The Fragrance of Christian Ideals

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THE FRAGRANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN -- HIS SPIRITUALITY

IN one of his books Maeterlinck has a chapter on perfume. He calls perfume the soul of the flower. And it is mysterious because the soul of everything is mysterious. Why flowers are fragrant has never been answered. Some say to attract insects, but then some of the sweetest herbs attract no insects. The little busy bee prefers the almost odorless maple to an American Beauty. So far as we yet know, perfume in the Floral Kingdom fulfils no useful function. We are confessedly in the realm of the unexplored. We know not what it is, nor why it is.

And yet it must surely hide some gracious secret. We cannot think of it as purposeless. What wondrous revelations would be ours if we had the nose of the dog or the butterfly! Some scientists are insisting that our sense of smell is only an awakening faculty, that it is as yet in the early stages of development. They claim that the human period is the only epoch of fragrant plants. That is to say it is in process of evolution, coming into the world and running parallel with man, and being intended solely for his gratification and delight.

But it is not of plant life I was thinking particularly. Human beings too have an aroma. There went virtue out of Jesus, and from us all a subtle effusion for good or evil is ever emanating. Not more continually is the sun sending forth its beams, or a flower expiring its essence, than are we radiating cold or caloric upon those about us. Go where we may, do what we will, this outgo never ceases. It would seem as impossible for a man to hide his forthgiving as for a stove to be filled with fuel, then lighted, and retain its heat. Heat cannot be retained. The fundamental law of heat is motion. Some things even God cannot do. He cannot make a crooked straight line. That would be a contradiction, and as Jonathan Edwards once put it, "a contradiction is not a thing." And even Omnipotence is powerless to dissociate a man from his shadow. The shadow mayhap may not be visible, but it is there all the same; in the right light it will emerge.

And each man's outbreathing is his own. That is the crowning seriousness of it. It is like the scent of the jasmine -- inimitable. It cannot be reproduced by any cunning chemistry. It is individual, characteristic, idiomatic. How wonderful a thing is this! As mysterious is it not as the scent of the lilac? And who can tell what that is? No one can. It is too delicate and subtle. Neither can we analyze the delightful flavor of many of God's elect ones. The hem of their habit imparts healing. They have the

power to restore, to quicken, to reinforce, but oftentimes how it is done we cannot tell. Not infrequently they are retiring people, preferring to live unnoticed, and quite unconscious of their power. "They wist not that their faces do shine."

Perhaps it is because our lives are so peculiarly impressible. In chemistry there is an odd phenomenon called instability. The equilibrium of some elements is exceedingly unstable. Iodide of Nitrogen has to be handled very cautiously. The touch of even a feather is apt to explode it. And our lives too are most delicately adjusted. They can sometimes be changed by a word, by a look, by a smile. There came to my knowledge only yesterday the story of a discouraged woman who was on her way to the river. She was accosted by a strange face who fortunately knew her name. "Good morning, Mrs. ---------," he exclaimed. "Why," she thought to herself, "he knows my name," which seemingly simple greeting led her to think on her ways and the awful step she was about to take.

But the most interesting thing about perfumes is what our essayist calls their morality. Perfumes and the passions are interrelated. Some odors stimulate, some effeminate. The fumes of stuff that is fermented have driven many a poor fellow to drink. They have been known to do it even at the Communion table, which, by the way, ought to furnish some very serious food for thought for some of our

churches. It is again the inexplicable mystery of atmosphere. One need not talk to the man who sits next to him, there need be no point of tangency, and yet he may do him harm. Some men we meet pull us down, chill us in some unaccountable way, dull our spiritual acuteness, make it harder for us to believe. Others contrariwise lift us up, fortify us, make it easier to be virtuous.

And one does not need to be great to throw out healing shadows. Ambergris gives flavor to a hundred essences, but is odorless itself. Reading the life of Beecher recently, I was struck with what he says of his childhood. "As I look back upon my life, I see how the largest natures did not always get access to me. It was late in life before my father influenced me very much. I think it was a humble servant who first gained any considerable control over me. He was a colored man, and I am not ashamed to say that my whole attitude toward the Civil War was largely due to a poor colored man who worked on my father's farm. He did not try to influence me; he did not know that he did; but he did."

I was told recently of a man who could not see his way clear to come to the Lord's Table. He was a most faithful attendant at all the services and a most admirable member of the community.

"Why not come forward this time? His pastor said to him.

"Oh," he replied, "I guess it is not essential."

"Maybe not, but suppose your influence is keeping others away."

"I do not know of any such," he returned.

"But I do," the pastor interjected. "I spoke to your head clerk the other day, and he quoted you."

Let us remember then our influence. A good deal of our writing is done with invisible ink -- we cannot read it at the time. The flower does not know what becomes of its breath; it sails away on the air. We cannot tell what becomes of our breath; it goes off likewise on its mighty mission. There has always been a discussion as to what worldliness is. Worldliness is putting the emphasis on this world, and it is an atmosphere. Blessed the Christian whose atmosphere, like McCheyne's, reminds the world of Jesus.

II

THE FRAGRANCE OF DISCIPLESHIP -- ITS TRUST

WHEN conducting family worship this morning, I was struck with a very refreshing and cooling and restoring truth. We were reading the Mountain Sermon together, when a little voice of seven spoke up in the corner and said, "Papa, what is a raven?" I said, "My dear, a raven is a bird." Then another little interruption from the corner, "Birds don't sow or reap, do they?"

And then I tried to explain how the Master is trying to teach us to trust Him. He feeds and clothes the little birds. He takes care of them, and He will take care of us too if we will just let Him. Then we went back and read the verses in Matthew, and while we were reading I noticed for the first time that in ten verses the word anxious is used six times. "Be not anxious!" "Why are ye anxious?" "Which of you by being anxious?"

And then when we separated and she trotted off to school, and I slipt into my study, I began to think of the child's question, and it started some other questions.

"Consider the raven." Why the raven? I wonder. Why not the eagle or the ostrich or the pelican or the stork? The raven is a bird of ill-omen. The law of Moses condemned it as unclean. It is a superstitious bird -- I mean it is associated with superstition. It is black and weird and funereal. It is supposed to bring bad luck and to forebode death. It has a hoarse, grating voice -- croaking, raucous, not a bit like the meadow lark. It is carnivorous. It is rapacious, greedy, voracious. It has given us our word ravenous. The eagle kills its prey, but the raven waits till it dies. It prefers something offensive.

Then it is a very cruel creature. It forces its young out of the nest, and compels the little thing to find its own food or starve. The Bible has quite a little to say about God caring for the young ravens. They surely need His special care. "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens when they cry."

Then, too, it is a very solitary bird. You never see more than one or two. Crows go in flocks, but you never saw a flock of ravens. It is a lonely creature. No other bird seems to care for it. Poe calls it "that grim, ungainly, gaunt and ominous bird of yore."

"Then this ebony bird beguiling
My sad fancy into smiling,
By the stern and grave decorum

Of the countenance it wore,
'Though thy crest be shorn and shaven,
Thou,' I said, 'art sure no craven,
Ghastly, grim and ancient Raven
Wandering from the Nightly Shore,
Tell me what thy lordly name is
On the Night's Plutonian Shore;'
Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.'"

Now, after all this disagreeable recital, does not the verse shine out in a softer and more revealing light? If our Father cares for a raven, will He not care for His child? If He clothes the grass of the field, is He going to leave His children naked? Cannot we learn the gracious lesson? Little wonder He chides us gently and calls us "Ye little faithed ones."

Does God care? Perhaps it is life's greatest question. Men and women with hunger and hopelessness in their hearts are asking it every day. Yes. He cares. He cares intensely. And He cares individually. His care is personal. "Are not five sparrows sold for two pence, and yet not one of them is forgotten." He singles us out from the crowd and calls us each one by name. Samuel! Samuel! And the child answers, "Here am I, Lord!"

This is the precious intimate lesson of the lily and the raven. The love of God is not a vague, foggy influence,

wrapping us all in its cold impersonal embrace. It is the tenderness which takes up in its arms "one of these little ones."

No matter how many million bricks go into a building, each brick is handled as if it were the only one. No matter how many kegs of nails are driven into the walls, each nail is driven one at a time. It was never the intention of the Master to save cities in blocks or brigades. "Oh love that will not let ME go."

And the perfume of trust is just in accepting this implicitly at its face value, and so never being anxious. Never being anxious about anything! "Be anxious for nothing," writes the Apostle to the Philippians, using this very word. "Casting all your anxiety upon Him," adds Peter, again adopting the same root.

Life is an ocean voyage. We have nothing to do with the choosing of the ship nor the making of the weather nor the time of sailing nor the picking of the crew. The only thing we choose is the cargo and how we are going to handle the craft.

So let us trim our sails and watch our bearings and use the very best seamanship we know. Never failing to keep our prow towards port! Be not torn hither and thither. Be not of doubtful mind, unsettled and tossed about like boats adrift on the billow. Be not creatures of perplexity and

suspense. Be not distracted about to-morrow. Sufficient unto each day are its own distractions.

Consider the raven: Consider means literally "with the stars." Get up into the heavenly places. Look down on these streets from a lofty altitude. The reason people fret is that they live such low-down earthly lives.

And how sad it is! What a sorry sight is a worrying Christian! A worrying Christian drives away the little children. There is nothing balmy or ambrosial or sweet about him to attract young, hopeful hearts. He is sour himself, and everything he touches turns sour. Birds and lilies never murmur. That is one reason why we love them.

"Be anxious then for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." and His peace shall keep you from all undue agitation and fill you with His own eternal calm.

III

THE FRAGRANCE OF THE SICK ROOM -- ITS PATIENCE

THE root meaning of the word patience is to suffer. It is the secret of suffering with fortitude. It is power, but power in restraint. "Stand therefore." It is playing the soldier in sorrow. Cicero, speaking of the death etiquette of a gladiator, asks, "What gladiator ever groans?" To be great it is not always necessary to be great in action. Sometimes greatness consists in being great in repose.

Usually we define this grace in negative terms. We call her, "the angel that guards the couch of the invalid." But in the good Book patience is far from being a valetudinarian virtue; it is never a frail, drooping, languishing flower; indeed, quite the opposite It is a healthy, hardy crocus rather, blooming oftentimes on most unpromising heights.

One cannot delve very deeply into the epistles of the New Testament without remarking what strong, virile company the word keeps: "Strengthened with all might unto all patience," "Patient continuance in well-doing," "The

testing of your faith worketh patience," "Running the race with patience." This is not effeminate language. Patience is the whole man thinking, suffering, working, but, like nature working quietly, smoothly.

Perhaps few things have done more harm to religion than some of the narrow views of sainthood that have obtained. And in the inventory of the wronged saintly virtues, patience must be listed. Some have made it the synonym of calmness, but falsely. A man may be calm because he is asleep. Patience is heroic. It is the courage of the conqueror. "Patience," said Aristotle, "is so like fortitude that she must be her daughter." "Beware the fury of the patient man," says the old proverb. "Make us patient and enduring."

How often in scripture the word is linked with hoping and waiting! "I waited patiently for the Lord," the Psalmist muses. "Your patience of hope." says the apostle. "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." The trouble to-day is we do not dare to hope enough. We have fallen on a hopeless age. That is why we are so furiously and feverishly impatient. Hope is the great physician in the school of patience. One cannot but note how, when unbelief takes possession of the heart, patience is straight-way slain.

"One moment in annihilation's waste,

One moment of the well of life to taste;
The stars are setting and the caravan
Starts for the dawn of Nothing -- oh make haste."

I watch this queenly virtue sometimes in amiable wonder. Who does not stand in silent admiration before the patience of the scientist -- the Audubons and Palissys and Pasteurs? When Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood he delayed announcing it for twelve years. Darwin, it is said, kept his secret twenty years. He was content to wait, animated simply by his august love for truth. That is a fine thought of Emerson's when, speaking of this very thing, he reminds us how quiet and patient Nature is, and how she seems to lay her hand on us and say, "Why so hot, my little man?"

Then to be patient under injustice. To be misrepresented and yet to be unruffled. To listen to slander and still to make a prisoner of one's tongue. How it wins my praise! I follow Columbus on his great risk. I see him stake everything on the perilous venture. I hear the threats and the mutiny. I watch him through the slow, weary weeks of waiting. Truly, it is beautiful.

And I am attracted, too, most invitingly by the patience of the teacher. I admire the "patient continuance;" patience with the bad boy, and patience with the mischievous boy, and patience with the mercury boy, and patience with the

dull boy. "Why do you scold me, sir"" said the lad to the great Arnold. "I am doing my best." The patience that stops to gently unravel a whole skein of silk that has got mentally twisted; or the patience of the Christian sportsman untangling his line and renewing his bait, and waiting pluckily and serenely for months, or maybe years; the patience of a Judson sowing seed for almost a decade in India before he cut a single sheaf; or the patience of a Tyler in South Africa watching fifteen summers come and go before the first Zulu was won over to discipleship. What patient pioneers were Carey and Morrison and Chalmers and John Williams! Is it not altogether admirable and glorious?

Then, too, do we not sometimes need patience with God? How often we cry, "Why tarry the wheels of His chariot?" Ah, dear heart, "Tarry thou the Lord's leisure." He will meet thee in His own time at the trysting place. Be patient with your fellow-men, of course, but be patient also with thy God. Theodore Parker used to say, "the trouble is, God is not in a hurry and I am." Patience lays hold of the great things that really matter. She does not clutch nervously at the bubbles sailing past her, because she knows that the enduring things are not without, but within. The reason why men are impatient is not because their lives are so full, but because their hearts are so empty. "He that believeth shall not make haste."

But it is when we see her in the sick room that she wins my heart and wonder and applause. Here she is perfect. "Let patience have her perfect work." How comes it that as you come out of some sick chambers you feel as though you had been drinking from a spring of bitter waters; while in others it is as though there were odors wafted from the gardens of Beulah Land. Such sunshine, such sweetness, such peace, such unconplainingness, such perfume! There is a morning freshness. "I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily. His branches shall spread and his beauty shall be as the olive tree and his smell as Lebanon."

I conducted a funeral recently of a young woman who had been an invalid from childhood. For twenty years a constant sufferer, the last two years a life of veritable martyrdom. Deformed in body and worn to a skeleton, but never once a murmur; giving half of her little income to other sufferers; sending fifty Christmas presents every December to the poor, of little knick-knacks that she had made with her own hands; writing bright short stories for the magazines; never talking about her trouble; always smiling, always saying if somebody had to suffer it was good that it was she -- and then only thirty-three. Verily the rose opened its heart to the sting of the bee and gave up the nectar. Like the fabled nightingale, she sang with her breast against a thorn.

There is a famous drawing of Millais. It is the figure of a woman lashed to a pillar. The sea is pounding away at her feet and the tide is rising, and a ship, in full sail, is beating by, but paying no attention to her or her doom. Birds of prey are circling over her head. But she is indifferent to all. Her eyes are looking into the glory behind the golden gates. And this is the secret of her peace. I watch the great patient man himself, going quietly about His work, resting in His Father. What patience with the disciples, with Peter and James and John, with Mary, with Pilate! What patience on the cross! And remember it was for the joy that was set before Him that He endured.

IV

THE FRAGRANCE OF FRIENDSHIP -- ITS LOYALTY

THERE are not many things in life so beautiful as a true friendship, and there are not many things more uncommon. It is indeed rare, but then all precious things are rare. A friend is more than an acquaintance, more than a comrade, more than a crony, more than a pal, more than "hail fellow well met." The word itself is a singularly courtly word. It is a word of quality and high descent. It has had a most noble and patrician lineage.

When Wordsworth visited Walter Scott, he wrote him on his return to Grassmere a most gracious letter, which he closes thus: "Your sincere friend, for such I call myself, tho' slow to use a term of such solemn meaning."

To-day, however, the word has lost somewhat of its kingly lustre. By common usage the superscription has been rubbed and dulled, and robbed of its clear and definite royal stamp. The Postal Department has used it so much that it has become worn and faded. We have

commercialized the word more or less, and emptied it of not a little of its rich spiritual content.

So much indeed that there those who are telling us that the sentiment itself is dying out. "Look," we are told, "at the old classics. We have no intimacies to-day like those of the Pagan world. We have no ties like those of David and Jonathan, or Damon and Pythias, or Pylades and Orestes, or Ruth and Naomi." When Socrates was building himself a house at Athens, being asked by one who observed the littleness of the design why a man so eminent would not have an abode more suitable to his dignity, he replied that he should think himself sufficiently accommodated if he could see that narrow habitation filled with real friends. Indeed the great literature of the Ancient Empires are rich in the tales of most wonderful fellowships. The book of Proverbs has been called a Treatise on Friendship. Did not Plato make it the basis of his ideal state? And does not Aristotle devote two of his ten books to its discussion?

But today there is little of this one-time warm and wealthy communion. Compared with the past, ours is an age of the decline of Friendship. And the conditions of society are perhaps largely to blame. Because the practice of the virtue calls for leisure, and it would seem as though we had no time for that any more. Is not the chief end of most men nowadays to make money? We pay few visits, and when we do, we must needs leave next morning on the

seven o'clock train. We are so busy with the commercial that we have little time for the affectional.

When we factorize the word, as the algebraist says, we find that it is first of all an AFFINITY. It is not a creation; it is a discovery. We do not make friends; we find them. The friends we make we do not as a rule keep. There must be a community of spirit. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" If the goal of one life is pleasure and that of another life is culture, how can they march to the same music? Pythagoras said that Friendship is one soul inhabiting two bodies. We cannot very well live on friendly terms with another unless we are in tune with him. That logic would seem to be remorseless.

I punished my little boy the other day because he was naughty. For an hour or so we were not on our usual intimate terms, and it was a very painful exposure. Our relations were strained. There was a rupture. And there was no communion until I went and put my arms around his neck and kissed him, and said I was sorry that I had to punish him, that I did it for his own good. Then in a little while there was complete recovery. The old relationship was restored.

Friendship, I repeat, is an affinity, and it is a spiritual affinity. There can be no lasting confederacy in sin. There is an old Indian proverb which says that "while the thunder lasted the two thieves were friends." But true Friendship is

a Divine connexion, because the nearer we get to the centre the nearer we approach to one another.

Then there must be TRUST. No Friendship can thrive in the atmosphere of suspicion. Even reserve will chill and wilt the tender flower. Because the sentiment calls for freedom. We can think out aloud to our friends. We do not need to weigh our words. We can "unbosom" ourselves, as the old expression puts it. Goethe says that is perfect Friendship which says the thing we tried to say but could not exactly phrase. When a friend of Lamb's had passed away the genial essayist expressed the regret that there was no one left to call him "Charlie" any more.

Genuine Friendship never flatters, only the counterfeit coin has this false ring. And it does not always compliment. It is not a sweetened emulsion. Sometimes the straight truth must be administered with a candid but kindly intent. Where truth is not, trust cannot be. "Intimacies that increase vanity destroy Friendship."

But the perfume of the flower is its LOYALTY. Some men shed friends as a bird sheds its feathers, or rather as a serpent sheds its scales. In that matchless little classic, "Rab and His Friends," we are told the story of a dog; how when the master and mistress of the home were gone the faithful creature slunk away to his kennel and died of a broken heart.

Robertson of Brighton says, “How rare it is to have a friend who will defend you in the dark!” True; but one who will not is faithless and false. For this light of the affections, like the firefly, shines brightest at night. We speak of fast friends. We mean steadfast, do we not? Every now and then we hear the expression “thick friends,” meaning thereby adhesiveness, tenacity of union, firmness of fidelity. The fire of reverses never destroys such gold; it tests it and purifies it. Cicero’s devotion to Atticus lasted for almost fifty years, and like old wine, improved with age. Happy the man who is rich in a few such tried and true intimacies! His is a wealth that never fluctuates.

V

THE FRAGRANCE OF THE RICH MAN -- HIS GENEROSITY

SO many have the idea that to be rich is to be able to buy a million dollar yacht, and spend the rest of one's days cruising -- a happy "life on the ocean wave!" Well, one of that fortunate, or shall we say unfortunate number recently returned from just such a vacation into strange waters, and the trip was not by any means all pleasantness, according to his own tale. He had a right perilous time of it. What with storms and sickness and bad weather and trouble with the crew, they all sang "Home, Sweet Home" with something like a religious fervour.

One of the penalties of being rich is the way one gets pestered. Most of us, of course, cannot speak as personal sufferers, but some can speak as close speactators. There is in our little church-family, for instance, a philanthropist who is known all the world over for the good she is doing. She is a sweet and humble follower of Jesus. No trustee was ever more faithful, no Chrisitan ever more devout. Of

course, naturally she is much besieged, and so compelled to hedge herself about with obstacles of approach. So the people write her ministers, asking if they will not kindly intercede and present their appeals. Reading these appeals is sometimes a very amusing, sometimes a very pathetic undertaking, We have opened five of these epistles this week already. The first is heartrending. The second is from a lady up in Vermont who wishes to start a dancing school in her town, and requests some officer in the Church to call on Mrs. -------- personally, and ask if she will not help with a loan of $10,000; this followed by a long exposition of the great need for just such a work in their town.

The third is from a man over in Jersey who has a mortgage of $1000 on his farm, and who wonders if Mrs. -------- will not put him on his feet by cancelling the debt; the claim advanced in this case being that his grandfather and her husband's mother were distantly connected. It is a long rigmarole of a letter -- ten pages, and poorly written at that -- and going into the minutest details of the family history.

The fourth is from a minister who is anxious to build a clubhouse for his young people, and asking $50,000. There is no specific obligation set forth in this appeal, the writer having concluded that, as the philanthropist in question is

trying to get rid of her wealth in the best way possible, he might as well have a slice of it as anybody.

And still the fifth is from a college president in the West, whose immediate needs are the modest sum of $500,000. But the one that was most amusing was from a woman in Texas who has a daughter whom she is very anxious to send to Italy for an art education. The daughter is only eighteen and too young to go alone, so that the mother would need to accompany her, which would call for an outlay of at least $2,500. And, as in the other case, it is a long eulogy of the daughter's talents and a detailed narration of the family misfortunes, covering twelve pages.

Is it to be wondered at that rich people sometimes lose a little of their morning freshness? Think what it means to receive fifty or a hundred letters such as these every day. Think what it means to read even a half dozen of the sad ones. Then do you wonder at the remark of the philosopher, that if he “had one hundred million dollars it would drive him crazy”?

But this is part of the penalty that rich people must needs pay; the world expects of them a savoury and generous aroma. One of the interesting discoveries of Luther Burbank is the way he has made certain plants fragrant. Others with a disagreeable scent, like the dahlia, he has diluted into the sweetness of the magnolia. He has observed that a rich soil is not always favourable to

perfume. And sadly must it be confessed that in the human conservatory it is not infrequently true.

"I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry," the Apostle writes. He means that there is a secret enshrined, and that he has mastered the secret. "I know how to be abased." The figure is that of a drough, and the streams drying up. As much as to say, I know where the channel is when the river runs low, and when the tide is at its full I do not fear the perils of the flood. What a precious lesson to learn! To know how to be poor! So many do not! And then to know how to be rich! What a gracious and charming accomplishment! Verily, it is a fine and difficult and lofty art.

Poverty, decking itself in tinsel and trying to pass itself off as sumptuous and ample, and as a rival of luxury -- what a pitiful sight!

And luxury, growing selfish and sour and even more pitiful! Strange that when Alexander conquers the world he should bring together the stores of wine he has captured and drink himself into offensiveness. When one of the richest men in America lay a-dying he said to his nurse, "Nurse, I'd like to see the gardener." The gardener, it seems, was a godly man, who carried about with him the perfume of the King's country.

A college president, who is making a sturdy effort to raise an endowment for his little Christian college in the

West, said the other day, “It is really noticeable how few rich people are doing the giving. I am acquainted fairly well with all our denominational colleges, and the endowment pledges to these institutions all come from pretty much the same people: I fear the same thing is only too true of the Church. The giving in our churches is done largely by the few. The great majority have not learned the blessedness, the exquisite joy, of this rich and redolent grace.

VI

THE FRAGRANCE OF THE HOME -- THE FAMILY ALTAR

EVERY home, like every church, has its atmosphere. In one door we inhale a sweet incense. It is the "Smell of a field which the Lord has blessed." In the very next there is suggested the fever of the street, and the din and clatter of the exchange. Every dwelling reveals the soul of its inhabitant. Like prison cells, they take on the marks of their occupants. Some breath an air of sordidness and wrangling; in others we note the innumerable little attentions and courtesies and clusters of thoughtfulness that make what we call the "sweet home." Like Tom Moore's vase, they are perfumed by the roses they carry.

Perhaps the greatest work that any two young people can do on earth is to create a home. The trouble with the world to-day is not the saloon; the trouble is the home. Home is the cradle of human culture by every arrangement

of the Eternal. When the home disappears, the church disappears, the State disappears, everything structural disappears.

And it does not take a great income to make a home. Silver and mahogany are not indispensable. Cloisonne and carved ivory are not essential. You can pile up grandeur and miss the soul of the thing. How often the word becomes degraded and gets mixed up with a mania for a house! If the front be marble, well and good; but wooden walls do fully as well. They are just as acceptable to the vines and the virtues.

"In fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind."

To skim over the literature written about home would be like taking a walk out into the country in Autumn. One is besieged by gorgeous colour and the flavour of ripe fruit and the tender fragrance of the falling leaves. For the place to most of us is filled with hallowed memories. Sometimes we apply the word to an apartment. We are fast becoming a nation of tenants, lodgers. We live in rented rooms. Well, we can rent rooms, but a home cannot be rented. Rent is a commercial term. It smacks of the store and the market place. We speak too of "Homes for the Aged," and "Homes for the Blind," and "Homes for the Friendless," but this is robbing the word of its wealthy deposit. Home is a

word of spiritual lineage. "Because thou hast made the Lord who is my refuge, even the Most High, thy home, there shall be no evil befall thee." The family table is not a lunch counter. It is a symbol of the Father's house above. When Christ wanted a memorial of His passion, He instituted a supper.

Home is where FREEDOM is. There is no restraint. We can talk about our troubles and our secrets. We can act just as we please. We can take our shoes off and put our slippers on. We can relax. We do not have to set a watch upon our lips. We do not need to be on guard all the while. There is no playing to the gallery, no fear of reporters, no posing. There is the most perfect and the most restful liberty.

There is a growing custom among us to-day that many good people are watching with anxious concern. It is the boarding school fad. How popular that is becoming! Dormitory, refectory, rule, regulation, livery, uniform! What an imprisonment it must be to the young life! And it is fraught, many believe, with the gravest danger to our American homes. The lad may need a head master and a gymnasium teacher, but he needs a father more: a father who can do the disciplining -- aye, and the romping too. For what a tonic there is in an hour's frolic with the little ones! If the son needs the father, the father needs the son

full as much. After all, are not the children our best teachers?

Home is where TRUST AND REST are. For both go together. The one cannot thrive without the other. Banish trust and rest will soon spread her wings. Suspicion cannot take its place. 'Tis trust that is the taming of trouble. "Let not your heart be troubled -- trust." Children always trust their parents, but parents must trust their children, too. Doubt here is a very deadly thing. For a father to say, "I do not believe a word you are saying, my son," would paralyse any lad's virtue. The father who is always opening his boy's letters and searching his pockets for cigars -- that father deserves bad boys, and he will surely have them. He violates the very first principle of chivalry. Home is a confidential and tranquil retreat.

But home best of all is where LOVE is. There is a strange, sweet spirit in the home where love rules. It tells us that something fine and exalted is going on.

"There's beauty all around
When there's love at home."

Fear is a good thing in the jail, but what a horrible bugaboo in the home! The little child hearing of heaven, and being told that his father would be there, replied, "Oh, then, I dinna want to gang!" Fathers, provoke not your

children to insurrection by a harsh irritating manner. Let love be the timber of your tone. But the sweet incense of the memorable spot to most of us is the Family Altar. Nothing glorifies the home life like that. It is the very perfume of the place. It weaves into the fabric of memory silver threads that remain bright and shining forever. There is no better way to bind the heart of a child with chains of gold to God's throne. It is the altar, after all, that makes it a sanctuary. When Carlyle was dying his mind wandered far back to the simple hearthstone up in Dumfriesshire. He thought his niece was his mother. He put his arms around her neck and called, "Mother, dear." How beautiful! The great old man is in Cheyne Row, and is now well past four score. But he dreams of his childhood, and the humble log cabin with its morning and evening devotions.

Alas! to-day I much fear, if the truth were frankly told, it would have to be confessed that this holy shrine has just about tumbled into ruins. And it is the greatest blow the Church has yet sustained. Nothing can take its place -- nothing. It has been a veritable nursery of greatness and the loss is simply past computing. A strong navy is not America's defence. The "Family Altar League" will do more to make America great than scores of "Utahs" or "Floridas."

VII

THE FRAGRANCE OF THE CHURCH -- ITS HOSPITALITY

CHURCHES, too, like Christians, have an aroma. The Apostle, writing to the Romans, uses the expression, "Given to Hospitality." After the most intricate and incisive doctrinal discussion we have the most practical and homespun advice. Like the pilot who has steered his ship safely past the rocks, through the narrows, he is now in a quieter water. And by hospitality is meant kindness to the stranger. In these early days there was great stress laid upon this virtue. Later on, the Apostle, in his charge to Titus, cites it as one of the requisite qualifications of a bishop. These were times of persecution, when there was a

peculiar need for just such urgent comradeship. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

"Given to Hospitality!" literally, following after hospitality, pursuing it; and the expression is not an archaic one. We still say of so and so, do we not? "He's given to drink," "given to gambling," "given to exaggeration." We mean that the man has surrendered himself to these things. He is in the grip of some enslaving habit; he is following after some mocking will-o'the-wisp that, like the mighty suction caused by a vacuum, is constraining him on. And the Apostle invites us to do likewise, only in a more excellent way, to be dedicated to a lofty ideal, to "follow after love," to surrender ourselves to this gracious and generous injunction, "Given to Hospitality."

The word, I repeat, means Kindness to the Stranger, neighbourliness. It is simple Christian courtesy. There are several branches of the same root that we make use of in our every-day vernacular--host, hostage, hospice, hospital. A hospital literally is a place where a hand of welcome is extended to the unfortunate fellow. In the Alps the mountain climber finds at convenient stages of his journey the hospices. They are warm, cozy, comfortable resting places for the tired pilgrim of the heights.

Riding on the street car today, I met a foreigner. He was poorly dressed, and his English was as impoverished as

his attire. He did not understand how to make his destination, and his efforts at enlightening the car men were abortive. He was lost in a big city, and it seemed, friendless. But the grievous thing was the bad temper and irritability of the conductor and his lack of consideration. The Illinois Central Railroad has just issued a pamphlet on the "Value of Courtesy," the gist of the pamphlet being that railway employees are engaged not only to perform their specific work, but to make travel, to the patrons of their road, easy. Lord Chesterfield is quoted on the value of "an engaging politeness, and almost irresistible address, a gracefulness in all you say and do, and," adds the author, "in railway circles to-day it is the path to promotion." These are wise words -- and greatly needed. It takes not a little courage sometimes to ask some employees we are thrown up against a simple civil question.

But the thing that grieves one most at times is the lack of Hospitality in the sanctuary. Last Sunday afternoon I went around to an afternoon service in one of our large city churches to hear a brother minister. I was politely shown to a good seat about halfway up the aisle. I had not been seated more than a minute or two, when the same usher bowed a young couple into the pew directly in front, thereby filling the seat, which, by the way, had five people in it. During the singing of the first hymn, in walks Lord Somebody or other with his wife. They walked slowly up

the aisle till they came to this same pew into which the young couple had just been shown, when, standing at the door, they stared and glared as, in the old story of the Lamia, the sage eyed the serpent. Of course the occupants felt the chill keenly, for they cuddled themselves up like children in bed after hearing a ghost story. It would have been embarrassing even to those of us who were spectators had not the usher just at that moment come up, and asked the young people if he could not show them to a "better" seat.

Well, I was greatly annoyed. It marred the service for myself and my friend. If there is one place more than another where we would naturally expect to see love and real hospitality and brotherhood flourish and thrive, surely it is within the walls of the sacred enclosure where the golden rule is preached and incarnate Love is worshipped. Inexplicable as it may seem, however, in no Pullman is more selfishness oftentimes shown than in the House of Prayer. And a man who would welcome you to his palatial home on Riverside Drive, and greet you warmly, is often strangely inexplicable in the sanctuary. We put on our church bulletins, "Everybody Welcome," and we write it so boldly that you can read it easily at night under the glare of the electric bulb clear from the other corner, and yet the outsider cannot help doubting, for everybody, it seems, is not welcome.

The Church of the Lord Jesus ought to be a supremely hospitable place. It ought to be a brotherhood. It ought to be a centre of fellowship. The most noticeable thing about the Church of Christ ought to be, "Behold how these Christians love one another." Yes, it is true, every place of prayer hath its atmosphere. Hospitality is a very gracious form of altruism. How delightful to find oneself in an atmosphere that warms the heart and makes one feel welcome!

Hospitality is the perfume of the Church. The Christian Church was once a real family. This it was that first struck, then attracted, the Gentile observer. I fear she has lost quite a little of that early morning fragrance. There is too often a stiffness, a stereotypedness, an unnaturalness, a stuffiness -- shall I call it?-- about many of our churches to-day which prevents the average working man from taking good, long deep breaths and feeling at ease. There is a lack of homeliness.

And it must be recovered: the loss is too serious. There is a great need to-day in the Church, we are being told, for hospitality to new ideas; but this is hospitality to old ideas. This is getting back to the primitive order. Rich and poor must meet together, as in Apostolic times, on an equal footing. Men cannot love the place unless it is a home. Class distinction is the greatest enemy of the Cross. "We're all alike here," said the Duke of Wellington to a poor

woman sitting by him at the Lord's table. What does all our talk about brotherhood amount to if it is not workable when we are in the presence of the Father?

VIII

THE FRAGRANCE OF THE SABBATH -- ITS SANCTITY

THERE is a question in our Westminster Catechism, "How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?" And the answer given is, "The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days, and spending the whole time in the public and private exercise of God's worship except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy."

The answer, it will be observed, begins in a negative strain. Because to sanctify a thing was originally the opposite of profaning it, and that was a familiar warning in the early history of the race. Profane ground was ground outside sacred enclosures. It was ground in front of the

fane or temple. Within was holy; without was profane. And the profane man was the man who treated the consecrated interior with disrespect. The sin was not primarily a sin of the tongue; it was an attitude. It consisted in regarding things as if they were common, in rubbing away the polish, in stealing away the perfume.

Perhaps we would not be far afield if we were to say that this is the cardinal sin of our time. We are tearing down fences. The line between the sacred and the secular is becoming blurred. The theatre is just as venerable, we are being told, as the temple, and Shakespeare as much inspired as Jeremiah. Some say the age is scientific, some that it is sceptical, but it would seem that those come nearer the truth who claim that it is irreverent.

And by way of illustration look, for instance, at the noble game of golf. I am not much of a golfer, although I golf "at it" a little, but I am very fond of the game, and it is because I am so fond of it that I am sorry to see it being pressed so insistently and so successfully into the service of sin. The game is a fascinating one, as everybody who has given himself to it with any degree of devotion will readily confess. It stirs the blood, grips the hearts, and makes fools indeed of not a few who seem to think that the chief end of man is to play golf -- by a sinful overindulgence. Yes, and it taxes the patience, and challenges the honour, tests the self-control. What a splendid moral gymnasium the links

are! I sometimes think that the man who can challenge a Colonel Bogey to a match some fine afternoon and play the game dead square, never advantaging his lie by the good colonel's absence, and never losing his poise or his calm when things do not connect, and dubs and tops and bunkers and boomerangs are all the go -- I sometimes think that that man must be in, or at least "not far from," the kingdom.

Then what a fine physical elixir! It calls one out into the open with a few odd-looking sticks -- and by the way, the fewer the better: five are better than fifteen for the average player -- and a ball; and it says, "Hit that little ball into that hole over there. Do not touch it with your hand or your foot or your finger; address it not in any unchaste language with your tongue. Do not push it or shove it or tickle it in any way, just hit it with one of these clubs in that bag. Hit it clean. Watch it. Keep your eye on the little rascal -- marvellous how it will elude you! Do not press; do not crouch; do not jump at it. Use your wrists. Follow through. Keep in mind about sixteen things at once just before the moment of impact."

The point is plain. It rivets attention. No man can play golf and play stocks at one and the same time. He cannot drive a ball and drive a bargain. Everything else must be forgotten, absolutely forgotten -- business, care, joy, sorrow, disappointment, friction -- all forgotten. It is the greatest system for forgetting things ever invented. So

it heals headaches; it drives dull care away; it relaxes tension; it slays worry; it carries off surplus activity. It makes the poor pilgrim forget the things that are behind and press forward to that little rubber bulb before.

And the beauty about it all is that one does not need to be a first sixteen player or even a second sixteen player to get wholesome pleasure out of the noble game. The third sixteen foozler enjoys it full as much -- sometimes I am tempted to think more. For golf has a happy greeting for everybody. No matter in what mood we approach her, she breathes a benediction. She is the ideal queen of sport.

Another reason, I think, why so many people are taking to this outdoor form of amusement, is that it is a supremely thoughtful game. I suppose more books have been written on the science of golf and the subtlety of golf and the psychology of golf than any regarding any other outdoor game. For half the mischief one gets into is purely mental. Every expert player tells us this. The best golfer is a sort of Christian Scientist. One can imagine more trouble in golf than in any other game, and the moment one does that it becomes terribly real. He is in distress for sure!

That is why the thinker takes to it. It is a slow, studious, reasoning game. One does not have to make up his mind what to do in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, as in tennis, or baseball, or cricket; and save the very long drive, which only a few master, there is little that is

spectacular or cheer-evoking. I suppose the putter would be conceded to be the most important club in the bag, but what a shy, sensitive little fairy she is! Even a whisper disturbs her, a passing bird, a breeze, a call from a far-off caddie. Who has not felt that solemn, death-like stillness when the little putter is meditating and about to proceed! So, I repeat, it is a game for the thinker, the student; a quiet game, a philosophical game, subjective, introspective -- the Hamlet of sports.

And it has had a most honourable history. It has been associated with less objectionableness than any other American form of athletics. It has small attraction for the gambler, little or none for him whose hand is unsteady with anything fermented, none whatever for the man of unclean life. It is a sport pure as the Highland rills whence it had its rise.

It was my fortune recently to be on an automobile trip through the northern part of the State of New York. We arrived Sunday [contributor's NOTE:- The author means Saturday morning -- a typographical error or one in the writing of the manuscript itself, and overlooked in its publishing.] morning at a country club located about five miles outside the limits of a city. We played around the course in the afternoon; and as there were rooms in connection with the club, we decided to remain and rest there over Sabbath. What was my regret in the morning

about eight o'clock to hear underneath my window the crack of a golf ball! Up to ten o'clock I counted some seventy-five players starting out. In the afternoon there was no lull. Possibly one hundred or one hundred and fifty caddies were engaged during the day. No tournament could have been more full of excitement and bustle.

And the question kept swimming into thought, What is all this going to mean to the future of the church? Let it be borne in mind that there are about a thousand organized clubs in the United States to-day, with a membership of more than a quarter of a million, and the number increasing every week. What does it mean that 100,000 caddies are being kept away from Sunday-school every Sunday morning? It is a well-known fact that in most places the links are more crowded on Saturdays and Sundays than any other days. Indeed, in some instances guests are not permitted Sunday privileges, there being no room. In some a double charge is made. I can count just now, without any warning, from twelve to twenty members of churches who up to two years ago would have been shocked at the idea of Sunday golfing, but who to-day are spending every Sunday morning on the links.

We chanced at dinner on the occasion just cited to be seated by a certain gentleman, who remarked:

"Well, did you have a good game to-day?"

"I never golf on Sunday," I answered; "I always go to church."

He laughed. "My family were there, I guess, but I confess I haven't been around very much this summer. To tell the truth, I find that this does me more good."

"Then I suppose you would be ready to make that a position of universal law," I ventured. "Would you advise it for everybody? Do you approve of it for the caddies?"

But just then the gentleman across the table chimed in that it looked a little like rain, and the discussion was dropped.

I think there can be little doubt that this matter is fast becoming the most serious Sunday desecrating question before the church. Because the man who takes to golf is a man of a religious tint of mind. He is not the noisy shouter of the diamond or the turf. The game draws its devotees largely from business and professional life. It is a keen blade thrust into the very life of the church, and dangerous -- much more dangerous than the coarser weapons. The foe that is to be feared most is the polished foe.

We are losing our Sabbath day by leaps and bounds and flashes. It is running away with us at breakneck speed. The man who denies it knows not the facts. Our condition to-day is little better than continental. The automobile and the links are doing more to-day to empty our churches than

any other lure of the evil one. They are the response of a worldly Chrisitanity to the irreverent challenge of the age.

The breath of the Lord's Day is its sanctity.

No man can make of it a common holiday and long retain the aroma.

IX

THE FRAGRANCE OF THE PRESS -- ITS WHOLESOMENESS

THE Press, too, like the Church and the home, has its perfume. There is a phrase among reporters, "The nose for news." Some papers are savory and sweet; others are noxious and noisome and malodorous. And the atmosphere of the ideal newspaper would be one of wholesomeness, not truthfulness, because a paper may be truthful and yet not sweet smelling. There are times when the whole truth cannot and should not be published. I like that word wholesome. It has a smack of health and freshness and poise and tone. There's music in the word.

Roger Bacon is said to have trembled when he discovered gunpowder, and for a time to have suppressed the discovery. One can well imagine an editor trembling as he wields his pen and contemplates that what he is writing

will be read to-morrow morning by half a million people. He surely ought to tremble. To think of the possibilities for good or evil that lie in that steel stylus is enough to make any honest man hesitate. Certainly it should make him surpassingly serious.

The forthcoming of a great daily is an illustration of never ceasing wonder. Perhaps there is no other brain worker who carries the burden of the editor. The politician during a campaign makes fifty or one hundred orations, but it is the same oration over and over; the only thing new being the audience. If a Congressman makes four or five speeches in a session he is thought to have acquitted himself admirably. Sir William Curtis once remarked, "It takes me months to prepare a lecture, and how a clergyman can sustain two sermons a week is a mystery." But for the editor there is no pause. That column must be written. That leader must be ready for type. There are no vacations in the journalistic field. The sanctum is never closed. Verily 'tis a ceaseless, endless grind.

The aim of the newspaper is to give us the news; and that word news is significant. It means fresh tidings, recent intelligence, something that has lately happened. The reporter wants the last thing. What is a few hours old is flat. He is on the scent for something fresh. The past is nothing, the future is little more, the present is everything.

He is a camera man, alert to snatch the moment that is passing.

And this is the danger. It will be remembered how the Book of Acts describes the Athenians. It says that they spent their lives in telling or listening to some new thing. At one time these Athenians had been a very wonderful people. They had had a very remarkable history. Athens was the home of Plato and Aristotle and Lycurgus and a long list of intellectual thoroughbreds. Her schools of philosophy are immortal. And yet at the time the Book of Acts was written they had as a people degenerated. They had become as obscure as they had once been illustrious. They had become petty and frivolous, ever rummaging about for some new thing. They spent their time newsmongering. The danger was, and is still, a very real one.

But the peril of the paper is its perfume. Its color, or off-color rather, is of course, important, but its fetor is more important. Some papers (and with sorrow be it confessed) have a very unpleasant odor. They are not only yellow; they are olid. The breath of some is intoxicating, of some contaminating. The breath of some is intoxicating, of some contaminating. They inflame the passions; they create suspicion. They breed disease in the social organism. They foment distrust and excitement and alarm. The aim of the newspaper is to give the news, meaning, of course, the

truth, for nothing is news that is not true. No criticism on a journal ought to be more damaging than this, that it does not tell the truth. But how often the truth is seasoned with just enough error to mislead! How often the issue is clouded! How not infrequently, indeed, the news in manufactured!

And the yellow sheet! How pestilential and baleful! How can one speak of it with judicial composure? Crimes and scandals of every hue and horror. A friend said but yesterday: "Really, it is not safe to give these papers to the children any more. Look at that front page; there are five shocking murders on it."

Saint Beuve says that in reading Rabelais one needs to take running jumps to avoid the mud. Just so with much of the printed mixture that is set before our eyes every morning. One cannot help wondering wherein consists the necessity to put in type the ugly stuff. One finds it difficult to credit the fact that our country is as much interested as we are being led to suppose, in the money marriages and domestic squabbles of our families of wealth.

What is needed is a juster proportion. There is a false emphasis. The most serious criticism we can bring against the Press to-day is that so much of it violates the law of relative dimensions. They are like Chinese painting, marred by a false perspective, a wrong dividing of the word of truth. The journal that devotes wo or thre columns to a

suicide, and at the same time almost ignores a conference concerning the welfare of our public schools, has an extraordinary sense of chiaroscurro. An up-to-date paper must, of course, report crime and tragedy, but wherein consists the need to wallow in the mire of sickening detail?

One of the greatest calls of our country is for a Press that is sweet selling, home uplifting, wholesome. A few of such publications, in most of our cities are to be found. It should be the aim and effort of every Christian family to support them.

X

THE FRAGRANCE OF THE PASTOR -- HIS SYMPATHY

I AM being reminded of this almost every day by the tributes I hear paid to the memory of my lamented predecessor, Donald Sage Mackay, but all seem to agree that he was not a wonderful preacher. What won and held his great congregation was the superb sympathy of the man. He had such a big tender human heart. He felt.

As a dear friend of his was recalling yesterday: she had lost her sister, and the Doctor at the time happened to be up in Maine on his summer vacation -- and a sick man. But he came down to the funeral unexpectedly, although the deceased had not even been a member of his Church. And when the sister said to him, Doctor, why did you come so far?" "Because," he answered, "I heard you wished that I was here, and when I knew that, I wished it too."

And is not that the very key to sympathy -- to put one's self in the other's place? Whoso does this will always feel. Sympathy can never be aristocratic. No man can be exclusive and compassionate. Sympathy is essentially considerate and thoughtful. Wordsworth says of Milton, "Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart." But Milton we know was by nature cold, solitary, masterful, austere.

Sympathy and compassion mean the same thing, "to feel with," the one being Latin, the other Greek. I can feel for a brother in distress at a distance, but I cannot fully feel with him until I get close by and hear his sobs. Then his trouble becomes my trouble too, and I am a co-sufferer. A Madame du Chatelet says, "I have a pain in my sister's side."

"Rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with those that weep." Not weep for. Weep with. Pity is a weeping for, but many there are who dislike being pitied. Pity has been known even to reprove. Pity is a little apt to carry with it a gentle reminder that possibly after all it may be one's own fault. Jesus did not weep for Mary and Martha. He stood by the grave and said, "I am sorry with you."

When the little child in the street saw a bereaved husband following the casket of a loved one to the grave his heart was touched and he went up to the weeping man and

slipped his hand into his and walked along without saying a word. That was true sympathy.

When Walt Whitman writes of the horrors of the hospitals at the time of our Civil War, when he tells of one poor fellow about to undergo an operation, and as there were no opiates, saying to the poet, "Would you mind sitting by and holding my hand?" He takes the lad's hand and watches the cold beads of perspiration break out on the brow, and the wrenches of pain, and, says Whitman, "Every cut of the knife cut me too." That also was true sympathy. And when that merchant discovered that one of this clerks was embezzling, he called him into his private office and said, "Charlie, why did you do this?" The young man was crushed with a sense of unutterable shame, and putting his head down on the desk, he burst into tears. The merchant saw the tender spot, and felt he must tiptoe tenderly. "He must not break the bruised reed." Convinced that there was good stuff left, he put his arms about him at last and said in the dusk of the twilight, "Charlie, let us kneel and ask God to forgive us." "Us!" That was the grace, was it not, in its perfect expression? To sympathize with men who are terribly tempted! What a delightful and delicate and gracious art! How little we know of the solitude of the sinner's soul!

But Sympathy is not only the minister of sorrow. She is also the blessed messenger of joy. She is a beautiful angel with two wings. Clip either and her glory is shorn.

We are not only to weep with those who weep; we are to rejoice with those who rejoice. We are not only to sob with men in their sorrows; we are to laugh with them in their laughter, which is a more intricate and a much more difficult and subtle thing. It is not easy to see another go forward when we cannot. Not easy to say to one's competitor, "God prosper you, brother, there is room for us both."

But it is the mind of the Master. Where real sympathy is, jealousy cannot linger. Jealousy is throwing impediments in the path of your rival. Sympathy is rolling away the stones.

You, colleague in the pulpit, you are meeting with success in your stewardship. I share the holy joy with you. You, young Christian, the beat of a great victory is in your heart. My heart is also beating. There is a keen and sensitive partnership. You, seeker after souls, you have won a wanderer home, and you are jubilant with an unearthly delight. I, too, am jubilant. The joy of leading a soul to Jesus is like the joy of a mother when God gives her a child. And is not this the sweetest strain in heaven's music: "Rejoice with me for I have found my sheep which was lost." "With me!"

And this is the charm and glory of Jesus. Many are willing to rest his supremacy on the royalty of his concern for others. Such a superb unselfishness! It is the sympathy of the man that wins my heart. He made the sorrow of the world his own. "In all your afflictions he is afflicted. And its joy too! "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full."

And it is the superlative power of the pastor. It is the very perfume of the man. It steals so insidiously and so sweetly into every niche of his ministry. It blossoms like the seed of the honeysuckle into a most beautiful and fragrant creeper. There is a deep, delicate redolence about the curate of souls who can feel with his flock, that is most compelling. The very witchery of true pastoral success is in getting an insight into other people's joys and sorrows, and being able to understand them and interpret them and share them.

A lady said to her minister, "I have a terrible tragedy in my heart; would you mind if I come some day to your study and unfold it? Perhaps you can help me; a secret burden is so heavy." "Certainly," he replied, "come; I will be pleased to see you; we will try and swap experiences. Maybe I will be able to give you a little of my happiness and share a little slice of your grief. Anyway, it often kills the secret thing to just drag it out into the open. How lovely! And it is the very spirit of Jesus.

XI

THE FRAGRANCE OF THE SERMON -- ITS SPIRITUAL FRESHNESS

I WENT to church this morning with a little company of worshippers. We were guests at the country home of a friend. It was a Presbyterian church and the largest in the town. On the way our hostess remarked: "I wish you were going to hear a good sermon today, but I know you will not. Dr. Sackville is just the pokiest old preacher you ever heard -- not a pennyweight of magnetism about him. Every time I hear him I vow I'll never go again, yet I do. Next Sunday I find myself in the old pews. I suppose it is my training; it certainly is not my enthusiasm. There's Miss Cameron -- she never goes any more, says she

simply can't stand him; he makes her fidgety, she declares. Just think of it; there are 500 students in our little town here, and I do not really believe that more than fifty of them ever step inside a sanctuary. Isn't it a shame? Look at that group on those steps over there. Dr. Sackville is all right as a pastor, but pshaw! what we need here is not a pastor; what we need here is a preacher -- someone that can strike the manly note to draw these young fellows. His sermons always seem to me to be hastily got up. There's not a bit of freshness about them. Oh, he's dry, dry, dry!"

We were entering the vestibule as she spoke that last word. I could feel it like a desert breath wafted in my face as we walked adown the aisle together. The organ was pealing forth the strong, steady strains of our noble doxology. After the invocation I cast my eye around. It was a large auditorium -- capable of seating perhaps a thousand people and about one-third filled. There was quite a considerable choir and an audience that struck the stranger as one of culture. The room was warm and inviting.

The preacher was a middle-aged man--slow, dignified, possessed naturally of a good rich, fertile voice, but one marred more or less by a wretched singsong inflection. His Scripture reading was rather impressive, however. His prayer, I noted, was

rambling, informing, cold, too long entirely. It lacked preparation, one could see -- lacked simplicity, lacked directness, lacked almost entirely that spiritual touch without which no true prayer can be.

He gave out his text, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord, our God is one Lord." It is a generous thing to line up with the friends of the ministry in upholding the high standard of that noble calling, but this time we were all driven to admit that our hostess was right. There was nothing fresh about the sermon; nothing up-to-date; nothing to appeal to a young lad in college, say; nothing to interest the man of the world who is earnest and square in his business, but who is, as so many are, stone deaf to the call of the church. Yes, she was right, it was dry.

We were barely outside the door when the inevitable question, "Well, how did you like him?" was delivered with quick and unexpected directness.

"Well, to be honest," one member of our party answered, "I did not care very much for the sermon, but I was impressed forcibly with one thing, and that is this -- how much the poor man is trying to do. I wonder if it struck you as it did me, when he was giving out his announcements, the number of services he has on hand this week for instance. He preaches both morning and evening today. I understand he

always gives a lecture at the addresses -- one on Monday and one on Friday. That is to say, this week alone he appears five times in public when he has to say something -- something good and fresh and helpful."

There is a widespread and singular notion current that ministers as a class have nothing much to do. Instead of getting credit for being among the hardest worked body of men in this busy age of ours, they are full oft regarded as having what is termed a snap. Wasn't it Ian Maclaren who was telling us of being once asked by a gentleman who was by no means an unlettered man, "How do you manage to put in the time, Doctor?"

How many visits does the parish clergyman make in the circle of a year? Full as many as the parish doctor, does he not? How many funerals does he attend? How many weddings? How many social functions? How many sick rooms look for him at least once a week? How many books must he read? How many magazines? How many church papers? How many outside addresses must he make -- missionary, temperance, educational, civic? How many letters write? How many articles review? How many demands does he respond to, and gladly, from those who have no colour of claim on him?

How not infrequently, indeed, is he called upon to shoulder the financial load of his church!

And this press and crush has told on the intellectual freshness of the message. The sermon has come to have a bad odour because so many sermons are below par. A recent critic has said that not one sermon in quite a number (ten, I think, was the estimate), is worth the trouble and effort it takes to listen to it. Even those published utterances of our most distinguished divines, the writer went on to claim, are but rarely felt to be other than ordinary. I know not whether the criticism be altogether just, but there can be little doubt that sermons as a rule have not a very toothsome taste to the average listener.

There has grown up in recent years the cry for what is called the new sermon. The call for this type of homily is insistent. Once if a discourse fulfilled the hometetic and theologic tests it was accepted; but now in addition it must be literary, scientific, artistic, illustrative and entertaining. The average discourse we hear is no doubt excellent in make and matter, but the average discourse one hears is not interesting. So at least the critics are claiming. It is, they say, tame, flat, colourless, commonplace. It shows the marks of hurry.

There are city pastors who are trying to do the work of many men. If they were doing a like amount of

labour for a corporation it would be divided up into five or six departments, and distributed among as many clerks. There are more nervous breakdowns in the ministry today than in any other profession. Running a church in the twentieth century is not what it was fifty years ago, not what it was twenty years ago. Then people came to the service anyway, no matter who preached, almost no matter what he said -- provided only it was orthodox. Not so now! The pace has become hot and perilous; unreasonable the demands on the clergyman's time and well-nigh past numbering. Congregations are asking of their ministers the impossible.

Few people are aware that the late Henry Drummond was an ordained clergyman. He never accepted a pastorate, but ordained he was by the Free Church of Scotland, and one thing that kept him out of the regular pastorate was the "nightmare," as he termed it, of "sitting down minister fashion and turning out two essays each week." Let it be remembered that a thirty-minute discourse is at least 3,000 words; two such will be 6,000. That means 1,000 words to be written each day; 360,000 a year; which aggregates a bewildering pile of manuscripts to the equivalent of several standard novels. Who but some theological Anthony Trollope is sufficient for such a feat?

That we are suffering today from a plethora of sermons there can be but little doubt. No ordinary student, it would seem, can turn out two edifying dissertations each week, and keep it up year in and year out, and do his evangel and his people and himself and the community justice. Can it be wondered at that the evening service so often drifts into a talk or a stereopticon or a musical concert or a running commentary or some such weak apology? And can it be much wondered at, that short pastorates have become the rule -- not, as once, the exception?

The minister today should know something about administration, something about Sunday School work, something about organization, something about music, something about etiquette. But there is one thing he must know -- he must know how to preach. And that means preparation. And preparation means time. He has a great message and he ought to be interesting. Dullness in the pulpit is unpardonable. George Dawson once remarked, "When I speak I make up my mind that people are going to listen, for if they do not listen it does not matter what I say." That is a good maxim to remember. There should be the smell of Spring about every sermon. There should be the breath of new life and joy and hope. The average congregation is composed largely of people who are tired and needing

comfort. What a crime for a Herald of Hope to allow himself to grow tedious and stale!

XII

THE FRAGRANCE OF THE PREACHER -- HIS MYSTICISM

I HAVE just been reading an article on the ministry which our age demands. It is a rather remarkable document. The author begins by saying that every age has its idiosyncrasy and that ours is no exception. The message is ever the same but the way it is illustrated and applied is constantly changing. The speaker, if he would be effective, must adapt himself to the style and acoustics of the building.

And one is tempted to think that in this he is right. Each age must grow its own leaders. If Jonathan Edwards or even John Wesley were to come back today, is it not

more than likely that they would find themselves more or less out of tune?

The first credential which the writer lays down is that the minister for today must be a leader. But would it not be nearer first principles to begin by saying that he must first of all be a man, a true man, a real man, a nobleman, a gentleman? One of the leading bank presidents of our country in speaking about their new minister the other day, remarked, "Well he's quite a good deal of a man."

We hear it said not infrequently today, that the people are giving up their respect for the cloth. But the cloth is not the minister. Not any more than are the regimentals the soldier. Today no ecclesiastical vesture of itself commands respect. The minister is not the pope he once was. He is not the authority on all things on the earth, under it and above it, that he was 100 years ago. If he compels respect it is because of his manhood. That criticism passed by the Scotch elder long years ago on three ministers that had served the parish, is sometimes, alas, a just one: "Our first dominie was a man but he was not a minister, our second was a minister but he was not a man, and the one we have now is neither a minister nor a man."

And indeed perhaps it is not to be altogether regretted that the old reverence for the tall hat and the white tie and the clerical collar has passed away. One is tempted to wonder sometimes if it was not on the whole injurious. No

real man cares to be idolized "ex officio." The pedestal is still there, but the people are not particularly interested in it. It is the statue that they scan. And if it would suit them, it must be made of real flesh and blood. The poet speaks of sermons in stones, but the average congregation does not hear these declarations. They are as a rule deaf to the utterance. Sermons for them can only be in souls. The greatest sermon a man can preach is his own manhood. No matter how many gifts an orator may have, he cannot be impressive unless there is a ring of real manhood about him. Perhaps Phillips Brooks' definition of preaching is as good as any. "It is the communication of truth through personality. The only thing that the preacher has a patent on is himself. Our Master did not write twelve books. He sent forth twelve men.

And there are not a few who think that this is one of the reasons why so many ministers fail today -- they are not true men. Some understand the Hebrew better than they do the human. When we hear men speak of the drudgery of the work, it is not because they are true men; it is because they are small men. The man who refuses the call of God because of its hardships lacks the heroic note; he lacks the stuff that goes to the making of an ambassador. There is a joy in conquering difficulties, and there is a joy too in being conquered by them, if one goes down bravely after doing his best. It is the joy of duty done.

We are being told that the young men of our colleges are turning away from the ministry. They have heard that the ranks are full, the vacancies few, the dead line only a few leagues distant, the remuneration meagre, the pastorate precarious, the demands great, the work hard, the criticisms severe and often unjust. No true man is afraid of that. Think of Paul asking for financial inducements. The stipend is not all paid in gold coin. Love is part of the living. "Man shall not live by bread alone." He lives on affection, on appreciation, on sympathy, on the plaudits of his conscience.

And then he must be a student. Nowhere is there such an array of scholars as in the history of the sacred desk. The minister who is not a student, is not in the line of Apostolic Succession. His pastoral pilgrimage will be brief. A young man in Union asked me the other day, What would you advise me to emphasize in my seminary work? I am so sick," he said, "of Syriac and Shibboleths and Shva's. Isn't all this Greek and Hebrew stuffing sheer waste of time? Would I not be putting my senior year to better advantage by trying to master the King's English and something more congenial and alive?"

I said to him, "Who were the masters of the homiletic art in the ages gone? Will you name one who did not drill in the lodes and deposits of dusty learning?" Quick as a flash he threw Moody at me.

The study is a peculiarly arresting one. It is so striking that it is well-nigh startling. Indeed it is doubtful that if there were half a dozen men in the whole history of pulpit preeminence who were not followers after some phase of scholarship. God can use the weak things of the world, and sometimes He does. He did it in the founding of His Church, and He has done it since, but the illustrations are not crowding. The pathway to the throne of power is lined on either side with the monuments of mountain-minded men. It is in their libraries that ministers have found and perfected their art.

Here is Loyola tearing himself away from his spiritual rhapsodies to toil away at the rudiments of his Latin grammar.

Here is Baxter, the apostle of celestial fervour, the author of sixty volumes, and one of the most profound men in the long line of learning; "classical scholar, accomplished linguist, deep philosopher,"but first of all and greater than all, preacher and evangelist to those simple Cornish miners.

Here is John Howe, whose greatest work is a reply to Spinoza.

St. Paul had behind him all the treasures of classic literature. Sometimes it is wise to develop muscles that are wobbly and limp. "Knowledge," said St. Francis, "is the eighth sacrament of the Church." It is necessary oftentimes

to study subjects that are difficult and dry. The age is rushing madly after the easy and the pleasant.

But the perfume of the preacher after all is his Mysticism, and this comes only from direct intercourse with the Spirit. We hear much about magnetism, but magnetism is a miscellaneous thing; Mysticism is the better word. It is the real secret. It was said of Matthew Simpson that when delivering his message his eyes were slanted upward as if he were listening to and reporting a voice which the people could not hear. Preaching is trying to get the people to look at life through the eyes of Jesus.

I never heard Phillips Brooks but once. It was down in Old Trinity at a midday Lenten service. I was a student in Princeton at the time. I stood in a crowded aisle throughout the service. I do not remember the text, nor indeed a single thought uttered. But I remember very keenly the impression left. It was that of a man who was looking into the face of God. The real power of the pulpit is not its eloquence, not its learning, not its artistic touch, not its dramatic sense, but its God-consciousness. This is the bloom on the fruit. It was not the speech of Jesus, nor his parables, nor his miracles, but his revelation of the Father. The perfume of the prophet is not his culture. Culture as a rule is cold and odourless. Brilliant flowers have usually little aroma, just as in bird life those highly coloured have little glory of song. He is a guide and the first duty of a

guide is to know the road. The fragrance he flings comes from living so near to God that the angels possess him. Just as perfume is the breath of the flower so prayer is the breath of the saint; it is the sweet expression of the inner life.

"A Persian fable says, one day
A wanderer found a lump of clay
So redolent of sweet perfume
Its odors scented all the room.
"What art thou'? Was his quick demand;
'Art thou some gem from Samarcand,
Or spikenard in this rude disguise,
Or other costly merchandise'?
'Nay, I am but a lump of clay'
'Then whence this wondrous perfume -- say'?
'Friend if the secret I disclose
I have been dwelling with the rose.'
Sweet parable! and will not those
Who love to dwell with Sharon's rose,
Distil sweet odors all around,
Though low and mean themselves are found?
Dear Lord Abide with us, that we
May draw our perfume fresh from Thee."