfect medium of His Divinity. All power in heaven and earth was given to it. The Son became equal to the Father, became so perfectly His image that He could say, "*He that has seen Me has seen the Father.*"

Those who have no love for anything but self and the world, whatever may be their doctrinal tenets, can see nothing in Him but a human nature. Their eye rests upon the cloud alone and they see no glory shining through it. The formal doctrines, to which we give a nominal or even intellectual assent, are no measure of what we see. Doctrine is truth formed. It is the glass through which we look; but what we see depends upon our power of vision and that again depends upon purity of heart, upon the power and perfection of the will.

A true doctrine concerning the Lord gives us this immense advantage: it directs us where to look and how to look to see God; and when we have followed all its directions we shall see all that we have the power to see. To the pure in heart the Lord becomes the one altogether lovely. They delight to dwell upon the attributes of His nature as set forth in the Gospels. They see His Divinity in His humiliation and temptation; in His patience in suffering; in His gentleness and forbearance; in His diligence in doing good; in His inflexible adherence to the truth. They see God as truly when He is touched with sympathy and weeps with Mary and Martha, as when He stands at the grave of Lazarus and by the power of His word restores the dead to life.

They see His Divinity when He associates with fishermen and eats with publicans and sinners and wanders from place to place, with no home and no place to lay His head, as fully as when He stands upon the mount of transfiguration, when His face shines as the sun and His very garments are radiant with the glory from within.

They see His infinite love and His perfect obedience to the laws of His own divine order, in His struggle with the infernal hosts and in His cry of agony in Gethsemane; and in His despair on Calvary, as in His resurrection and ascension, He who was the First becomes the Last, the Alpha becomes the Omega, the Highest descends to the lowest and takes upon Himself the form of a servant and brings His life down to men; adapts it with the utmost gentleness and patience and skill to their dying state, that He may lift them up from eternal death and bestow upon them the blessedness of eternal life. Every act He performed, every word He spoke, while on earth, was divine; and just so far as we come into harmony and unity with His nature, we shall see Him in His true form and glorified perfections.

The path to the attainment of this highest wisdom lies plainly open before us. It does not require great research, a vast accumulation of knowledge. It does not require profound philosophical insight; it cannot be forced open by mere intellectual strength. If we cast out the obstructing evils from our hearts, it will come to us. When pure heavenly love, which alone can recognize God, fills our hearts, we cannot fail to see Him everywhere. We shall see Him in His works; we shall see Him in human history and in the faces of our friends and loved ones. The Sacred Scriptures will be all alive and glowing with God, with the divine truth. His voice will come to us in patriarch and prophet and apostle and His words will be spirit and life; and

above all, shall we see Him in Jesus Christ. His face will shine as the sun; His glory will fill the understanding and His law the heart; and His blessedness will be our blessedness, to the extent of our ability to receive and enjoy it.

9. The Blessedness of Peacemaking

"Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God." Mat 5: 9

ALL the Beatitudes are summed up in this one. Man is the embodiment of all the forms, forces and activities, of the universe. All the qualities of the divine character can be finited in him. Man was originally created in the image and after the likeness of God. He lost that image by sin. In this promise of His holy Word, the Lord teaches us how we may regain our birthright, we must become peacemakers. This step in our regeneration follows as a natural result, from purity of heart. It is our impure desires and false principles, which disturb the harmony of our lives and array faculty against faculty in our own natures and our whole being against the Lord. When these disturbing causes are removed peace follows. We come into true relations to the Lord and He can control and guide us, fashion us, as the potter the clay, into whatever form pleases Him.

But we are not passive in this formation. We must act freely of ourselves. We are partners in this work and unless we do our part, it cannot be done.

The question for our consideration, then is, What is there in the work of a peacemaker, which makes him a child of God?

If I were about to tell you that you might become the children and consequently the heirs, of the greatest and richest and wisest men of the present or of all past time, with what intense and delighted interest you would listen to every word; and will you not give me your undivided and eager attention, while I tell you how you may become the children and heirs, not of the best and greatest men who have ever lived, but the children and heirs of the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

This blessing is promised to the peacemakers. Our first inquiry then naturally is, What is the nature of the peace referred to? Is it civil peace between the various nations of the earth? Is it social and domestic peace? Is it peace between the conflicting elements in our own natures? Or is it peace between man and the Lord? It is all these. It is peace everywhere, in all forms; but, especially and primarily, it is peace between man and the Lord. If we are at peace with Him, we shall be at peace with ourselves and with all who love Him; and at war only with the enemies of goodness and truth.

We are at peace with the Lord when our sins are forgiven and we are conjoined to Him by the reception of His divine life into the will and the understanding.

Man was created in the image and likeness of God, that he might receive life from Him and all his human faculties flow in harmony with the divine activities, according to the divine order. So long as man remained in this state, he was in perfect peace; there was not a jar or a discord in his whole nature. He met with no opposition to his will, for it was in perfect accord with the divine will. He found nothing in his understanding or thought, or in the statements of others, to combat, for there were no false principles in the mind, or evils in the will, or lusts in the desires. Thus he was at peace with the Lord, at peace with his fellow man, at peace with the outward world and with himself. All his thoughts and affections flowed in the currents of the divine order and man was lifted up and borne peacefully on, by those silent but mighty forces, to the highest attainments of his being. Everything favoured him.

You have seen a river flowing swiftly and smoothly along, in obedience to the laws of attraction, by which the earth seeks to draw things to herself, as the Lord to draw all hearts to Himself by love. There is not a ripple on its surface, nor a murmur in its current. The heavens above, the mountains and hills around and the trees and blossoms upon its banks, seem to sleep in peace and quiet beauty. Repose and action are

combined in harmony. The whole scene is a perfect picture of the peace of those, who live according to the laws of the Lord. "*Oh that thou had hearkened to My commandments, then had thy peace been as a river.*"

But when the same stream is opposed in its flow; when rocks are planted in its bed and opposing winds sweep over its surface and awful chasms yawn to swallow it up, how it roars and rages, how it dashes into foam and sweeps along with fury, as if it would hurl every opposing obstacle away. Now it is as perfect a type of war as it was before of peace.

So it is with the human soul. When man departs from the divine order he puts himself out of its harmonies and arrays himself against its forces and combats them and thus deranges the whole order of his own life and brings his will and reason and senses, into perpetual conflict. When he makes himself the centre and seeks his own personal interests to the exclusion and detriment of others, his ends are hostile to all others, his hand is against every man's and he lifts it to smite his fellow and, if it were possible, to dethrone the Lord. This is war. All conflicts in society, among men and nations, originate in the love of self and the world; for the essential spirit of selfishness is the desire to rule, to make all others serve us. This disturbs the peace of households; this excites competition in all productive industry and arrays one interest against another. This love of dominion makes nation hostile to nation. The history of humanity, through the dreary centuries of the past, is but little else than the strife between nations and men, for wealth, power and glory. And this strife will continue so long as men act from infernal motives. There can be no peace to the wicked, because all the ends of a wicked man are hostile to every other man and to the Lord: and they are so because wickedness is hostility to the Lord and to man. All things in the Lord are perfect; consequently they are harmony, order and peace. All principles which oppose that order must be discordant, false and evil. Peace then, consists in that conjunction and unity with the Lord which arises from love; from making His will our will, His law our law and in working together with Him, to establish the principles of His divine order in our own hearts and in the world.

It is evident now how we can become peacemakers. It is not by effecting any change in the Lord, but in ourselves. We must change our motives of action. We must cease to love ourselves and the world supremely and begin to obey the first great commandment. We must remove those obstacles in ourselves which hinder the reception of the divine life. Then the Lord can conjoin us to Himself and fill us with His own peace. The promise will be fulfilled "*In Me you shall have peace.*"

But the question arises, How can we do this? Can we change our own natures? No, we cannot make one hair white or black. The Lord alone can do it. We can no more do it than the plant can grow without the light and heat of the sun. Man has no power of himself to change one of his affections. Nor has he any power to walk or breathe, to exercise any affection, or to know any truth. The Lord gives him all the power and life he has, in one respect as much as in another. The Lord gives him the power to learn the truth and to obey it; to distinguish between the true and the false; and thus the Lord gives man the power and the means of making his peace with Him. We can learn the truth and obey it; we can shun the evils and reject the falsities in our own souls which that truth reveals to us and we can do the work which it commands us. "*Great peace have all they who love Thy law.*"

While we learn the truth and strive to obey it, the Lord creates us anew and becomes for us the Prince of Peace. Really then, we ought to go about this work of peacemaking as we go about any other. We ought to do it as though all depended upon us. But at the same time we ought to acknowledge that, in the highest sense, it all depends upon the Lord. This is the proper spirit or state in which we ought to engage in the work of peacemaking.

But learning the truth is only providing ourselves with the materials. We have still to use them. When the light of heavenly truth shows us an evil in our natures, the evil is not put away by merely willing it, or by sorrow that we find it. There is an actual work to be done and a work that requires patience, perseverance and much self denial and courage.

We can only make our peace with the Lord by making our peace with our fellow men. "*Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these My brethren you have done it unto Me,*" is the law. We must begin to

act from love to others in the family, in society, in the nation and in the church; we must repress the selfish motive; we must not speak the selfish word; we must not do the selfish act.

Take the family, for example. If there is not perfect harmony and peace among the members, it is because some one or all are selfish. They are careless, wilful, exacting, unkind, disorderly, prone to say sharp things; or they may be slothful and unwilling to bear their part of the burden of daily duty. They may be perverse and fretful and prove a constantly disturbing element in the daily life of the family. You have seen such people, perhaps you are one yourself in some things. Now you can become a peacemaker by overcoming your own evils. Reflect upon them. Try to get a clear and distinct idea of what they are. We are generally so busy in spying out and censuring the faults of others, that we do not see our own.

When you find one cause of discord, you need not wait to discover more. Remove it. If you find that you derange the order of the household by your careless, heedless habits, correct them; put everything you use in its place and keep yourself in your place. Whatever is committed to your care to do, do it well and do it at the proper time. Repress the sharp word and the unkind feelings which gave it birth. Try to fall in and act in harmony with the general movements of the family. Let your words be kind, your manner cheerful and pleasant and show a disposition in little things, to yield your own preferences and to act for the general good. Then you will become a peacemaker; and if all the members of a family would do this, everything would flow on smoothly and harmoniously and the household would become a little heaven upon earth.

While you are doing this, you will find as great a change going on in your own nature. While you are repressing the discordant elements in your own mind and seeking to promote the peace of those with whom you associate, the Lord is eliminating them from your soul and your efforts to repress them enables Him to do it. This is your part of the work and the Lord will do His as fast as you do yours. In this way you are at the same time, making peace in your own soul and with the Lord.

The same principle holds good in all our social, civil and church relations. That man or woman who seeks to be an element of harmony with all that is good and true in the church and the state, gains permanent spiritual peace by every effort to promote it among others. Our first duty is with ourselves. In overcoming evil, charity ought always to begin at home; but it ought not to remain there. On the contrary, we ought not only to do our part kindly and well, so far as personal duty is concerned, but we ought to assist others in overcoming those false and evil principles in themselves, which disturb the peace of others. But we must do it kindly and wisely, or we shall cause more disturbance than we prevent.

In all our efforts at making peace, we ought to look more to permanent than temporary peace. The Lord makes peace with no one while he is in evil. He is a man of war. His truth is a sword to all those who are in evil and falsity. He makes peace with man only by eliminating from his will and understanding all those principles which are opposed to His divine laws. So we ought to stand firm and steadfast against false principles wherever we find them. We ought to make no compromise with them. We must labour diligently and faithfully to overcome them in others as well as in ourselves. We ought to make war upon them, but not in the spirit of hatred and revenge. This is the only way in which any lasting peace can be attained, either in the world or in our own hearts.

In opposing the evil and false in our own lives and in the lives of others, we are preparing the way for the coming of the Lord, to establish the principles of peace in our hearts. We place ourselves in the stream of all the divine forces and we begin to act in harmony with them and the Lord can give His peace unto us.

Now it can be clearly seen how the peacemakers become the children of God. We are really the children of those principles or causes which beget us, or make us what we are. Our Lord said to the Jews, "*You are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father you will do.*" And in many places in the Sacred Scriptures, those are said to be born of God, to be His children and sons, who receive His truth and live according to it.

This is not a figure of speech, but a simple fact. We are the children of earthly parents only as to our material bodies and the natural degree of the mind. We derive none of the higher spiritual qualities from

them. These we derive from the Lord alone. All the hereditary qualities we derive from our natural parents are evil and false. We must be born again, or from above, born of God, or we can never see His kingdom, or taste its blessedness. It is the natural evil and false, derived from our parents, which we adopt and make our own by loving and living it, that causes the warfare between us and the Lord. When the divine life comes down in the form of love to God and man, it meets with opposition and there is often a wild and fierce conflict of elements in the soul. We can only make peace by hating father and mother, that is, the evil and false principles which we have derived from them and which constitute our selfhood and this is hating our own life also. We must put away these hereditary and acquired evils and be reformed and make heavenly and divine principles our own, by adopting them and living according to them; as we have made those principles and qualities our own which we have derived from our earthly parents. Then we shall be the children of God; we shall be born in His image and likeness; we shall be the embodiment, the creation, the form of that goodness and truth which have their origin in Him. Shall we not in reality then be His children? We are begotten by Him; we are born of Him; all our goodness and truth are derived from Him; we bear His image. Is He not then our Father, as He has taught us to call Him and are not we His children in every sense of the word? The whole process by which we are made so, is the same as that by which we make our peace with Him, with ourselves and with all the good and true.

Now we can see wherein consists the blessedness of being a peacemaker. We become the children of God and consequently the heirs to the infinite riches of the Lord's love and wisdom. "*He that overcomes shall inherit all things.*" By overcoming and putting away all that is hostile to the divine character in ourselves, we come fully under the divine care and protection. We become so conjoined with the Lord, that He can mould us into His image and communicate to us His life and all blessings which flow from it. We bear the image of our heavenly parentage, as we have borne the image of the earthly.

We shall inherit according to the measure of our ability to receive, in a finite but ever increasing degree, all the perfections of our Father's character. We shall become the personal forms and embodiment of those perfections. "*The beauty of the Lord our God will be upon us.*" Every deformity, weakness and imperfection we have received from our earthly parentage, will be removed. Every repulsive lineament from the evil and false; every foul spot from vile lusts and greedy desires, will be taken away. The marks and scars we have received from those fierce, infernal passions, which have incited us to make war upon the Lord and our neighbour, will all be obliterated.

You know how every vile passion leaves its mark upon us. How soon it writes its horrible characters in the face and moulds the whole form into its foul, repulsive image. By the same law, heavenly principles embody themselves in heavenly forms. What ineffable grace and loveliness must those inherit, who become the embodiments of innocence and purity. Take from the human form all marks of evil, all traces of care and anxiety; of feebleness and disease and give it the loveliness of form, the gracefulness of motion, the winning courtesies, the simple dignity of conscious innocence and the free play, in pace and motion, of all pure affections and you will see what all the children of God may and will become.

But this heavenly beauty is only the outward form of the inward and real perfections which the children of God will inherit.

The very essence of the divine nature is love. You will become the heirs of that. It will constitute the very essence of your nature. Love to the Lord and the neighbour will rule supreme in all your affections, thoughts and actions. It will become your very life.

The form of the divine love is divine wisdom. You will inherit that. Conjoined to the Lord by love, it will be your delight to be guided by Him in all things. His law will be your delight and consequently His wisdom will become your wisdom. If children could inherit the learning and wisdom of their parents how great and valuable a possession it would be. However that is impossible. But the children of God can and do inherit His wisdom and are guided by it in every action. Therefore they can nevermore go fatally astray. They will make no more mistakes. They will ever move on through eternity to the highest possible attainments, by the shortest and most delightful methods. Think one moment of the happiness of having infinite wisdom

for your guidance. You who are tormented with so many doubts and fears, who make so many mistakes, who go trembling along for fear of unseen dangers. You can become the inheritors of a wisdom that never errs; that sees the end from the beginning in all contingencies and every shade of influence. You can inherit it. It will be given to you. It is one of the blessings which are given to the peacemakers. Make your peace with God and His wisdom is yours.

Through the exercise of this love and wisdom, you will come into the possession of all blessings, internal and external. All the sweet and lovely affections of the angels, all the power and majesty of angelic intelligence will be yours. You will find free scope for the exercise of every faculty. You will possess all you desire. The children of God may ask their Father what they will and it will be done unto them. They will want for nothing. In this world it is impossible for those of the largest means to gratify all their desires. But it is not so in heaven. There the means of supply keeps even pace with the ability to use and enjoy. The more we can receive, the better we please our Heavenly Father.

In this world, when a large estate is divided among many heirs, each one receives but a small portion. But in heaven it is not so. The more heirs, the larger the inheritance. Each one helps all others to receive. So in every respect your inheritance will be as perfect aid as great as you have the power to receive. You cannot name a real good that you will not receive.

Is not the office of peacemaker a most blessed one? I beseech you, my friends, bring the subject home to your hearts. Do not let it pass away as an idle tale! Reflect upon it. Try to bring it home to yourself, as a work for you to do and a blessing for you to attain. Can I be a peacemaker? and so become heir to such blessings? How can I engage in the work? When can I begin it? Now before you leave your seats. You can carry it on as you go to your homes. Begin it in your own hearts; search them diligently for every cause of discord, for every evil that separates you from the Lord and try to remove it. See if you cannot be a peacemaker in your family, in one respect, if no more. See if you cannot be a bond of concord and union among your associates and companions, in the social circle in which you move; in your store and office and workshop and especially in the church. Do not expect to harmonize everything. Do it in little things. Pick the thorns and nettles, that pierce and irritate and sting, out of your looks and tones and words and actions; yes and out of your heart too: that wherever you go there shall be one discord less. Seek peace and pursue it. So shall you become the children of God and the heirs of eternal peace and blessedness.

10. The Blessedness of Being Persecuted

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” Mat 5: 10,11,12

THE Beatitudes end as they begin, with a promise of the kingdom of heaven. This must be so, because real blessedness can only be found in that kingdom. It is the kingdom of blessings. It was established by infinite wisdom to communicate blessings. To be in that kingdom, by having its principles formed within us, is to be in the true form and order for the reception of all blessings and in the currents of the Divine Providence by which they flow into us. All truth is given to us to show us the nature of this kingdom and to point the way to it; and all delights were designed by the Lord to lead us into the knowledge and life of it. Therefore the kingdom of heaven is the beginning, ending and the sum of all blessedness. Whatever it may be necessary for us to get or resign to do or to suffer for the sake of gaining entrance into it, is a blessing.

There are no conditions or steps towards this blessedness that seem more unlikely in their nature to attain it than the one mentioned in the text. Why should men be blessed for being persecuted? What can there be in persecution, for any cause that entitles its object to the kingdom of heaven, or that tends in the least to introduce one into it? Little or nothing, if we regard the subject in a natural and outward manner, but

much every way, if we know what real persecution is, if we are acquainted with its origin and its effect upon the soul. These are the questions, therefore, which primarily concern us.

Persecution when applied to us personally in the work of regeneration is temptation. It is conflict between the spiritual and the natural man; between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of this world. Spiritual temptation can never take place, until the kingdom of heaven has become so far formed within us, that we can make resistance from it against natural evils and false principles. Incitement to evil is therefore only one of the elements that enter into temptation.

There is a difference between the fascination and the allurements of evil desires and temptation. If there is no spiritual principle in the mind to resist the allurements there is no persecution or spiritual trial. There is nothing to be tried or persecuted. There is no internal ground for resistance and struggle. A thoroughly wicked man cannot be tempted in the true sense of the term. He is led along in the currents of his evil desires. He feels no inward restraints in doing evil. The only hindrance he finds to indulgence in wickedness comes from without and is excited by fear of the loss of some other selfish or worldly good.

But when the distinctly spiritual man is born within us and has gained some power, a plane of resistance to the natural man is created and the struggle commences. Man begins to act from a principle of righteousness, from love to the Lord and the neighbour; and all his selfish and worldly lusts are aroused against him as a spiritual man and they bring all their wiles and all their infernal forces to bear against him. The Lord and the angels fight for him on one side and evil spirits on the other. The evil spirits carry on the warfare by exciting the lusts of the natural mind and by using its falsities as weapons against the spiritual mind. They appeal to man's natural appetites; they show him the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and promise them as a reward, if he will fall down and worship them.

On the other hand, the angels and the Lord strive to awaken man's spiritual and heavenly affections. They arm him with all the truths he has learned from the Word, or any other source; and they give him all the assistance he can receive from them. But they never destroy his individuality or overpower his reason. The man is left in perfect freedom. He must meet these opposing influences and decide which shall win the victory, as though the decision really rested with him alone, as it seems to.

The spiritual man, or the spiritual plane of the mind, is not formed when we are born into this world. It only exists as a mere possibility. We must be born again, or from above, before we can enter the kingdom of God. Before this kingdom becomes substantially formed within us, so that we can bear temptations and overcome them, we must pass through the states represented by the previous blessings. Man must be poor in spirit; he must mourn over his sins; he must be humble and meek in view of them; he must hunger and thirst after righteousness; he must be merciful and pure in heart and a peacemaker or peace doer, before he obtains that righteousness which can be persecuted.

I do not mean that he must possess all these spiritual graces in perfection. No man does that. No angel ever reaches a state beyond which he cannot pass. But the kingdom of God, which is composed of these spiritual principles, must be established within us in its elements. The groundwork must be laid and there must be a constant endeavour to establish its dominions and perfect its form.

We are sometimes discouraged because we cannot perfect the work as we go along and draw a clear line of distinction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan and be able to say at the end of the week or year, "I have made so much progress. I have conquered so much territory from my spiritual enemies and have occupied it with heavenly principles. We sometimes doubt whether we have any religion, because we can never get out of the sight of our evils and falsities. Wherever we go and whatever we do, some falsity will show its deformity; some lurking lust will breathe its foul breath upon us and mock us with infernal delight. The tares and wheat grow together and cannot be separated in this life. It is enough to give us hope, if we find the wheat growing and gaining firmer root in our minds.

Therefore when I say that the heavenly principles described in the preceding blessings must be formed within us before we can be persecuted for righteousness' sake, I do not mean that we must possess those

heavenly qualities in perfection, but that we must begin to exercise them. The way must be opened from within, by which the Lord and the angels can get access to the evil and the false, which operate upon us from without, repel them; and build up the heavenly kingdom within us.

No evil can ever be overcome and removed from our natures, until it is seen to be an evil and is combated with the truth. Therefore it is absolutely necessary to our regeneration that we should see our evils, acknowledge them to be evils in us and fight against and overcome them. Until this is done they will remain as secret foes, for they never leave us voluntarily. As fast as we gain a knowledge of divine truth and admit it into the life, we discover our evils; and so far as the kingdom of heaven is formed within us and we seek to live according to its laws, the false and evil principles rise up and persecute them and seek to destroy them.

Then the conflict commences. The good never make the attack. The Lord and the angels never attack the evil spirits. They only resist when assaulted. When the Lord was in the world, He did not assault the devils. They assaulted Him. The Lord seeks to build up His kingdom; to carry on His heavenly work; to make us happy and blessed in time and for eternity; and it is only when obstacles oppose and strive to defeat Him, that He removes them.

We are now prepared to see why those are blessed who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. This persecution shows that heavenly principles have become sufficiently established in our minds to awaken the enmity of the evil and false. The Lord and the angels can draw near to us and they can find ground to stand upon to wage the conflict and they can find weapons drawn from the armoury of God, the divine truth, which we have learned, with which to carry it on. That is an immense progress. Our enemies are alarmed. The Lord can reach them and He will surely overcome them. He can give us strength to carry on the war. All heaven is on our side and the powers of heaven can hold up our arms while we resist the assaults upon us.

No man would ever fall into evil, or commit a sin, if the Lord could prevent it. But He can gain access to us only by means of the good affections in our wills and the genuine truths in our understandings. Where these do not exist, the Lord can only restrain us by outward fears and by balancing one evil principle against another. But when His love is in the will and His truth in the understanding, He leads and guides and sustains us by them. Therefore it is a blessed state to be so fully under the control and in the power of the Lord that He can fight our battles for us and give us the assurance of victory. A nation which had internal or foreign enemies, would consider itself blessed when the occasion came for removing them, if it was confident that it had the power of doing it. Such are the general principles involved in this subject and the true grounds for pronouncing those blessed who come into these spiritual conflicts.

But this conflict between the kingdom of heaven and of self is not limited to general principles; it descends to every faculty. It is carried on by the will and the understanding and descends to every thought and act. It is not one combat and one victory and then a settlement of the whole question for ever. It is a conflict in every form, renewed on every occasion and fought from every point of assault.

This truth is revealed to us in the words: "*Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you.*" Men represent all the false principles by which the assault is made. The truth is the same whether the combat is made by nations or individuals, or by the various principles of goodness and truth: of the evil and false in ourselves.

"Reviling" has relation to the will and the affections. It is the assault of the evil spirits upon our affections and it is the most subtle and grievous temptation to which man is exposed. When a man has any affection or lust for evil, the most subtle and malicious of evil spirits flow into it and inflame and excite him with such of their own desires and filthy lusts as he is tainted with and thus they carry on the combat by the man's selfishness itself. This they effect in so malicious and clandestine a manner, that it is impossible to suppose them its agents; for they infuse themselves into the life of man's impure affections and in the same instant turn and bend the affection for goodness and truth into the love of the evil and false, so that man cannot possibly know but that it is done of himself and thus flows in of its own accord." They inflame

man with their own lusts and then insinuate the idea that they are his own; and then they mock and revile him for the very evils they have infused into him; and if possible, fill him with fear and despair. The temptation of the affections is the most interior; it is an assault upon the life and though the conflict and the agony are terrible, they are blessed who undergo them and conquer in them, because by means of them their evil affections are subdued and love to the Lord and the neighbour take their place and become established.

"Persecute" relates specifically to the understanding and has reference to the conflict between falsity and truth. This temptation is never so severe and painful as that which takes place between evil and good. It does not touch the life so intimately. It is much easier to change our opinions and doctrines than our characters. Some men hold their opinions so lightly that it costs them no pain to change them. The difficulty and the pain is always in proportion to the degree in which we have made truth or falsity our own by life:

Every truth in us is assaulted by false spirits, especially when it is somewhat new to us. They will insinuate doubts concerning it in the most wily and seductive manner. If it is a truth that reveals the evils of our nature and commands us to remove them, they will twist it and bend it and insinuate a falsity so like it, that we are liable to mistake the false for the true. They will take advantage of weakness and prejudice; they will array before us the seeming advantages of the false, or the terrible consequences of accepting the truth.

No man or child ever told a lie, or took what did not belong to him, without persuading himself for the moment, that it was the best thing to do, that he would be the gainer by it. No man ever pretended by his actions and external, social, political or church relations, to believe what he knew was false, without excusing himself in some way. Satan can furnish us with an abundance of the most plausible lies and subterfuges and when we accept them and act according to them, he will give a keener sting to conscience and fill every chamber of the soul with his infernal mockery at your folly. But when we have the truth, these temptations are useful to us. We see the truth more clearly and hold it more firmly, after the temptation and victory. We have seen truth in contrast with falsity; we hold it in greater freedom: by the contest it has become more fully ours. So the tempters are foiled and we are blessed.

"To say all manner of evil against us" is to assault us in the ultimate conduct of life; in what we say and do. Many persons are peculiarly susceptible to this temptation. Probably no one, who sincerely loves goodness and truth, is ever fully satisfied with his words or acts. We can see so much better than we can do. Expression halts and stammers; action is weak and imperfect. The higher our ideal and the more ardent our purpose, the more we come short. Men, or those evil principles denoted by men, are always ready to say all manner of evil against us for what we do, or say, or fail to do.

If the thought comes to us, that we will do or say something for the cause of truth, Satan will whisper in our ears that we cannot do it; or if we could, it would be of no use. Thousands of men and women are kept from writing or speaking or doing something for the Church, by this lie of the enemy of all truth. You feel an impulse to contribute a greater portion of your income to build up the kingdom of God. And some man, or somebody who was once a man, but is now an evil spirit, breathes into your love of the world and so inflames it, that you think you cannot afford it and he leers and chuckles at the thought, that he has divested a dollar from the treasury of the Lord and saved it to minister to the love of self and the world.

Many persons think they will come out openly and join the Church in its external form and cast the influence of their example in favour of the Lord's kingdom. But Satan is always ready with a reason suited to each case. To one he says: You are not good enough, wait until you become more holy. To another: What's the use? can't you be just as good a Christian out of the church as within it? He persuades another that he might commit some sin and bring a terrible disgrace upon the church and he had better wait until he is sure that he will not sin any more. He persuades one to wait until somebody else will come with him and another that he will not take this step because somebody else has taken it. And so he touches the

secret springs and most powerful motives to action in each one and tries to make us dupes of his infernal subtleties.

And when we go forward and do our duty as well as we know how, he will mock us and make us disgusted with our own work and, if possible, dissuade us from making another attempt. Indeed the evil spirits who attend us, say all manner of evil against us. The Lord and the angels never do it. When we do the best we can, even though we succeed very poorly, the Lord does not find fault with us. He says: "*Well done, good and faithful servant,*" when we use the talents we have, whether we have one or ten. Did you ever think that all the fears that you will not succeed, when you are engaged in a good work and all disappointment at the degree of your success and all discouragements in doing your work, come from evil spirits flowing into your worldly and selfish affections? It is so. The angels encourage every effort to do good. The evil only say all manner of evil against us.

But when they say it falsely, for the sake of Christ, we have every occasion to rejoice and to be exceeding glad, for we have come to a day that is into a spiritual state, when we can resist and overcome them. When that day comes, or when we have attained to a spiritual state in which we identify ourselves with the kingdom of heaven; when we find every evil and falsity, whether it exists in our own natures, in society, the world, or in evil spirits arrayed against us, as heat against cold, darkness against light; then we may rejoice and be glad, or glory. We have now the best evidence that can be given to us in this life, that the kingdom of heaven has been established within us and that we have come so fully under the power and guidance of the Lord and, the angels, that they can protect us from every infernal illusion and wicked assault and lead us safely to heaven.

The divine life is breathing its purity and power into our hearts and we recoil from every vile affection as from the contact of filth. The divine truth is illuminating our understandings and we can see how dark and ugly and destructive is every falsity and how beautiful and glorious is the truth. Let the wicked rage, we do not fear them. Let them mock, we do not regard them. Let them plot their infernal machinery for our destruction, a ray of divine truth reveals all their machinations and disperses them. Let them appeal to appetite and passion, there is a heavenly principle within and above every natural power stronger than it. Let them hold out the allurements of this world; and promise us their glory and blessings; we see pain, disgrace, horror and eternal sorrow through the thin disguise of their illusions. Let them open all the flood-gates of their enmity, falsehood and malice; "*the Lord is on our side: we will not fear what man can do unto us.*" Our present and our eternal future is secure.

But that is not all: our reward will be great in the heavens and it will be great just in the degree that we resist and overcome our evils. Evil and falsity are the only obstacles to our reception of the divine blessings. When we resist and put away an evil, its place is occupied by some heavenly good and the more interior and deadly the evil, the higher and more blessed the good.

This then is our encouragement and hope in the conflict with evil and falsity. The more vigilant we are in discovering the evil within us and the more faithful in putting it away, the greater will be our reward. Then let us not shrink from the conflict. Let us rather rejoice and be exceeding glad that it has begun and that it rages against us. Let our enemies revile and persecute and say every evil thing against us with their lying lips, the fiercer the conflict, the more glorious the victory and the greater the reward. "*Blessed are you when they shall revile you and persecute you and say every wicked word against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.*"

11. The Blessedness of Loving Enemies

"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." Mat 5: 44, 45.

THESE words are not recorded among the blessings, but they are so intimately connected with them, that it seems proper to consider them in this connection. They seem to complement the means of becoming the children of God. They show us how we may become peacemakers in a universal sense. They also present the other side of the blessedness of being "persecuted for righteousness' sake." That was the passive aspect of the subject, this is the active. It shows what we must do to become the children of our heavenly Father. In the light of both portions of the Sacred Scripture, we can see this important subject on all sides.

Parentage is both natural and spiritual. We receive natural only from our earthly parents. We are not born into the image and likeness of the Lord by natural birth; and we should not have been if man had never sinned. The true image of God is not in the body or in the natural mind. It is a moral and spiritual image. To become the children of God, we must be born from above. The spiritual degree of the mind, which is the subject of spiritual affections and spiritual truth and which constitutes our' true humanity, must be born and nourished into strength.

The relation of parent and child is much wider and more various than is commonly supposed. Every cause is the father of the effect which is born of it. The Lord is the universal Father, because He is the universal cause. But He is only the Father of that which He does cause. He is not the Father of evil, nor of those who are in evil. As He said to the Jews: "*You are of your father the devil.*" The Lord is the Author of all that is good, in every form and degree. So far as we are begotten into the image and likeness of the Lord, we are His children.

One child in a family is often said to be his father's and another to be his mother's, because he has the form, features and mental qualities of one parent or the other.

In the same sense we are the Lord's children, so far as we become like Him.

In the divine words to which your attention is here invited, the Lord has revealed to us how we may become His children. He has pointed out the way, in a few plain and simple terms, to become the image and likeness of beauty, order, purity and loveliness; the sons of God and therefore the heirs to the power and blessedness of heaven. There are no dark problems to solve; there are no legal questions to settle; no impossible conditions are required and there can be no doubt about the result if we follow the directions. Let us try to learn what those directions are, that we may follow them and obtain the immeasurable blessedness of becoming the sons of our Father in heaven.

The first thing we are commanded to do is to love our enemies.

Love to enemies is mentioned, because that is the highest form in which love can be manifested and consequently it includes all other forms of affection. It does not require a very high degree of spiritual excellence to love those who love us and because they love us. Even wicked men do that in appearance at least. That is a merely natural affection and it is seen even in animals. Love to our enemies is something higher and nobler than that. In its essential principle it is a desire to do good to all, without any reference to their feelings towards us. It is thinking kindly of all and making use the controlling principle and end of life.

However it does not imply that we are to treat all men alike, or that we are to express our affection for all in the same words or deeds. The form in which we express our affection must depend upon the relation of the person to us. It must depend upon his character. It does not always consist in conferring benefits, or at least, what others would regard as a benefit, nor in saying kind and pleasant things. But it does consist in feeling kindly towards others and in doing what will be of use to them. It does not imply that we should give alms to vicious and indolent beggars. That only encourages them in indolence and vice. If we would do them good we must put them in the way of reformation; we must help them to help themselves.

So a wise regard for the real good of thieves, robbers, or any wicked men or women, would not lead us to release them from the restraints and save them from the penalties of the law, merely from a weak pity for them. We ought rather to seek to secure their punishment.

Every pardon granted to a criminal is an injury to the innocent and to the criminal also, for it gives him license to renewed crime. It weakens the force of law by making its execution uncertain.

It is useful to every man to be under the restraints of law and to preserve these restraints, the law, within just limits, should be as inexorable to pity as natural and divine laws are. The judge or the jury who spares the criminal from pity, pities him more than the innocent and acts with a weak and short sighted tenderness which overreaches itself and inflicts a permanent injury upon society. Such a false and misplaced tenderness weakens the only protection against the evil, which the innocent have and exposes them to their unrestrained assaults. A true spiritual regard for bad men would lead us to let them feel the inevitable consequences of their evils that they may be deterred by external restraints from repeating them. The Lord does not remit the penalty of sin except with the sin itself. He shows His love as clearly in so constituting man's nature that suffering should follow sin, as that happiness should result from obedience to His laws. Indeed the motive and the method are the same in both cases.

Love is the only motive of the Lord's action. We shall become His children by making it our only motive, whether we confer favours or impose restraints. And its highest manifestation will be seen in loving those who are hostile to us, because when we love our enemies, it must be without any selfish motive.

If we have this disposition of charity towards all, we shall be disposed to do what we are commanded to do in the second place, "*to bless those who curse us.*" It is only another feature in this heavenly portrait and another mark of our heavenly parentage. And it is much broader and more comprehensive than the natural meaning of the words would indicate. It implies something more than the mere utterance of a form of words, of wishing another well, though they may wish us ill. To bless others is to do them good. Its specific meaning here is, to teach them the truth.

The word "bless" in the original literally means to speak well, or to say that which is good, or which will do good to others. To speak well of bad men would not be right, for it would not be the truth. Neither would it be right to bless them in the common acceptation of the term. The Lord does not do that. Nor can it mean the mere expression of a wish for the happiness of others.

To pronounce a blessing or a curse upon one in words does not necessarily bless or curse them. A man really speaks against us, or curses us, when he teaches us what is false and leads us to evil. So we always bless others when we teach them the truth and by means of it lead them to good. To call hard names has no more effect than the hissing of a serpent, unless it leads us to do evil. Men often utter curses upon others in anger, but how impotent is their cursing to harm them! They cannot reach their object. They cannot harm a hair of his head. Their words are idle wind.

But when we are approached by the wicked under fair and specious pretences and the poison of falsehood is insinuated into our minds and we are led astray by it, robbed of our innocence, polluted with evil, then we are cursed indeed. Then the curse enters the soul; then the blast and mildew wither its fair beauty and destroy it.

When any one attempts to curse us by teaching us the false, what shall we do if we regard them with true charity? Shall we not try to bless them? Shall we not give them truth for error? An evil man would not do it. He would give falsehood for falsehood; cursing for cursing. But he who was animated by genuine charity, would desire to do them good by teaching them what is true.

In a general but painfully true sense, every evil man and woman are a curse to all with whom they associate. They taint the air and poison the currents of social life. They blight the purity of home. They destroy the orderly operations of business. They corrupt the integrity of civil affairs. In every relation they are like a poisonous flower or decaying flesh, they carry with them a sphere of cursing. They are the open gateways between this and the spiritual world, through which the evil spirits pour forth their venom into the hearts of men.

What can the child of heaven oppose to this cursing? What would the ruling principle of his life lead him to do? Not to curse in turn, but to bless, to teach the truth. And in that is implied many things which might

not seem to be born of pity. He must utter words that would not be smooth and sweet and savour of peace only. They might be and they often must be, words which burn like fire, words which are keener than a sword blade; and yet they have a benediction in them. They cut like the surgeon's knife, but only that which has become acutely sensitive by disease. They wound to heal, not to give pain.

A simple word of truth spoken "more in sorrow than in anger," is sometimes a most terrible blow; but in the end it may bless. There are times when such a word, though coming from the very heart of love, is difficult to bear. None of us, doubtless, could bear to hear the full truth about ourselves. But as far as we can bear it, it will bless us; for the truth is a blessing, under whatever disguise it may come. And the good man, who is an embodiment of the truth, who is the truth in form with a soul in it, the good man is always a blessing in every relation of life. He is a fountain of healing and strength and peace. He is a staff for the weary to lean upon, a cordial to the fainting soul. He is health to the sick, a light to those who are in darkness. He is a foundation stone on which the pillars of business and the state rest; he is a bond of union and a source of life in the church.

He stands between this world and heaven. He is a channel through which the pure waters of life can flow. They sparkle and play in his eyes; they run in clear and shining streams from his lips and flow down in a thousand varying forms in his actions. They make him a blessing like springs of water in a dry land. He is an instrument tuned to heavenly concords. The keys are in his heart and the angels touch them and the music flows down to us in a pure and orderly life; it flows out through thoughts, words and deeds and its effect is everywhere the same, to bless. With love in his heart and truth on his lips, you will find in all his actions the third prominent characteristic of a child of God.

He will "do good to them that hate him." His love does not remain in his heart, nor does it disperse itself in empty words. He not only teaches the truth, but he makes it the guide of his life. He will do good to others, even though they should hate him for it. It is often dangerous to our natural interests to do good. It exposes a man to more obloquy, hatred and persecution than it does to do evil. It requires more true courage than it does to brave the dangers of battle.

The reason is obvious. To do good especially to those who hate you, implies something more than giving them alms, or protection, or assistance in any natural difficulty. At times, it implies withholding all these and the most vigorous opposition and the thwarting of the ends which those desire who hate us. This sometimes can only be accomplished by the most violent means. It implies that we are willing to do all that wisdom dictates and a just regard for the good of others requires without a primary regard for ourselves.

There are many occasions in life, when the good man must appear to be hard and even cruel in his opposition to others; when he must forsake his dearest friends and even oppose them. Our Lord has given us some memorable examples of this self devotion.

But the occasions are still more numerous, where we have an opportunity to repay those who hate us, in giving injury for injury. We may be labouring for another who hates us and who shows his hatred by depriving us of a portion of our honest earnings. We may see chances to retaliate. But the good man would not do it. That would be repaying hate with hate. He will "*do good to them that hate him.*"

But we may be prevented by our own circumstances, or the condition of others, from reaching them by our voice or deeds. When this is the case, we can pray for them and this completes the qualities which make us the Lord's children.

To pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us, is a great practical work. It implies that we try to make ourselves instrumental in carrying into effect all the blessings we pray for; that we cultivate in ourselves all those qualities, which would fit us for becoming mediums of good even to those who persecute us. It is the spirit, which our Lord manifested when He prayed, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*"

But all these particular characteristics are embodied in one principle and presented in one living view in what He says of Himself, "*For He makes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends His rain on the*

just and the unjust." His love and wisdom like the light and heat of the sun flow forth constantly and equally to warm, enlighten and to bless all; and His truth like the rain is sent to the just and the unjust.

The difference of reception depends upon us and not upon the Lord. He has no thought towards man which does not originate in love. And He gives to everyone, both in this world and the world to come and He always will give all the good any one will receive. Whether we curse or bless, whether we persecute or love and obey Him, He is not changed by it. The only change is in our willingness and ability to receive.

But the form in which His love comes to us, depends upon our state. If we are evil, it will be restraint and it will seem to us to be punishment. If we love the Lord and our neighbour, it will be freedom and blessing. As it is the same light that falls upon the black and the white garment, the same heat that ripens the whole: some and the poisonous fruit and afterwards destroys them, so the Lord's love comes to us in the various forms of prosperity and apparent adversity, of joy and sorrow.

To be His children we must act from the same principles. Love must be the governing principle of our lives. If we are the Lord's children, it will make no difference to us, so far as regards the principle of our action, what others think of us, or say of us, or do to us; whether they love or hate, curse or bless, we shall not make their action the rule of ours. We shall only love and bless and seek to do them good. Love will be the ruling principle of our action and it will move us to select such means as our wisdom directs and it will shine through them all. If we teach, it will be from a real desire to communicate the truth. If we reprove or chastise, or in any way oppose the wishes of others, it will not be from the love of opposition or dictation, but from the love of goodness and truth.

Such a heavenly disposition would stimulate us to constant diligence in some useful employment. The heart filled, I might rather say formed, of such heavenly affections, is indeed a sun that warms, illumines and gives life to all within the reach of its influence. And even if all turn away from it, it still shines on, as the sun shines by day and by night, whether his beams fall upon the iceberg, or the fruitful soil, filled with germs which his warmth will quicken into life. The sun shines because it is his nature to shine. So the Lord loves because it is His nature to love. His children love others, because it is their nature to do so and by loving goodness and truth, they become more and more His children.

How hard it is to realize the glorious truth that we are and may become the children of God. It is not a mere figure of speech. All the terms which express the qualities or acts which constitute the parental relation are ascribed to the Lord. He forms, makes, begets, regenerates us, creates us into His own divine image and likeness, calls us His children and makes us His heirs. We are His constant care. He protects, guides, saves, blesses us today and He has prepared an inheritance for us, compared with which all the kingdoms of this world are the shadows of a dream. Let us try to bring it home to our consciousness to make it real. Let us try to conceive what it is to be a child of God. It is to have His form our form, *"to have the beauty of the Lord our God upon us."* It is to have His principles our principles, His order our order, His love and wisdom our love and wisdom. In a word, it is to be finitely in the order and degree of our life what He is infinitely in His life, a child of God! It is the crown of all human honour. It is the sum of all human attainment. Then *"love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you: that you may become the children of your Father which is in heaven."*

12. The Sum of Blessedness

"And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,*

*For they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the ¹earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
For they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.
Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets
who were before you.* Mat 5:1-12

THE Sacred Scriptures in their spiritual import are a perfect whole. They are a statement of the laws of the divine life as they exist in the Lord Himself, in their true order and relations. The Lord is the Word, because the truths stated in the Word exist in Him. The Word is a statement of the laws of human life in their true form and order, as they exist in the Divine Humanity and in man himself so far as he comes into the image and likeness of God. Irrelevant and even contradictory and destitute of all natural meaning, as many parts of the Word appear in the letter, it is nevertheless, a statement of spiritual truths which are related in perfect order. That is expressed first which is first. The connection between one part and another is perfectly logical. Like the Lord's garment for which the soldiers cast lots, the Sacred Scriptures are woven from above or within, through their whole texture, without seam.

Therefore the different parts of any continuous passage have not only a specific meaning, but they bear definite relations to each other. They have a meaning as a whole. They are in the human form. Each passage is like an organ or series of organs in the human body and they are so related that they cannot be transposed without doing violence to the meaning of the whole.

The Beatitudes, which seem to be isolated truths, are definitely related to each other and to all that precedes and follows. Their order could not be disturbed without disturbing their meaning as a whole. The same is true of the commandments, the Lord's Prayer and of every part of the Word.

Having considered each one of the blessings separately, I propose now to view them as a whole.

I remark in the first place, that they all relate primarily to the will and the affections. There is no blessedness without love. Truth alone cannot bless us. Truth is only the form of love and the instrument of communicating. Therefore we find that all the qualities upon which blessing is predicated are states of the will or heart. Humility, mourning, meekness, the hunger and thirst of the soul, mercifulness, purity of heart, peacemaking, enduring persecution for the sake of the Lord, these are all states of the heart and none of them primarily of the understanding. Some of them partake more or less of the qualities of the intellect, but the point of view is from the affections.

They are also given from the divine love. Mountains represent elevated states of the affections. The fact that our Lord taught His disciples and through them all who will learn of Him, from a mountain, represents an eternal law of the divine order. He always teaches us from love and all His commandments and precepts, all His warnings and punishments, are the form of His love, as it comes to us by the direction of infinite wisdom.

The first blessing is promised to the "*poor in spirit*." The word translated poor means literally to bend or crouch. The word came to mean a beggar, because beggars assumed that attitude in asking alms. When applied to the spirit it means humility; the bending or bowing of the soul before the Lord; the assuming of that attitude before Him which is best adapted to the reception of life from Him.

The Lord cannot establish His kingdom, which is the form and continent of all blessedness in man's nature, unless man will permit Him. This kingdom is planted and built up in the will and unless man yields his will to the Lord He cannot establish His kingdom in it. The Lord cannot force man's will; for if He did, all that was placed in it would not be man's will; it would not be in him. The kingdom of heaven would not be man's, for it only becomes his by his loving or voluntary reception of the principles which constitute it. All that is necessary for the attainment of heaven on man's part, is a willingness to receive life from the Lord. The Lord is always in the effort to give it to him. Poverty of spirit is the state of the affections, or the spiritual aspect of man towards the Lord, which is essential to the reception of life from Him. It consists essentially of two things: first, The consciousness of our absolute destitution in and of ourselves of all those states which constitute the kingdom of heaven; and the utter impossibility of ever gaining them by our own power. We must feel that we are destitute of all spiritual food, clothing, shelter and riches of all kinds. Secondly, It implies the actual bending of our spirits before the Lord and the yielding of ourselves to Him to be guided by Him; to be moulded by Him; to be penetrated by His life; to have our thoughts and affections move in the currents of His order; to dwell in Him and He in us; to be one with Him. This is the first step towards the kingdom of heaven and it is the first thing in every step. It may be feeble, imperfect. But in some form and in some degree, it must be taken before any other can be taken; and just in the degree that it is taken, the kingdom of heaven will come into our possession.

When we begin to take this step, we shall also begin to mourn. We shall see how feeble it is; how much there is in our natures that is opposed to it and that must be given up. The mourning is the effect of this bending of our wills to the Lord. We may not know it. No man will mourn over his spiritual poverty until he sees it and feels his destitution. Pride glories in its imaginary wealth. Humility mourns over its spiritual poverty. But comfort must always come from this mourning, because the Lord can draw near to the soul, when it turns itself to Him and surrenders itself to His guidance. He fulfils His promise "*I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you*." When He begins to establish His kingdom within us, we see by the light of it the discords and deformities and torments of the kingdom of evil and we mourn over it. That very mourning is an effort to turn away from the kingdom of self and the world towards the Lord; and every such effort brings the Lord nearer to us and fills the soul with comfort. It is soothed, elevated, released in some measure from the darkness and bondage to evil and it is filled and strengthened with power and life from the Lord: In this way mourning becomes the efficient cause of the next state of blessedness.

"*Blessed are the meek*." Meekness consists in mildness and gentleness of heart. When we become conscious of our utter destitution of all those spiritual graces which constitute the kingdom of God and prostrate our souls in humiliation before the Lord, open our hearts to the reception of His life and begin to mourn over our spiritual destitution, the Lord can come to us by the influences of His Spirit; and those influences soften the hardness of our hearts and cause this meekness, which is another step to a greater blessing.

All life comes from within. All outward actions and natural delights are the effect of causes that dwell in the soul and act from it. The kingdom of heaven is formed within. But before it can be established in permanent forms and in the fullness of its activities, it must come down to earth. It must rest upon our natural faculties and bring them to act in harmony with it, so that there will be no conflicting elements in our nature; no discord; no opposition. Every faculty from highest to lowest must flow in harmony with every other. When this is done and to the extent that it is done, we come into the possession of the earth; that is, of all our natural faculties. Our natural affections, appetites, knowledges, possessions and delights, become the instruments of the spiritual man; they become his servants and yield a willing obedience to his commands. In doing this they are filled with a life higher and purer than their own.

No man ever gains full possession of his natural faculties and desires from them the blessedness the Lord found to be instrumental in giving him, until they become penetrated with a life higher than their own and the willing instruments of its service. When this takes place the appetites and the lowest desires become purified and elevated and filled with keener delights.

Also let us observe how meekness brings us into this state and puts the earth into our possession. We do not gain this spiritual possession of the natural man by force, by arrogant demands and violent combat. All blessings come from the Lord. They are not wrested from Him by force or by importunity. They are His free gift. All that He asks of us is to receive them and enjoy them. Mildness, gentleness, a disposition to yield to the Lord; to open the door of every faculty for the entrance of His life, is the true state for receiving His blessings and for inheriting the natural as well as spiritual good of every faculty. Thus the three conditions of blessedness follow in order, the succeeding one always being the effect of the preceding one. They begin from the Lord and end on the earth. The first blessing is the kingdom of heaven; the third is the inheritance of the earth. Thus the trinal order and form is complete.

But in reference to those conditions of blessedness which succeed humility, mourning and meekness are passive rather than active; they are states or conditions of receptivity rather than the active and energetic exercise of those states. They are the real conditions upon which all the others are based and from which they flow.

The next blessing is promised to those that hunger and thirst after righteousness. Hunger and thirst are caused by the activities of life within us. The dead body does not hunger or thirst. Even in disease there is often no desire for food. And always a want of appetite is evidence that the body is in an unhealthy state and is not doing its work. On the other hand a good, keen appetite is an indication of health; it is a sign that every organ is doing its work and that there is a constant waste of tissue from the active exercise of its functions. So the person who is spiritually dead, has no hunger and thirst for spiritual meat and drink. He has no taste for spiritual good and truth; and consequently he does not seek for them or receive them, when they are offered to him.

This hunger and thirst are caused by the stirrings of the Divine Life within us. The spiritual faculties begin to awake and act and call for their proper food. How beautifully this law of growth is exemplified in every organic form. The seed does not demand any food so long as it remains in the cold. But when you plant it in the warm earth, the heat of the sun penetrates its inmost forms and wakes them to life. A multitude of hungry mouths are soon opened to eat and drink the substances essential to the formation of the new plant. We see the same principle and the same order in infancy and childhood, as one natural faculty after another awakes to action.

The hunger and thirst after righteousness is the effect of the three preceding states and begins a new series of activities and a new circle of blessings. Hunger and thirst are more active states than the preceding and that shows that the principles of the heavenly kingdom are beginning to do their work. It is a healthy spiritual state and gives sure promise of growth in spiritual life.

The blessing promised to this state is, "*And they shall be filled*" No human being ever need fear that the Lord will not grant him all the righteousness he hungers and thirsts for. The Lord Himself excites the appetite for spiritual good and truth, that He may satisfy it. Men will always fail in getting as much of this world as their natural appetites and lusts crave, but they cannot fail of obtaining all the heavenly good they hunger and thirst for. You cannot ask too largely for the divine bounty. There is no wealth of knowledge, no extent of power, no depth and fullness of peace and blessedness, which it is possible for you to conceive or ask, which the Lord will not confer upon you to the fullest extent of your capacity to receive.

The next blessing is the natural consequent and effect of this. When a man begins to earnestly desire a knowledge of the divine truth and to hunger for a divine good and is filled with it to the degree of his desire, he becomes merciful. The ignorant and wicked are always the most cruel. A man cannot be truly merciful until he has some love for goodness and truth and some knowledge of the divine order, which is righteousness itself. For mercy is not a weak sentimentality that acts from impulse and treats the good and

evil alike, without any discrimination. Mercy consists in doing good to others from love to them; especially: in doing good to the evil and unthankful, without any hope or expectation of reward. But what we do will depend upon their state and not upon ours. When the sole end of any one is to do good according to his ability and the wants of others, when he looks upon the good and evil with only one purpose and that a purpose to do them good, he is merciful and he comes into a state in which he can receive mercy from the Lord. The Lord's mercy is not mere pity. He shows His mercy in the fact that "*He will by no means clear the guilty*" as fully as He does in His longsuffering and loving kindness.

The mercy of the Lord is exercised towards us in removing the obstacles, which obstruct the entrance of His life as fully as in communicating that life. And during our regeneration this is the principal work: it is the six days' labour. The very act of showing mercy to others is the Lord's mercy operating in us and through us and as we give to others we receive from Him. Our evils are removed, a larger measure of the divine good is received and we are introduced into another state; we rise to a higher degree of blessedness and that is "*purity of heart.*"

The will can never be purified while it remains in a passive or quiescent state. We must exercise mercy. As we begin to love others and the currents of the divine life flow into this will, they purify it. They make it more sensitive to that life. They raise it up from death and expand and exalt its powers.

The will and the understanding are intimately related. In a perfect state they are one, so that what the will loves the understanding sees to be true. The will is the life of the understanding and the understanding gets all its power to see from it. The true way to elevate the understanding and give it new power, is to purify the heart. Men do not know that it is evil, which blinds them or so perverts their understandings that they cannot see the truth. When we are filled with the love of the world and self, we can see nothing but self and the world in anything. We are blind to everything else. We cannot see God in anything; not even in His holy Word. It is in accordance with the experience of every one, that nothing so clears the intellect and sharpens its vision, as a more ardent and devoted affection for the subject we desire to understand. The will holds the intellectual eye upon the subject, gives it a kind of microscopic power to enter into all its details and sufficient breadth to grasp its compass and penetration to enter into its sentient principles.

No human being can see God if he does not love Him and just in the degree of his love for Him or his purity of heart he will see Him. He will see Him in himself, in all the duties and labours and trials and blessings of his daily life. He will see Him in the material world, in the faces and deeds of his brother man and especially in His holy Word. The reason that men see so little of God in the Bible, is not because it is so obscurely written, but from want of purity of heart.

In our progress from one blessing to another, we have risen until we can see God. We have come within sight of all blessedness; for to be able to see God in everything is to come within the reach of the source of all goodness and truth. When we can see God in whatever form He manifests Himself to us, we see the highest there is in that form, whether it is the form of nature or of man, of scientific or spiritual truth, the works or the word of man. There is but one step more and that is to make that knowledge our own by life. The perfect circle of blessings culminates in this step.

We become peace makers or peace doers and the children of God. We not only see Him, but we become like Him. We are begotten into His image; we grow into His likeness; we are one with Him.

There can be no peace to the wicked. There can be no peace except in conformity to the divine will. Nor can anyone become a peacemaker or doer in any other way than by willing, thinking and acting according to the divine order. Men may try to silence the questionings of their own natures; they may attempt to ignore the eternal laws of the divine order or evade them; they may devise systems by their own intelligence, that will favour their own selfish and worldly ends and oppose the divine purposes, but they will never find peace or make peace by doing it. They could far more easily check the rush and silence the roar of Niagara by the force of their own reason. Men may cry Peace, peace, in Church and State and to their own souls, but there will be no peace until they hunger and thirst after righteousness and become so

filled with it and purified by it, that they can see God in the Church and State and in themselves and all the affairs of human life. Then they will be so conformed to the divine image and likeness that they will become the children of God. They can call the Lord Father and they will love to work with Him for the up-building of His kingdom. They stand fairly, openly and squarely on His side. The Lord's friends are his friends and the Lord's enemies are his enemies.

There can be no mistaking him now. So long as any man is on the side of evil and falsity, he will not be persecuted for righteousness' sake, or for the sake of the Lord. He will be restless, opposed and combated by those who desire to gain their own selfish ends in opposition to him; the wicked are like the sea, continually casting up mire and dirt. But they are united in their opposition to goodness and the Lord.

When the lineaments of our heavenly parentage begin to appear in our face and speech and actions, then the line is distinctly drawn and the combat commences in earnest. It takes men a long time to find out, that they cannot serve God and mammon. But when they really begin to see God and become His children, every evil and falsity in their own natures, in the world and in the hells, will assault them. They will revile them and persecute them and say all manner of evil against them. But instead of injuring them, they will be the instruments of blessing them. When we have been born from above, and are becoming the children of God, every assault upon us by falsity and evil is a blessing. It shows their presence in our natures and reveals their true nature. The most venomous serpent is as harmless as a dead stick while it is stiff and torpid with cold. But when it is warmed into life it shows its true nature; it assaults and would destroy us. But when we have become the sons of God we shall conquer in every conflict. Evil and falsity will be put away and we shall gain power and purity and largeness of heart; we shall see God more clearly. As the kingdom of evil is overcome and put under our feet, the kingdom of heaven is more firmly formed within us and we come more fully into its possession.

The circle of blessings ends in the same state in which they begin, though we may be much farther advanced in it. The knowledge that we are full of evils and falsities, which are continually saying all manner of evil against us; the consciousness that there is that in our natures which wars against God and reviles everything that is pure and good, begets humility. We yield more fully to the Lord and He takes fuller possession of us and plants His kingdom within us more firmly. Then we mourn with a keener grief over our destitution and separation from God. This softens our natures as showers the earth and makes the natural man more pliant and yielding to the influx of heavenly life and the Lord takes possession of us more fully. That awakens a new activity in all our faculties; we hunger and thirst after righteousness and as we receive it and become filled with it, we become more active in doing good to others. As we exercise true charity towards others, we receive it from the Lord. Then our hearts become purified; a higher and more ardent love glows in them and that love purifies the understanding and elevates it into clearer light and gives us the power to see the divine truth more clearly. The Lord reveals Himself to us; He comes to us in larger measures of His Spirit; we get out of the darkness and discords of falsity and sin. Peace begins to reign within and around and we become the children of God. Now we can be persecuted for His sake. Before, all we suffered was for the sake of evil; but now it is for the sake of the Lord and His righteousness. Now, we stand more distinctly and squarely on the Lord's side; we are persecuted as His children and we shun evils as sins against Him. And just in the degree we do this, our reward becomes great in the kingdom of heaven.

So the cycle of ascent will continue to eternity. The Lord will soon subdue our enemies and put them under our feet; all active opposition to the reception of His life will be overcome; all conflict and discord will cease. There will be no more pain, nor sorrow, nor crying; the wicked will cease from troubling and the weary will be at rest. But this rest will not be the rest of slumber and inaction. It will be the peace of more glowing activities, flowing forth in more perfect harmony to the attainment of their ends. It will be peace within, peace with all around and peace with the Lord. Thus we shall go on, ever on, through eternity nearer to men, to angels and to the Lord; the kingdom of heaven becoming more fully formed within us and according to its measure within us we shall enter into its peace and blessedness.

13. The Conserving Power of Heavenly Blessedness

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men" Matt 5:13

"You are the salt of the earth" The Lord was addressing His disciples as the representatives and embodiments of those principles, which are the creating and conserving elements in all human society. In this declaration, He announces a great law of the divine order. Let us see what that law is and how it applies to human relations and contributes to human blessedness.

All creative and conserving forces act from within. They are causes, phenomena are effects. The higher creates the lower and preserves it. The soul is the saving salt of the body. The spiritual world is the proximate creative cause and the instrumental means of preserving the material world. Sever the connexion between them and the material universe would vanish from existence, as the morning mists disappear before the rising sun. The Lord creates and preserves all things. Preservation is perpetual creation. His life, like the river which issues from the throne of God, *"everything will live wherever the river goes"* The principles of that life preserve the heavens and they are the saving salt of human society.

But these creating and conserving forces have no abstract existence. They originate in the Lord and they are embodied in human beings. They are angels and spirits, they are men and women upon the earth. We may consider them abstractly, as truth, purity, holiness, love; but they can be found only in the divine and in human minds, as the saving quality of salt can be found only in the salt itself.

Therefore we must look, first to the Lord and then to His disciples for the saving influences which preserve all human institutions and human society itself.

The disciples of the Lord and all men, are His disciples who learn of Him, are called "salt," for two reasons, corresponding to the two uses of salt. Salt gives relish to our food and preserves it from decay. How insipid and even repulsive are many of the most nutritious substances without salt!

The love of the truth is the salt of the mind. Affection gives zest to our appetite for the truth. No man will listen to a truth unless he has some relish for it. The cause of that relish is affection. Where this is wanting, the mind has no openness for its reception. It does not take hold of the truth. If a man reads a book, or listens to a discourse, without any love for the truths they contain, they do not penetrate his nature and become a part of it. The truth lies in the courts of the memory. It is something to be talked about; to be looked at and admired, it may be as men admire a picture. But the vital forces of the mind do not take hold of it and incorporate it into the organic forms of the soul. Affection gives the same relish to our spiritual food that salt does to our natural food.

Truth is infinite. The fields of knowledge which lie open for our exploration are boundless and yet the majority of men and women are content to go round in the ruts of a very small circle. They have no desire to explore new worlds. It is difficult to convince many persons that there is anything worth knowing, which they have not learned. Their minds close like the shell of an oyster at the approach of any new light, especially if it relates to spiritual things. The little world they dwell in is the universe to them. Their life is a mechanical one. Their intellect is but little more than a higher form of instinct. They are the tools which the intelligent use, the hewers of wood and drawers of water, the intellectual and moral beasts of burden. There is no zest, no aspiration, no progress in their lives. They have no salt in themselves.

But affection not only gives zest to our appetite for the truth and takes hold of it; it keeps hold; it penetrates its substance; it seizes upon its minutest particles; it becomes one with it. How soon the most important truth will drop out of the memory, or recede to some dusty and unused closet in the mind, when we cease to love it, or use it! How it vivifies and strengthens us when we do love it!

Truth alone will not save us. Truth is not salt. It is only the gross substance in which it resides. The salt of love is its soul, its savour. It is difficult for us to keep the mind from being misled and mistaking the formal and instrumental for the substantial and real. There is no virtue in any science, natural attainment, or

earthly possession, to save the individual man or human society. It requires something higher, something purer, something more powerful and constant in its operation.

The earth is the natural mind. It stands for man himself, as an inhabitant of the earth, with all those desires, affections and intellectual principles and human activities, which find their proper field and limit in this life. These natural affections and intellectual principles are the earth in which man's distinctly spiritual faculties are planted; they are as the body to the soul. As it is man's spirit which organizes and preserves his material body; so the higher degrees of the mind, which are born from above, are the saving influences of the natural mind and of all human relations and activities.

Take labour as an example. What organizes it? What keeps the currents of life flowing into it? What springs feed it? What influences elevate it from becoming a mere drudgery and a curse. What preserves its existence even? Some will say necessity. Who would labour, if he was not compelled by his wants? It cannot be denied, that multitudes are scourged to their daily toil by the whip of necessity. Want is the sternest of taskmasters and it is one of the most pitiful sights, which the eye of infinite love looks down upon, to see so many human beings working like vile slaves, when they might be the Lord's freemen; working to appease the animal desire of hunger, or to gratify some natural lust, when they might make their labour an instrument of loving use and a means of their own spiritual culture. But want does not organize labour. Want does not elevate it from mere physical servitude. Want seizes its crust and hastens to indulgence. It does not forecast; it does not economise; it does not invent; it does not discover. Want did not invent the loom and the engine and the steamship. The great inventors, the great pioneers in every form of human progress, have spent their money like water. They have braved want and shame and contempt. They were moved by some impulse from within. The savage does not invent.

It is also the salt of human use that preserves. The unused ship rots at the wharf. The deserted dwelling soon crumbles to dust. The most complicated machine which does not answer the purpose for which it was constructed, is consumed by rust, or cast into the furnace. What would become of our railroads and steamships and factories and telegraphs, if we could not use them? Multitudes work from necessity; but if there were no higher motives, man's necessities would continue to diminish until they were reduced to his mere animal wants.

But if we look to man's social relations, we shall see the truth we are considering still more closely exemplified. What preserves human society in its various forms, civil, social and domestic? It is not the desires, the ambitions, the hunger for human sympathy and companionship. There is no saving element in them. Governments are not maintained by politicians or kings. The idea has generally prevailed, that the mass of the people were opposed to order and government and that the rulers alone were the great conservators of civil order. But it is not so. The salt which preserves civil governments, is not the sceptre of a king, or an act of Congress. It is a vital force in the body of the people. It is the "saving health" of justice, order and peace, as it is embodied in men.

The same law works for the preservation of the family and society. What saves the family but purity of heart? There may be but little of it. But there is more saving power in the little finger of one virtue, than in the loins of the strongest lust. Those who despise the virtues still fear them.

Why does vice skulk and shun the face of day? Why do wicked men put on the appearance of goodness? There is an old saying, which answers the question, "Hypocrisy is the homage which vice pays to virtue." There is a public opinion, often unseen, often unexpressed, sometimes forgotten by wicked men, which often slumbers and its slumber is so profound that it seems to be dead. It may be drugged; it may be buried beneath a mountain of rubbish: but it will arouse and assert its power.

The same principles operate still more clearly in the Church. Truth does not save the Church; organizations and politics and rituals and liturgies and ecclesiastical forms do not save it. They may remain, like the fossils of the primeval, geologic ages; and they only remain because they have become petrified: for where there is life, there will be growth, there will be change, the ebb and flow of opinions and versatile activities.

It does not require any salt to preserve a stone. The most delicate meats will remain unchanged for ages, if they are kept frozen. The Church seems to be preserved in this way sometimes.

But its normal condition is one of life and a genuine spiritual life is the saving salt in all ages. Churches change, but those principles which constitute the Church remain. Some man, or some society of men, who are the embodiments of these principles, will be raised up at the critical moment, to become the seeds of a new Church, a new civilization.

The history of humanity, both in its civil and ecclesiastical form shows this. When those virtues and spiritual graces which constitute the salt of human society have lost their savour, the nation or the church perishes. But another springs from it, or is raised up from some new source. The Lord never loses His hold upon humanity. Abraham, Moses, David, appear at the critical time; and, when there was no human arm to save, the Lord Himself clothed His divine with a human nature, that He might provide a medium of communication with man, which no power could sever. His human nature, now glorified, is the medium of transmitting His divine life to men. By means of it, He brings His life, which is the saving health of all nations, down to earth. He has embodied it in words; and the words themselves have become embodied in permanent material forms.

The apostles were the living instruments by which He effected this work. They heard His divine words; they proclaimed them throughout the land, they committed them to writing and thus they stood at the fountainhead of those influences which have become the salt of the earth.

The Church has ever been and will ever continue to be, the saving power in human society. Corrupt as it has often been; few in numbers compared with the great mass of humanity as it has been and will continue to be, it is yet the salt of human society. It preserves governments; it preserves literature, art, science. It is the soul, of which these are but the body. The Church, directly and indirectly, is the moving impulse to everything, which is good and true in human life. It may not seem so, for the combined operations of all the sects dwindle into insignificance compared with the armies of fighters and workers which the State employs. The money used to carry on her operations, is nothing but the crumbs which fall from the table of civil life; but her influence is more potent for good than all these natural agencies, which make so much noise and occupy so much attention. The Church is the heart of humanity. It may be a feeble heart; it may be a cold heart, but such as it is, it is the vital force in human life.

Demolish our churches, edifices, disband our church organizations, abolish the office of our ministers, silence the voice of the religious press and let all the affection, the thought, the labour, the money, which is now employed in spiritual uses, be turned to natural and worldly affairs, let our ministers become lawyers and doctors and financiers and teachers of science, let the little army of men who are now enrolled under the banners of the Lord and who must depend upon others for their support, turn their energies to trade, art, commerce, manufactures and the preservation of human society would be impossible. There would be universal corruption.

Abolish the churches and all organized effort for spiritual instruction and use in this city and what would be the value of property in twenty, in ten, or even five, years? The city would not be habitable. It would be among cities and in the body politic, what the unburied dead of a battlefield are to an army. Every form of human society would turn to corruption. No trust would be sacred; no right would be respected; no virtue would be regarded; no human life would be safe. Vice would breed corruption; every foul lust would multiply and breed pestilence; violence would rage and death would reign supreme. Why have Babylon and Nineveh and the populous cities of a former civilization perished. Because there was not sufficient salt of spiritual life to save them? They perished, as Sodom and Gomorrah perished, because ten righteous men could not be found in their midst; and every city and every form of civilization, will perish from the same cause.

If every building for religious worship was razed to the ground and every means of spiritual instruction and culture could be abolished, or suffer to fail for the means of support, the men who own property in the city, the nameless multitude of rich men and women, would find it for their worldly interest to rebuild the

churches, support ministers and supply church organizations with sufficient means to reach every man, woman and child, with the light and saving power of pure spiritual influences.

They could not invest their money in any form, in which it would yield them so large a percentage.

It seems strange that men, that good men, who have some knowledge of spiritual truth and some desire for the spiritual good of humanity, should not see this more clearly than they do. It is strange that we do not see, that the highest and the most interior, are the most precious interests of humanity. Those who work for them are touching the secret springs of human well being. They are putting their hands on the helm of human progress; they are purifying the fountain, which feeds the currents of human life. They are providing and administering the salt, which is to save human society.

Let us apply this truth to ourselves. We believe that the New Church is a new dispensation of Divine truth; that there has been committed to it a higher form of spiritual truth than was before known on the earth. We believe that this truth and the life that must come with it, was necessary to the salvation of men, to the preservation and perpetuity of the Lord's kingdom on the earth. They are the salt which is to preserve the Church and everything that is precious in human life. Some of you will say today, that these truths are the richest treasures you possess. They have saved you from doubt, from infidelity; they have saved your spiritual life. You would not have them blotted from your existence and lose the power of regaining them, for the wealth of the whole city. You believe that these truths are of more value to humanity, than all the gold and silver, the art and science of the world. You believe these truths will do for others all that they have done for you. In a word, you believe, that these truths are to human society, what salt is to the food we wish to preserve and to eat.

Now judging us by our own standards, what is the greatest work we are doing? Of all the work you do, of the influence you exert, which will live the longest, and be the most conducive to human good? Many of you, all of you I hope, are engaged in some useful employment, as you all ought to be. Is it not true that the time, the money, the influence, you spend in sustaining the Church, in learning these divine truths and providing for their communication to others, will have a more powerful and lasting influence, for your own good and the good of humanity, than all else you do? Some of you occupy important positions and carry on large and useful operations; but how do they compare with the Church in their saving power over men?

When you look at the spiritual needs of men, needs which the churches do not supply; when you think of the amazing power of a higher form of spiritual truth ; when you look back upon your own history and see how many clouds of doubt these blessed truths have dispersed from your minds; when you reflect upon the strength and comfort they have given you, as you have seen those who are dear to you as your own soul, close their eyes upon this world and depart never to return, can you conceive any way in which you can exert so much healing, saving, elevating and life giving influence, as in communicating this saving salt, of all that is most precious in human life to others.

These words apply to every good man and woman and to every society of every church, according to the nature of the truths they teach. But they apply with peculiar emphasis to us, judging us by our own claims, we occupy a most important position and we have the means of doing a most important work.

Let us do it efficiently and well. We ought to enlarge and intensify our influence. Let us not be as salt which has lost its savour. The work of communicating these precious truths to men must be done. If we will not do it, the Lord will raise up others. If we have no love for these heavenly principles, we shall cast them out and tread them under our feet; and we in turn, shall ourselves be cast out and trodden under foot. No man and woman ever had a grander opportunity or more abundant means for doing good than we have. Let us not make the fatal mistake of suffering them to pass unimproved.

14. The Blessedness of Shining

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Matt 5:14-16

HEAVENLY principles are good in every form and variety of application. They are the conserving savour of everything that is precious in human society. They are the vital element in business, in social, civil and domestic life. They are also a light in a dark world. They are the rays of a sun above nature, which shines with a clear and steadfast light and reveal to us another world, substantial, pure and, glorious and show us the true nature and significance of this.

The sun of this world gives us no spiritual light. Nature is as dark and silent as the grave concerning everything above herself, until her forms and qualities are viewed in a, higher light than comes from her own shining. As the various objects which fill the landscape, have no form and no colour and no existence even to the eye, until light from some higher source shines upon them ; so the whole material universe, including the sun itself, says nothing and is nothing, to the spiritual mind until light from the spiritual sun shines upon them.

"You are the light of the world." Men and women who become the embodiment of these heavenly principles are light shining in a dark place. The Lord Himself is the sun; the Bible in its letter is as the moon; and those who receive its truths into their minds and try to live according to, them, are the stars and the glowing fires and the shining flames which give light to human minds. Take away from literature all the spiritual truth embodied in it and blot out from the human mind all it has received from prophets and apostles and from the Word made flesh and the natural mind would be as dark and rayless as the earth herself would be if the sun and stars were destroyed.

We make a great mistake in supposing that man has some innate inherent light in himself; and that the Lord gives him more to make it brighter. We have no light in ourselves. We have no knowledge, no idea of spiritual, or even of natural things, which is not revealed to us.

We become spiritual lights in the degree that we receive light from the Lord and transmit or reflect it. We must get the light before we can shine and we must shine before we can become a light to others.

We can have the light and not be a light. A bed of coal has the light. In its dark substance are imprisoned the sunbeams of many ages. How many creatures of sunny days lie buried in the earth! How long they have reposed there giving no sign of their existence! So the light that is in us may be darkness. It is not a city set on a hill. It is buried beneath the earth of the natural mind. What a blessing to humanity has been the discovery of coal. It lights our streets; it illuminates our dwellings; it gives warmth and comfort to us in the dark nights and cold days of winter. It is a power also which moves the vast machinery of human society.

The letter of the Sacred Scriptures is much like a stratum of coal. Its genuine light is in the substance of Jewish history and ritual; it lies buried deep beneath the traditions and glosses of men. It crops out here and there and men use it for warmth and light, but its vast strata are still buried beneath mountains of natural thought.

"A city set on a hill cannot be hidden." Truth comes to us from the Lord, who is the spiritual sun; but it comes from various directions and in many forms. It comes as a city in which the various qualities of one idea or fact are related to another idea or fact as one house in a city is related in another. When truth is formed into doctrine it becomes a city of the soul in which our thoughts and affections dwell. We can see their definite relations to each other and we can pass from one to another. Such a doctrine has its walls and gates and streets and if it is a heavenly city it has its river of life, its tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruits and the glory of God lightens it.

Every man has his doctrine. Every man builds a city for himself in which he dwells, or he seeks to enter the Holy City, which comes down from God out of heaven. Some build it on a hill where it cannot be hid; others build it in the ground where it cannot be seen. The doctrines of spiritual truth in many minds are like the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii, or like the catacombs in Rome. They are buried beneath the lava of burning passions and the ashes of consuming lusts. The weeds of evil and false principles have grown over them. And the soil of a merely natural earthly life covers them. They give no light or shelter or comfort to any human being.

Our city of spiritual truth is set on a hill, when it is elevated into the affections. The affections dwell in it; they warm it and illuminate it and shine through it. When a truth upon any subject becomes the embodiment of the affections it cannot be hid. This is especially true of spiritual truth when the life of heaven dwells in it. No one can conceal a heavenly truth when his heart is in it. His face will shine with it as the face of Moses shone when he came down from the mount. The truth will drop from his lips. He cannot meet a man in the street without mentioning it. He cannot write a letter to a friend without hinting it. "*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*" If you have gained any new spiritual light and have set it on a hill, if you have any love for it "*it cannot be hid.*" The Lord does not say you will not be likely to hide it; you will be disposed to make it known; He says you cannot hide it. Such a light cannot be hid.

Where the love is strong and the light is clear, the whole man becomes a city and his light is seen in everything he does. It shines in his actions; it shines in his work; it shines in his rest. He does useful work and he does it well. He becomes kinder, gentler, purer. He carries a benediction with him wherever he goes. Everyone feels it; everyone sees it. They cannot help it.

It is not the great geniuses alone who shine, the men who can write forcibly and speak eloquently, but everyone who is a city set on a hill. A woman who has, who is this light, will shine wherever she is. Every room in the house will be more luminous for her presence. She will shine in the kitchen and in the parlour. The table will be brighter and the food sweeter, for her presence. The clouds will clear up from troubled faces at her approach. Doubts will become dissipated and she will stand, even in the midst of suffering and death, as clear and serene as a star through the parting folds of a cloud.

Can the kindled flame withhold its light? Can the evening star cease to twinkle in lovely beauty, like a gem upon the brow of night? Can the sun cease to shine?

No more can we, if we have any genuine spiritual truth in our minds and in our hearts.

If we have a truth and men do not see it, it is because we have hid it under a bushel of our own natural conceit. We have put it out with our fears, or more likely we have not lighted it at all. We may have the candle, but we have not love enough to light it. "*Men do not light a candle and put it under a bushel.*" They cannot do it. If it is lighted it will shine. It cannot be covered up.

You learn a new spiritual truth. That truth is a candle. It may lie in your memory, like a candle in a box, for years and give no light. You may talk of your candles, you may exhibit them and boast of their illuminating power, but they will not shine until they are lighted. And they can only be lighted by heat and heat is love. That is what lights our candles.

If we love a truth, we have no desire to cover it up; on the contrary, we wish to make it known, we put it on the candlestick of some good deed and it gives light to all in the house. Notice the positive declaration of the Lord. He says, "*Men do not light a candle and put it under a bushel.*" They do put it on a candlestick. There is no doubt or uncertainty about what they will do. If we have got a new candle and try to conceal it, it shows that we do not love the truth. We have not lighted it. Here is a test of our love for the truth.

There can be no doubt but we do cover up our truths and try to keep them from shining. And we do it in many ways. One covers them with the measure of fear, fear of ridicule, of appearing singular, of losing caste; another covers them up with a falsity. He puts an error over them; he smothers them with a bad habit; he puts them into the damp and musky atmosphere of some natural lust and they give no light.

The bushel is of all kinds and forms and qualities. But it is always some natural evil or falsity, that is dark and obstructs the light.

This light is an internal and spiritual one. It is within us; and if it shines at all, it must be through our speech or deeds, or by that more subtle power which we call our influence. If our speech is false we cover the light with that bushel; if our deeds are evil we cover the light with them; if our influence is impure, like the standing pool which breeds miasma and poisons the air, we cover our light, or the means of shining, with that. How many ways there are of smothering the flame and making the light that is in us darkness!

There are just as many ways of shining. Every useful work will serve as a candlestick for a heavenly truth. The candle is a spiritual truth, which has been lighted by love in the heart. This candle and this light are within us. Before it can give any light to others, it must shine through the natural mind and radiate out from our deeds and speech.

Some men, good men, are like a dark lantern. The light comes out only by a narrow orifice and in one direction. They can concentrate a great light upon a given spot, but they do not give any general light.

Others have no concentration. They are like an alabaster vase, they are translucent, but not transparent. You can see that they have light within, but it is so feeble and diffused that it amounts to but little more than a whiteness. You cannot read by it; you cannot work by it; you cannot guide your footsteps by it. It gives no light which others can use. There is no out flowing, no radiance. Others shine with a fitful light; they are all ablaze today and make everything luminous around them. Tomorrow they will be dark, like a lamp without oil. They are like the revolving lights in a lighthouse, casting a flood of light far over the sea of life at one time and then they are all dark. Some wax and wane like the moon and some, a few are steady as the sun.

Some again, shine in spots. They have some bright and some dark places in them. The work of regeneration consists in the creation of the spiritual degree of the mind, in bringing the natural into correspondence with it, so that the love and the truth of the Spirit will flow unobstructed and unperverted through it. Before regeneration commences, the natural man perverts and suffocates this spiritual light. The natural plane of our faculties is to spiritual life as a dead wall is to the light. The Lord puts windows in it by giving us genuine truths from the Word. But they are covered with the dust of falsity and twisted by lusts, so that but little light can struggle through them. Evil habits are dark spots which sometimes cover their whole face and it is the work of a lifetime to remove them. Some of these windows are like ground glass. The surface is so scratched by the sharp contacts with natural falsities that they give no distinct image. Others are so coloured by evils that the pure white light of divine truth assumes all colours. The truth we have learned is a stained window.

As we shun evils, the medium becomes more transparent. We shine with a clearer and steadier light. As the work goes on, all the imperfections in the natural medium are gradually removed. The dark spots disappear; the perverting forms are changed; the discoloration disappears and the whole man becomes like a pure crystal. Such are the angels. How their faces shine! What splendour flows from their whole forms!

To acquire this transparency is the work of this life. It is hard work, because we prize those imperfections, which distort and change the light, more than we do the transparency. You cannot see a perfectly transparent body. You only see the light. The natural man desires to be seen. He likes gaudy colours and even prefers his own darkness to the clear light of heaven.

But when the true light begins to shine through, it tends to make the medium more transparent. So we have cause for hope if a little true light gets through. How differently men shine! Some shine in their faces, some in their speech, others in their deeds; they can do what they cannot express in words and there is no loveliness in the face, which is prophetic of the beautiful deed. It is a great attainment to shine with heavenly light in any form.

There is a great difference in the quality of the light men transmit. With some it is clear and cold. There is frost in it. It dazzles, but does not warm us. It is beautiful and we are attracted by its splendour, but it does not quicken. We shiver while we admire. In others the light is warm and ruddy, though not so clear. There is a pioneer in their presence, which moves and quickens us. It is not so much what they say or do. An unseen influence flows from them and our minds grow clearer by it; it draws us away from evil and falsity and by some magnetic influence brings us within the sphere of the divine order.

All these forms and qualities of light are good in their place and degree and are worthy of the most persistent labour to obtain. Is it not a blessed privilege and attainment to shine, to give light to others? If the sun and the stars knew what they were doing, how much happiness they were conferring, it must make them happy. To be a light wherever we go, a little ray even which leads to the source of all light; to make the house and the store and the shop and the journey, a little brighter for our presence, is it not a blessed privilege?

You are in doubt upon some great question of spiritual life; you wander to and fro and you turn here and you turn there, without relief. You meet a stranger, it may be, who has light and some word he drops gives you a clue to the truth; and the whole world is henceforth changed. Someone puts a book or tract in your hand, or invites you to hear a discourse and your fears are dispelled, your doubts are removed and your faces are set towards the light. Such instances are occurring every day. Is it not a blessed privilege to be able to do this? The word you speak today makes the path of someone brighter through his whole life.

We shine by our example. "*Let your light so shine that men may see your good works.*" Words are fitful and are easily misunderstood. They are like our artificial lights. But the example of a good life is like the sun; it shines with clear and steadfast light; it never deceives; it cannot be misunderstood; it shines when we do not think of it; it shines when we have passed on into the other life. How many men and women of pure and noble natures, who have lived in past ages and have laboured with unselfish devotion for the good of humanity, have become like stars in the firmament, which gives light and joy to us!

There is another motive for shining than the good we give or gain by it. When we love any one sincerely, we desire to honour them and to see them honoured by others. Our Lord sets it before us as a motive for shining, that men may glorify our Father which is in heaven. Every Christian ought to set an example, which will lead men to reverence and honour the Lord. They ought to be so honest in their dealings with others; so truthful in their speech; and so faithful in their work, that others would notice their good works and be led to see the beauty of a heavenly life and to taste the delights of His service, which alone is perfect freedom and perfect blessedness.

15. How Heavenly Blessedness is Lost

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;" Matt 6:29

THE Lord is in the perpetual effort to restrain us from evil and lead us to good. His infinite mercy regards nothing but our highest good; and His infinite wisdom is exercised for no other end than its attainment. For this He reveals Himself to man in the Sacred Scriptures. To effect this purpose, He has given us prohibitions and commandments, warnings and entreaties; He has sent prophets and kings. To save us from death and hell and to lead us to life and heaven, He came into this world, took upon Himself our nature; He taught us; He suffered for us; He died for us; He rose for us and lives for us, today and forever. The divine words we are about to consider were spoken by Him to His disciples to effect this end in them and in all who should hear or read them through all time. They are living words and He is a living Lord and Saviour and He says to every one of us today, "*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;*"

These words, like many of the Lord's commandments, are negative. They contain a prohibition. The words themselves are material and they express material ideas. Treasures, moth, rust, thieves, earth, laying up,

corrupting, breaking through and stealing, are all names of material objects and actions. All words are material and in their origin all stood for material ideas. But these words contain spiritual and divine ideas. They were spoken by a Divine Being to spiritual beings. Let us try to learn their spiritual and divine import.

What is the spiritual and divine idea of "*treasures*?" You all know what the material idea is. Money, stocks, houses, lands, food, clothing, tools, office, friends, every earthly thing that can minister to our wants, our comfort, or delight. So also, are mechanical skill, science, art, culture, power, honour, moral worth and all virtues which commend us to others; and all the social and domestic relations, which adorn our life in this world and make it noble and happy and good.

But these may all be possessed and enjoyed and not touch us as spiritual beings. They might be possessed and enjoyed if there were no other life and no other world than this and if the end of our life in this world was the end of our existence.

There are treasures distinctly spiritual. They consist of all those truths which relate to us as spiritual beings; which teach us our real nature and destiny and show us how to attain it; which reveal heaven and the Lord to us. The Jews were called rich because they held in their earthly possession, all the infinite treasures of the divine truth contained in their sacred books. We are rich for the same reason. We are richer than they, because we have the Gospels and the Revelation. Are not the treasures contained in Sacred Scripture, the most precious of anything in this world? Do they not give value to every other treasure? All truths which teach us the nature of the Lord and the sure way of attaining heaven; and all influences and attainments which help us on our way to conjunction with Him, are treasures; they are of more value than the whole world. "*What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul.*" The universal idea of a treasure is what we love. The affections give value to every earthly and heavenly possession. When we possess what we love, we are rich, however destitute we may be of everything else. When we fail to gain what we love, we are poor, though we may possess all things besides. But all these treasures, spiritual, natural, material, may be laid up in the earth.

The material idea of earth every child understands. But this could not be the Lord's idea, or, at least, it could not be His only idea. What is the spiritual and divine meaning of earth? Our Lord declares "*that the kingdom of heaven is within us.*" By which He evidently means that all the principles, which constitute the kingdom of heaven, are embodied in man's spiritual nature. Man is a universe in himself. He is the embodiment of all the forms, forces and principles that exist in the material and spiritual worlds. He looks in all directions; he has relation to all beings and things; he can be acted upon by all substances and forces. The kingdom of earth, as well as heaven, must therefore be in him. That part of man's nature is called the earth which has relation to natural and material things. All his affections and thoughts and knowledge, that are limited to this world and this life, constitute his spiritual earth.

"*To lay up treasures on the earth*" consists in loving the things of this world and this life alone and in loving them only for the service they can render us in this life. Man receives life only in that plane of his nature which he exercises. If he brings into activity only his lower, sensual nature, the appetites and passions he possesses in common with the animal, he lays up his treasures there. There it is where he deposits them, holds them, enjoys them. His thoughts, affections, knowledge, delights, are all stored up there. He lives in the merely animal plane of his nature. The principle is the same, whatever part of the natural man is exercised. He is of the earth; his treasures are laid up on the earth; he lives upon the earth. No affection rises above it. If his thoughts ever ascend to heaven, like birds upon the wing, sooner or later they come down to the earth and find their rest, their home and their life with their corresponding affections.

We may lay up our spiritual as well as natural treasures upon the earth. We do this when we make spiritual and heavenly truths subservient to merely natural ends. The man who uses the church, his knowledge of spiritual truth and the worship of the Lord, merely to advance his earthly interests, or as an avenue to social and civil distinction, or to secure the attainment of honour and power, lays up his spiritual treasures on the earth. The natural service they can render him is the only quality that gives them any value to him.

The affections are the treasure house of the soul. They send out their tendrils and clasp every object and possession they love. They open their doors to it. They hide it in their secret chambers. They watch it with sleepless vigilance. They give up their life to it; they dwell with it; they become it.

But their vigilance is of no avail. They cannot protect and preserve their treasures. The man who lays up his treasures on the earth, deposits them in the midst of unseen and powerful enemies, against whose cunning and persistent power there is no protection; and therefore our Lord, in His infinite mercy, warns us against the danger of their certain loss.

These enemies are the "moth," the "rust," and "thieves," and they symbolize all the forces that rob man of his pleasures and consume them. The "moth" consumes his garments. The "rust," or more properly, the "eating," the "gnawing" for that is what the word our Lord used really means, everything he calls good. His gold and silver and iron; his fruits and meats. It has a more general meaning than rust. Rust consumes the metals; but this gnawing feeds upon everything. It is an invisible and ever present enemy, always wasting the treasures to which it can gain access.

Thieves do their work not less secretly, but with more violence. They break through all our bolts and bars; they unlock our safes; they come when we least expect them and steal our treasures. We leave them, as we think, in safety and lie down to sleep. We wake in the morning and they are gone.

The "garments" which the moths eat, are truths concerning spiritual things, which we have laid up in our memories, in the vain hope that they will be wedding garments that will clothe us and under cover of which we shall finally gain entrance to the marriage supper of the Lamb. This is a common and most fatal mistake. It is the central falsity in the Christian Church that man is saved by faith. And by faith is meant belief in certain dogmas. Multitudes put this garment away in the memory, the wardrobe of the soul and think their salvation is secure. But the natural memory is on the earth. All the truth in the Bible would not save a soul while it remained in the memory alone. Truth is of no more service to a man as a spiritual being, while it remains in the memory only, than garments are of use to the body while they remain in the wardrobe. It is of no consequence how warm and fine and beautiful and well fitting and serviceable, the garments may be in themselves; they are of no use to the body until they clothe it. So even angelic and divine truths are of no use to the soul until they are taken out of the memory and the thoughts and affections become clothed with them. When the cry is made, "*Behold, the Bridegroom comes!*" they only will be admitted to the marriage who have on the wedding garments. No cry of "*Lord! Lord!*" will avail them. The Lord may have taught in their streets, but He never gained access to their houses, much less to their hearts. He never knew them. If they make haste to clothe themselves with their unworn spiritual garments, they will find them consumed by the moths.

The moth eats only unused garments and the only security against spiritual moths is use. No chests of fragrant cedar and no pungent spices or gums, afford any security against them. They must be worn. They must clothe heavenly affections and not cloak infernal ones. They must be kept shining with the light and pure with the life of heaven and in constant motion with heavenly use.

But what are moths? They are worms. Spiritual moths are those evil affections which destroy spiritual truths, as material moths destroy material garments. Evil affections clothe themselves with spiritual truths, either to conceal themselves the more effectually to do their wicked work, or to feed upon them. There is no real belief in a truth we do not love. And when the love is wanting the moths are in continual effort to destroy it. They insinuate themselves into every thought and idea; they destroy its texture; they change its form; they turn it from a living, flowing, beautiful fabric into dust.

Every garment of truth deposited in the natural memory is laid upon the earth and placed in the midst of all our evil affections. No one would put away a valuable material garment into an old chest or closet filled with moths. We are too wise and prudent to commit such a folly. But we put the shining garments of the Divine Humanity, from whose very hem, when touched by the hand of a living faith, virtue flows forth to heal and save, into the dark and dusty corners and the damp and foul closets of the mind, where crawling passions breed unmolested and consume every beautiful and useful garment of the soul. This is the folly

and wickedness our all merciful Lord warns us against. He loves us and He commands us not to lay up our wealth of apparel, where these moths will destroy it.

"Rust," "eating," "gnawing," are names of an action or process that is universally operating in the material universe and in the natural plane of the mind. There are forces in nature which are continually preying upon every organized and unorganized substance and form. They disintegrate and turn to dust the hardest rock; they consume the most precious metals; they attack plant and animal and man and no power but life, ever present, ever-vigilant life, can preserve any form from their destructive influence. The material universe itself is perpetually wasting; and if it was not perpetually renewed, it would vanish away. The living tree maintains its form and organization against these influences and uses the very forces and substances, which come to destroy it, to build itself up. It may brave them and use them and grow by them for centuries. But the moment life leaves it, the tables are turned. The moth consumes its garment of leaves and penetrates into the solid fibre of its trunk. The rust, with its invisible teeth, attacks it in root and branch; on its loose surface and in its solid centre and in a few years at most, its form vanishes away and its substances mingle with the elements.

It is the same with animals and the material body of man. What a miracle of wisdom is embodied in the organization of even a worm! How much greater the miracle in man! How delicate and sensitive to every contact is the human hand and yet it is the most complicated and powerful material instrument in the universe. It crushes the hardest rocks; it moulds the most tenacious metals into forms to suit its will as so much wax; it resists cold and heat and man wields it over the realms of matter with a sovereign power. But the moment life leaves it, its might and skill are gone. The worm feeds on it, the elements consume it. Where are the countless myriads of human forms, the cast off garments of former generations who have passed on to their eternal homes? Moth and rust have consumed them they have become the dust we tread upon and the rich mould in which we grow our harvests of corn and wheat. There is no place where the most precious earthly treasure, the material body, can be laid up and be preserved for ever.

With equal power and certainty, the moth and rust consume all that man's hand, wielded by his highest wisdom, has wrought. All his treasures of architecture and art ; his private dwellings and public palaces ; his factories and ships; his weapons of war and implements of peace; his thrones and tents; his purple robes and coarse garments of service, they return to the elements. Matter itself is continually moving in the great circuits of change and over its whole surface there is a ceaseless ebb and flow between organic and inorganic forms. It is impossible, therefore, that any material treasure can be garnered up in security for ever.

But these earthly forms are only symbols of the real treasures and the earth itself is only the representative of the real earth of the human mind. The real treasure is not the gold, the garments, the houses and lands, but the affections which they excite. And these affections may be in the earth of the natural mind, or in the heaven of the spiritual mind. There is no security for them when they exist in the natural mind alone; when they are laid up on the earth. Rust consumes them.

The natural mind is the plane of man's selfhood. All its faculties, when uncontrolled by the heaven of his spiritual mind, regard himself and the world in the same way that the material body looks to the material world and becomes entirely subject to its forces when it escapes from the dominion of the spirit. The material world and the natural plane of the mind are the theatres of continual change. Their forms are continually passing away. Their precious things are exposed to innumerable enemies. All things become permanent, cherish and favour us, only when we rise to the spiritual and heavenly plane of the mind.

We have only to keep in view the true nature of the love of self and the world, to see how impossible it is for any treasure to be safe, when laid up on the earth of the natural mind. The man, who loves himself and the world supremely, stands in the universe as a perfect Ishmaelite. His hand is against every man and every man's hand is against him. All the forces in the universe are against him. Regarded from his point of view and the' ends he seeks to obtain, the Lord and the angels and all heaven, as well as men and the earth and all hell, are against him. They all seek to thwart his purposes, to rob him of his treasures. It is true the

Lord and the angels seek to take away his selfish life that they may give him a heavenly one. They strive to transfer his treasures and his heart from the earth to heaven. But judged by the standard of self, they are hostile to him.

No, the merely selfish and worldly man, the man who lays up his treasures upon the earth, has not a real friend nor a truly helping hand in the universe. There may be multitudes who will appear friendly and seem to help him, but they will do it only so long as they can serve their own ends by it. The moment they can gain more by opposing and robbing him, they will do it. Property and social and civil freedom and life itself, owe their security to the fact that personal interests are so interwoven with public interests, that we are compelled to work with and for others and to regard their interests in order to secure their own. You help me and I will help you. As long as it is for my interest to do it, I will work for you; I will praise you; I will worship you. But when it serves my purpose better, I will make a slave of you, I will rob you of money, reputation, office, life. This is the spirit of labour, of business, of politics, of social life. "Men give, hoping to receive as much again." Such being the condition of every man who loves this world and himself alone and who lays up his treasures upon the earth, let us notice some of the enemies that rob and destroy him, some kinds of the rust that are continually gnawing away at his treasures and consuming them.

There is the rust of fear. We know that our treasures are in the midst of enemies and that we are liable at any moment to be deprived of them. We hold them by the slightest tenure. We know that we have but little power to control events. Those whom we trust may prove treacherous; the elements may work against us. Wind and storm, fire and flood, may sweep away in an hour the labour of a life; ignorance and sloth and incapacity and want of integrity, may suffer the most precious natural treasures to be destroyed.

These elements of weakness are in others and they are in ourselves. We are in doubt about the best course to pursue to accomplish a given end. A word spoken or unspoken; a promise made, or the failure to make it; the signature of our name, or the refusal to sign it, may strip us of all our material wealth, or cause us to miss the golden opportunity to gain it; it may entangle us in inextricable difficulties, or fail to free us from them. Every person knows this and the wisest and shrewdest are affected by it. The want of power and the liability to take a false and ruinous step, fills the mind of the merely natural man with perpetual fear.

Fear and distrust cast their shadows over every path. They throng every step with imaginary or real enemies. These shadows dim the brightness of every treasure. They perplex and weary us and rob our richest natural blessings of half their value. Like the mist that rises from the earth and shrouds it from our view and carries in its fine particles some substance that moulds our food, mildews our garments and corrodes our most useful metals, fear overshadows and penetrates every faculty of the natural mind, wastes the power of its affections, dims the brightness of its truth and causes its most precious treasures to vanish like vapour away.

Another form of rust similar to fear and born of it, is care. Trusting to ourselves and knowing how much depends upon our energy and vigilance, the mind is filled with cares and anxieties, care for today, anxiety about the morrow. And these cares, with their sharp points and fine corroding teeth, are continually gnawing away at our treasures and wasting them. They penetrate where even fear cannot. They attack our treasures of knowledge, of parental and social affection. They plough their furrows in the most lovely face and waste the symmetry of the most beautiful form and etch their ugly characters everywhere. They are like those acids, which consume the substance of the most precious metals. There is no possibility of protecting any precious thing from their corroding influence while it is laid up on the earth. They eat their way through philosophy and indifference and power and the sharpest vigilance and the devotion of friends. Like those insects that sting our fruit and deposit their eggs in its germs, which in time, breed worms that consume it, so cares fill the atmosphere of the natural mind and deposit in every germ of thought and affection, those evil principles which waste the blossom of their beauty and consume the sweetness of their fruit.

Another form of rust is envy. The negative side of the love of self is hatred of others. No selfish and wholly worldly man likes to see others happy and prosperous, especially if they equal or surpass him. He cannot

bear the sight of any one, who is not dependent on him and who does not serve him. The praises of others sting him like so many poisoned arrows. It is impossible for us to escape from the presence of those who either surpass or equal us, or who will not bow down to us. Consequently, we are continually exposed to the tormenting influence of envy, while our treasures are laid up on the earth. It is a poisonous and bitter current, whose fountain is within us and the very sight of another's prosperity opens its gates and lets its destructive waters flood the soul. It pollutes everything that is in itself pure; it turns every sweet and pleasant affection into acidity and bitterness; it stings like a serpent and bites like an adder. How often have those who have attained great heights of power and honour, been made restless, uneasy and even stung to madness at the sight of some Mordecai in the gate? Envy and jealousy have corrupted and consumed all that was of any real value in their power and honour.

But it is not in high places alone and great treasures alone, that envy consumes. Like the disease breeding miasma, it fills the hut as well as the palace; it visits the office and counting room, the store and shop; it infuses its deadly venom into all forms of social life; foments jealousies; excites hatreds; gnaws at the heart and sucks the life blood of all the wealth and worth of natural good.

These are some of the general forms of rust which consume and dissipate our natural treasures. Their special forms are innumerable and singly or combined, there is no escape from their destructive influence. No human power can subdue them; no human vigilance can guard against them.

But even if it were possible, there is another enemy to every material and natural good, more subtle, more powerful and more violent, which, either combined with the moth and the rust, or acting by itself, evades every human precaution and spoils us of our natural treasures. That enemy is represented in our text by thieves. The rust and moth are thieves, for they take from us that which does not belong to them. There are a multitude of influences which are continually stealing from us our most precious goods. But there is one thief, which breaks through all our bars and bolts; which picks our most complicated locks; and outwits all the cunning devices of men. That thief defies all human law, evades all human police, braves all human judgment. He steals not only our gold and silver and bonds; our garments and jewels and precious material goods; but he robs us of our treasures of science, of art; of our wealth of natural affection; of our children and friends; of parents, husbands and wives. He breaks through the walls of clay; he breaks up the foundations of the earth itself and rolls together the heaven of the natural mind as a scroll. This thief is Death.

The natural memory, which is the treasure house of material ideas, is closed at the death of the material body. It is by means of the material body that we, as spiritual beings, get access to the world and our hold upon its possessions. When the body dies, the tie that bound us to material things is broken and our title to every worldly good is annulled. Everyone knows that this is true so far as it relates to wealth in every form and this knowledge destroys the essential value of earthly treasures, in the estimation of those who possess the most of them. A change in the temperature; a misstep; a damp foot; too much or too little food; the presence of an invisible influence in the atmosphere; a thousand nameless influences, touch the body and it turns to dust and man is robbed of all his earthly treasures.

But it may be asked, Shall we not carry our science, our philosophies, our knowledge, our mechanical and artistic skill, our wealth of natural affection, into the other life? No. We shall carry their results, but we shall not carry the material ideas in such a form, that they can be of any essential use to us in our ordinary states.

It is true that we never absolutely forget anything. The natural memory can be opened if our good at any period of our existence requires it. But it will be only to catch a glance of what is in it, as we now sometimes recall the scenes that lie far behind us in the dim past. We may see them, not to return to them; but to gather a lesson, or enforce a truth. Of what use could any knowledge of natural science, or geometry, or the history of human governments be to us, when we were in a world that is not subject to the laws of time and space and where all human relations, all change and creation, are governed by spiritual laws? None whatever.

No. The savant will forget his science and his philosophy; the king will leave his sceptre and crown behind him; the priest his sacred lore; and the jurist his legal wisdom. All that is factitious, everything which the affections have not entered into, which we have not made our own by life, will fall from us at the touch of death, as the autumn leaves fall from the forest trees at the touch of frost. As the tree is not an agglomerate of heat and cold, of light and darkness, of clouds and rains and dews, of storms and calms, of mineral and gas, so man, when he passes into the spiritual world by the death of the material body, is not a mosaic of various events, possessions, thoughts and emotions. He is their result in other forms. If he has placed his life in the merely natural possessions, laying up his treasures upon the earth, the great thief Death will steal them all away from him, leaving only the evil life and power he has gained in accumulating them. Death strips the merely earthly man of all he holds dear. He steals from every one every treasure he lays up on the earth.

Therefore if you would not have your life a miserable failure; if you do not wish to see the moth consume your garments and the rust corrupt and waste everything you call precious; if you wish to escape the violence and vigilance of death and the utter destitution of all things, then heed the warning of the Lord, "*Lay not up your treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal.*" If you wish to preserve beyond every contingency of loss, every earthly substance and influence, every natural possession and treasure, lay it up in heaven. There is no earthly good which you cannot carry with you if you lay it up in the right place. No moth can consume your heavenly garments; no rust can tarnish the brightness, much less consume the substance, of heavenly treasures. No thief, not even Death, can break through those invisible bars, or touch those bolts whose secret wards are known only to the angels and the Lord. Lay up your treasures in heaven and they have infinite love to cherish them, infinite power and wisdom to guard them; and no cunning, no enmity, no secret influence, no open violence, no moth, no fear, no care, no envy, no hatred, no thief, can ever touch them. They are yours for ever.

16. How Heavenly Blessedness is Preserved

"but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal" Matt 6:20

LOVE is the universal measure of all value. It is the central principle in every being, human and divine; and everything is precious in the degree that it ministers to it. Love is life. "*all that a man has he will give for his life.*" We put wealth, knowledge, power, glory, friends, the world, heaven and the Lord Himself, into one scale of the balance and our love into the other and the love outweighs them all.

This central principle of life is of various qualities and degrees and has its seat in different planes of our nature. In multitudes it rises no higher than the natural degree of life. Then the earthly plane of man's nature is the centre and all things of earth and heaven revolve around it. All things and all beings, material, natural, spiritual, are estimated by their power to minister to its wants. Those which can do this the most fully and efficiently are the nearest to it. To the selfish and worldly love, this world and this life are the nearest; heaven and the Lord are the most remote.

To lay up a treasure is to love it. We have no secure hold upon any treasure of wealth, power, knowledge, or the affection of others, but our love for it. Love is spiritual attraction and according to its grasp and intensity all things gravitate towards it and are bound to it. The heart is where the treasure is. It broods over it; it clings to it; it seeks to dwell in it and to become one with it.

When our treasures are laid up on the earth, they are deposited in the midst of enemies. Every influence is hostile to them. Every power seeks to destroy them. Our treasures are embodied in perishable substances and forms. They contain in themselves the elements of decay. They breed the moth and attract the rust, which consume them. They create the thieves, which break through all their bolts and bars and steal them.

We lay up our treasures in heaven by making the spiritual degree of the mind, the centre of all influence and the measure of all value. "The kingdom of heaven is within us." When our hearts are in that kingdom, our treasures are there, our life is there; and all things are precious to us in the degree that they minister to our spiritual wants and aid us in the development of a spiritual life. The Lord created all things, material as well as spiritual, for this purpose and all His wisdom and power are directed to this end.

There are three points in relation to this subject, which primarily concern us.

What treasures we can lay up in heaven.

How we can lay them up.

The absolute security of every heavenly treasure.

What treasures can we lay up in heaven? I answer, Every treasure. There is no material or sensual good, which we cannot lay up in heaven. We can lay up our money and our houses and lands, our food and clothing; our mechanical dexterity, our artistic skill; our science and knowledge of all kinds; our honour and power; our friends and children; our domestic and social relations. There is nothing so great or so small, so trivial or so precious, that we cannot lay it up in heaven and secure it beyond any contingency of loss. The sole purpose of the creation was provision of the means essential to the formation of heaven and there is not a grain of dust, or a mote in the air, that does not, to the extent of its power, serve that purpose.

Let us inquire in the second place, how all natural and even material things can be of use to us in the formation of a heaven within us and how all that is of any value in them can be laid up in the treasure house of the soul.

This is an important question and to understand it clearly we must learn how the kingdom of heaven is formed within us. In every act of the mind, whether of the will or understanding, two elements or constituents are necessary, a power or life which gives them power to act, within and above the will and understanding and something external to them to act upon; or the power to act and the materials to act with.

All our ideas come from the earth. It is impossible for us to conceive of any form, substance or existence, until we have some hint, idea or suggestion from the material world. The mind is exercised, developed, strengthened by means of the body. Our ideas are images in the mind, of forms and relations external to it. It is not within the scope of human power to form any conception of a tree, of its leaves, flowers and fruit, before a material tree exists. We look upon a tree and an idea or image of it is formed in the mind. We taste of its fruit and an idea of its quality is photographed upon the memory. We are affected by heat and cold, by light and darkness and the sensation is treasured up in our minds and becomes a part of our inheritance. However it would be just as impossible to gain one of these ideas of form, colour, relation and sensation without the outward object, as it would be to get a photograph of a person or thing that never existed.

All our ideas, thoughts and affections come from the Lord; and the angels and spirits, good or evil, who are with us. But they do not come as specific thoughts and affections. They come as spheres or influences, good or evil, which awaken affections and thoughts according to the character of the influence and the form of the mind into which they flow. The power to think and feel, to will and act, in all cases comes from within. But there must be something without, to receive the action and give the spiritual influence specific form. The internal influence is the molten substance; the external object is the mould in which it is cast and whose form it takes. Therefore the material world not only serves as a solid basis for our material bodies and supplies the materials for their sustenance and formation, but it supplies us with the basis of all thought and affection, with the materials essential to the building up of all our spiritual life.

The senses are the open doors through which the mind gains access to the material world. They are the halls of miraculous structure in which mind and matter meet and weave their bonds of union. The forms and colours of the outward world are photographed upon the eye. The soul cannot look upon the material object; but it can see the material idea and in this way it supplies itself with distinct forms and gains the

materials of thinking. The soul cannot immediately gain any conception of material sounds, or the vibrations which cause them. But when they flow into the ear they speak a language, which the soul can understand. They form discords or harmonies corresponding to states of the soul and they are treasured up in the memory. The same principle applies to the sense of touch and taste and to all sensations. The soul must come in contact with the fixed and definite forms of the material world before it can discriminate, before it can gain any idea or image.

The memory is the great treasure house, in which these images of all kinds are stored up. The will and the understanding go to the memory as the merchant to his safe, or the farmer to his granaries and select those ideas that will suit their purpose. If they cannot find them, they send abroad the senses in search of them and gather them from all quarters. When they are obtained, the soul selects and combines them into new forms and creates a new series of ideas called rational. From these again, a new order can be formed for the use of the spiritual mind. Thus there is an ascent from the material world to the highest planes of the spiritual mind.

If anyone will carefully observe the operations of his own mind, he will see that his ideas of spiritual and heavenly things are all formed in this way. No man can gain any idea of God or of the nature of a spiritual life in any other way. The Lord is our Father. But our idea of father comes from without, from the material relation. The Lord is love. But our idea of love is formed, from what we have seen and heard of its effects and from our own experience. This is a universal law. The outline of the idea or attribute, in the first instance, comes from the material world or some material relation. We may purify and exalt and expand the idea to any extent within our power; we may eliminate from it every material quality, but the basis of the idea or affection is the earth. It never could have been formed without a material basis. Such is the law and method of development of our intellectual and spiritual being. The highest and purest heavenly affection and the most interior spiritual ideas, are born from the conjunction of spiritual and material influences.

It is also a well known truth that in the mind, this ascent of ideas from earth towards heaven may stop at any stage. There are a multitude of images formed upon the eye, of which the mind takes no notice and which therefore, never enter the memory. Many enter the memory, which never rise any higher. The will and understanding never use them. They are stored up there simply as materials that may or may not be used according to the occasion. They may be used merely to gratify the desires of the animal nature. If the love of self and the world are the ruling principles of the soul, they will rise no higher than the earth of the natural mind. They may continue their ascent to the spiritual and heavenly planes of the mind. They may stop at any round of the ladder, or they may ascend to the Lord, who is at the top of it.

This ascent is caused by the affections and no truth ever rises permanently higher than the affection which gives birth to it. The affections are formed and developed by truth. They clothe themselves with truth as with a garment. They become married to the truth and one with it. The affections select those truths that are homogeneous to them, which they can use to effect their own ends and they dwell with them and in them. They love them; they are precious to them. "Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also."

Now we may perhaps be able to see how every material and natural good may be laid up in heaven. Let us take material possessions as an example. Money in itself is of no use. If we had all the gold and silver in the world, it would be of no more use to us than so much dust, if we could not purchase anything with it that would feed or clothe us, or in some way minister to our wants. Its real value is the service it can render us. We may use it merely to feed, clothe, protect and adorn the body and gratify the natural desires, then we lay it up in the body and in the earth of the natural man. We get its worth in other forms. It is not the material gold and silver itself, but its equivalent in comfort, beauty and natural delight.

But suppose we use it for a higher purpose. Suppose we use it as an instrument of doing good to others, of exercising and developing love to the neighbour. Now we have its value in another form. We hold its spiritual equivalent. We have laid it up in the spiritual plane of the mind. We have coined it into heavenly affections and thoughts, into forms that pass current among the angels. We hold it in forms and

substances, which the Lord recognizes as a legal tender in all the heavens. By the alchemy of heavenly affections, we have transmuted the material metal into the gold which the Lord counsels us to buy of Him; "gold tried in the fire" "silver seven times purified." Now our money is laid up in heaven, and it is placed beyond every contingency of loss. Banks may fail; nations may rise and fall; the material world itself may go to ruin, but none of these changes will affect our treasure.

The same principle applies to our food, clothing and habitation. Food that we cannot eat, is of no service to us. What we do eat is treasured up in the material body.

It is wrought into organic and living forms. It becomes physical health, strength and the means of doing our work and attaining our ends. If we eat merely to satisfy our hunger or gratify our appetites and gain strength to attain selfish and worldly ends, we lay up the treasure on the earth of the natural appetites. But if we reflect how soon all our usefulness in this life would cease if we had no food, we shall be thankful for it, because it gives us strength to use for the good of others; If we see the Lord's merciful Providence in continually supplying it and acknowledge His goodness in it, it awakens spiritual affections; it calls into activity love to the Lord and the neighbour and thus it becomes changed into spiritual meat and drink. It nourishes the spiritual degree of the mind. All that is of any value to us as spiritual beings is laid up as a treasure in heaven. It has passed into imperishable and eternal forms.

These are examples of a principle, which applies to every earthly and natural possession. All our knowledge of science, art, mechanical forces and all our skill in using them, are first laid up in the merely natural mind. But when they are used to form, develop and carry into effect spiritual principles, love to the neighbour and to the Lord, they ascend to a higher plane of our being; they are transmuted into spiritual truths and heavenly affections. They are laid up in heaven.

All that is valuable in society, in business, in office and government, may serve as means to the same end. We may fail in our business naturally and yet succeed in it spiritually. Indeed our natural failure may be the means of our spiritual success. When we see the insecurity of treasures laid up on the earth, we may begin to lay them up in the heavens. We may lose our office in earth, but retain the heavenly one the earthly has assisted us in gaining.

We can lay up all our natural affections in heaven in the same way. Our children and all the objects of them; husbands, wives, friends. When we love our children with natural affection only, we lay them up on the earth. All the ties that bind them to us are natural. This world and this life bounds all our relations to them. We regard them as wholly our own. Their life and our life are woven together in the same web. When we see all the vicissitudes and dangers to which they are expose; how wayward they are; how liable to disease and estrangement; what temptations may beguile them from the path of virtue; how soon death may come as a thief in the night and snatch them from our sight for ever, we cannot but feel that we hold them by the slightest tenure; we cannot but tremble at the dangers which continually threaten them. And even when there is no fear of their loss by death, the cares and anxieties and weariness, which are born of our love for them and their waywardness and ever recurring wants, consume like the moth and waste like the rust, all the delights of natural affection.

But when we regard them as spiritual beings, as really the Lord's children and only apparently our own, as given to us to feed and clothe and teach and train for heaven; when we love them with a true spiritual affection, we shall lay them up in heaven. If we regard them as the Lord's children we shall do all in our power to train them up for His service. We shall look upon them as a trust committed to us for a special end and we shall love to do all in our power to perform the duties of our stewardship. When we have done our duty, we shall feel that all our responsibility ends and we shall cease to be anxious about results which we cannot prevent or control.

If we are faithful, we shall do much to prepare them for heaven; and in everything we do, we shall exercise a spiritual affection and be laying up in the spiritual plane of the mind all the treasures of natural affection. Parental love will be changed into spiritual love. Regard for them as our children will be changed into the

love of them as the Lord's children. We shall grow into the feeling, as well as thought, that they and we have a common Father and are destined to a common home.

Regarding them in this spiritual light, suppose death removes them from our natural sight, it cannot take out of our hearts one "*jot or tittle*" of the affection and development we have gained by their instrumentality. If we have regarded them as spiritual beings, as given to us in trust to prepare for heaven and the Lord, everything we have done for them has been instrumental in building up the kingdom of heaven within us. Every step we have taken, every word we have spoken, every provision we have made, has been only the outward form of a spiritual treasure, which has been accumulating in the heaven of our own minds.

Death cannot touch that treasure. Death does not remove our children from us as spiritual beings; it does not cut off or destroy them. It simply removes them to the very home for which we have been preparing them. It introduces them openly into heaven and brings them nearer to their Father and our Father; and it gives them more fully to us. In every sense they are treasures laid up in heaven and secure beyond any contingency of loss.

Therefore we conclude that we can lay up as a treasure in heaven every natural good that can be given to us. And we do it by using natural things as instruments in the formation, exercise and development of spiritual and heavenly affections. Material things serve as the basis and means. They were given to us solely for this purpose. They bear the same relation to spiritual treasures that the leaves do to the fruit; the husk to the corn. The leaf may grow and the tree bear no fruit: then when it fades and falls, the whole labour of the tree is lost. They may contribute their means to the formation of blossoms and fruit: then every activity of the whole tree is preserved and laid up as a treasure in the seed. So it is with every possession of human life.

Every treasure laid up in heaven is secure from every enemy and safe from every possibility of loss. No moth can consume it. Every truth we love becomes a part of our being. It can no more be taken from our spirits than the identical particles of food, which have become bone, muscle, sinew and nerve can be taken from our material body. The garments of spiritual truth, formed by the aid of natural truths, now clothe our affections; they are no longer laid away in the damp and dusty closets of our memory. They have a living connection with us. They are kept pure by the inflowing life of heaven. No moth of error can touch them.

No rust can corrode them. Care and anxiety and doubt and fear and the lusts of envy and hatred, cannot enter there. Our treasures are in the light of heaven and no doubt can cast a shadow there. They are under the special protection of the Lord and the angels and no fear can disturb our repose. They are changed into the coin of love to the neighbour and the Lord and envy and malice cannot touch them with their corroding teeth. No false principle, no evil desire, no malignity of the wicked can reach them; no commotion can disturb their repose. They have passed into those forms which lie above the plane of evil influences. They are "*There the wicked cease from troubling, And there the weary are at rest.*"

Thieves cannot break through and steal them. Death has no power over them. Suppose he does kill the body. Can he rob us of our treasure? Our treasure was not laid up in the body. Suppose he does close the natural memory and cut us off from all consciousness of natural things, he only gets the chaff; the wheat is stored up in imperishable garner. He gets the withered leaves; the fruit is ours forever. Suppose he does close our eyes to earth, he opens them to heaven. He only rends the veil and introduces us openly and fully into the conscious possession and full enjoyment of all our treasures. He rescues us from every enemy who would rob or injure us and places us in the midst of friends, who love us better than themselves and who desire to bestow upon us the richest blessings they possess.

Where is our treasure? We can easily tell. It is where our heart is. It is treasured up in those objects, towards which our affections tend and in which they rest.

Is our treasure on the earth? We shall lose it! We shall lose it! No power or wisdom in the universe can preserve it. There is no "perhaps" or chance about it. We shall lose it. It makes no difference in what we invest it; gold, land, knowledge, power, friends, loved ones, we shall lose them. They can be secured to us by no bond which the moth, the rust, or thieves will not sever. We might as well invest our treasures in crystals of snow, or the glory of the evening cloud and hope that they would remain forever, as in any natural good. Let no falsity and no appearance delude us. Let us settle the question in our own minds, as it is settled in the eternal and changeless order of infinite wisdom. Every treasure we lay up on the earth will perish.

With equal certainty we may decide the opposite question. Every treasure we lay up in heaven is ours forever. We cannot lose it; we cannot dispossess ourselves of it; we cannot forfeit our claim to it; we cannot fail to enter upon its possession and enjoy it; we cannot waste or consume it. The more we use it and enjoy it, the larger and more precious it grows; the more liberally we give it to others, the more fully and entirely it becomes our own.

Let us not be guilty of the irretrievable and measureless folly of laying up our treasures upon the earth. Let us heed this warning of infinite wisdom, let us hearken to the voice of infinite mercy, "*Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal.*"

17. The Lord Comes Again to Bestow and Enlarge it

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill"
Matt 5: 17

ALL true progress for the individual, for the church, or humanity, consists in advancing towards the Lord along the line of the divine truth in the paths of the divine order. The abyss between us and the Lord is bridged by truth. Every divine truth, clothed with natural forms and lodged in the memory, like the wire of a telegraph, is a way opened along which the Lord can send fuller messages of His truth and more attractive influences of His love to draw us towards Him. When these truths become anchored in the affections, the circuit is completed and the Lord comes to us and as we receive His life, we come to Him. Progress for the intellect, the understanding, consists in a knowledge of the true laws of natural and spiritual life, as they are ordained by infinite wisdom in the constitution of our natures; progress for the will and the affections consists in loving and doing what the truth teaches us. Truth is the way; a knowledge of the truth is light on the way. Living according to the truth from affection is walking in the way; and to the extent we so live we are making real progress.

When man was first created and so long as he retained the likeness and image of his divine prototype, he could receive the divine life in true order. The Lord could come to him from within and man could receive his life as love in his will and intuitions in his understanding. His knowledge and his actions were spontaneous as the instinctive actions of the animal. But after the Fall, which consisted in the violation of the laws of his being and the consequent derangement and interruption of the harmony and unity between man and the source of his life, he lost this perception just as the eye loses its power to see when its delicate tissues become inflamed, or its lenses destroyed. The will closed itself against the divine life, for its inflow caused it pain.

Then the Lord was compelled to come to man by an outward way. He could gain access to him in no other form. So He gave him a law written on tables of stone, instead of upon his heart. He sent prophets to him to instruct, warn and command by vocal and artificial language, instead of making his own intuitions His voice within him. And even these commandments had to be given in the most external and sensuous forms and to be enforced by most terrible punishments, man had gone so far astray from the Lord and sunk so low into a merely sensuous life.

But in giving the law and the prophets in such natural and even material forms, so that very little of the Old Testament in the letter has any relation to spiritual things, the Lord still adhered to His universal method. The statutes, precepts, commandments and even the ritualistic worship and the national history of the Jews, were so expressed in material language and natural imagery, that they might correctly represent and embody spiritual ideas, that they might be vessels capable of containing and expressing spiritual and divine truth and of being filled with new and higher meanings, according to the wants and capacities of men. In this way the connection between man and the Lord was preserved, though only in a very external and imperfect form.

As the Lord is a being of infinite love and wisdom, He sees the end from the beginning. He does not try expedients; He does not try one plan and if He finds it does not work, throw it away and begin again; but every step is a direct advance towards the end He seeks. The succeeding one never destroys the first, but grows out of it, or is based upon it. The Lord created the material world to be the birthplace and abode of spiritual beings and every step in the creation, as it is now recorded in the structure of the earth itself, was an orderly one and a direct advance.

In giving man a revelation, He must adapt it to man's states and capacities. But in doing this He did not give him a primer, which was to be thrown away when he had learned the alphabet and its place supplied by another revelation, He gave it in such forms that new and higher truths could be continually unfolded from it. The letter could be continually filled with spirit and life without destroying the letter. Therefore when the Lord comes with a new truth, He does not set aside the old, but fills it with new meaning. He comes in it, admitting what we most heartily believe, that the Bible is a revelation of divine and spiritual truth from the Lord and excels all other books, both in the mode of its composition and in the truths it contains, as far as the Lord Himself excels man; any new revelation could not supersede it. Every new truth must coincide with it. If the Bible is the law and the prophets, that is, the whole of divine truth in general and particular, every coming of the Lord, every step in the progress of humanity, must be in accordance with it. This is the crucial test for every church and every new truth.

This principle is not generally acknowledged by the so called friends of progress, or by those who claim to possess more liberal views of spiritual truth and Christian life. They generally depreciate or deny the inspiration of the Bible, because they cannot make it square with their views of truth. They set up their own doctrines as the standard and measure the Bible by them and accept or reject it according to its agreement or disagreement with them. Their doctrines are not the fulfilment of the law and the prophets, but its rejection.

The Christian Church, with all its reverence for the Bible and all that is said in its vast literature about its inspiration, does not understand it. Much of it has but little or no meaning to the Church, much of it is enigmatical; and still more of it is supposed to relate almost exclusively to civil and worldly affairs. The common idea of inspiration amounts to but little more than that the Lord has told the truth in the Bible. It is not so much a revelation of spiritual and divine truth, as the history of a people divinely led and a collection of the precepts and commandments which were given to them for their guidance. The belief is rapidly gaining ground in the Christian world, that the inspiration of the authors of the Bible does not differ in kind, though it may exceed in degree that of our great authors.

But this is not the opinion of those who believe in the Lord's Second Coming, in the power and glory of new spiritual truth. Swedenborg did not come to supersede the Bible, but to teach men its true nature; to show them that it is a divine book written in a style entirely different from any book of human composition, as we might rationally conclude it would be, if infinite wisdom is its author. He made known the laws according to which spiritual and divine truths are embodied in natural truth and in human language and the scientific method of interpreting the Sacred Scriptures. He says the Word contains infinite truth. It is the embodiment and expression in human language of all spiritual and divine laws. Not one jot or tittle can therefore fail. If this is so, all spiritual progress must consist in a more accurate and a fuller knowledge of these laws and a more complete conformity to them in our lives. The direction of real progress must be towards the Lord and not away from Him and all advancement towards Him must be in the way of His

commandments, which are statements of the true order of life. If the Sacred Scriptures are a revelation of the divine character and contain a statement of the laws of man's spiritual life and his relations to the Lord, all true progress must be according to those laws. It must be elevation of character and knowledge towards the Highest. It must be the filling up of the outlines of the nature given him at birth. It must be ascent through the various rounds of the ladder from one degree to another, from appearances to science, from the natural to the spiritual, from truth to goodness. In no other way and in no other direction, can the individual or the race make any progress.

Having stated the general law of progress and the only conditions on which it is possible, I propose to show that the New Church comes strictly within these conditions and bases her whole claim to be a new Church, a distinct step towards Him who is the only standard of perfection, upon them.

By the "law and the prophets," we understand the whole of the divine truth in general and particular. The Law was not merely the Ten Commandments written upon tables of stone, though they comprised its general principles; it was the whole order and all the methods of the divine activities, as they have become embodied in the creation of the spiritual and material universe. The prophets are a more particular statement of these laws, as they will appear in their special forms of development in the life of humanity.

"To fulfil" has two meanings. The most common one is to do naturally what the prophets foretold that the Lord would do. However this is not even the literal meaning in this passage. He discloses that He did not come to relax the force, or to annul the least jot or tittle of the literal claims of the divine truth, as expressed in the law and prophets.

The real meaning of "fulfil," however, is to fill full of new significance. The Jew had very low and sensual views of the "law and prophets." He supposed that they related entirely to the material interests of his nation. The law was given for the regulation of the outward conduct. The predictions of the prophets related to the affairs of the Jewish nation, the material power and glory they were to obtain under their promised King. But the Lord came to fill the law full of a higher meaning. He came to enlarge its scope, to show that it was of universal obligation and application. He came to elevate its meaning from the natural to the spiritual, to show that His words were spirit and life. Jerusalem was a spiritual as well as a material city, a city of the soul as well as the body, formed of the principles of spiritual truth, as well as of material stones and wood. Israel was not the Jewish nation alone. It comprised all who dwelt in the spiritual Jerusalem, that is, all of every nation and age, who received the doctrines of spiritual truth denoted by Jerusalem. The promised Saviour, Redeemer and King, was not to be a temporal and civil ruler. He was to save the spiritual Israel from their spiritual enemies; He was to establish His kingdom within men, in their hearts and understandings and by the prevalence and power of these spiritual principles, He was to subdue all things unto Himself and become King of all the earth. Under the image of nations and kingdoms and peoples and material cities, the prophets were foretelling the rise and progress, the conflicts and victories and principles of a spiritual kingdom.

The Law was given, not only to regulate the outward conduct and the natural relations of men, but to direct their spiritual conduct; it was given to regulate the affections and the understanding. The natural law is only the vessel that contains the spiritual law. Hatred is murder; the lustful desire is adultery. "*You shall not steal,*" applies to every plane and degree of human activity. It prohibits us from claiming as our own and appropriating to our use, spiritual as well as material wealth. We steal from the Lord, when we claim for our own what belongs to Him.

The Lord came to fill the law with these spiritual and divine ideas. On the way to Emmaus, He expounded to the sorrowing disciples, "*in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.*" And He was in the continued effort to lift their minds above this world and this life, to enlarge and elevate their conceptions of truth. The spiritual truth did not destroy the natural, but filled it with meaning; extended its application to innumerable particulars. Thus the new dispensation, established at the time of the Lord's first coming, was based upon the old, while it was a distinct step in advance beyond it. It did not leave the truths of the old behind, but carried them along with it. It filled them with a new meaning. By the apprehension of this

meaning, men took a step not only in advance, but above the former state. The Christian held the law and the prophets in more reverence and honour than the Jew and saw indefinitely more in them than the Jew, though the external and scrupulous Pharisee thought the Lord Himself violated the law and he could not see in His humble and sinless life the fulfilment of the prophecies concerning the power and glory of Christ's kingdom, because he had made the Word of God of none effect by his traditions and had formed entirely false ideas of what it really forbade and enjoined, because he had limited its meaning and application to this life and to his own nation.

By the Lord's first coming a Church was established, whose doctrines in many respects and whose whole conceptions of the scope and nature of the divine character and purposes and of the nature of man as a spiritual being and of his future destiny, were of a most exalted character and these truths finally crystallized into doctrines. But these doctrines were promulgated as matters of faith, or belief upon authority. They were never rationally apprehended and could not be, from the form in which they were stated and the condition of men's minds when the Christian Church was established and their method of interpreting the Bible.

But since the cultivation of natural science and the discovery that law and order everywhere reign in the material plane of the Lord's works and that opinions, theories and doctrines are of no value, except as they find their sanction and existence in nature herself, intelligent men begin to demand the same authority and rational ground for the doctrines of spiritual truth, for the Word as well as the works of God. But this demand the Christian Church has never been able to meet and those doctrines, which have always been regarded by the great body of the Christian Church as evangelical and essential to a Christian belief, have lost much of their hold upon the minds of Christian people, both within and without the Church; and the Church has no means within herself, or in her conceptions, or methods of interpreting the Bible, to arrest this tendency to unbelief. The Church is in the same state with regard to her doctrines that the Jews were with regard to theirs when the Lord came to them. She has come to the end of her knowledge and power, she has no new resources, she has no power to arrest the action of those forces that are destroying her. Therefore it is evident that the Lord must come again, either as many suppose He will come, to destroy the earth and wind up all human affairs, or to work some miraculous change in the condition of men. But He does not come to destroy. Therefore it is rational to suppose that He will come as previously, by giving men a higher and truer conception of what He had told them before.

The New Church claim, that His second coming is in the power and glory of new truth; that the Lord comes to fill the law and prophets full of spiritual truth, to show that His commandments have rational and eternal grounds in the "law and prophets," as well as in man's nature. He comes in the form of a true spiritual philosophy, which is to be found in and evolved from, the Word of God, as a true natural philosophy is found in and evolved from, the works of God. In the Christian Church, He came in a form of truth to be received by faith; in the new, He comes to the reason and the understanding. It is a distinct step for humanity. It will enlarge the boundaries of man's spiritual knowledge far more than His first coming did and raise man into a distinctly new light and new conception of spiritual and divine things; and, in attaining those high ends, not one jot or tittle of the letter of the law is destroyed. On the contrary, the whole Bible in every syllable and letter is filled with a new and higher meaning.

It is generally supposed that churchmen either reject or hold the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, with some degree of laxity. On the contrary, the new coming fills them full of spiritual truth and moulds them into a truly rational form. But a general statement of this claim is not sufficient and we therefore give you some particulars:

1. There are no doctrines that have ever been received by men, that teach so fully, clearly, rationally and scripturally the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. We believe in the existence of one supreme personal Being, who is the Creator and Preserver of all beings and things; who is called by various names in the Bible, as Jehovah, God, Lord, &c. We believe, also, in a Divine Trinity, called the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, existing in the one supreme God; in the Incarnation and Divinity of Jesus Christ our Lord; in the necessity for His coming, His sufferings, death and resurrection to human salvation and consequently, in

the Atonement. We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, divinely inspired in every syllable and letter, in every jot and tittle and excels all other books, both in the style of its composition and in the truths it contains, as the Lord's works excel man's works. We believe also, in a heaven of happiness for the good after death and in a hell of misery for the wicked. And we accept these doctrines fully and heartily, without any reserve or hesitation. We do not relax or break, in our doctrines, the least of the commandments, or teach men so.

2. On the contrary, these doctrines are full of rational ideas and spiritual truths. Regarding them from a higher point of view, from more interior and universal principles, they are in harmony with each other; all their apparent contradictions are seen to be real harmonies, just as the apparent irregularities in the motions of the heavenly bodies when viewed from the earth, from appearances, are found to be perfect harmonies and according to a universal order when viewed from the height of a common centre and in the light of a true science.

The problem of the unity and trinity in God, for example, a "sphinx riddle" which has torn many a man to pieces, because he could not solve it, is explained in the doctrines of the New Church in a manner entirely satisfactory to the reason and perfectly in harmony with every passage of the Sacred Scriptures. The unity and the trinity are both far more clearly and distinctly shown, than in the creeds of the Christian Church and yet, they are perfectly reconcilable with each other.

But this is not the only service our doctrines render us. They show us why the Bible presents the subject in such an apparently contradictory manner, just as a true science explains why the planets appear to have a retrograde as well as a progressive motion in the heavens, or why the sun and stars seem to be so small and to be continually revolving about the earth, when in reality, they are so much larger than the earth and are comparatively stationary.

3. They not only reconcile the apparent contradictions of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, but vastly increase the means of illustrating their meaning and nature and of confirming their truth. When the scientific man discovers a law that really exists in nature, every new fact confirms it, throws new light upon it. He sees the fact in the light of the law and the law in the light of the fact. They reciprocally confirm and illustrate each other. New facts arrange themselves around the central law, as the iron filings around the magnet and by the aid of his central truth, he can push his inquiries on every side and indefinitely extend his knowledge. The same principle holds good with regard to spiritual truth. When we discover a general spiritual law, we can take it in our hand as a thread and it will guide us through all the labyrinths of spiritual truth. We gain new light at every step and it enables us to enlarge immensely the boundaries of our spiritual knowledge. Every new fact gives us new life and our path becomes clearer at every step.

4. Again we not only step forward, but upward and view the truths of religion in their own spiritual sphere as they are and not merely as they appear in the disguise of material forms and natural life. We rise above the mists and clouds of the letter and the letter itself becomes transparent. We rise from faith to knowledge; from the authority of men to the authority of the truth itself. The understanding finds itself in the region of spiritual law and order and it feels at home in the Father's house, where it can rest in peace. The law and the prophets are filled with spiritual light and that light flows into the understanding and fills it and the soul wakes to the morning of a new day.

5. Again this new spiritual light not only enlarges the boundaries of our knowledge and lifts the soul into new and purer regions of truth, but it penetrates into the particulars and minute details of religious doctrine. It has the powers of the microscope as well as the telescope. It shows that every jot and tittle of the law is divine and has its embodiment in human life. It shows that religion is not a mere contrivance to get to heaven by some legal or factitious means; but that it is a life of spiritual order, the life of heaven upon the earth and that its principles must be carried into all the details of our labour and into all the relations and activities of natural life: that we lead a heavenly life, when we act from heavenly principles, whether we labour with our hands in some natural employment, or kneel in devout worship in the temple. Thus it gives dignity to labour; ennobles the common duties of life; strengthens us in its trials; adds a new

zest to its joys and shows us that we can be co-workers with the Lord and the angels, even while labouring for the common wants of the material body. It fills our natural life full of heavenly life.

6. It also increases the sanctions of the law, as much as it extends our knowledge of it. We see that the obligations to live according to the law are founded in the law and not in any arbitrary will. Man was created in the image and likeness of his Creator. The laws and order of the divine life were finited and embodied in man's life. Therefore he cannot transgress them without doing violence to his own being and destroying himself. The soul that sins dies by the very act of sinning. Every wicked man is a moral and spiritual suicide. Man can no more hope to escape spiritual punishment, if he breaks a spiritual law, than he can escape physical punishment when he violates a physical law. Therefore the sanctions of the law have their ground in the divine nature and derivatively in human nature. In this new light, we can see that the only escape from death is in a life according to the commandments, according to our Lord's declaration to the young man, "*If you wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments.*" Therefore our doctrines do not relax a jot or tittle of the claims of the divine truth upon our obedience, but on the contrary, they extend and increase them in every direction; lift them out of the requirements of legal right and arbitrary will and trace their origin to the constitution and eternal order of infinite wisdom.

7. But they do more than this. We must not only know the cardinal doctrines of religion in our understandings, but we must receive them into our hearts. We must love them and do them. They must not only be our light, but our life. They must not only control and guide our thoughts, but our affections and ultimate acts. Therefore they must fill the whole man from centre to circumference. They must be the Alpha and Omega of his being.

Thus our doctrines do not come to destroy the truths of Christianity as revealed in the Bible, but to fill them with new and rational truth. They do not come to break one of the least of the commandments, or to teach men so, but rather to teach men how to understand and keep them. They come to divest them of the crust of traditions and the commandments of men which have gradually gathered over them and which conceal their true nature and make them of none effect. They come to reconcile their apparent contradictions and to reveal them in their real forms in the clear light of spiritual truth, to extend, exalt and multiply their applications to human life in every form, to show that their sanctions have their ground in the eternal order of things and therefore that there is no way of escaping the consequences of sin but by ceasing from sinning and no possibility of obtaining the blessedness of heaven but by living a heavenly life.

They come to reveal new worlds of spiritual and divine truth in the law and the prophets. They give to our life in this world a new significance; they give us new strength to perform its labours, a new beauty and value in its possessions, a new and brighter hope in death and through the open portals of the grave, they reveal to us a new, a real, a spiritual world in which we are to find our home and which, if we begin to live the life of heaven here, is to be the theatre of our glowing and ever expanding powers for ever.

Thus while they destroy nothing that is good and true, they are anchored fast in the Word of God, the truths they accept issue from it, as the river of life from the throne of God. But while they teach us to hold to every jot and tittle of the law, they are at the same time, a distinct step forward and upward. They teach us the true meaning and spirit of the law and fill it full to every particular of spiritual and divine truth.

Therefore while the New Church is orthodox, Catholic and evangelical in the strictest and highest sense of the terms, it is still the church of progress; while it rigidly holds to the letter of the Word, it is truly scientific and finds new confirmations of its truth in every step of advancement in natural science; while it acknowledges its allegiance to the laws of the divine order and confesses that it is not possible to depart from that order and attain spiritual life, it still holds out to man the greatest freedom and the widest scope for the exercise of every natural and spiritual faculty. Therefore its progress is in and according to the laws of the divine order and towards the infinite perfections of Him who has commanded us "*to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect.*" As men advance along the line of her doctrines which are spiritual truths, they will find their strength increase, their path grow continually brighter, the horizon of their knowledge expand, their freedom enlarge; faith will become knowledge; knowledge perception; the

understanding will be filled with light and the heart with peace and to the spiritual eye, cleared from the obscuring veil of the material body, there will open the brightness and glory, the peace and blessedness of a new world more substantial than this and a new life whose perfections no language can express and whose fullness and extent alone can reveal.