



SERMON.

Is Anger a Virtue?

SERMON BY REV. DR. GEORGE W. DOWLING, OF ALBANY.

"The Lord is slow to anger and great in power."—Nahum, i, 3.

"Have nothing to do with an unlovely man," Mr. Rothschild whispers as he sends his keen, shrewd eye glancing over the marts of trade. "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak," Jesus Christ whispers to his world chosen out of the world. "Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost," thus says the self-seeker. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ," thus says Christianity. So when we bend our ears to catch some definition of manly strength how strange the contradiction between that of the world on the one hand and of heaven on the other—of men, as men go, and of our Lord, men's Maker. Very much of our social organization today, friends, has for its unuttered creed that physical, or at the best intellectual, force is the highest test of strength.

How often do we hear it said of this man or of that man who has had cause for offence, "He is slow to wreak his vengeance, because the opportune moment has not yet come. But I know the man. He is gathering up his strength, and as certainly as the snow falls, silently but surely upon the mountain side, even so he is preparing the avalanche which shall bury his foe forever. He only waits because today he is weak. Tomorrow he will be strong, and the curse will fall." And as it is with men so it is with nations. Ever and again we cast our eyes across the Atlantic and we see the various kingdoms of Europe standing over one against the other, with fists clinched and faces stubborn, measuring each other's strength of arm and sinew, and we are told that the only reason the air is not heavy with the clash of war is because each fears the other, knowing its own weakness.

But now notice the contrast in this text. These are slow to anger because they lack power: here I learn that God is slow to anger because He is of great power. Do not miss that idea—if He were less powerful He would be more easily angered. And notwithstanding all the false maxims of this false world, He is not the strong man who will lift himself up with a giant's might and grind an enemy beneath the heel of his hate. No, but He is the strong man who, in the face of insult, in the face of open antagonism, and that which is harder still to bear, in the face of secret persecution, with the thunderbolt already forged and in his grasp, can say, though the cheek may be pale and the teeth clinched, and the whole frame may tremble with the pent-up fire, "No, no, I will not hurt it."

He is an imbecile who cannot strike; but many times He is one of God's noblemen who will not. For, like God himself, He is slow to anger, not because He is feeble, not because He lacks one whit of manhood and dare not show his wrath, but because He is strong and will not. "The Lord is slow to anger in power," Socrates was no less of a man, he was more of a man, when he said to his slave, "I would beat you if I were not angry." On another occasion, when walking through the streets of Athens with a friend, he bowed to an acquaintance; the man, however, passed, insultingly taking no notice. "Will you not resent that?" asked his friend, and Socrates replied: "We would not strike a man whom we met on the street because he had a deformed body; why, then, should we strike him because he has a deformed soul?"

Some time since a gentleman said to me: "I would like to become a Christian if I could but conquer my angry passion." This morning, I want to say to you, young men, this morning, that a revengeful anger is everywhere and always only a synonym for weakness. And I emphasize that word revengeful, because anger in itself is as holy a passion as love. Yes, that is often the truest love that can flash the most burning scorn and peel forth the most scathing anathema against hypocrisy and meanness.

Rev. Dr. Spencer was walking down the streets of Brooklyn one morning with his face flushed. One of his parishioners met him and asked: "What's the matter?" And Dr. Spencer said: "I'm mad." "Why?" "Because I have come from a poor woman whose child is dying, and I found her with her household goods tumbled out on the sidewalk because she could not pay her month's rent; and her landlord is a member of my church; and I'm on my way to see him." Anger like that is divine; for 'tis not the anger of revenge, but the anger of indignation.

Watch the next man whom you meet, or better still, watch yourself, when again you find your heart beginning to be stirred with such an anger. Perhaps you will discover after listening to this sermon that it is because of your own failure in some respect, and that anger, instead of being a proof of strength, is a proof of feebleness. In other words, that, unlike the God of whom our text tells, you are quick to anger and therefore of little power.

We are prone to suppose when in a fit of tempestuous anger we stand face to face with our antagonist, that we are looking into the face of our worst enemy; but we are mistaken. We do not see our worst enemy until we see him in the looking glass. Conquer him and the whole world is yours: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things."

Driving among the Catskill Mountains some years since, on every side were towering highlands covered with forests. It seemed as though God Himself had come down and looked upon those hills, and beneath His gaze they had blushed into every color, and every leaf was trembling. But on one side I saw the deep ravine, telling of the swollen mountain stream, which, gathering its waters on the hilltop, had come roaring

down into the valley, dragging up trees and sweeping away homes. I listened to the pitiful story of those who had been awakened in the dead of night, only to find it was too late; that their mountain cottage was soon to become the sepulchre of those they loved. And, pointing to the river, I said to my guide, "If those narrow rivulets bring destruction, what must it be when the river becomes a boiling flood?" "Ah," said he, "it is not the broad streams that bring the danger, for they hold all the waters that come into them; but they are the narrow brooks which overflow their banks and sweep our loved ones from their homes into the churchyard."

And I thought how true it is indeed, that all this material world is but a parable of the moral and spiritual. It is not the man with the soul broad and deep who sends forth his turbulence to sweep down others to the grave. No, no, the waters may chafe, and fret, and foam, but the deep channel holds all within itself. It is he who, like the little mountain stream, is shallow and narrow, who, unable to contain that which is poured upon him, sends forth his violence to hurt and destroy.

So that the true test of strength is very often not so much in what a man does as in what he restrains himself from doing. Ah, it is so much harder for us to wait than it is for us to strike. All of us are more or less animals at the base. We each have our horns, just as truly as the ox, and we are by nature just as fond of goring people when provocation comes. Each of us has seen moments, at least, when we would like to stamp on a man as an angry bull tramples the dust beneath his hoofs. But, that is a test of power, worthy of men in the image of God?

Think of two men in the image of their Maker and one of them showing his superiority and strength by staining the other's image with blood and blackening his eyes. Beautiful picture, is it not? It takes only the lowest brute in the field to kick. Ah! but it many times requires a soul filled with the spirit of a holy Christ not to do it. Let us not be too quick in blaming that apostle for grasping his sword and smiting the servant of the high priest. He himself had been asleep when he should have been awake, and like many another sleeping Christian when he woke up, he woke up cross; and the first thing he did was to strike at somebody else. You and I would have done the same, it is more than likely.

But, tell me, who was the greatest hero, Peter who struck, or Peter's Lord who, with no petulant murmurings, placed the ear even upon his enemy, saying as he did it, "Put up thy sword into the sheath. The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?" Ah, one of the noblest proofs of the divinity of that sublime man, who walked this earth eighteen centuries ago, lies for me in that sentence which he uttered when he stood silent before them all as they cursed him and sought his blood: "Knowest thou not that I could even now pray to the Father, and He would give me ten legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it may be?"

Oh! to have the power to crush some bitter persecutor, to hurl to the dust some cruel foe, to have the ten legions of angels, the power to do all this and then to be able to say, "No, my Father; if it be Thy will that I should carry this yoke, I will neither murmur nor lay it down nor shrink from it." God's heaven lies about such an one. God's angels come to sing their songs to him, and as Christ stood in the midst of that council chamber smitten and degraded, and yet the only calm and peaceful one among them all, so in this world doth he stand who has learned to conquer himself; smitten it may be, mocked and reviled, and misinterpreted it may be; and yet in the midst of all his heart aches he stands a king, though his only crown may be a crown of thorns.

It is said that the French general who could command a hundred thousand men and carry dismay among the throngs of Europe—that the great Napoleon, who almost conquered at Waterloo, nevertheless trembled like a coward before the sneers which Mme. de Staël circulated among the parlors of Paris. And there is many a man who might win a battle who would not dare to kneel tonight before a comrade to say his prayers. Dare you? Many a one who could walk with unfaltering step into the face of the belching battle's roar would shrink like a craven recreant into the corner rather than face the sneering laugh of some poor ridiculing blasphemer. Remember, young man, if you are weak enough to let him, he may laugh you out of your manliness of character, out of purity, out of heaven, but he never can laugh you in again. He takes everything, and in return he gives you nothing.

The Dignity of Self-Conquest.
And here we reach the practical lesson for you and for me—the dignity of self-conquest. Not he, the great man who, standing aloft in contemptuous pride, looks upon humanity as existing for him; but he who has learned from Jesus Christ the lesson that he exists for humanity. Talk to me not of the greatness of those who have plodded amid breaking hearts, their feet wet with women's tears, to palaces and thrones and dominions. He was a greater monarch than they all, who, a poor and ignorant slave, standing upon the sinking vessel's deck, pressed forward to enter the life boat as she was about to shove off. Already the boat was filled to the gunwales; the sailors noticed that he had something wrapped in his arms; they refused to admit him unless he cast that away. And so he laid aside the covering, and there were two innocent babes, the children whom his master, their father, had committed to his care. There was his choice—a choice that will come to you a thousand times along your track of life—to live, and others might die; to die that others might live. It was only a moment that he hesitated; and putting his great black manly arms about them and pressing them close to his bosom for the last time, he kissed each smiling little face tilted to his; and then as he lowered them into the boat he said: "Tell my master that I died faithful to my trust."

Oh, I look for Paul's glory, and where can I find it. Not as he was when thinking of himself and the pride and honor of this life only, he stood surrounded by the chief men of Israel, offering him political power and a name which should live in Jewish history. Oh, not there! But when with that intellect which had been schooled at the feet of Gamaliel; with every rational endowment and every quickened faculty, all consecrated to others, he was able to exclaim: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things."

And now, young men, let us not go away from this house without remembering that there is but one worthy aim for all our lives; and that is in the strength which comes from Jesus Christ, with every honest effort, to seek to cultivate a nobility like that; a nobility which finds its supremest joy, not in being ministered unto, but in ministering. And how can we attain that? By loving and believing in Him who came in the name of His Father to give his life a ransom for many. Oh, 'tis only when I place my little petty motives beside His who sought utterly, not His own will, but the will of His Father, it is only then that I fully realize the beauty and delight of a perfect self-conquest.

It was when Isaiah stood in the temple filled with the glory of Jehovah that he discovered that he was a man of "unclean lips." It was when Peter, on the shore of Genesaret, saw the glory of Emanuel in the miracle of the fishes, and cried, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" then it was that he was prepared for those words from that Lord Himself: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." So it is when I stand before this God who is "great in power and slow to anger that I seem to hear Him saying, as He did to Gideon, the least in all his father's house, "Go in this thy might."

As Opie mixed his soul with his colors, and thus breathed life upon the dead canvas, so only by sacrificing ourselves, can we hope to paint our life's picture that it shall be recognized by God and by angels. And then how everlastingly true that saying, "He that loseth his life shall find it." Who but the "Crucified" is "The One who liveth?" And he today, who can so far lose himself, as to say in every deed, "I am crucified with Christ;" that man shall live in his work, when all the pyramids of Egypt shall have crumbled into dust.

And when the histories which tell of bloody deeds shall have turned to ashes with a world of fire; in that great hereafter, when God with his own hand shall have swept back the sky, and that bell in his eternal temple shall have struck the knell of time—then his work, whether it be the rearing of some granite cathedral or only the wisp of straw given to the burden-bearing oxen in Jesus name, shall live forever and forever.

Let others seek to wield the sceptre over men, take heed that thou shalt learn to rule thyself. "The Lord is slow to anger and great in power."

CHURCH WORKERS.

What they are Thinking and Doing Everywhere.

Dr. John Hall said at the ministerial meeting in Jay Gould's house that in twenty-five years he had never been obliged to go to a prison to look for one of his parishioners.

The oldest Unitarian minister now living is probably the Rev. Thomas Treadwell Stone, D. D., of Providence, who completed his 91st year last week. He is vigorous enough to address a meeting of ministers and did so last Monday.

A biographer of Phillips Brooks, writing from personal acquaintance with the distinguished Massachusetts divine, says that he has always been a notably diffident man, distrustful of his ability. It is rather singular that Mrs. Beecher, in her memoirs, makes practically the same statement about the great Brooklyn preacher.

Moody is one of the men they talk of as Spurgeon's successor as pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. Across the water it is believed that the great American evangelist is enough of a Baptist to come within the requirements of the trust deeds of the church property; but little hope is entertained of persuading Mr. Moody to come. A younger brother of Mr. Spurgeon, and three of the great preacher's students—Archibald Brown, William Cuff and E. G. Gauge—are also among the possibilities.

The Rev. Dr. Robert Collyer thus tells the story of his first sermon: "I took for my first text the words, 'As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.' I ought to have had, 'Thou shalt not steal,' for although my 'first' and 'last' were my own, I stole my 'secondly' bodily from an eminent Scotch divine. But I received my punishment, for though I struggled through the parts that were my own all right, I never thought of how that stolen part went until I was on my way home after the service. I have never 'stolen' since."

Spurgeon sometimes carried dramatic action to a ludicrous extent in the pulpit. Mr. Haweis says that once in the middle of his sermon the preacher shouted out: "What's that says, Paul, 'I can do all things?' I'll bet thee half-a-crown 'o' that." So the preacher took out half-a-crown and put it on the Bible. "However," he continued, "let's see what the apostle has to say for himself." So he read on, "through Christ, that strengtheneth me." O," says he, "if that's the terms of the bet I'm off!" and he put the half-crown back into his pocket.

A curious lawsuit has been instituted in Shenandoah, Va. A few Sundays ago the wife of David Jones brought their infant child to the Episcopal church to be baptized. Before the ceremony began Jones arose and exclaimed: "Hold up! If you christen that child you do it against the wish and religion of her father. I am an English Baptist." The wife said it was her wish to have the child christened, and the minister proceeded with the ceremony. The husband then had the clergyman arrested under a law which states that a father has the spiritual and educational control of his child until it arrives at the age of maturity. The case has been sent to court and will be tested.

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Spurgeon's Modesty.

When Spurgeon was called at twenty years of age from his little charge at Waterbeach to London, it was on an invitation for six months. New Park street was naturally somewhat cautious as to a mere youth. Six months of him might be long enough. Spurgeon, on his part, was more cautious still; not of New Park street, however, but for his own sake. He would only engage for half the specified time. "It ill becomes a youth," he wrote the deacon who had the call in hand, "to promise to preach to a London congregation so long, until he knows them and they know him. I would engage to supply for three months, and then, should the congregation fall, or the church disagree, I would reserve to myself liberty without breach of engagement, to retire, and you would on your part, have the right to dismiss me, without seeming to treat me ill." Such refreshing modesty is none too common. It is a sign of true greatness all the same.

The Mother's Prayer.

Starting forth on life's rough way,
Father, guide them;
Oh! we know not what of harm
May befall them;
'Neath the shadow of thy wing,
Father, hide them;
Waking, sleeping, Lord, we pray,
Go beside them.

When in prayer they cry to thee
Do thou hear them;
From the stains of sin and shame
Do thou clear them;
Mid the quicksands and the rocks,
Do thou steer them;
In temptation, trial, grief,
Be thou near them.

Unto thee we give them up,
Lord, receive them;
In the world we know must be
Much to grieve them,—
Many striving oft and strong
To deceive them;
Trustful in thy hands of love
We must leave them.

—William Cullen Bryant.

Notice of Dissolution

THE undersigned hereby give notice and certify that a certain limited Partnership under the laws of the Province of New Brunswick, conducted under the firm name of "W. C. PITFIELD & Co.," for the buying and selling at wholesale of dry goods and other merchandise, and generally a wholesale dry goods and general jobbing and commission business, which by the certificate of Limited Partnership registered in the office of the Registrar of Deeds of the City and County of Saint John in the said Province, was to commence the Twenty-eighth day of December, A. D. 1889, and terminate the First day of January, A. D. 1892, did terminate and is and was dissolved the said First day of January, A. D. 1892.

(Signed) WARD C. PITFIELD.

S. HAYWARD.

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAINT JOHN, N. B.:

Be it remembered that WARD C. PITFIELD and SAMUEL HAYWARD, parties to and the signers of the annexed notice and certificate, personally came and appeared at the City of Saint John, in the City and County of Saint John and Province of New Brunswick, before me, J. E. Barnes, one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the said City and County of Saint John, and acknowledged the said WARD C. PITFIELD that he signed the said notice and certificate, and the said SAMUEL HAYWARD that he signed the same.

Given under my hand at the said City of Saint John this Twenty-first day of December, A. D. 1891.

(Signed) J. E. BARNES,

J. P. City and County of Saint John.

Partnership Notice.

THE undersigned, desirous of forming a Limited Partnership under the Laws of the Province of New Brunswick, hereby certify:

1. That the name of the firm under which such partnership is to be conducted is "W. C. PITFIELD & Co."

2. That the general nature of the business intended to be transacted by such partnership is the buying and selling at wholesale of dry goods and other merchandise, and generally a wholesale dry goods and general jobbing and commission business.

3. That the names of all the general and special partners interested in said partnership are as follows:

WARD C. PITFIELD, who resides at the City of Saint John in the City and County of Saint John and Province of New Brunswick, is the general partner, and

SAMUEL HAYWARD, who resides at the Parish of Hampton in the County of Kings and Province of New Brunswick, is the special partner.

4. That the said SAMUEL HAYWARD has contributed the sum of forty thousand dollars as capital to common stock.

5. That the period at which the said partnership is to commence is the Second day of January, A. D. 1892, and the period at which the said partnership is to terminate is the Second day of January, A. D. 1896.

Dated this Thirty-first day of December, A. D. 1891

(Signed) WARD C. PITFIELD.

S. HAYWARD.

PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAINT JOHN, N. B.:

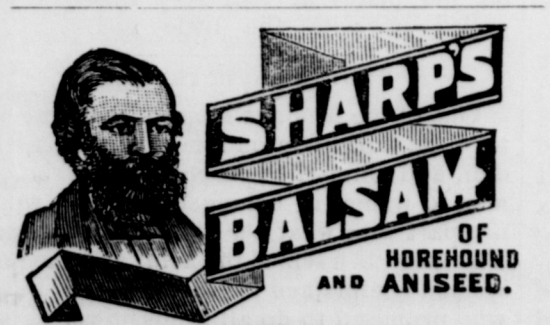
Be it remembered that on this Thirty-first day of December, A. D. 1891, at the City of Saint John and Province of New Brunswick, before me, JAMES A. BELYEA, a Notary Public in and for the said Province, by lawful authority duly commissioned and sworn, residing and practising in the said City of Saint John, personally came and appeared, WARD C. PITFIELD and SAMUEL HAYWARD, parties to and the signers of the annexed certificate, and in the said certificate mentioned and severally acknowledged, the said WARD C. PITFIELD that he signed the said certificate, and the said SAMUEL HAYWARD that he signed the said certificate.

In witness whereof, I the said Notary have hereunto set my hand and Notarial Seal at the said City and County of Saint John, the said

Thirty-first day of December, A. D. 1891.

(Signed) JAMES A. BELYEA, Notary Public.

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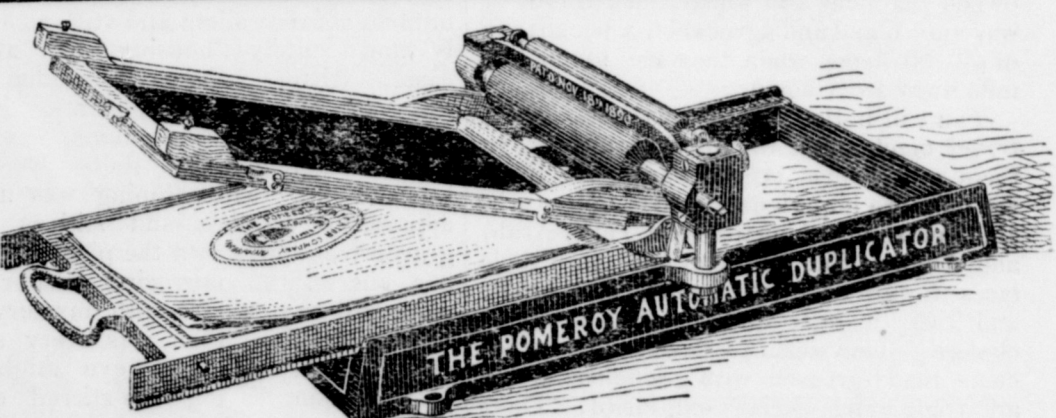
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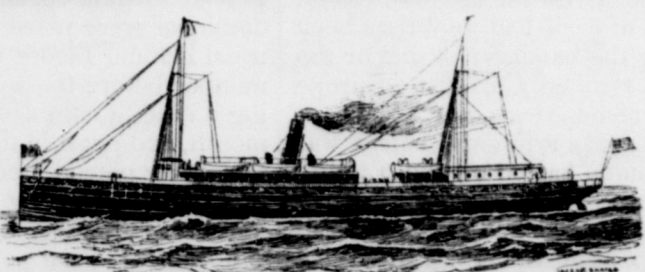
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