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LOVE IS ALL
By Evangeline Booth
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Press of Reliance Trading Company
120-130 West Fourteenth Street,
New York

Printed Book Copyright, 1908

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Digital Edition 10/25/99
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LOVE IS ALL

Love Never Faileth.

The day was far spent; nay, it had passed. Its blood-prints the heavy tramp of all time can never efface. The merciless crowd which had feasted their eyes upon that ghastly and inhuman spectacle had dispersed. The excited and vulgar laughter night's sympathetic silence had hushed, and the tier above tier of empty seats seemed strangely to add to the desolation of the hour. The sky had wrapped itself in its blackest mantle, and apart from the kindly light lent by the stars revealing the mangled forms of the martyrs and the sound of the intermittent roar of the well-feasted beasts, there was nothing to be heard or seen.

A few hours previously Rome's vast amphitheater had been alive with a massive throng. The stone galleries held hundreds of the highest and chiefest men of the city. Rome's fairest and brightest matrons were there -- all her prided beauty bedecked with jeweled apparel, gathered for the scene; youth with all its would-be, tenderness and innocence, and old age doing everlasting wrong to the honor of gray hairs, were also spectators. The Emperor's Imperial Guards, in readiness to excite Nero's each capricious wish, were onlookers, until right round the immense space no empty place could be found. That great God-contending crowd, with every evil instinct awakened, every evil passion excited, every mind on fire with brazen, lustful gaze, watched for the first sight of the victims.

The murmur of voices grew louder, the ribald song and the coarsest of jests rose higher, composing a clatter, the echo of which must ever and anon fall with the rudest discord upon the ears of the virtuous of every nation. For this coarse combination of sound, if lost, was not to be destroyed in the louder and unanimous applause which greeted the signal that "The Christians are coming!"

Then entered that handful of men and women, for whose destruction the vast throng of onlookers and the savage lions in cages beneath hungrily waited. A little procession -- despised, trampled upon, ridiculed, accused, deemed only fit by reason of their sufferings and agony to provide sport for the Emperor, and that bloodthirsty multitude! But their faces are like unto angles -- pale, yet lit with a radiance which could only be borrowed from the skies.

Some trembled, but none faltered; some wept, but none showed fear; some grasped firmly the hand of a comrade, but none hesitated or turned. Upon the countenance of the weakest could be traced the power of a strong purpose, the strength of undying love, the triumph of an unshaken faith -- truly throwing on to the canvas of time a picture upon which millions will gaze through all eternity.

I fancy I see them come -- mother and daughter, husband and wife, sister and brother, and I see even children there. Some cheeks are tear-stained, some hands are clasped, some forms are worn; some so weak, some so young, some so fair. Some brows have caught the rays of life's setting sun, and their feet tremble in the paths of its late autumn, but they speak words of cheer and courage to a frailer and a younger one. Some pray, "Into Thy hands I commit my spirit," "Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth," "Jesus, I come, I come." Some sing. They sing even songs of

praise! They seem not to see the greedy gaze of diabolical appetite, neither do they meet the blood-shot glare of the beasts, starved to madness. All eyes are lifted. They look up, up, up to the hills from whence cometh their help, and by the hands of blood sacrifice lift up a faith which all the power of earth and Hell have not been able to destroy.

Is it to be wondered that a scene so Divine woke a question in the most prejudiced mind, and gave birth to condemnation in the most lifeless soul?

Could so much of Heaven step through such wreck, and chaos of earth, and not declare its reality?

Could spotless Purity pass so near Uncleaness, and fail to put it to shame?

Could Love so strong meet Spite so cruel, and not reprove it?

Could Light from on high touch Darkness so deep, and not reveal it?

Would it be possible for Truth to stand face to face with Lie, and not condemn it?

They cried: "The Christians to the lions!" -- and lived to prove Death cannot destroy Christianity.

Looking back through the vista of years at this picture, one great question fills our hearts: Whence their strength? Whence their courage? and above all -- amid this anguish and contest for their faith -- whence their patience and their peace?

Do we not find it springing from that root which sends forth ten thousand times ten thousand blossoms of brightest, choicest character into this desert world of ours -- the root of Love?

Planted nineteen centuries ago on Calvary's hill, its upspringing thrusting aside the tomb, destroying the sting of death and bringing healing for the nations -- has not its essence been the motive of every true self-denial offered by the followers of the Crucified, both in the days of the martyrs and our own times?

It was love! It was love that endured. Through the long, wakeful nights, in damp prison cells, on the rack of torture, when the frame was weary with want and hunger, as brutal force spent its fury on trembling tenderness, it was love's pulse that beat strong; it was love that went on and would not retreat; it was love that showed a tenacity that confounded the persecutors; it was love which, when all was done to make time drag, lived through it. It was love that parted with everything, and only knew gain. It was love that stood in the fires and was not burned.

It was love that went through death and was not killed. It was love that shouted the declaration from the martyr-hill which still rings out on earth and in Heaven. "Whether there be prophecies they shall fail, tongues they shall cease, knowledge it shall vanish away," but love can never break down, can never go back, can never die. "Oh, wonderful, matchless love divine!"

But such enduring love was not only for the martyrs' of long ago; nay, it has cheered, strengthened, soothed and carried thousands through tribulations strong and deep, since that time, and is bearing thousands up in adverse circumstances while I write.

It has brightened the days and shortened the nights of those who have pressed through ten and fifteen years of martyrdom on the couch in the hospital, enabling them to sing the songs of conquering grace. It has sustained and held up mothers who for fifty years have "died daily" in the kitchen or attic, martyred by the fires of life's sorrows, and the wrongs practiced by godless husbands and wayward sons. It has armed and made triumphant thousands persecuted in the store, workshop and street, where men have hourly bared their breast to the bayonet point and the lion's teeth of opposition and spite, upholding the story of the Cross, for Love is greater than all these things.

Are you to be found in this number? Are you in the ranks of this long procession? Do you know, feel, prove that love can carry the burden, shoulder the cross, stand the struggle, make you to do your duty to God and to man, and lead you through more than conqueror?

No brutal force has asked at your hands a shameful death as the price of your love to God, but is there not a measure of shame and ridicule that He has asked you to endure for Him? -- the daily fight of which Paul spoke, and which falls to the lot of every conscientious soldier of Christ -- the many, many conflicts which must be waged in the interests of righteousness?

Have you shirked it? Have you sought the easier path and left the higher road for other feet? Oh, for love that suffereth long and even in its sufferings is kind!

Ah! As you look at this picture of the martyrs, you say: "If I had been there I would have joined them. My hands would have linked theirs, my prayers would have been lifted with theirs, and my name would have been handed down as an example with theirs. I would have been faithful in the hour of test. I, too, would have shown that I loved Him best!" But how quickly do you seize your own opportunities theater equally valuable in sowing the seed of the Church?

They are not brought before you in the arena at Rome, but here in the kitchen, the workshop, with your friends, opportunities to show His grace and power to save. Jesus sends them the same; angels are near you to help you to use them the same! and if you love as the saints of old did love, by the way you endure you also will light amid the shadows of life a candle that no power will ever put out.

It was love that trusted, and that trusted to the end. Not only were there present the cleverest devices for torturing the human frame, but Hell, ever ready to attack the soul in its weakest hour, took care to assail those martyrs' minds with suggestions of distrust -- their God had forsaken them; the Arm of Jehovah was powerless to help them; Heaven had overlooked them; their faith was wrongly founded. Nothing good could come out of such shame and suffering! But through the blinding smoke of seeming defeat; through the midst of questions that they had no power to answer; through the thickest clouds of blackest darkness they trust blindly, but bravely, faith's hand, and held on to the promise of God: "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee." Where they cannot trace, they trust;

where they cannot feel, they believe; where they cannot see, faith lends them sight. Oh, what a triumph! Oh, what a victory! for "This is the victory that overcometh the world."

It rocked the foundation of the strongest infidel. It conquered the bitterest opponent of Calvary; it shattered forever the supposition that righteousness could be slain; for, resulting from the few hundreds put to death that day, tens of hundreds founded their feet upon the rock of Christianity!

Oh, for trust that brings the triumph
When defeat seems strangely near!
Oh, for faith that changes fighting
Into victory's ringing cheer!
Faith triumphant,
Knowing not defeat or fear!

This is the Hand to hold to when the storms of life are beating; this is the Arm to lean upon when there is the valley to tread. Feelings are grand and helpful, but they so often fail us. Sight is wonderfully cheering, but so soon grows dim.

Faith is the shield of protection; faith is the two-edged sword; faith is the light of life's evening. Its morn never closes, but goes on and on unto the perfect day.

Perhaps it is just here that you feel that you have lacked; you can trace every retreat in your past experience to want of the love that refused to doubt, the trust that would not question. You have seen others weaker than yourself, less able in many ways, pass you on the journey, go on where you have gone back, stand firm where you have changed, triumph where you have failed. It meant such a price -- an exorbitant price -- and you could not see where the gain would be; it seemed a sacrifice that was all loss, like the martyr's did. It would not have helped your social standing; it would not have fitted in with your business plans; it was not approved of by your relations. You can argue it all out so clearly, but there they are, retreats all the same, and with what sorrow you count them over! -- retreats from what would have been eternal conquests if you had gone on and trusted, like Abraham and the three Hebrew children, and Joshua, Peter and Stephen -- retreats from public platforms for fear of the gaze of the crowd, and retreats from secret conflicts that asked a sacrifice alone in the dark. Jesus asked for it, but you had not the love that could trust to give it. You thought you could not do without the treasure. You had leaned upon it; and it would hurt so to part with it! Oh, how many blessings have been lost for the want of faith!

It was love that gave! It gave its best, gave what was hardest to give, gave all it had to give, and gave it freely, uncompromisingly, without grudge and without regret. There were the children -- it offered them living sacrifices, torn from mothers' arms to suffer and die for Jesus' sake. There was the husband! Love held him not back from torture and the grave! There was the mother! Love laid her upon a bleeding altar! There was wealth! It lost its glittering charm before the gold that could never waste or wear away Name, fame, home, treasure, store -- Love gave all! and Love would that it could have given more, for had not Love, in giving, given Heaven, and with Heaven pardon for sins and crowning for virtues? One drop of that burning passion, which stripped the skies of its brightest and best, and gave the Son of God that none need perish, MUST

give. Give, if it means to suffer; give, if it means to lose; give, in life; give, in death; give forever throughout eternity!

And real love is today as in the days of the martyrs. It must give according to its own measure. When a heart loves much, it will give much, and much and great. will be its reward, whether seen here or not, as it was with the widow of long ago. She was ignorant of how anything great could possibly come out of things so small as those two little mites, but the Lord made them the foundation of a monument standing high enough to teach a whole world that the way to make its offerings to Heaven is by love that offers all.

It was love that triumphed! -- but not according to the world. As far as human eye could see at the time, these martyrs' deaths were almost as black a defeat as Calvary seemed when they lowered, Jesus' body from the rugged tree, and buried the Lord of Life in a sealed grave of Death. They were slain; they were massacred upon the seashores; they were burned to ashes; they were stamped out; they were devoured; they were buried in heaps like dogs; the crimson dye from their veins staining history till the hour when "He maketh inquisition for blood." They were done away with. They were gone!

But they were not dead, for love is greater than death, and hath not power to die, neither could such a light ever be hid. One of earth's grandest victories achieved, the Church founded, Christ upheld, faith protected, the Bible pre served, grace sufficient for fiery furnace, for rolling billow, for prison cell, for lion's jaws, and lingering suffering, declared this was Love's triumph, Love's victory, Love's eternal conquest. It took the world a little time to see it, for as so often the light did not burst forth till the last pulse ceased to beat, and the sacrifice was fully made. Then Victory! Victory!! VICTORY!!! was written in eternal lettering over every martyr's grave.

It was victory over human affection, victory over tenderest ties, victory over feeling, victory over fear, victory over agony, victory over tears, victory over Hell's best art and power to insure a retreat. All was done that demon mind could devise to make them forsake their Lord, to draw one utterance that would make certain their release -- but they pressed on -- on with breaking hearts and bleeding bodies, carrying victory right through the gates of death, for in their dying was their triumph.

The same grace, the same victory, the same Heaven are ours for time and eternity by the power of the same love. Battles as dark can be fought, struggles as long and longer can be waged and conquests as great can be won; so that here and hereafter before His Throne we can join in the great and everlasting chorus of praise for conquering grace.

Love traveled through the journey. Love safely reaches home. Love trod the lonely winepress. Love sang within the gate. Love drove its sword in battle. Love waved the victor's palm. Love carried heavy crosses. Love wears the golden crown. Love bore and pressed through sorrow. Love wipes away all tears. Love smiles. Love sings. Love shines. Love shouts. Love reigns. Love's in HEAVEN! Oh, on earth Love counts for little, but in Heaven "Love Is all."

* * * * *

CHARITY

The greatest of these is Charity. (I Cor. 13: 13.)

It was the only picture relieving the solitude of four large white walls. At least, if there were others, I know nothing of them, for immediately upon entering the long and crowded room my eyes were so riveted upon the one of which I speak that I became too oblivious of all else to observe any other attempt at ornament. In fact, only a touch upon my arm, drawing my notice to the attracted attention of the whole room to my presence, and intense interest, made me recollect that, after all, pictures were only pictures, hanging like dead things on people's walls; yet, it was with some reluctance that I turned away whispering, "Beautiful, beautiful!"

However, this triumph production of an artist soul -- for there is something more than skill depicted here -- has held the eyes of my heart with the magnetic influence of life, rather than the mere expression of talent on canvas; and the longer I look -- for the picture has been loaned me -- the more I discover the many evidences of Divine light that seem to throw their radiance from behind the crust and beneath the rags, leaping into a very halo of stars to crown the unadorned head. Yes! all the richest gems of Heaven's virtues are set in this one coronet -- Charity.

There is no perfection of contour to tempt the pencil of the artist, neither are there those flushes of youthful beauty attracting the brush of the painter. Fashion and culture's moulding fingers have left untrammelled nature's sterner chisel, leaving a form and face which show that both cradle gifts and life's hard school have made her but the object of their plainer handiwork.

No blue in the eye, no gold in the hair, no grace in the form; but rags for the dress, and yet she is so gloriously beautiful -- beautiful with a beauty so inviting that many times I have kissed the cold glass where it covers the pale face, saying: "Let me be like her."

Lovely with a loveliness that knows no rival; for who can suggest improvement -- what can we find wanting? Why the very forsaking of what this world would deem of worth has but made more brilliant those love-lit lamps, which, burning in the soul, shine o'er the countenance with a luster that all this world's wealth cannot purchase, and all its arts can never feign.

And so it is with Charity -- that rare and indescribable light. It flushes not only the countenance, but the face of a lifetime, with a beauty as grand and matchless as that with which the burnish of a sinking sun irradiates the Heavens, showing that its full glory has been there.

Charity -- the excellency of Heaven! Was it not out of this very germ came the creation? There is no budding of the hillside, no murmur of the brook, no bird on the wing, no breath of the forest, no life on the sea, no cloudlet of the sky in which one cannot find God's touch of love. Love was the beginning of all things, and love will rush in and throb out the final climax of all, when in the world's tribunal the heavy tramp of the nation's halt for love's sealing of every virtue, and crowning of all good.

Charity brought in religion. It began planning thousands of years ago for the salvation of man, it was in the midnight song of the Angels, it swung the star over Bethlehem, it burst the sepulcher of Calvary's tomb, it is Heaven's first and highest grace, it is man's only hope for time, death, and eternity -- it is God Himself.

Can anyone measure it, fathom its depths, scale its height, estimate its circumference?

It is

Higher than the highest heavens,
Deeper than the deepest sea . . .

Now, seeing that Heaven itself is love, and that our only passport for crossing its shiny portal can alone be love's namesake, God has given a test, by the application of which every soul may know without doubt whether they possess the true kernel of religion, or whether, with hearts deceived, they hold only the shell.

It seems, in order to show us how erring and mistaken we can be in our judgment of our spiritual standing, God reveals in the thirteenth chapter of I. Corinthians a casket of gems of highest worth -- all that the heart could desire for this world, and all that the mind, with its poor, limited understanding, would imagine was needed for the next, and shows that, while possessing so much, we can miss all. In this casket we find, first, the gem of Oratory.

Who could look upon it and not be impressed with its mighty value?

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels." Oh, what an overwhelming attraction there is in this supposition! Could a heart carry a burning theme and not covet that gift most fitted to voice its claims? Yet what trouble we have in our day to get men to speak! Even in the Christian world there is very little sounding out of what God has done, and is able to do, in the souls of men, in making them conquerors over sin and patient in disaster. I think that thousands get very little from Heaven for the simple reason that they refuse to boldly acknowledge what God has given them.

However, numbers there are who raise their voices in the cause supposed to lie nearest their hearts. They say a few words in the Sunday-school, in the home, or even in the pulpit, but often with such uncertain and hesitating confession, that few, if any, are the better for it. In fact, I should say that there are a great many people who could never be orators owing to their personal uncertainty of the things of which they speak.

Their use of all negatives and affirmatives, adjectives, or definite terms, given for distinguishing right from wrong, are too limited to allow of it. This may be owing to one or two causes; either a breakdown in their own spiritual experience, rendering a timidity in speaking of graces -- graces they have never possessed or long lost -- or a cowardly fear of jarring others' tastes, or hurting somebody else's feelings.

In giving an address in a large church a few weeks ago, one of its members said to me that he thought I was the only one who from that pulpit had given the devil his right name since the erection of that building. Now, it seems to me a great incumbrance to true oratorical preaching to be denied calling the devil by any and every name that would be best and quickest in making his dark character understood.

To be repeatedly speaking of this monster of all wrong, shame and crime, in such mild terms as "Evil influence," or of sin as "Errors of judgment," is to rob any speech of that distinctness and force which must characterize the effectual orator. One of the greatest political lecturers that this world has ever known, said: "True oratory is plainness of speech, with the courage of your convictions."

But, oh, how some have gone forth, where the motive power has been created by Divine touch; where the object has been thrice worthy of depth of heart and width of intellect; where the theme, becoming an all-absorbing passion, has claimed every energy, and where God has thrown in the additional equipment of a gifted tongue -- a tongue skilled in the art of arresting the ear of a nation, and swaying its mind as sky winds sway the foliage of the forest -- convincing, convicting, converting the people by power of speech; turning the tired feet from the hard roads into the eternal resting place by eloquent persuasion; driving out the regiments of wrong and marching in the troops of right, by orders on Heaven's authority; rocking the strongholds of iniquity, and building "Temples Divine of living stones inscribed with Jesus' name."

This is what it means -- "Tongues of angels" -- the tenderness of persuasion; fervency of entreaty; force of eloquence; depth of compassion of an angel's tongue.

Yet, all too appalling does it seem to speak it, but true it be, that while even so much possessing, if the one Crown Jewel of Charity be missing, then in the ears of God all the outward sounding has but the echoing emptiness, coldness and hardness of beaten brass, and to His all-searching gaze but the irritation of battering cymbals.

And so you see that being a good speaker is no criterion that you are a true lover, follower or server of Christ. You can talk charity without having it; you can expound and display its priceless beauties, with its rightful place in your heart filled with self; you can join your voice with the numerous exclamations of pity for the poor without giving any shoes for bare feet, or clothes for naked forms; you can bewail with great pathos the distresses of the hungry, but spare no cents for loaves of bread; you can with effective eloquence picture the sin of the wicked and be void of one drop of Calvary's passion for their poor, sinking souls.

There is something so very repulsive to me in the simile "Sounding brass." It is only sound -- nothing underneath; all emptiness, and yet one can easily see, it is just what a whole life would become without that God-created, Heaven-breathed motive power, which can alone lift service on to His altar, and can alone make all that is offered there acceptable to Him. But we will not stay longer with the gem of oratory, but will turn and draw from the casket our next treasure -- the gift of Knowledge.

None but fools would think lightly of a gift so priceless. How much more to be treasured than wealth, or sought for than fame! What a key of possibility placed within the hands of man, unlocking so many of the mysteries of this world's entanglements, and giving a clue to so many of life's hidden meanings!

Its pursuit has made thousands oblivious to poverty or pain, and the promise of more worthy discoveries beneath its restless waters has cast a halo around many an otherwise dark and dingy future. For after all, what pen could describe the inviting fascination of an awakening thirst to know? The young artist realizes but little joy from the picture of today compared to that immense satisfaction derived from nursing buoyant ambitions of what the future productions of his crayon and paint are yet to be.

The man of science, laboriously wrestling with the intricacies of some invention yet in its germ, forgets both fatigue and toil in the vision of some piece of mechanism of unique completeness which the promise of greater knowledge holds out to him. Does not the musician revel in the thought that the deeper he dives into music's soul the more there is in its worlds beyond?

But the charms of knowledge are not to be compared to its potent value in emphasizing the character and empowering the life. Although God has, and does, bless the use of the most illiterate and unlearned -- and ever will do, while such stand their feet upon an unreserved consecration -- yet the culture of the mind is not to be lightly valued.

It is much too mighty a thing, and influential in all its far-spreading issues. Willful ignorance finds no favor in Heaven, neither will God work miracles to reward it.

I cannot help thinking how much more efficient fighting in the Kingdom of God there would be if there was a little more seeking to know how to do it. Men too often neglect to learn the lessons of wisdom and advice which God has caused to be written upon the pages of every life; and there is no question but that ignorance and stupidity have been the reason of three parts of the spiritual wrecks which strew the shores of time.

Here is a man who takes up farming. He gets from his surrounding neighbors every bit of information that he can as to how to run the business; he collects every particle of literature printed which is likely to be of any assistance to him; he listens to every story of success and tale of misfortune, gathering all the experience within his reach, sits up at night to plan, and is up at daybreak to test his schemes in the light of the fresh day.

He must make the thing go, and this can only be done by solving agricultural problems, by getting a perfect knowledge of the business.

But here is a man who gets converted; he starts for Heaven; it is a long road and a difficult one -- there is much more up-hill work than down, but he undertakes the journey; he is to champion the cause of his Master, although he is quite a new hand at the task; he holds himself responsible for the saving and blessing of others, although it is the most intricate business one can be engaged in.

He doffs the dress of the worldling, and adopts the garb of the Christian (if not he ought to) and enters into battle with minds as cunning as their hearts are cruel; with sin as brazen in blackness as Heaven is fearless in purity -- but where do we find him? In tens of thousands of cases with the slothful in business, leaving God to drag him to Heaven, instead of fighting his way there; talking of blessing others, when he has never studied how to do it.

Does he overlook that all the devils in Hell will attack him, strongest and most subtle temptations will assail him, every conceivable barrier will be cast before him; that all the powers of evil, all the strength of vice, all the champions of rascality will form in line against him?

When a soul starts for Heaven, do you know what I hear? I hear the fiends of Hell cry out, "Back with him! Back with him!" -- back to the darkness of the sinning road, back to the evil habits, eating up all his resources, back to the condemnation of heavy crime, burning the heart and blistering the brain -- back, back! All dark hands engaged in the thrusting; all dark plans spread in the scheming; all delurements flung into the tempting, until he staggers, he falls -- he's over -- he's gone -- He's down -- He's damned!

I tell you that to get to Heaven you want to know all the eccentricities of the road, so that you can make "straight paths for your feet," or you will never get there. It is a delusion for any soul to ground his arms and expect that mere desire is going to win the race! You say he would never start, but for the limitless measure of God's conquering grace. Yes, but you forget that this conquering grace is only for those that are diligent and study to show themselves approved. You want to search into the inner meanings of the grace of God.

The finest faculties of the grandest intellect can never fathom the bottom of those waters; the swiftest mind to grasp and understand can never soar to its full heights. Oh, that our prayer might be Solomon's -- "A wise and understanding heart!" He became so learned that his knowledge overshadowing his pen poured out 1,005 songs and wrote 3,000 proverbs. In fact, it would be difficult to say what Solomon did not write. His writings stand, and they will stand while the ages roll. Oh, what a power was the knowledge of Solomon! And yet the Bible tells us that even such knowledge as this -- grand, great and mighty as it is in all its far-reaching influences -- without Charity, is nothing! No wonder! Knowledge and Charity, how can you possibly compare them? You may as well stand the rush-light by the sun, or expect the rain-drops to rival the ocean. How could Knowledge make up for Love? How could Knowing make up for Being? How could Thinking make up for Feeling? How could the Brain -- glorious as it is -- take the place of the Soul? One "vanishes away" -- the other is immortal. Knowledge springing from, revolving around, and resolving itself into Charity, is one of Heaven's mightiest forces. Knowledge without Love dwarfs the soul, narrows the sympathies and minimizes the character.

Love that passes understanding;
Angels would the mystery scan;
Yet so tender that it reaches
To the lowest child of man.
Let me, Jesus,
Better know redemption's plan.

After all, one can know all about the path to Heaven, seeming to tread it so far as the letter tells, most perfectly; so walk by the lamp of Knowledge that they never fall into the ditch of vice; so as never to become a drunkard, or a gambler, or a wife-beater, or a robber -- indeed, they are very religious, what the world calls religious -- but when before the scrutinizing gaze of the Judgment Throne, or trying to get a look -- just one look -- inside the star-bedecked gates of Love's Own Land, their righteousness will be found "filthy rags," and their debts too heavy to pay. And so, seeing that Knowledge is so poor a treasure without Charity, we thrust our hands deeper into the casket and draw from its clustering gems the Pearl of Sacrifice.

"And though I give my body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing." -- I Cor. 13: 3.

Is it possible to give from any other motive than love? Can we sacrifice and the offering be worthless? Can surrender reach degree so deep, so high, as my verse here describes, and be profitless? Surely there must be some great mistake, or anyway, unsolvable problem connected with the quotation!

Assuredly it is the right thing to give. It is the primary principle of the universe; -- the axle upon which the wheel of nature, all industry and spirituality swing round.

I look into the forest and I see tree branch nurturing with sap-food its infant buddings into maturity. I find the Autumn decaying, trodden leaves returning in death nutriment for their parent foliage. I hear the bird singing for the birdling, and the night wind's lullaby hushing earth to sleep, while earth in its morning glory repays its kindly benefactor with tint of coloring, thrill of music, and bountiful service. I perceive in the veil of vapor arising from river, ocean and lake, water's generous offering to appease the burning thirst of fiery sky and floating cloudlet, and hear in the outpour of gratitude on the stormy morrow Heaven thanking earth by its feeding of all nature.

When I think of all these things, do you know what I say! I say that nature remembers so well what creature so oft forgets, that "they that sow bountifully shall also reap bountifully."

Then, withdraw this fundamental agency of giving from the commercial world and watch the effect; the great engine flags, pants, struggles, squeaks -- then a crase -- and a standstill!

Ah, but you may argue that the world gives for what it gets. I am glad that you put in those three letters spelling f-o-r, for what giving is there that does NOT get? God has too well arranged the law of sowing and reaping to allow offering to pass without rebounding in receiving. But this is just what I want to show. There is all the difference in the world between giving for what you get, and being given to for what you gave.

But let us look at this giving. Even that which is based on no higher motive than the fact that one being the recipient of much blessing, in return must yield of their store. I mean here to state that this is a great advance on the practice, if not the profession of thousands of people I have met in my day. I refer to those which I classify in my own mind as the spongers.

They throw themselves on the charities, on the virtues, on the labors, on the prayers, on the tears, on the generous administration of others in ten thousand ways through life, and when you come to squeeze them for a little return you find them dry -- quite dry -- completely dry! If you are seeking sympathy, they will say, "It is not in my nature to be demonstrative, and to say that I am sorry for people."

If you are seeking means to finance a missionary for the salvation of the heathen, they will, like Ahab, look round their fruitful vineyards and say that they themselves are wanting. If you are seeking a little service to save some back from breaking, and some overpressed mind from failing, they will plead overtaxed time or physical weakness.

If you are seeking a little cheer or congratulation to save some toiling spirit from fainting, they will say they don't believe in praise -- it elates and puffs up. If you ask for some roll of material from their elaborate stock, or some food for the hungry from their well-filled cupboard, they will direct you to some charitable mission, and speak of the advisability of these requests being made exclusively to the fitting parties. If you ask for a word -- a hot word -- to save a soul from sinking -- eternally sinking -- they will say that public speaking is outside their vocation, thus giving most brazen manifestation of that gross ingratitude which unblushingly absorbs all, but yields naught in return.

I call these people "the spongers." Their entire time they get, take, squeeze, receive, and give NOTHING. But the procession is so long and the appearance of those forming it so mean and meager, that I turn away and say again: "Giving is a grand thing, a splendid thing, a beautiful thing." Yes, beautiful, for generosity takes the compressedness out of the lip, the sharpness out of the nostril, the severity out of the eye and the sternness out of the expression.

A poor and grief-stricken mother, whose son had been condemned to die, sought the presence of Abraham Lincoln to plead for his Presidential reversion of the fatal sentence. Love's ingenuity and sorrow's passport pressed through all intervening formalities and reached his council chamber. Returning with transfigured face and clutching with joy's trembling fingers the boon she had gained, she was heard to murmur on descending the broad steps of the White House, "They lie when they say the President is plain-looking -- why, he's the handsomest man I've ever seen." And so I say that generosity, which hands out gifts of all description, is a lovely thing.

And yet -- I could never say it -- my pen dare not write it -- courage would fail to repeat it, were they not the words of Bible record: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." The "nothing" sounds like the death-knell rung in our ears -- it seems to clash cold and barred gates on all that has gone before it. Open,

O Heavens, and tell us the meaning --
That we may learn, and learning,
Miss so great an erring.

Surely, the solving of the problem is to be found in the careful reading of the two words "profiteth ME."

The explanation can but be that the altar sanctifieth the gift. All laid thereon God will take and use in His Kingdom; but only those offerings springing from the burning promptings of that love which to live must give, and which to give can only offer from that purity of motive that in giving reckons not on gain, but rather counts on loss, can bring eternal profit to the giver.

It seems that only love can look to love for the crowning of self-blessing, and only love can expect to wed love on Heaven's bridal morning. So God, being love, can but set His royal seal upon that soul which yields to Him from the self-same motive from which He gave all to us, when Omnipotence made sacrifice to life and death and met the queries of all worlds in the spoken passion, "God so loved the world."

Oh, this sweeping, subduing, victorious power -- this golden coronet for which there is no tarnish -- this morning life that cannot die, this invincible force which, upon the fields of life's battle, never beat a retreat, has known no failure -- could not be slain.

Apostles have avowed it in felon's cell, bound by chain; martyrs have shouted it on burning stake in heated flame; death-beds have declared it in rising foam and swelling tide; the children have sung it in ten thousand songs, and the aged have affirmed it in life's last evening.

This has been the lamp which has blazed for the lifting of the hospital's shadow, the lighting of the prisoner's gloom, the guiding of the pauper's feet, the drying of the widow's eyes and the realizing of the orphan's dreams. Boundless, wondrous, limitless, glorious Charity Divine -- sweetest, dearest, intensest, most thrilling, most convincing, most conquering ambassador of the sky!

When the world is smitten into flame, and the moon turned into blood, and the countless numbers of all the earth are before the Throne, and the portals shine their best gems, and the fountains shower their pearliest waters, and the angels sing their fairest songs, -- then I see the stars leap into archways, the floating planets spread burning pathways, and palms bedecked with diamonds form waving garlands, while following the leadership of troops of angels whose swaying "banners of love" keep time to the resounding anthems of the glorified, -- Faith, Hope and Charity pass in, "but the greatest of these is Charity."

Hark, for the angels call:
"The love of God lives through eternity
And conquers all."

* * * * *

3
FLIES

"Charity suffereth long and is kind, . . . is not easily provoked."

As a chime of resonant, bells amid the unblending voices of confusion, heated controversy, contradictory beliefs, and mystifying arguments, rings out Paul's decisive declaration to questioning Greece, as to the essence and influence of unalloyed Christianity. The words of my text were addressed to Corinth, but have with equal force been thundering through time since their utterance, answering all sincere inquiry of the seeking soul, while condemning all hypocrisy.

Corinth, the great; Corinth, the grand; Corinth, the beautiful! I have read that nothing in our world today could be compared to the stupendous display of column, statue and temple of this ancient city, which stands unrivaled either by the past or present. In the building of her wharves were absorbed the wealth and skill of kingdoms, and their naval force confounded the armies of the seas of every nation. It was from her fountains gushed the far-famed health-giving waters; within her walls there towered the statue of Hercules, carved in Corinthian brass; through her groves of pines and olives there floated -- and in her theaters and cathedrals there vibrated -- the most delicate and cultured music; battlements, towers, temples, columns, sculpture, architecture, beauty and art, either spread in her walls, or towered in her streets, or shone in her gates, or was carved in her stairways, or cut in her pillars, or hung in her pictures, until there was scarcely a corner in Corinth that was not adorned with some magnitude of splendor.

But here comes Paul! His rounded shoulders and swollen eyelids by no means modify his meager appearance, and, standing in some public highway, past which there glides the glitter of aristocracy, says that all these gifts, of which you think so highly, around which your highest hopes encircle, in which your strongest ambitions are centered and on which the best of nations has been spent -- are but as nothing compared to the glory of the possessions of which I have to tell you.

In your prided splendor -- though you see it not -- there is the sure indication of coming decay; within your towering pinnacles of pleasure is the trembling of approaching downfall; your myriad dissipations and multitudinous gaieties are fragile as the butterfly's wing; their gauze-like fascinations will all too surely and speedily reveal the chasm of discontent and retributive remorse toward which they are bringing you. Held blindly by such bewildering gaieties and fantastic toys, you cannot discern the intrinsic value of the treasure of which I speak, whether at Athens, Corinth or Rome, though it so far outweighs the worth of either's boasted fame, be it wealth, wisdom or imperial power. Your luxuries and ease will diminish when your need is the greatest; your fountains will run dry when your thirst is the strongest.

Your gold will waste and wear away,
My portion never can decay.

I have a treasure earth can never tarnish. I have a temple not made with mortal hand. I drink from a fount whose waters are eternal. I have a recipe for all pain -- any pain -- both deep and fractious pain. It is the gift of God made free for every man; it is the grace of Christ, an ocean-river; it is the light of Heaven; the luster of eternal ages -- it is Charity. It can hold up when all props go down; it can hold on when all hands let go; it can hold out when all strength gives in.

When the fires come and your temples are consumed it will live; when the floods come and your pride is laid low it will stand; when the cyclones come and your city is deserted it will

remain; when disaster or affliction besieges or distracts, it will shine -- for it is Charity, and Charity can suffer -- suffer long, and even while suffering, be kind.

Now I am not in the least surprised that Paul in a day of such dispute as to diversity of gifts holds out this, as one of rarest worth, for, in other words, it is patience that wins the race, and I suppose it was just as scarce a grace in that day as it is. in this. I would like to show first, that the want of the capacity to bear -- or, to put it into a nutshell, "impatience" -- is at the root of some of the heaviest misfortunes and darkest sins. Three parts of the suicides of the world would have never pulled through the ghastly business of shunting their souls from the rails of time on to the end less tracks of eternity, had they postponed the bloody transactions until one-half hour later.

Again, would it be possible to draw any accurate estimate of the multitudinous number of those mistakes which have brought lifelong trouble and misfortune upon mankind, which a little waiting for thought would have prevented?

I knew a gentleman who, although a millionaire on the yesterday, was little better than a pauper on the morrow, when the horses, library and the grand old homestead, all went in the hunt for the lost money. The friend, who told me the sad story, said: "Undue haste for the accumulation of further riches secured his signature to a mistaken document, which cost him all, and brought on himself and his family this terrible loss." And so, I say, impatience is the rock-bottom of some of the most monstrous sins and gigantic calamities of the world's history, and that Charity's armies make full provision for our protection, in their capacity to hold back as well as hold on.

Secondly, impatience concerning what are deemed the minor matters of life lies at the cause of more than half the spiritual breakdowns of the Christian world. The continual giving way to impatient feeling and expression destroys the very foundation of peace, and leaves a conscience so offended that any joy to be experienced must be squeezed out of an empty profession. Such religion is a failure; it cannot bear up against the current of daily adversity, those tiny streams whose source springs from some hidden creek, created by infinitesimal droppings, in the kitchen or the office -- nevertheless, whose strength of tide is far greater than would appear on the surface.

I refer now to those little restless currents flowing through every life -- wearing the strength, irritating the spirit and tiring the nerves -- in fact, summed up in the total, putting a far greater tax upon the body and soul than periodical gales and storms can do. It is not the cloud-breaks and cyclones that bring down the mountains, but the steady rains, the continual drippings, filtering through the crevices, nooks and gutters that loosen these massive bodies, and destroy these monuments of nature. And so with thousands of souls, undermining the strongholds of their spirituality is the continual giving way beneath the slight but penetrating pressure of trial's drippings.

In the dark ages one of the most inhuman means of torture was to fasten the condemned man by iron chains to the ground, while water spent itself in tiny drops upon the center of his brow, until reason, inflamed, reeled and broke beneath that miniature weapon, which by its maddening continuity -- drop, drop, drop --produced the effect of a sledge-hammer thundering on the brain and later the victim dies.

And so the drops of passing afflictions batter and shatter the spiritual power of countless numbers of souls.

They could suffer the heavy blow when the father forsook the home and steeped his name in the burning lava of shame; or when the children were carried to the corner grave of the large cold church yard, they shone -- but they have never found the religion that can suffer the everyday vexations which flow in the current of time.

For one thing they are so persistent -- each morning, afternoon and evening bringing but a continuation of drops that have dripped before, and some sincerely question as to whether there ever has been proved an equivalent stream of grace that could outrun these waters of irritation and test.

There are large crowds belonging to every church, and connected with every Army hall, who prove themselves heroes of the field when there is the bayonet point to be faced, Goliath to conquer, Joshua's Jordan to cross, the mob to resist, and hot persecution to withstand. They can suffer these sharp, fierce upheavals of the enemy's thrusts, but the plague of flies that conquered Pharaoh also conquers them. They buzz in their ears -- in the teasing racket of the house, the street or the office. They buzz in their eyes -- and the papers are lost, which is exceedingly trying, specially when there is such certainty as to their having been placed on that identical spot in that particular desk. They buzz in their mouth -- and the tea is cold, when it might, and could, and should have been hot. They come as in clouds and o'ershadow each path -- and they miss their train, they lose their way. They buzz through our nights, thickening our gloom, for only those who have had the darkness of sorrow intensified by trying circumstances know what these night irritations mean.

When I meet these daily, and indeed, sometimes hourly, trials and cross purposes beating against my plans and flying across my schemes, and interfering with my intentions, do you know what I say? I say, "Pharaoh's flies." They are not big or mighty, and yet it takes more to overcome and subdue them than the heavy afflictions of life, just as it would take more to capture and destroy a thousand flies than the most ferocious quadruped. But the flies of life's irritations never can be captured -- they can only be borne, and bearing in patience is one of the highest forms of spiritual triumph.

A few weeks ago a soul seeking the blessing of a clean heart said, "Commander, I get on well at the store; I can smile and sing amid the persecution there, but it is the vexatious matters at home which upset me." I thought, yes, standing the furnace as well as the three Hebrew children, but conquered by flies! Oh, I know some giants of Christianity who have come down here! Oh, could all the dirges in minor keys moan out what a calamity it is that a man's religion all through life should be marred for the want of conquering grace for flies! Better lose your papers than lose your peace. Better stand outward noise than inward strife. Better miss your joy than miss your crown. Better suffer the night than bedim the morning. Oh, what a saving, conquering, helping, keeping provision in this grace which "beareth all things, hopeth all things, believeth all things," and "is not easily provoked."

Again, I see that Charity makes us befitting pupils for the stern tuition of life's more rigid teachers. From the rough, straight benches of sorrow's hard school Christianity has graduated her first and greatest heroes. God's best and choicest spirits have almost unexceptionally been the chosen subjects of adversity -- the sharp chisel of pain being the selected instrument for the cutting of the character and the fierce chastening to bring the life into softer expression. The vista of history, from earliest ages, reveals that man's highest lessons have been learned in the crucible of suffering.

How many thoughtless has the sick couch made earnest! How many careless has adversity taught responsibility! How many inconsiderate have become sympathetic by overstrung and tortured nerves! How many cold and hard have been brought to gentleness and kindness by the rending sorrow of bereavement! How many haughty and rebellious have been subdued and led into loving subjection by a downfall in circumstances! How many hearts strengthened, natures deepened, souls purified, saints perfected can be traced to these afflictions! Ten thousand graves have formed the birth-cradle of passionate love for Jesus. Many a crushing disappointment has brought the strength to lift His Cross.

How oft has a calamitous blow thrust open the barred gates between the soul and salvation! How frequently has the furnace of affliction through which the parent has passed lit the light by which the whole family has followed on to God!

I see suffering to be such a wonderful medium through which Heaven is interpreted to earth, and God's best channel for infusing into the soul His rarest graces. As it was God's chosen channel to impart to this poor world the great plan of redemption, so still it is the stream on which is borne His choicest gifts to the soul; and this alone can be the reason for so much tormenting of trust, torturing of tenderness, tearing of spirit and teasing of nerve, which would tempt the best of us to ask, Has God forgotten His own? But surely life's open page has written too clearly the evidences that pains impress upon the mind and character proves our highest gain.

Therefore, don't shirk the Cross, don't turn back from the rivers, don't complain so severely of the trial, but remembering how you can make it the richest blessing of your life, get the Charity that can suffer it -- the Charity that will shine in it -- the Charity which, by virtue of its very capacity to endure, needs suffering to call forth its full glory.

The explanation given in Revelation for the reason of the glistening and the glory of the children in white, was that this eternal triumph and blessing came to them by virtue of their having come out of great tribulation -- that they came out of it, not did away with it, but came through it -- singing and shouting the praises of the Blood of the Lamb.

What pen could write, what tongue could speak, what angel tell the full congregation of afflictions which composed the tangled forests, or flamed the heated furnaces, or rolled the heavy waters through which those patient feet and forbearing spirits pressed their way. It is beyond dispute that they had cried much, for now they are not to shed any tears. They had known what it was to want bread and suffer from thirst, for now "the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne of God shall feed them, and lead them by living waters; they shall neither hunger nor thirst any more." Oh, the tribulation had been a hard, fierce and long fight!

Whose was the arm that held them? Whence the light that led them? Whence the love that guided them? All found in the gift Paul spoke of at Corinth, telling how, in blood, it came to a world from Calvary. Charity! -- why, it can hold up any weakness, strengthen any feebleness, and straighten any crookedness. Bent backs, tired heads and worn nerves can rest on it. It removes not the trial, but gives strength to bear it. It divides not the waters, but carries through the tide. It quenches not the furnace, but the flame shall not kindle to singe. It will not still the strife, but in all life's battles will declare the triumph. It will nerve your heart in time, it will light your candle in death. By its continual virtuous, patient bearing it will soothe all your sorrows, lighten all your burdens, understand all your trials, smooth all your frictions, ease all your sufferings and stay all your tears. For Charity suffers, Charity is kind, is not easily provoked, and in the heavy bivouac of earth's varying warfare I ask what more invincible forces could champion the claims of the soul than these three regiments which march in the army of Love.

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4 COLORED VIEWS

"Charity . . . thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." This there is no mistaking. Here is the reason for a mother thinking her babe the perfection of childhood's charms, and for a father seeing his son to be in possession of attractions of which few others can boast. Then, if beauty is so completely in the adoring eye, I should certainly say that the uncomely appearance presented by some people and things is also solely to do with the unfavorable vision of the beholder.

It is not a necessary sequence that there is nothing of an admirable nature in the object because it is not discerned by the onlooker. No matter with what magnificence and artistic correctness the scene may be portrayed on canvas, if the eye lacks the perception of harmonious blending of color, or the realistic grouping of life, to such a one the picture is but a poor, bedaubed affair, whereas to an eye quickened with a perception for the beautiful, it stands as a triumph of Art.

Where there is a non-perception of harmony in sound, the impression left upon the ear by the most cultured music, will be that of discord. The other day I heard of a gentleman whose friends took him to a string concert of exceptional renown. After listening to the rare rendering of classical strains on the violin and cello for quite a little while, he remarked, "When are they going to begin? What a time they have been tuning up their instruments!" And so I say that the world of music, art and creature is largely what our perceptibility makes it. For it is a hard matter to discern or appreciate that which finds nothing akin to our own souls, or in other words, an easy matter to cast the reflection of a sunny and glorious nature, or the shadow of an evil and suspicious mind, over the deeds and lives of others.

Now, in this "Thinketh no evil," I am reminded of a qualification of Charity, which beautifies everything, and at the same time of an appalling weakness which has destroyed the happy experience of many.

This spirit of evil possessing the mind is no respecter of persons. We find it in all classes, and squeezing its way in despite all manner of professions. There are thinkers of evil in every church, in every society, in every Salvation Army hall, although it is one of the most destructive and poisonous besetments to which the soul and a religious society can be subjected. It tends to make cliques and form sects in all communities, disbanding the unity of the whole. It saps the spiritual influence of the individual soul. It undermines and confounds the strongest and purest trust.

I have known one evil-thinker to overthrow a whole church -- to thrust back the Christian of long years' standing -- to entrap the innocent and simple, and to drag the blood-and-fire flag through a gutter of ignominy, into which no rampant persecution could have lowered it. I have no hesitancy in saying that evil-thinking is a damnable sin.

How are such people distinguished? Easily! Not because of their being so numerous, but because their faultfinding spirit is so clearly manifested in such multitudinous forms and shapes. Their attitude is suspicious, and their expression bespeaks an officious desire to peer into the secret chambers held in every heart. Their conversation is fluent and excited -- they are never hard up for a story to tell -- they show no delicacy in parading the misfortunes of others; they are scarcely ever stuck fast for the beginning or the ending of a tale; they can always add either, and exaggerate the middle.

They think that they polish their own virtues by enlarging upon the faults of others. They seldom take people to mean what they seem, unless that seeming goes unfortunately against them; for they impute base motives for even virtues. They "rejoice in iniquity and not in the truth." When a sorely-tempted soul goes down and under, they say, "I told you so," and with great liberty propound the advisability of running in the French maxim, "Doubt all men till you prove them true." They can find the flaw in every gem, the cloud in every sky, the fault in every life, and see many that were never there, and never will be.

I see that "evil thinking" makes us hard and unjust to those who labor in our interests, or under our authority. Somebody I was speaking to the other day said that they had never met anyone who came up to their ideal of religion -- that there was "none good, no, not one;" the Christians were no better than others, but rather worse, being the bearers of an empty profession. And the speaker instanced in support of these melancholy conclusions one or two of whom she once thought well, but who afterwards showed themselves (as she termed it) in their true character. There was a minister whom she deemed wickedly proud of his good preaching, although so fervent and earnest were his sermons that he would often faint at the conclusion of his heaviest services; and there were many others with whom she found serious fault. But a Salvation servant was the last to fall under her scathing suppositions, for she said, "When Mary does hurry on with the work and gets through things quickly and neatly, it is only to be off to the meetings, or out seeking her own in some other respect;" although she admitted that Mary was the most trust worthy girl she had

had in the house. I thought as she alighted from the car, What a perverted mind -- what an, absence of Charity -- what a spectacle of ugliness of character to which evil thinking can reduce one!

Again, I see that evil-thinking makes us hard and unjust to those who are above us. I know those whose circumstances are all that can be desired. God has not only seemed to bless them, but favored them. He has given them companionship, home, comforts and influences. Their wages are good -- they have all they need, and when a man's wage meets his whole needs, and is a just compensation for the service and ability rendered, I consider it can without fear be reckoned good and reasonable.

But they complain, they nurse the feeling that they are hardly done by; they suspect the expressed inability of their employers to do better -- they say he could if he would; they accuse him of a grudge toward themselves, and partiality to others; they feel badly toward those over them; they embitter their own lives whether or not they affect anyone else's when they have all reason to feel well. They are thinkers of evil; they are ensnared by that abominable sin which lies at the root of three parts of the ingratitude which, in its blindness to advantages, often throws overboard the brightest of future prospects.

Then, evil-thinking makes us hard and unjust on those who are on equal standing with us -- our comrade in the strife, our friend on the path of life, our neighbor who, remembering the commands of God, has every claim upon our merciful consideration. But the ten thousand blessings that should be bestowed upon those climbing with us the steeps of time are interfered with by these evil suspicions and dark surmisings.

The man who is occupied by revolving in his mind, let alone turning over with his tongue, the weakness which he fancies can be detected in the faltering steps or the impeded journey of another, will be the last to extend a helping hand to assist a weaker than himself. Or the woman, be she a Salvationist, or a constant pewholder, who has ever ready a whisper detrimental to the family whose name is up at the moment, will be the last to staunch the wound of a bleeding heart or bind a breaking spirit.

I write with much sorrow that in my experience I have known many whose one and only besetting sin could be classified as evil-thinking. It may have been a bestower of goods to feed the poor, or a Salvationist, a member of the church, a frequent open-air attender, or a good public speaker -- yet all the same an evil-thinker. They hold on to a bit of discreditable back history of every convert which they think should be remembered; they can always throw in words calculated to hang weights on those lifted in praise of anyone. They say, "It is not what people seem, it is what they are," and leave others to wonder what they mean, while they work hard behind the scenes to undo any good impression made in the party's favor.

When they cannot circulate actual evil reports they cast cruel insinuations, such as, "Beware of so-and-so," or with an eye so outstretching its normal position as to leave but a greeny white in view, and a significant nod of the head, infer that there are "dark things which they would speak, but Charity makes them for bear," when in reality there are no dark things but in their own dark minds. Thus they build almost insurmountable barriers for many young and trembling feet which have already more than enough in the cold currents of life to struggle against.

Evil-thinkers hold not back from tearing holes in the garments of the most needy and helpless. I had scarcely said, "Oh, what a dear, motherly and sympathetic soul that woman is!" when someone overhearing my remark whispered: "Oh, she has a dreadful temper; is so fearfully irritable that I sometimes even wonder if the old soul knows what conversion means." Personal observations, however, made me detect that the woman criticized prayed much more fervently in the meetings for the souls of others than my staring-about informant, and on inquiry I learned that the former was a widow, with six children, who buried her husband seven years ago, when her youngest was an infant of two or three months.

All through the long seven years, with bony fingers, rounded shoulders, burdened head and breaking heart, this mother in her widowhood had earned the bread and clothes for the six orphans. I could not help thinking when I heard the story, that even were it so, that owing to overtaxed nerves and over wearied limbs, this woman was guilty of sharp-speaking, how much more excusable to the Friend of the widow in whom the "fatherless findeth mercy" was her irritable tongue, than the ceaseless fault-finding of the back biting one. Instead of this evil-thinking being a slight offense, I see it to be a monstrous iniquity, hurting and blighting wherever its heavy and cruel feet tread.

The last remark I will make respecting evil-thinkers is that they must be more or less a very miserable class of people; I cannot see how it could be otherwise. They are dissatisfied with their surroundings, and their surroundings are dissatisfied with them; they see the evil in everybody, and, with isolated exceptions, everybody can see what a great deal of, evil lodges in them. They point their finger at the imaginary mote in every eye, and all around are painfully conscious of the crowd blocking up their own.

They have no real friends; none can sufficiently trust to befriend them; the general feeling is that no reputation, no matter how pure and blameless, is safe in their hands. They do not really love anyone, and while persisting in focusing their vision on the one small distant speck in every man's character, I do not see how we could expect to find many hearts that would risk love on them; did they, it would be as in the case of the servant girl, that base and selfish motives would be imputed, besmearing even virtue with the coloring of sin.

"When thine eye is single thy whole body is full of light." All this evil thinking with the hard-heartedness, narrow-mindedness, disloyalty and self-deceivedness that it brings results from an unclean heart, making darkness within, and casting its black pall on all without. It is a sorrowful sin, it is a terrible fault, it is a cruel besetment, a spoiling of the past, a withering of the present, a blasting of the future course! If it is yours, run to Calvary, look to Jesus, see His face!

He thought the best possible of His murderers; He threw between their black guilt and the Father the only imaginable excuse in the cry, "They know not what they do." Seek His love, learn of His pity, ask His compassion, plead His grace, and while in the revealing light of a blameless Christ, bearing the guilt and shame of a world's sin, pour hot condemnation on your every unkind thought, harsh judgment, evil suspicion and unmerciful conclusion, and seek Charity -- which power alone can deliver you from the ruin in Time and curse in Eternity -- of this Hell-forged snare of the human mind -- Evil-thinking.

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5

THE BRIDAL MORNING

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." -- I. Cor. xiii. 12.

Could anyone question the assertion that there is a great deal more sorrow in the world than joy? We stand in our cities, and can trace in the thronged streets the many perplexed and worn countenances; we step in the overheated and crowded stores and are confronted with the tired attitude of bending back and languid limb; we look into the face of the busy multitude and can discern manifest expressions of hidden disappointment; we halt in life's march and are over taken with the moan of lamentations and weeping.

A pall of sorrow covers the world; men's footsteps drag as if impeded by some hidden weight; women's voices break as though vibrating with some secret sob. The very laughter of the children is fitful and interrupted by passion's petulance. There are more marshes than plains, more damp and seas than highways and dry-ways.

Nevertheless there have been the glimpses -- as the shimmering rays of night's silvery orb intervening floating cloudlets cast their glory, telling the darkness below of the light above, so have there been given to these poor hearts of ours momentary views of transfiguration and floating strains of Bethlehem's choristers, and flashes of convincing revelation, speaking clearly of a bright beyond.

Perhaps it was the flight of the little baby-birdling that made a rift in the veil hanging between this world and the next. You almost saw the angel throng hastening to meet the spirit bright. Oh! how near heaven to earth that moment; how real eternity; how poor and fleeting time; how visible so many things never seen before; doubt, fear and questioning vanished in the rays of the distant glory, and you said --

O little precious wanderer!
We know that your baby-feet
Have passed the mystic boundaries
Where the earthly and heavenly meet;
Forgotten our good-bye kisses,
Forgotten our passionate tears,
In the beauty and light and glory
That meet you beyond the stars.

A grey-haired medical man said to me a few days since: "I could never doubt the immortality of the soul after my thirty years of practice in the profession." "Why, doctor?" I asked. "I have seen so many children die -- children whose little faces, distorted with lingering agony, have lit with a light so glorious that there could be no question as to the transplanting of these buddings from this withering, destructive world to a garden of fadeless blooming." And there were

withholden tears in the strong man's eyes as he added, "manifesting a faith which would put many of us aged Christians to shame."

But for the moment omitting from our calculation these special skylights, which have through their intermittent openings cast transient gleams on every life, we learn from this exceptional assertion of Paul's: --

First. That no soul is left totally in the dark, though as "through a glass darkly" yet we see! Abundant mercy has swung in the conscience a lamp which gleams in every man's path, and has fastened a guiding star in the horizon of every man's soul. No human vessel has breasted the seas of time without its helm. Although befogged and besmeared our glass we can see, and see well enough to mark a straight and triumphant course.

I have met numbers of people who have filled up their lives with bewailing and complaining of God's highest works, because the compass of their limited minds could not span the infinite devices and purposes of Omnipotence. They could not grasp the momentous system of a world's circumstantial revolutions and have presumptuously thrown back into the Creator's face their puny quibbles, in the place of holy fear and grateful reverence. I always say to such, "Be careful that in your presumptuous haste to discover the light for the present withheld, that you do not extinguish the light that is for the present given."

Ten thousand stumblings would be prevented, ten thousand wanderings avoided, ten thousand heart-breaks spared, if, instead of seeking to call from mystery's slumbering meanings that which alone will awaken at the break of Eternal Day, souls would seek diligently to live out that distinct knowledge for which they are responsible; instead of straining to catch the voices that await to call from walls of jasper, they would heed and obey the unmistakable dictates of a sounding conscience; if instead of gazing up into Heaven as did the disciples after the ascension of Jesus, they turned their eyes upon the Jerusalem of present duty. Earth has quite enough light by which to find its way to Heaven, if earth will only use it.

Second. I learn in this "glass darkly" that this world's clearest and best vision is but a misty and imperfect one, and that we dangerously err as well as bring upon ourselves much keen and grievous disappointment, do we expect to see and know now, as we can only see and know hereafter. Just here has rushed in the current which has swept aside the spiritual mooring of thousands. Faith has made shipwreck amid the very breakers o'er which it should have been the life-boat.

How sadly too many have lost their hold of God as their Creator, Christ as their Savior, Heaven as their home, simply and only because they could not trace the full meaning of His dealings, either concerning themselves or those dear to them. From personal observation I should say, that nothing more frequently was overlooked than the great beneficence displayed in God's tender consideration which veils from the present the mixed happenings of the future, and which permits so much sorrow to confront us with its purpose withheld, to be revealed in a far-off and long tomorrow.

How much safer and better do we remember that it was within the plannings of God's love that we should not know now, but know hereafter. This world is not our home -- it is a place of sojourn. We never get the full story of all the occurrences of the home-life, or the reasons, for our seeming to be forgotten and neglected -- how it was that father's letter was lost, and mother did not write, and Gertrude could not stay, and the Christmas box was small, until we get around the log fire in the good old homestead.

There we laugh all the time and forget we ever cried; there we trust all the time and forget we ever feared; there we love all the time and forget our heart ever went cold. We say: "Why, father, don't make any apologies! I understand." We say: "Why, mother, I am surprised you sent a box at all under such straits." We say: "Here, sit beside me, Gertrude, darling -- it is best after all you didn't stay." What's the difference? -- the difference is we are "face to face," the journey's over, we're at home.

I say, Don't give up; turn back from, or let go the hope of the righteous, the faith of the saints, the love of the angels, because you can not find the reason of sorrow's heavy ministrations; because the children's Shepherd gathered four lambs from your nursery and not one from your neighbor's.

Remember you are only on the journey now. Traveling makes life's day long and dreary, but the Heavenly Father has the explanation all ready for you when you reach the Eternal Homestead. Then, while the celestial choristers sing you will understand it all and say: "Gertrude, it is best after all you did not stay."

Shalt know hereafter where the Lord doth lead thee,
His darkest dealings trace;
When by those fountains where His love will feed thee,
Behold Him face to face!

Third. I learn from my text that we have but a very poor and indistinct idea of the ultimate result of any and every effort thrown into the cause of righteousness. What ample reason we are often tempted to think is given to strengthen the unbelief or excite the scorn of the skeptic by our unanswered prayers; what ground is afforded our enemies, inviting their ridicule by our seemingly fruitless efforts; what reason for mockery placed in the hands of the godless by faith!

How often in ourselves we are sorely discouraged at so much casting of bread upon the waters and so much, weary waiting for return., Do not the laborers for that which satisfieth not flourish, do not the wicked prosper, do not the seekers of their own escape all hurt, get gain, and hold -- while many who, casting earth's treasures behind them, spend all that they have and are, to lift earth's sorrows and earth's sighs? Yet they reap not the first-fruits of gratitude, and in some instances their whole lives of devotion to Heaven and to others have been lived and hushed out in martyrdom!

This strange and seeming neglect on God's part is only on the surface, only because our light is dim and we cannot quite see, only a peering through a "glass darkly," only a floating vapor

veiling from the vision the great throbbing eternity which springs out of every seed sown in God's garden of good.

I knew a girl with a lovely face, but a much lovelier voice, who spent the flush of her youth for public praise she gave her girlhood strength and qirtue to wither in the garish blaze of stage glitter and midnight lamp. Faille, wealth and friends, all paid obeisance to her assumed charms and natural loveliness. The people said that nature and fortune had flung their best at her feet.

She had a sister, alike gifted with beauty of voice and fairness of countenance, but she chose the lower places of the sad and the lonely, to sing of his name and tell His story. She carried soup to the hungry, she visited the sick, she sang by the dying -- but none aided her, not many loved her, those who should have befriended her forgot her. Few seemed the brighter or the more blessed because she had sacrificed for them. But, oh! wait until the mists are rolled away. Earth pours on its rewards now. It has none later to give, but Heaven stores in its treasury of love crowns to fit the brow of every soul that has put Christ first and loved others more than self -- crowns given in the revealing radiance of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. There, finding the sweet memorials that her hidden life had shed, she will see that,

Thousand, thousand-fold her guerdon,
Thousand, thousand-fold her bliss!
While His cup of suffering sharing,
All His will so meekly bearing,
He was gloriously preparing,
This for her, and her for this.

Fourth. Our vision is mystified regarding our temptations. Of all the rough places upon which we would most crave for light are the thick and entangled forests where we have struggled with fierce temptation. Why should it have been a question of either going back on all His promises and devotion to God or the sacrificing of Isaac, for Abraham? Why should it have meant either sin or the lion's den for Daniel? Why the stifling of conscience and the worshipping of false gods, or the seven-times heated furnace for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? Why should it be asked of that young man either to slay his convictions of trust and right or leave the situation, with his widowed mother dependent on him?

Oh, these red-hot temptations! How perplexed are their meanings. How intensified by the cloak of mystery in which they are wrapped! We can but run a dividing line through the regiments of these unanswered questions, and marshaling the half under the "now through a glass darkly," and the remainder under the promise of "face to face," leave them there until that time when the blinding shadows of a whole world's mystery (casting their distortions over every life) will be swept before the dazzling, overwhelming blaze of Eternal explanation.

Lastly, I see that there is to be an inestimable and indescribable difference between our present day and our eternal tomorrow.

Today the heavy shadows falling from sin, mystery and grief; tomorrow the golden breaking of cloudless light from the once marred Visage. We are to enter into His presence; we are

to stand before His throne; we are to look upon His countenance; nothing between, no glass, no cloud, no time intervening, but "face to face" with Jesus; Jesus Who came, Jesus Who lived, Jesus Who suffered, Jesus Who died. Now the hazed and beclouded view, then a fadeless shining! Now the tumult and the strife, then the rest -- eternal life! Now the weeping and the sighs, then the song and the tearless eyes! Now the children dying, then no more parting! Now the waters dividing, then no more sea! Now the grave's hearts breaking, then the resurrection greeting! Now the night winds chilling and killing, then the morning lifting and brightening! Morning on the mountains! Morning on the plains! Morning with an eternity in it! Morning -- Morning!

Oh, the transforming touch of that hour! Only intelligence irradiated by contact with the skies could give us to recognize our heaviest cross, when it comes to crown us there. We shall find our failures; they will greet us as triumphs. We shall find our bereavements; they will meet us as re-unions. We shall find our loss rebounding in eternal gain. We shall find our hidden struggles crowned in open victory. We shall find our hottest tears forming coronation gems. We shall find the complete fulfillment of every promise of the Bible, the realizing of the highest hopes of the righteous, the verifying of the fondest dreams of the saints. Face to face with Jesus. The gates of strife closed behind us, the boundary crossed; the veil torn; the morning broken.

The light gets brighter and brighter, as on the wing of revelation I climb the heights before me, and, looking through the dazzling brilliancy, which only the eye of immortality can gaze into, see the massive multitude of which John says all attempts at calculation fail to estimate. All eyes are lifted to the starry lettering writing the meanings of life's every mystery. Now these orphans see why mother and father both are taken, leaving them to tears and the cold world all alone. Now they even smile and sing, and say it was best. How glad that mother is now, that the children went on first. Their little feet would have been too badly torn in life's thorny ways. That wife sees the reasons for the struggles of a long widowhood as clear as the shining of the Golden Gate. The saints of the hospital thank God for all the suffering. The bearers of the Cross thank Him for the persecution; Paul, for the scourged back; Silas, for the prison cell; Ridley, for the flames, and Catharine of Sienna, for prison flags.

They all say it was best; it was best, it was the dawning of the most triumphant glory in disguise. Suffering is the only ladder long enough to lift us from our low levels on earth to thrones in Heaven.

Then I hear a great sound, like as the roar of many waters; as out of the numberless multitudes of all nations, kindreds, peoples and tongues. Ten thousand mothers lift their voices and shout: "Blessings to our God which sitteth upon the throne!" He spread His wings over my nursery and blessed my children. Others shout "Wisdom!" He enlightened my ignorance, and by His truth taught me. Others, "Thanks giving!" He blotted out as a thick cloud my transgressions and covered my sin. Others, "Honor!" He gathered me from the disgrace of the out cast and redeemed my name. Others, "Power!" He gave me the victory over every foe. Others, "Might!" He touched my weakness and turned it into greatness.

Then the harps are strung and the seraphims sing and the angels strike the key-note while all the children clap their hands. Sight unequalled, sound unparalleled, light unrivaled, as the heavenly orchestra catches the strain of the numberless multitude and burst in with the chorus of the

Hallelujah Anthem, singing, "Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

Oh, it is the "face-to-face" time! No one can describe the glory. It is the crowning. It is Jesus -- Bozrah's Hero, Calvary's Lamb, Resurrected Lord, the Sinner's Savior. Again the redeemed break out as every eye is cast on the wounded hands, the riven side, the thorn-pierced brow of the conquering Lord:

"Worthy is the Lamb, Who on Calvary was slain."

All along the line of march, they are waving the palms for the Bride stands forth -- the Church of God adorned in redemption's glory, while all beads that were weary in the conflicts of righteousness are crowned; hearts that were true to their calling, crowned; lives that reflected His likeness, crowned; souls washed white in His Blood, crowned. All nations at the banquet -- from all places of the earth. They have pressed through the waters; they have stood in the fires; they have fought with beasts; they have lived and died in dungeons. There is Stephen who was stoned. There is James who was clubbed. There is Matthew who was flogged. There is Paul who was whipped and imprisoned and beheaded, and multitudes more who suffered for Jesus. They stand in the light; their garments are white; their faces are bright; they sing, they shout, they shine; they are Home; they are at the banquet; they are with Jesus; they are "face to face." No more pain, no more death, no more hunger, no tear, no sigh, no grave, no night; all morning! -- The Bridal Morning -- "The Bridal Morning of the Lamb!"

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THE END