

It has been indicated in the short corresponding section of St. Mark. It is fully set forth in the teaching of St. Luke ix.-xix., dwelling as it does almost exclusively on thoughts that accorded with or arose out of His own spiritual situation, thoughts of judgment, such as would be in His mind as He faced the judgment which Jerusalem was about to bring upon herself; of humility, the spirit of His own approach to the end; of the self-denial, the sincerity, the stern unworldliness which are exacted from those who are to follow in the steps of His great self-sacrifice; of love and pity and forgiveness, the spiritual driving-power of His deliberate movement towards the inevitable issue.

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THE DUTY OF SELF-LOVE.

THE duty of self-love is a strangely misunderstood and widely neglected duty. The main reason of this misunderstanding and neglect would seem to be that self-love is commonly used as a synonym for selfishness. But this common use of the term is an entire perversion of it. For self-love and selfishness, far from being identical or interchangeable terms, are terms essentially antagonistic. The truly self-loving man is always unselfish. The selfish man is always deficient in self-love, or even in proper respect. It is only when a man confuses a part of himself with his whole self, and loves one part excessively instead of loving all parts in their due proportion, that self-love is degraded into selfishness. Selfishness is fractional self-love; and self-love is the destruction of selfishness by the conviction that the whole is greater than any of its parts. Selfishness is a man's devotion to one part of himself to the exclusion of the other parts, while self-love is his devotion to his whole self in

all its parts, taken in combination. Selfishness is a partial, self-love is an integral affection.

Every whole man is made up of many parts. Just as a man's body is made up of many organs and many limbs, so each man's self is made up of many powers, many faculties. One part of the man is his body, another his mind, another his conscience, another his will, another his emotions and affections, another his spirit ; but none of these parts, taken separately, is the whole of a man. All the parts must be viewed in combination before we can rightly see the whole. We cannot look at a man's mind and say that the mind is the whole of a man any more than we can look at a man's feet and say that his feet are the whole of his body. Feet are a necessary part of a whole and active body ; without them a man is a cripple. Mind, too, is a necessary part of a whole and intelligent man ; without it he would be an imbecile. But, however important as particulars, these are obviously not the whole of a complete and perfect man. A man with mind but without conscience is an immoral man. A man without sound and developed will-power is a feeble and unstable man. A man without sane emotions and affections is a hard, cruel, base, anti-social man. And if we had not souls and spirits, which are rays from the Spirit of God Himself, we should all be atheists, seeing that spiritual things can only be spiritually discerned. We could neither feel after God nor find Him, neither believe in Him, nor know Him ; neither trust in Him nor love Him, if we were bereft of spiritual faculties. When, therefore, we rightly consider the complex constitution of our complete manhood we find that it is the several parts of this constitution taken together which constitutes the whole of man ; and it is the love of each of the parts in combination with the rest which alone can rightly be called true self-love.

This true self-love will, on reflection, be found to be not

only the antithesis and foe of selfishness but also, of its very nature, an irrational thing. All selfish men are foolish ; and for this reason, they sacrifice the whole for the sake of a part, or a true and better part for the sake of a part smaller and inferior. The wise man, e.g., may rightly sacrifice some limb of his body to save the rest, but what would be said of a man who allowed his whole body to be putrefied rather than have a diseased limb cut off ? or blinded his eyes rather than lose his toes ? The latter would justly be called foolish, and the former suicidal. And it is just as foolish to violate either reason or conscience rather than sacrifice bodily ease : just as suicidal to allow the whole manhood to be putrefied with vice rather than subdue the appetites with which vice is fomented and inflamed. This is the meaning of the great saying, " If thy right hand or thy right eye offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. It is better for thee that one of thy members perish than that thy whole body should be cast into Hell." Yet it is just this most obvious truth that the selfish man is too blind and too irrational to see. He prefers to gratify one part of his manhood at the risk of losing his whole. This suicidal folly lies at the root of all selfishness. Selfishness is not simply the preference of myself to others. Its vice goes deeper far. It is the fostering or gratification of some fragment of my whole self at the cost of that whole ; and as the socially selfish man, the man who gratifies himself at the cost of the community, is a curse to the community, so the man who gratifies any part of his whole being at the cost of the other parts, is a curse to himself.

Again, this sacrifice of the whole for the sake of a part is essentially lustful : for one of the great differences—the greatest of all differences—between lust and love is this : lust is partial, love is complete. Lust sees and burns for the object of its desire only in part, and sacrifices all to

that part. Love thinks of its object whole, and reverences every part of it. The false and selfish voluptuary lusts only for the body of his victim : the true bridegroom worships the whole being of his bride : her body, soul and spirit. All selfishness is lust and all lust is selfish, for both alike allow a single part to glory over the whole. In a sensually selfish man the satisfaction of his body is his whole desire : in an intellectually selfish man his intellect is everything : in an aesthetically selfish man his taste and feelings : in a religiously selfish man his particular gleam of the whole splendour of spiritual light. If we lust we cannot love : for lust is the desire to gratify a part of ourselves at the cost of the whole. Love is the satisfaction of the entire and complete self. Lust loses the whole in pandering to a part. Love gains every part in nourishing the whole. . Yea, more, lust loses even the part it panders to in neglecting the whole ; while love makes the most of every part by ministering to the whole. A man cannot even make the best of his body, he cannot truly and healthfully enjoy his body, if he dwarfs his reason or wounds his conscience. Similarly, he cannot reach the full height and strength of conscience if he quenches the light of reason ; and he cannot delight himself in the full vision of spiritual faith if he abuses and starves either reason or conscience or sense. As every part of a man's body is strongest when the whole is strong, so every part of his whole self is at its best when the whole is sound and good.

Self-love, therefore, depends on the healthful regard for all the separate parts of our complex being. All men who really love themselves will love and reverence their bodies. They will keep their bodies in temperance, soberness and chastity. They will live in the constant recollection that their bodies are fearfully and wonderfully made. They will never forget the sacred truth that their bodies are temples

of the inner spirit. Consequently, they will neither undervalue nor abuse their bodies, but will love them with a strong, hallowing love. So also will they love their minds. They will realise that the power to think is an awful and glorious gift. They will pay homage to their reason by feeding and training it to the utmost of their opportunity and power. Conscience, too, will be the lamp of their life : and they will constantly replenish it with the oil of the largest, noblest knowledge, lest its light should grow dim and finally go out. They will prune and trim their will into likeness and harmony with the Divine will : realising that their will is loftiest, grandest and most powerful when it is working together with the will of God. They will consecrate their affections and sanctify their emotions in imitation of the affections and emotions of the Divine and Model Man. Above all, because more precious than all, they will educate and develop the faculty of Faith, that sublime power, by means of which, even in this temporary and mortal stage of existence, they can break through the barriers of sense and mount above the summits of reason until they reach the beautiful gates of the Glory which is immortal, invisible and eternal.

This is true self-love : the love which leads to the culture and reverence of every part of our complex being : loving each part for the sake of the whole, and loving the whole for the sake of each part. In some ages of Christianity, and in some branches of the Christian Church, this proper and complete nature of man, even sinful man, has been grievously misunderstood and misrepresented. Doctrines have held dominion, and even yet are not completely dethroned, which teach that man is wholly vile, utterly corrupt and base. But this is not the teaching either of Scripture or of well-observed fact. Scripture teaches that man is a fallen being ; that he is conceived in sin and shapen in

iniquity ; that death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ; that when they would do good, evil is present with them ; and the good that they would they do not ; and the evil that they would not, that they do. Scripture even goes so far as to say that, viewed in the light of perfect righteousness, human righteousness is as filthy rags. All this is true. We know it from experience to be true. No man who is honest with himself can be unaware that if we are temples, as we truly are, yet we are temples in ruins. We have a lower self as well as a higher. Whatever there be of good in us is mixed up with appalling evil. What man would dare to lay bare his whole heart to the gaze of his fellow-men ? his every wish and desire, his secret thoughts, his secret impulses, his dallyings with his conscience, the emotions of his heated hours, the dark dreams of his solitary moments ? I do not believe there is a man in the world who would not shrink from such an ordeal ; and that the truer, the nobler, the man, the more terrible would his shrinking be, because the more a man knows of himself the less likely he is to wish that other men should know him also in the recesses of his being. To dwell in a palace where all the residents knew all the truth of each other would be to dwell in a palace of horrors.

All this, I say, is true : most affrightingly true. Yet there is another side to the picture. We know it, and Scripture shows it. No man is all bad, else he would not know that he was bad. It is the good in him which makes him see the bad. The worse the man is the less is he conscious of it. The better he is the more sensible also is he of the presence of evil in himself. It is the saints of Scripture and the saints of every age who draw in darkest colours the pictures of their degradation. The greater the saint, the greater is also his conviction of sin.

Again, the teaching of the Bible is that, although we

are fallen, yet we are men made in the image of God. When St. Paul says that "no good dwelleth in him" he is careful to explain that he means the fleshly, carnal part of him. He says that the law in his members wars against the law in his mind. He himself desires to do good and hates doing evil. With the inward man, i.e., his real, true, consecrated self, he delights in the law of God. "I myself," he writes, "with the mind, serve the law of God. It is with the flesh that I serve the law of sin." This dual experience is the experience of all thoughtful, reflecting men, especially of all men truly spiritual. Our Lord Himself never taught the utter and absolute degradation of man. He taught us we are lost and have missed our way; that we are sinners and need repentance; sick, and need healing; that only when we think we are righteous is there no hope for us. But He made it quite clear, as in the parable of the Prodigal, that the prodigal was a son although he was a prodigal. The prodigal also realised this truth "when he came to himself." "Came to himself." What a wondrous and sublime expression! So long as the prodigal was spending his substance in riotous living away from home in a far country, he was not his true and entire self. He was only part of himself; and that, the lower part. But when he came to his whole self he felt he must go back home. Profound and awful as his conviction of sin was, teaching him his utter unworthiness to be called a son, yet his higher nature, the God in him, testified that, despite all his unworthiness and wickedness, the fact of sonship remained; else, on his return, he could not have burst into the exclamation "Father"! And the Father acknowledged the relationship. His child had, for the time, lost the sense of sonship, but now he had found it again. When he "came to himself" this sense of sonship sprang again into new life. This is one of Christ's own pictures. It

is the essence of all His teachings. One great purpose of His divinely human mission was to reveal to men their sonship in God, and to show them the beauty and love of God's fatherhood. These revelations underlie all His words and all His works. Why did He so often cast out demons? Was it not to show that, when the demons are cast out, men "come to their right mind"? So long as demons have possession of them and their lower nature dominates, they are in a wrong mind. Looked at from Christ's point of sight, they are insane. They are as madmen cutting and gnashing their whole self into fragmentary pieces. They have substituted a false, degrading, fractional selfishness for true, elevating, complete self-love.

Everything Christ said and did had the grand intention of quickening man's nobler nature to the realisation that in spite of all the demons that possess him, of the insanity that maddens him, of the sin that encumbers him, he is yet a son of God. What man is yet to be, he has not now the faculties to know; but even now in his fallen condition and ruined state, he can claim the great prerogative of sonship to God. Wherever Christ went and taught He developed in men the consciousness of this stupendous fact of their divine relationship to God. He quickened it in publicans, sinners and harlots. He sealed it by His rising from the dead and the outpouring of His Spirit, and wheresoever He quickened it two results followed: first, a prostrate sense of utter unworthiness, and, secondly, an unspeakable thankfulness for His mercy and love in making men the sons of God.

This conviction of our Divine sonship is a necessary pre-requisite of learning truly to love ourselves as we ought. We need to learn not only the depravity of our nature, but its dignity also, before we can truly understand the meaning and purpose of Christ's redemption. He died both to

redeem us from our depravity and to redeem us also to a fuller consciousness of our great dignity. As we steadfastly behold ourselves in the mirror of Christ's redemption we can clearly see that, although the likeness to God in us is sadly defaced, it is not altogether effaced; although the divine similitude in us is blurred, it is not blotted out, but is destined to be ultimately restored. Even the worst of men, when reflecting upon the significance of Christ's redemption, become conscious of heavenly traces in their manhood. To make these traces strong and clear, to give them new beauty and greater fullness, Christ died and rose again. His Incarnation and Cross: His Resurrection and Glory are proofs, both of the worth and worthlessness of man: his worthlessness as a sinner; his worth as a son. It may be truly said, with the deepest reverence and most contrite gratitude, that Christ would not have died for man if man had not been worth dying for. God never does anything in vain; nothing which it is not worth His while to do. And that God so loves us as to have sacrificed Himself for us is surely the most irresistible of all reasons why we should love ourselves. In loving ourselves we are only doing for ourselves what God has already done for us. In loving ourselves we are imitating the love of God. Indeed, one purpose of the manifestation of God's love for man is to teach him this duty of deeply and truly loving himself; and of making ceaseless efforts, through the power of the Spirit, to conquer all fractional lusts and of cultivating that love of his whole and complete self which is so lofty and grand that we may rightly call it Divine. The love of God for man is thus the root and inspiration of man's duty to love himself.

Nowhere, perhaps, in all the range of Christ's teachings is this duty of self-love more clearly and definitely set forth than in His enunciation of the second great Command-

ment of the Gospel. In Christ's own words, that Commandment runs thus:—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." "As thyself." These are the crucial words of this Commandment. It is obvious, therefore, that until we have learnt what "self" means we cannot know what "neighbour" means, and until we have practised the duty of true self-love we cannot know how best to practise the duty of true love towards our neighbour. We must learn how we ought to love ourselves aright before we can learn to love aright our neighbours as we ought; seeing that Christ Himself has constituted self-love as the right and just standard of our love to others. Our duty to ourselves is the only true measure of our duty to our fellow-men. It is not until we understand what we owe and ought to do to ourselves that we can clearly see what we owe and ought to do to our fellow-men. Not only for our own sakes, therefore, but for the sake of our neighbours, it is of supreme importance that we ponder in our hearts and carry out in our conduct this great duty of self-love: a duty which, while never allowing us to forget, but always insisting that in fear and trembling we remember, the depravity of our nature and the dangers of that depravity: yet we should likewise never forget, but always remember in wonder and love and awe, the divinity of our nature and the possibilities of that divinity. It is our duty then to look at and love ourselves comprehensively and look at, and love, ourselves whole. In fulfilling this duty we shall be preserved from the peril of allowing the lustful schism of any part in us to destroy the happy union of the whole. We shall be learning to do our duty to God, in whose image we are made: and learning also to do our duty to our neighbours in the same way as to ourselves.

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