ARTICLE VIII.

THE ABIDING REALITIES OF RELIGION.[1]

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WE live in a swiftly changing world. New visions daily come before the eyes, new elements enter into life, new thoughts and convictions occupy the mind. Ours is a world where in every sphere much that is old passes away. As Lowell sang in his great Harvard Commemoration Ode,

> "What ever 'scaped Oblivion's subtle wrong,
> Save a few clarion names, or golden threads of song?
> Before my musing eye
> The mighty ones of old sweep by,
> Disvoicéd now and insubstantial things,
> As noisy once as we; poor ghosts of kings,
> Shadows of empire wholly gone to dust,
> And many races, nameless long ago,
> To darkness driven by that imperious gust
> Of ever-rushing Time that here doth blow.
> O visionary world, condition strange,
> Where naught abiding is but only Change,
> Where the deep-bolted stars themselves still shift and range!"

The stars do "shift and range," for the universe is expressed in terms of motion. Life itself means mutation and growth, and thus the thoughts of men are widened. A recent notable article by a teacher in our Seminary calls attention to the lessening area of human confidence now covered by the historic systems of belief.

[1] Baccalaureate sermon before the Oberlin Theological Seminary, May 7, 1899, from the text, "And now abideth faith, hope, love: these three; but the greatest of these is love."

In homely phrase all of us may rightly say, 'It is better to know fewer things than to know so many things that are not true,' or only partially true. There is nothing unique about our experience. The Apostle Paul, whose life and convictions had met a sudden and miraculous transformation in his early manhood, and who even found himself called by a new name, realized to the full the transitory, and even visionary, character of much of human existence, the incompleteness of his childish thought of God and man, and even the fragmentariness of his own knowledge as an inspired preacher of Christianity. But he was also conscious of certain abiding realities in religion, which no progress could possibly render antiquated. There are persistent elements, eternal laws, continuing, though still living, forces in the world of the spirit; and the greatest of these he describes in a prose poem to which we can find no parallel in ancient or modern literature.

It is of these abiding things that I wish to speak. But I am not to give an exposition of Faith, Hope, and Love as qualities of character divorced from what is central to all Christian preaching, namely, Jesus Christ. I hardly need say that we look on him as the author and perfecter of faith, as well as the chief object of it. We look on him as the inspirer of hope and the everlasting fountain of love. The supreme virtues of the Christian religion, like that religion itself, are not separable from personality, and are not independent of the Son of God. Every graduate from this Seminary will undoubtedly say, "Remove Christ from my life and thought, take him out of my public utterance, and I should have no mission as a Christian minister, either in America or anywhere else." I might speak of Christ as the chief abiding reality of the Christian religion; for, although men have lived and died in holy faith and love without any knowledge of the historic Saviour, still in these modern days he is exalted more and more as the one luminary,

the one attractive power, the one divine standard, and the predestined Universal King of human souls. He is the quickener of life even among many who know him imperfectly, and among those who have never received or heard the evangelic tradition.

The faith of which I am to speak is that which he kindles by his holiness, goodness, and wisdom; the hope is that which is born of his Cross and Resurrection; the love is that which his mighty and redeeming affection has most abundantly called forth. It is these abiding elements in Christianity which require our attention. But these abiding elements are not stationary, devitalized, and dead, like pyramids set up as landmarks of a remote antiquity. They are abiding like the constant river, which ever moves onward to the sea, or the vigorous oak, which rises upward toward the skies. But these lasting things in religion do suggest at once that many other things are evanescent, secondary, unessential; things which the church has greatly valued, and may still grasp with instinctive and unintelligent tenacity, or hold with a natural affection, as for things familiar and of ancient origin. But one of the saddest facts in the history of the individual church, as of the Holy Catholic Church throughout the earth, has been its exaltation of the commandments of men above the Spirit of God, its magnifying of unessentials, and building of them into barriers of separation between the followers of the one Lord. We, however, live in a time when the Pauline estimate is gaining rapidly, and multitudes perceive that if their lives contribute anything that is permanent to Christendom and humanity, it must be along the bright and ever-brightening ways of faith and hope and love.

"And now abideth faith." Paul has written of faith as vigorously, if not with such seraphic eloquence, as of love. He penned the most intellectual and profound of his Epistles to indicate the essential excellence, the justi-

fying and soul-saving power of faith. We who have come to receive the truth, which filled and fired his soul, have learned that by faith the just live. It is a rational and necessary ingredient of the truest manhood. We regard it as the channel through which God's righteousness pours into the soul; as our gate of access into the kingdom of grace, standing like the Propylæa at Athens before the Parthenon, and giving entrance to the temple not only of love, but also of wisdom. Paul went so far as to say that any moral activity into which this quality did not enter was vitiated. In one of his letters he describes faith as the light by which the soul walks, "a light that never was, on sea or land," but which glows in the mind of man. To his thinking this virtue was so needful and important that the whole doctrine which he proclaimed he called by this name. He speaks of "preaching the faith" which he once persecuted, meaning by it both the Christian doctrine and the Christian church. Our warfare he calls "the fight of faith"; so that, in his thirteen letters, from the First Epistle to the Thessalonians to that addressed to Philemon, Paul sounds forth a thousand notes from this golden string. In the Epistle to the Galatians, a sort of a vehement sketch of the same doctrine set forth in his letter to the Romans, he shows how through faith in Christ the soul is justified; and thus, by a stroke of his pen, he swept away as antiquated the observance of the ritual of sacrifice which for a thousand years had crimsoned the brows of Jerusalem. And after fifteen centuries Martin Luther absorbs the same truth from that little letter to the Asiatic Gauls, and with it he changes the intellectual and spiritual face of Europe. He sits down in a fury of mental excitement, and writes a Commentary on Galatians, one of the chief works of Christian history. More than a hundred years later an English preacher reads Luther's Commentary on Galatians, and it fashions his mind, and he writes

the Pilgrim's Progress, which more than any other book shapes the religious thought of the world-embracing Saxon race. After another hundred years John Wesley reads Luther's book on Galatians, and it determines his conception of the gospel, and he founds one of the most influential and wide-spread Protestant churches of the modern world. So that in the light of the Pauline literature and of Christian history, faith begins to loom before us as a word of transcendent power, as a figure of spiritual light and majesty, like the statue of Faith which now overlooks the harbor of Plymouth on the New England shore.

"And now abideth faith." It has an enduring quality. It is no modern virtue. It was present at the birth-hour of the Jewish nationality. It is something which illumines with more or less of brightness the paths of all history, from the call of Abraham to the present moment. I know that some men tell us that civilization has outgrown the Old Testament, and that the nineteenth century cannot sit down at the door of Abraham's tent for instruction in righteousness, any more than Herschel and Laplace, with all the accumulated learning of modern astronomy, could sit at the feet of the Assyrian star-gazers. But have the needs of the human soul ever changed? Altered conditions of external life and better ones we certainly have, but by reason of far deeper knowledge of nature. Are the spiritual wants of mankind different to-day on account of the observatory at Lake Geneva, and the laboratories at Göttingen, and psychological experiments at Jena? Do electricity and liquid air and Röntgen rays make the sorrows and aspirations of our lives to differ from those of remotest time? When it comes to our profounder life, our abiding needs, are we essentially changed from the men of antiquity? If you answer "yes," I will confute you out of the pages of Homer, out of the ancient hymns of India, out of the drama of Job, out of the inscriptions on Greek and

Roman sepulchers. Your holiest aspirations may be expressed in the words of Sophocles: "O for a spotless purity of action and of speech, according to those subtle laws of right which have the heavens for their birthplace, and God alone for their author, which the decays of mortal nature cannot vary, nor time cover with oblivion; for the divinity is mighty within them, and waxes not old!"

It is true that we of to-day have different ideas of God and of duty from those of the pre-Christian era; but men always and everywhere need God, a touch of divine mercy and awful friendship. They need God brought near to them in Jesus the Christ, God the lover of the soul and the forgiver of sin. Without a living faith the spirit of man cannot be brought into the communion with the spirit of God. Faith is trust. Faith is reliance upon a person. Faith is the acceptance of another's love. Faith binds man to the invisible omnipotence and the eternal goodness. Christian faith links the heart of man to the heart and cross of Jesus Christ. Faith is the badge of the loftiest minds; it is grounded in reason, it leads to activity, and is in harmony with the sublimest things of life.

We live in a world as replete with mystery and undiscovered marvels as was the world of Job. Every few months some newly-found property of light or air brings to us a vivid feeling of the wonder of that God who pervades, surrounds, upholds, vitalizes, all things. And so men in the realm of Christian truth are enlarging their conceptions of faith as they discover new elements of power and grace in Jesus Christ. While faith abides, the one living, divine bond between earth and heaven, it is still like a child sent to school, ever learning new lessons, widening its mental horizon, and rediscovering how to give the proper place and proportion to the various elements of ever-expanding knowledge. What we call Confessions of Faith—that is, elaborated statements of intellectual be-

lief — cannot, from their very nature, be continuously adapted to anything so vital and expanding as the intellectual and moral life of the race. New meanings creep inevitably into the old creeds, and this must occur. Since men are getting from science a larger acquaintance with God, this must be a result of our living face to face with Jesus Christ, and beholding him in the light of the new knowledge which he has called forth in the last sixty years. He is found always adequate and always unsurpassable; and one supreme argument for his divinity is that, unlike theological formulas, he never grows old. He is fresh with the dews of an eternal youth, and on his brow are jewels of everlasting verity, flashing immortal splendors.

And I am confident that those of you who are going out to preach the gospel will not neglect to set forth the reasons for believing that the world of true, rational faith is wider to-day than ever before. You will repeat from a personal conviction what you have learned from your teachers here: that this is preëminently an age of faith rather than of doubt. We call ours a century of science; and so it is. But science is founded upon faith in the uniformity of law, and hence in the unity and continuance of the divine personality. More and more science confronts God. We call ours the century of the working-man; and so it is. But the working-man, very often losing hold of the Christian creed and the Christian church, appears to be turning his eyes as never before to the Carpenter of Palestine and His spirit, as the only solution of present problems. We call this the century of commerce and world-conquering enterprise; and so it is. But wherever the Red Cross flag of the British trader covers a new community of the Anglo-Saxon race, there the Bible opens its pages, and the church-bell, whether amid the tropic gardens of Singapore or the snowy wildernesses of Hudson's Bay, summons men to the house of prayer.

Faith stands, with us, as the representative of what is fundamental and distinctive in the Christian world. It stands for God, holy, spiritual, loving; for Christ as man's teacher and Saviour; for the Bible as man's sufficient and authoritative guide; for the Lord's day as the friend of man's higher nature; for the Christian home and Bible school as man's instructors and helpers; and for Christian missions as pioneers of a better future for those who are half-illumined or in the grossest darkness. Preëminently faith stands for confidence in the loving heart and purposes of God, the Governor of all things: for confidence in spiritual rather than in mechanical forces, as the security of nations; and it was almost yesterday when the penitent souls of believers the world over gave deep response to the prayerful Recessional Hymn of a masterful singer, who, beholding multitudes drunk with sight of earthly power, exclaimed, as "the tumult and the shouting" died away, and "the captains and the kings" departed from the world's capital,—

> "For heathen heart that puts her trust
> In reeking tube and iron shard—
> All valiant dust that builds on dust,
> And guarding calls not Thee to guard—
> For frantic boast and foolish word,
> Thy mercy on thy people, Lord!"

I was inspired by those who had the largest influence over my theological training and my Christian life, with the purpose to preach the Word of God so as to build up, if possible, an intelligent faith. Such is the inspiration which these young preachers have derived from this Seminary. Let us never be satisfied with attacking error, in the church or out of it. You will deem many Christians mistaken in their theological and ecclesiastical views and positions, and you will also believe that many things in Christendom tend to hide rather than to reveal God. And, on the other hand, you will account the materialist, and the agnostic, and those rash theorizers who think almost

anything more credible than the Christ of the Gospels, foes of man's more precious interests and destroyers of his best hopes.

> "Nor know I which to hold worst enemy,
> Him who on Speculation's windy waste
> Would turn me loose, stript of the raiment warm
> By Faith contrived against our nakedness,
> Or him who, cruel-kind, would fain obscure
> With painted saints and paraphrase of God,
> The soul's east-window of divine surprise."

But we should aim, in dealing both with the philosophic materialist, the ecclesiastic, and the extreme dogmatist, to discover first what is good and true in their thought, as a point of view for the better conception and the completer truth which we feel that we ourselves have received.

Faith abides and grows in your hearts and mine; and side by side with it is another of the God-inspired graces: white-handed Hope, "a hovering angel girt with golden wings." I look upon Hope as the second great distinctive word of Christianity. It is related to Faith, and indeed is the atmosphere where Faith has its life. While Faith rests down in confidence on the declarations of a faithful God, Hope looks forward blissfully to the realization of those promises, which are the light and life of the Christian Scriptures. While Faith fixes her anchor in the Bible and especially in the evangelical disclosures culminating in Christ, Hope fixes her anchor in heaven, the consummation of this world's great drama. Faith is the assent of the mind to God's truth, and the consent of the heart and will to God's law, but hope is the happy cherishing of the rich and surely-expected blessings of God's love. If we take any broad survey of the Christian religion, we find, from the beginning to the end of its unfolding history, from the foundation-stone to the cap-stone of its doctrine, and from the center to the circumference of its activities, the bright and energizing presence of the Angel

of Hope. And the preacher of our day will do well to emphasize the hopeful aspects both of the Scriptures and of human life. That is what he is for. He is to endeavor to show that, while the things that can be shaken and moved are many, the things that cannot be shaken are our chief possessions.

It would be easy to paint a picture of the world's present condition, even with the effulgent light of the gospel appearing here and there, so dark and threatening as to exercise a vastly depressing influence over your minds. I might tell you that eight hundred millions of the world's inhabitants are thoroughly pagan and sunk in vice and superstition; that nearly two hundred millions are fanatic adherents of Mohammed, and less accessible to the gospel than the pagans themselves; and that, after eighteen centuries, only four hundred millions are nominally Christians, and that a large part of Christendom is fossilized and corrupt, and that in many a civilized country the Christian religion has lost much of its hold on the majority of men and women. I might tell you that one hundred and eighty millions and more in Protestant lands are far from being thoroughly Christianized, and that so much of the commercial spirit prevails, so little of self-denial appears, such faint gleams of holiness are visible, that even those that are spiritually-minded need all the props and inspirations of continual preaching and urging, and all the offices of outward religion, to maintain their poor residue of Christian virtue. I might speak of the evils of mammonism and congested wealth, the indifference to the Christian Sabbath,—such lapses as the Governor of New Hampshire has recently announced, the neglect of the church, and a score of other things by which the stoutest hearts are sometimes appalled. And yet, you all feel that, in drawing this picture, I am making a false representation, that I have not spoken in the spirit of the New Testament, that

such portrayals as these are not keyed to the ringing tones of Christian hope, and that this is not the atmosphere in which the Christian breathes; for, in all these representations, I have fastened your minds on man's weakness and sin and degradation, and not on God's power and purpose, his love and providential wisdom, who knoweth all things from the beginning, who ordereth all things well, who has made no mistakes in the outgoings of history, who is not to be thwarted in the execution of his loving decrees, who sits patient and serene above the storms of time, able to make the wrath of man to praise him, capable of educing good out of evil, "thence on and on in infinite progression." The spirit of the Old and New Testaments ever gives us hope in God. What was Israel's history but the growth and fulfillment of a divine hope? And Christian history ever points to that "one, far-off, divine event toward which the whole creation moves." Hope is kindled by the voice of Him who, standing with a few humble followers on a Galilean mountain-top, encompassed by the kingdoms of evil, seeing only a few leagues of light amid universal darkness, said to these followers with the serenity of assured triumph, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." And from that faint dawn, overhung with clouds, the light has streamed wider and broader and further, until the face of the earth looks to-day like one of those sublime pictures which you sometimes find in the galleries of Holland, with beautiful floods and touches of light here and there, making the darkness luminous, and cheering the soul with bright expectations of the noontide millennium. Wherever the gospel is preached we behold the Angel of Hope advancing, like Guido's "Aurora," surrounded by forms of power and splendor, and chasing the shadows from the face of the world.

"In the darkest night of the year,
Beaten and tossed about
By the bitter winds that blow
From the desolate shores of doubt;
When the anchors that faith has cast
Are tested by the gale,
I am quietly holding fast
To the things that cannot fail.

"And dark though the night may be,
And long though the angels hide,
I know that Truth and Right
Have the universe on their side.
That the rulers must obey,
And the givers must increase,
That duty lights the way
For the beautiful feet of peace."

Christian hope inspired of God leads to hopefulness in our work with men, and especially with the young. The Christian teacher avails himself of the years of greatest promise, to plant in youthful minds the seeds of truth and love. But the Christian gospel is adequate to the hardest things. It has a message to the ruined and the lost which naturalism cannot give, and often does not receive. "Nature," wrote George Eliot, in the pathetic close of one of her greatest stories, "repairs her ravages, but not all." True. But the redeeming God, graciously transcending Nature, is able to take the broken fragments of the human temple, relay the foundations, reset the columns, and to fill the finished shrine with the sweet praises of him who is the Lamb of God, slain for sinners and the joy of every penitent believer. The one chief aim of evangelic effort is to take men who have despaired of themselves, and to fill them with hope in Christ. This is ever the gospel method, and by the confession of unbelievers, this is what the gospel has done. And who does not need a daily renewing acquaintance with the God of Hope, who speaks through the life of Jesus? A man may be enriched with a large measure of native hopefulness; and yet, as

the years go by, may see it dwindle to nothing. He may meet with reverses, such varied experiences of sorrow that, having no Christian hope, his native hopefulness has sunk into confirmed despondency bordering on despair. Christian hope, like faith, is an angel begotten in the soul by the Spirit of God. It is cradled in the arms of Jesus. It is nurtured by the bread of heaven contained in God's word; it flourishes and flowers with seraphic loveliness in the holy chambers of prayer; it is made mighty amid earthly weaknesses, it is not cast down by worldly disasters, but rises even from the wreck of the household and the darkness of the tomb, a strong-winged seraph with glad eyes looking toward the gates of pearl.

If I may speak a word out of my own experience in the ministry, I will say that nothing has given me a deeper gratitude—except, perhaps, the comfort which sorrowing souls have received in the darkest moments of their lives—than the expressions which have come to me from fathers and mothers troubled about their children, and from Christian workers depressed by their ill success, to the effect that the word of the gospel had re-heartened and cheered them for endurance or for service. It has always seemed to me that in the Christian ministry the only proper spirit is one of joyful hopefulness; that any other temper is dishonoring to the promises of God, and to the energies which are lodged in the Christian gospel. Ian Maclaren, in his Lyman Beecher Lectures, maintains that the chief need in the sermons of our times is spiritual intensity. The man who has it, together with proper training and intellectual resources, is the man whom the people are compelled to hear. It is said there are three kinds of sermons: those that we can hear; those we cannot hear; and those we cannot help hearing. The preacher who is possessed of spiritual intensity preaches this third kind of sermon. And he gains this mind-compelling power by prayerful com-

munion with the God of Hope, with the word which inspires hope, with the Redeemer who is the author both of faith and hope, and who ever kindles the holy passion of love. The man of spiritual intensity goes to his pulpit with a message which he must utter; and while that message may cut like a sword into sin, it also reveals the redeeming God, who is able to make all things work together for good, who enters human life to destroy the works of evil, and who is not to be defeated. Into whatever community the preacher goes, he goes not only as a critic, but also as a creator; he goes not only to pull down but to build up. And he who contributes to the hope-inspiring forces of the world is working in the path which Jesus followed, and his work abides. And what but Hope, begotten by the God of all grace, and the Saviour of all power, girds us with strength as we toil for "the good time coming"?

> "For lo! the days are hastening on
> By prophet bards foretold,
> When with the ever-circling years,
> Comes round the age of gold;
> When peace shall over all the earth,
> Its ancient splendors fling,
> And the whole world give back the song
> Which now the angels sing."

But loftier and diviner than Faith and Hope is that heavenly Love which expresses in human life the very nature of God himself. While Faith and Hope are among the noblest human virtues, Love must be deemed the architect of the universe, the creator and redeemer of man, the power which, as Dante sings in the climax of the Paradiso, "moves the sun and the other stars." God himself is Love, a love whose dimensions overpass the limits of our thought and imagination, a love which stretches in a radiant procession of creative and redemptive activities from everlasting to everlasting. If there is one joy in the pul-

pit keener and sweeter than every other, it is the gladness of striving to set before men the New Testament disclosure of the Divine Nature, the sympathy and helpfulness of God, his tender mercies which are over all his works, his glorious and eternal disclosure of himself in Jesus Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. George Herbert once sang his wish that he were an excellent divine, having the Bible at his fingers' ends, and skilled in the art of making God's enemies his friends. And who wonders at the joy which so many of the chosen preachers of the world have had in their high calling! What Beecher said at the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in New York twenty-six years ago, is true to-day: "Men say that the pulpit has run its career, and that there is but little time before it will come to an end. Not so long as men continue to be weak and sinful and tearful and expectant, without any help near; not so long as the world lieth in wickedness; not so long as there is an asylum over and above that one which we see with our physical senses; not until men are transformed and the earth empty; not until then will the work of the Christian ministry cease." "It is the sweetest in substance, the most enduring in its joys, the most content in its poverty and limits, if your lot is cast in places of scarcity, more full of crowned hopes, more full of whispering messages from those gone before, nearer to the threshold, nearer to the throne, nearer to the heart of him who was pierced, but who lives forever, and says, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.'" To be the interpreter and minister of Divine Love to this sorrowing and imperfect world is a mission that deserves this eloquent eulogium.

All who have been trained in Oberlin—whether in the College, Seminary, or community—have been brought face to face with the God of Love; not now and then, but daily, in home and class-room and chapel and church. They have been made to feel that a divine affection is back of

all human life and in the heart of it; they should be inspired to praise and set forth that love which is so broad that it covers India and China and the savage tribes of Pacific Islands, as well as the homes of our own land; that love which is so tender and forgiving that no vilest transgressor that trusts it need ever be afraid; which is so high that the angelic imagination of prophet and poet cannot reach its radiant summits, which is so deep that all whose lives are cast in the vales of humiliation and distress will discover that Love has descended below them all, that its strong arms might be beneath them all, mighty to lift them, were they willing, into inheritances which make earth seem poor.

Such being the nature of God, men are bound to be like him, for they are by creation his children, and all their duties are summed up in that love which is the fulfilling of the law. Without love, even faith loses its life-giving power, and zeal becomes nothing. Love is the divine something in human hearts that makes men the sons of God; it is begotten in us in the new birth by the loving Spirit.

This Godlike love is a vigorous reality in the world today. But it is not the offspring of our increased learning. India and Japan and China may capture our arts and sciences and still not be renewed in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Men hate each other as violently in Paris and New York as in realms of paganism and savagery. Unloving hearts beat as often beneath silk and jewelry as in the breasts of skin-girdled barbarians. No; it is God who inspires love by revealing it in himself, through the ministry of his Son, his Spirit, his Word, and through his kingdom of love that has already encamped among men. The presence of this love is indicated by the humaner temper that has been infused into the life of the world, reaching even the animal kingdom, by the enlarging spirit of brother-

hood, which is overcoming ancient animosities. It is shown whenever you, from the heart, forgive those who have wronged you. It is shown in the self-denial which humble souls in every congregation are faithfully practicing, that they may cast their offerings into the treasury of Jesus.

This love is not mere natural affection which the unregenerate may possess, not human impulses only, but the heavenly something which Paul describes in his wondrous panegyric, the love that leads to long-suffering kindness, which destroys envy, and boasting, and selfishness, and the spirit of resentment; the love that rejoiceth not in any form of iniquity, which is full of faith and hope, of modesty and strong endurance. If young women desire to be furnished with the best manual of lady-like conduct ever penned, let them meditate day and night on Paul's eulogy of love. If young men desire the best manual of true gentlemanly living ever written, let them learn this chapter by heart, and they shall have what Sir Philip Sydney called "high-erected thoughts seated in a soul of courtesy"; they shall know the beauty of self-forgetfulness, the glory of Christian chivalry, the splendor of Christian enthusiasm, and the all-conquering power of goodness.

It is love which is yet to destroy bigotry and intolerance. It is love which shall yet glorify the church with such moral beauty that nations sitting in darkness shall be drawn toward Him who is altogether lovely. It is this spirit which is binding Christians of various names into closer unity, and shall yet turn the jangle of Christendom into the varied harmonies of heaven.

I pray that these young men, going forth to the noblest of all services, may abound in Faith and Hope and Love, the elements of a Christian enthusiasm that shall kindle divine love in other hearts. All whom I address are summoned to a similar service. Let your faith be strong. It

has God himself behind it, and the empire of faith is enlarging among men. Let your hope be radiant; and sorrow, when it comes like a sudden deluge, shall not overwhelm you. Let your love be true and Christly, and you shall be kings and princes of God, gathering to yourselves a wealth of human love which shall cheapen earthly treasures and make you rich with the riches of immortality. I commend you all to the Divine Love, which is mercy to the sinner, redemption to the believer; a love inscribed upon our hearts in His precious blood who is our King and Saviour; a love which fastens humanity's deepest faith in the Divine affection to the Cross of Calvary; a love which is full of joyful expectation, and points to the kingdom of love on high, wherein, the purposes of redemption having all been achieved and the whole world subdued to the heart of God, Love shall make the music and gladness of heaven forever.