## The Christian Altruism.

A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE SOCIETY FOR MISSIONARY INQUIRY IN BROWN UNIVERSITY, ON SUNDAY EVENING, JUNE 13, BY REV. EDWARD JUDSON.

Whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall find it.—Luke ix: 24.

These words contain the subject to which I invite your meditations to-night—The Christian Altruism. They declare to us the duty and the blessedness of sacrificing the lower self in behalf of Christ and our fellowmen. The text is a startling paradox. It is apparently absurd, and yet it contains a profound truth. It does not tell us that he that loses his life for Christ's sake will get it back again. That would be all plain. That might seem quite reasonable. But the idea that our Lord conveys is that in the very act and process of losing our life for his sake we save it.

The key to the understanding of this paradox is in the word "life." There are two kinds of life. Man is dual. In every man there is the nature which he shares in common with the brute. He has animal passions, animal appetites, animal instincts, animal pains, animal pleasures. He has, beside that, a life which he shares in common with God and the angels and "just men made perfect"—the life of the rational spirit—the life by virtue of which he knows the difference between the right and the wrong. Now our Lord's teaching is this: he who loses the lower, animal life in the behalf of Christ, will save the higher, rational, spiritual life. For instance: if, once for all, he is put to death in behalf of Christ, if the head is hewn from his body, as the head was hewn from the body of John the Baptist in prison, there seems to be the utmost wreck of the animal life. But our Lord assures us that out of that wreck emerges, unimpaired, enlarged, glorified, the spiritual life. Or, if day by day, he loses the animal life, the lower life; if he suffers hunger and thirst and weariness and pain, imprisonment and scourging and reproach, if he suffers all these things, and day by day loses the lower and animal life for the sake of Christ, our Lord teaches us that the spritual life is all along becoming expanded and glorified, and in this way the man who loses his lower life in behalf of Christ saves the higher, spiritual life.

This is not the only place in the Bible where that is taught: it is not an isolated passage. You find the same principle pervading all the teaching of our Lord. You find this statement is fundamental to Christianity. You find it six times repeated over in the New Testament, twice in Matthew, once in Mark, twice in Luke and once in John, the same truth presented in slightly different words. And we have a glimpse of the same truth in that traditional saying of our Lord, which Luke preserves for us in the 25th chapter and the 30th verse: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." You find the same principle brought out with much greater fullness and clearness in Romans viii. 13, where the apostle says: "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die"—if ye live the lower animal life, ye lose the higher, spiritual life—"but if ye, through the spirit, do mortify,"—make dead—"the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Again in the second epistle of Timothy, second chapter and eleventh verse, you find the apostle saying this: "It is a faithful saying: If we be dead with him we shall also live with him." So that Matthew Arnold, however many mistakes he may have made in judging of Christianity, certainly pierced into the very core of Christian ethics when he said that the method of Jesus is an infinite dying, and in that dying is life.

This principle certainly suggests to you a thought which must have come to you a good many times in your life, and this is: that humanity advances along the pavement of suffering. Our Lord says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." Out of death comes life.

A little while ago you noticed that the air was full of the wrecks of blossoms, and yet out of the wreck of the blossoms came the fruit. And out of the catastrophies and disasters of human life is developed the solid fruit of character. A great German writer has said that those who have dared to reveal man to himself have from time immemorial been crucified and burned. It is not only true theologically, but historically, that Christ was the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," because the lamb has always been slain. The lamb-like in human nature has always been crushed and pushed to the wall. It has been "crucified and slain," and out of it has come the development of the race.

The great naturalist Figuier wanted to make all natural sciences popular. He wanted to bring the knowledge which he had to the minds of the common people, and in this way he secured the envy of other scientific men, and they nicknamed him "The Vulgarizer of Science." One time, when he with a number of people were in a room together, a little girl came up to the great scientist and said, "Why do they call you the 'Vulgarizer?'" He had no answer to give. But after a while she went to the window, plucked some roses and distributed them to the rest, and while doing that her own hands were pierced with thorns. Then he said, "Thou, too, art a 'Vulgarizer,' for thou givest the roses to others and keepest the thorns to thyself." And all along through the world's history those who have given roses to others have retained the thorns to themselves.

But it is not always true that suffering brings forth this development of character. We find a certain condition stated here. Our Lord says "whosoever will lose his life *for my sake* shall save it." There is a great deal of involuntary and reluctant suffering which does not make for the exhibition of the higher and spiritual life. Our Lord teaches that this suffering should be a voluntary thing, and done "for my sake." O Christ, how can I minister to thee? Thou art beyond my reach. Thou hast ascended into the heavens. There thou dost dwell in peace and glory. "How can I minister to thee?" Emerson tells us that "the finite alone toils and suffers. The infinite lies in smiling repose." But our Lord teaches us that we *can* reach him—reach him through the persons of those he loves—through our suffering fellowmen. Thus we get the significance of that tremendous judgment scene, where there was a division made, and some placed upon the right hand and some upon the left, and the King said to those upon his right hand, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Why? Because you are orthodox? Because you have had a good clear apprehension of some creed? Even because I died for you? No. No faith is genuine unless it has the root of unselfish behavior. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, he have done it unto me."

Let us glance at some of the illustrations of this great law, according to which he who loses his life saves it. The first great illustration is that of our Lord himself. He was losing his life from the beginning to the end, not only once, when he hung upon the cross and there breathed forth his spirit, but all the way through. That cross casts its black shadow athwart the whole life of our Lord. He was a homeless man; he who made home what it is; he who created home; he who placed women upon the pedestal which she occupies, and who made little children, as one has said, "little majesties," he had no home. He lived the life of a vagrant. When morning came he knew not where he would lay his head at night. When night came he lay down in the stern of a vessel and took his rest, which was not broken by the roar of the storm. And when at last he came to die, he had to be put in another man's grave. All through, our Lord's life was loss. The lower life was given up, from beginning to end. He himself illustrated this principle, that "he who loses his life shall save it."

But it was not only the case with our Lord, but with his disciples also. They were continually suffering all kinds of hardships, turned out of homes, evicted from synagogues, becoming refugees upon the face of the earth. They were scourged and imprisoned, "counted as sheep for the slaughter," and out of that suffering of theirs has arisen this Christianity, beneath the shadow of which we dwell. Men like those apostles never die. Their influence is ever moving the earth, even as the legend says the sleeping body of the beloved disciple ever moved his grave-mound with his breathings.

Then we have the long line of martyrs who lost their lives for the sake of Christ.

I want to know what Christianity is at its centre. Is it the holding of a certain set of dogmas? Is it a formal membership in some church? Is it a profession of religion? Is it keeping in the society of good people and going to church? Is not Christianity at its very centre the giving up of this lower animal life in behalf of fellow-men, in order again to save the higher and spiritual life? That is the very core and kernel of it. Every year deepens my conviction that this is the very central thing in Christianity, an infinite dying, and in that dying, life.

But we refer to missionaries to-night. They form the illustration of this great principle of the text. They go out into distant lands, taking their lives in their hands, and there take their stand in behalf of Christ. O friends, what inspiration comes to us to-night from the sufferings, the deaths, even the very graves of missionaries.

There is the lonely rock in the ocean, St. Helena, where she was laid to rest, who, almost at her last breath, consented to be parted from her husband, that he might go to his work of missionary labor, consenting that the solid earth might be between them, that he might perform his consecrated service for Christ;

We part on this green islet, love,
Thou for the eastern main,
I for the setting sun, love,
Oh, when to meet again?

Then gird thine armor on, love,
Nor faint thou by the way,
Till Buddh shall fall and Burmah's sons
Shall own Messiah's sway.

We all admire, at a glance, the generous qualities of an unselfish man. The officers of the army, in passing the wounded soldier, bare their heads, which is a salute of respect for the wounds he has received in his country's service. We all unconsciously bare our heads to the wounded—those who have suffered for the cause of humanity.

How is it there are so many unselfish people outside the church? Let us think of them a moment. In the first place, do not take too narrow a view of them. There are a great many outside of the church who have good and honest hearts and who are unselfish, yet they do not come within the fold. You see the man now and see him ten years hence, but there is no change in him, so far as spirituality goes, yet he is a good fellow, charitable hearted and generous. What's the use of my bolting my doors, if I leave all my windows open? It is morality which changes. There is no basis for the structure of character except in the simple faith, in the person of Jesus Christ. Why, a man has got to have a new set of relations, friends, and acquaintances. We must have such relations as will chain us closer to the throne of God. We are taught in the Bible that men are dead in the trespass of sin. You have seen men charge in battle, with the air filled with smoke, yet there were some people there who did not pay any heed, for their white faces were turned skyward in death. So it is in this great battle between sin and error; there are men and women in society who are dead to it.

The reward of Christian Altruism is happiness. You have not lived so long in the world without finding out the difference between happiness and misery. Suppose this beautiful city of yours, or these walls of brick were to cave in, what cries of misery we should hear. I want to ask you, my friends, where the bright spots in your life occur. Are they not where you have made some sacrifice for the happiness of another? My friends, if it is your inclinations to accept this Christian Altruism, do so at once. You say you cannot accept it on account of our creed and dogma; then look into the Old Testament, read it through, and if you find anything there which suits you better, stick to it and shape your life accordingly. I will warrant that after you begin honestly to search the Scriptures, you will find the connecting links which you will find connects with our teachings and will point you heavenward. Search any part of the Scriptures you wish and shape your behavior to that which seems to you so be the most systematic, and you will find that there is a system of coherent truth that connects these divine truths together. Again, I believe that this solidity, this bringing together the world by steamboat, railroad, telephone, and telegraph is the means God is taking to have the Gospel of Christ carried through the world.—*Providence Journal.*

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"And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven," etc. John 3: 13.

It is thought by some that this passage teaches that they who have departed this life have not gone to heaven. Many honest persons have no doubt been deceived by such fallacious reasoning.

Indeed it is generally honest persons who are deceived. But no person who has access to the Scriptures need be deceived concerning so plain a passage as this.

It is a part of the conversation which Jesus held with Nicodemus concerning the new birth. And it contains no reference, *pro* nor *con*, to the intermediate state of the departed. It simply means, "that no man had or could go up to heaven, to bring from thence the knowledge of divine and heavenly things; in which sense the phrase is used in Deut. 30: 12; Rom. 10: 6: 'It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it.' "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above),'" etc., and which may be illustrated by John 1: 18. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Wherefore inasmuch as Nicodemus had acknowledged Christ to be a teacher come from God, our Lord would have him know, that he was the only teacher of heavenly things, as being the only person that had been in heaven, and in the bosom of the Father; and therefore if he, and the rest of the Jews, did not receive instructions from him, they must forever remain ignorant; for there never had been, nor was, nor could be, any mere man that could go up to heaven, and return and instruct men in them, "but he that came down from heaven;" meaning himself, who is the Lord from heaven, and came from thence to do the Will of God, by preaching the Gospel, working miracles, obeying the law, and suffering death in the room of his people, and thereby obtaining eternal redemption for them." (See Dr. Gills' comment on this passage).

How plain and consistent the Word of God is when taken in its connection. It is only when the Scriptures are wrested from their legitimate teaching that they sustain error.

OLD LANDMARK.

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## Gleanings.

One of the most interesting meetings in celebration of the centenary of Sunday-schools in London was the gathering of 25,000 children in the grounds of Lambeth Palace. The Prince and Princess of Wales, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the mayor of London, and other dignitaries inspected the army of little soldiers, in their gala dress and with their beautiful banners.

Three hundred and eighty-five girls applied for the Oxford Senior examination this season, and 353 for the Junior examinations. In addition to the ordinary examination of boys and girls, another examination for young women over eighteen years old began at the same time, thirty-five offering themselves for the preliminary examination.

Queen Victoria's journeys between England and Scotland cost Her Majesty nearly £8,000 a year. Two special trains are always run, the second conveying the horses, carriages and servants.

Queen Victoria under no circumstances allows a lady whose name has appeared in a divorce court, either as complainant or otherwise, to appear at one of her drawing-rooms.

Mr. Ruskin has permitted himself to be nominated for the lord rectorship of Glasgow University by the Conservative Independent Clubs.

President Chamberlain, of Bowdoin College, is spoken of as the successor of the Hon. Hannibal Hamlin in the United States Senate.

Rev. Nathan Brown, D. D., our veteran missionary in Japan, writes from Yokohama, June 4, 1880: "I baptized four converts the 23d ult., making over sixty baptized since I came to Japan; and our brethren in other cities are reporting most encouraging prospect, especially in the inquiry after the Scriptures."

The Yale Lectures on Preaching next winter will be delivered by Dr. J. T. Duryea.

Major-General Sir Garent Wolseley, received, in South Africa, a salary amounting to about $46,000 a year.

Mr. Tennyson is taking a long journey through Italy and Switzerland.

Every Christian has a distinct, individual work. No two have the same work. As no two particles of matter are exactly alike, but each has its particular functions to fill, so God has assigned each of us our individual work, involving individual responsibility, the faithful performance of which will bless our generation, and gain us an individual reward in the rest by and by.




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