

is pre-eminently and painfully true that many are called but few are chosen; and there is something pathetic, almost tragic, in the painstaking and tireless toil which is always climbing but which never plucks the flower of ease. For this reason there is a great gulf set between the amateur and the artist, which is never crossed; for the artist is the servant of toil that he may become the master of his craft, while the amateur, by evading the service, forever forfeits the mastery. It is this last gift of ease that evidences genius and shows that the workman has become a magician—one who knows how to make the flower bloom without the aid of botany, and the stars shine without invoking astronomy. He who once did things as work now does them as play, and, therefore, in the creative spirit and with the creative force and simplicity. When he was an apprentice he could explain his methods, but now that he is a master the thing he does with consummate skill and with such a touch of finality is as much a mystery to him as to others; it is no longer a contrivance; it is the deep and beautiful product of his whole nature working together with that mysterious force that resides in a rich personality.

There is something baffling in the quality of these final touches in art. Why should these few lines on paper, this bit of marble, this little group of verses, stand apart from the toiling world as if they belonged to another order of life and had their affinities with the things that grow and bloom rather than with those that are made and perish in the making? Why should a civilization fade out of human memory, and the delicate vase or the fragile lyric survive? The answer to these questions is found in Alfred de Musset's deep saying: "It takes a great deal of life to make a little art." In this vast workshop of life, with its dust and sweat and din, it is the worker that is perfected oftener than the work; and when some bit of perfection emerges from the dust and turmoil, it not only explains and justifies the toil behind it, but takes on a beauty which is half a prophecy.

A civilization is not lost if, beyond the mysterious training of men which it silently effects, it leaves behind a few final touches, strokes, and songs as a bequest to that art which, by its very perfection, is the visible evidence of immortality. For when the worker so masters his material that skill is no longer mechanical but vital, no longer wholly calculated but largely instinctive, he becomes the instrument of a genius greater than his, and the channel of a truth deeper than any he has compassed. He escapes the limitations of the artisan and gains the freedom of the artist—to whom finality of expression is as natural as the gush of song from the wood or the glow of light in the east. For the highest form of all things is beauty; and art, in that deep sense which allies it with the spontaneity, the ease, the grace, and the play of nature, is the finality for which all toil prepares and in which all work ends. It takes centuries to make the soil, and then, born of earth and nurtured by the sky, blooms the flower, without care or toil, mysterious and inexplicable—the touch of the imperishable beauty resting for an hour on its fragile petals.



## The Problem of Charity

### The Words of the Christ

The first of the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye

love one another. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil.

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give unto your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

When thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.

When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.



## What is Faith?

By the Rev. Wolcott Calkins

A student in the Buffalo Medical College was once led to a thorough study of specific gravity. He became convinced by many scientific tests that the living human body is a little lighter than pure water. Was this faith? Not yet. He had never been in deep water, but now began to watch his friends swimming and floating. He verified by these experiments the demonstrations of science. Was this faith? Not yet. One day he went with the swimmers to the lake, made them promise not to come to his rescue unless they were sure he was drowning, and then, divesting himself of his clothing, rolled slowly from a float into twenty feet of water! He sank a few feet, floated to the surface, lay still, submerged all but nostrils and lips, for a few minutes, and then reached out for the float and returned to it. And, after carefully observing his friends' motions in swimming, he rolled again into the water and paddled himself awkwardly but successfully to the shore. That is faith.

Columbus satisfied himself that the earth is a globe. He used all available evidence in forming this conviction. At last he held it for a truth of which he had no doubt, that the eastern shore of Asia could be reached by sailing west. Was that faith? Not yet. He also began to have

a personal interest in this great truth. He longed to try the experiment. He looked for wonderful discoveries to be made on such a voyage. Was that faith? Not yet. He set sail, and steered straight into the trackless western seas. That is faith!

Now, I think that the Scriptural description of saving faith is just as simple as this. Its objects are all divine and spiritual things, beyond the present experience of the man of the world. What is faith to such a man? It begins with an apprehension and weighing of these things. They are unseen but not unreasonable. He finds evidence of their truth, quite as convincing as scientific proofs. At last he is firmly assured that the resurrection of Christ is a historical fact, that all his promises are confirmed by it, and that the whole Christian Revelation is true. But this is not faith.

Then all these great truths begin to have a personal interest to him. If God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, then he needs the forgiveness of sins which he now first begins to feel, and deliverance from a condemnation which he begins to fear. He takes knowledge of others who have communion with Christ by prayer, and longs for their peace of conscience. He hopes to realize for himself the things which he believes are promised in the Gospel. But even this is not faith.

Then comes the decisive test of action. He commits himself to his heavenly Father, just as he is, to be made what he ought to be. By virtue of the death of Christ he has been reconciled to God, and made to be an enemy no more, but a beloved child. He believes that his sins are forgiven, and he begins to live as an heir of eternal life. He proves and puts to the test all the promises of the Gospel, and commits himself fully to a penitent, prayerful, and obedient life. This is faith.

The best way to see that the saving efficacy of faith comes from this practical test of obedience is to reduce it to its lowest terms. Is a knowledge of the historic Christ essential to saving faith? Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, David, and even Gideon, Jephthah, and the wayward Samson! But the lowest terms go far down below these. Rahab the harlot! This benighted heathen, in the midst of her life of shame, is melted in heart by a gospel which is nothing but a rumor of what the living God has done for his anointed hosts, and she takes sides with the cause of truth and righteousness when it is in desperate straits. She trusts her life and all who are dear to her to one little scarlet thread whereon was suspended the covenant of the Lord God of heaven and earth. That is faith!

The things mysterious  
That here vouchsafe to me their apparition  
Unto all eyes below are so concealed  
That all their being lies in faith alone,  
Whereon high hope proceeds to base herself,  
And so faith takes the place and rank of substance.  
And it behoveth us from our belief  
To draw conclusions without other sight;  
And hence faith takes the place of argument.

—Dante, *Paradiso* XXIV.

Without faith it is impossible to please God: every man in every nation who fears God and works righteousness is acceptable to him. The faith in God that truth and righteousness are sure and steadfast; the faith that rests all hope in life and death on the single issue of truth and righteousness; and the faith that actually shapes and nerves the whole of life by the unseen things of truth and righteousness: this is true saving faith.



Not merely I shall grow so that I shall be able to understand vastly more of what God is and what he is doing; God also will be ever doing new things. He is forever active. He has purposes concerning me which he has not yet unfolded. Therefore each year grows more sacred with wondering expectation. Therefore I and the world may go forth from each old year into the new which follows it, certain that in that new year God will have for us some new treatment which will open some novel life.—*Phillips Brooks*.

## Phases of Western Life

### II.—Farm Life in Western Nebraska

By G. M. Whicher

It is ten years since the last great herd of cattle crossed the Union Pacific at Ogallala, Neb., on the annual drive from the Texan range to the mountain pastures of Wyoming and Montana. And with the vanishing of the wide-hatted, long-haired, nimble-fingered cowboy has departed the last touch of the picturesque which this region possessed. Railroads have crossed and recrossed the broad white trail, and along these arteries of modern civilization streams the prosaic life of the older East and of Europe. A host of settlers have divided among themselves the wide domain of the cattle-kings, and are building up communities under circumstances of unusual difficulty and amid surroundings peculiarly unattractive.

At certain seasons and in certain moods of the beholder the prairies have an undeniable charm; but under ordinary conditions no more depressing landscape can be imagined than confronts the intending citizen of western Nebraska. The broken lands near the Platte or the Republican River, and along the cañons between them, have a fierce ugliness that is refreshing when compared with the hopeless monotony of the rolling country. One who has not seen it can hardly appreciate the sameness of the hundreds of square miles that constitute the ten counties in the southwestern corner of the State. One gently rising slope succeeds another with bewildering similitude. All are bare of trees or rocks or other distinguishing feature that might render their height or distance appreciable. Occasionally a "blow-out," or outcropping of sand, shows through the sparse grass of some distant ridge, but as unindividual as the white-capped wave in mid-ocean. The chance traveler, without a clear track to follow, will be lost as surely as though he tried to cross the sea without a compass. Even some familiarity with a region will not insure one against wandering after dusk. Farmers have found themselves bewildered near their own claims; and it is related that a certain county surveyor, provided with his instruments, went astray within a few miles of the county seat. In the clear air of this high altitude the slopes loom up at a distance, especially when the mirage lends its illusion, until they seem like precipitous and lofty hills. One toils toward them only to find his outlook unchanged, and a few turnings or a minute of forgetfulness will make it hard to tell from which direction he has come. Between the slopes are trough-like "slews," or basins, which, to the stranger's surprise, are called ponds, from some tradition that there is water in them when there is a heavy rain—on the Greek calendar, perhaps. The grass grows higher and more rankly here; you can see slopes from the intervalles, and intervalles from the slopes; but otherwise there is little difference.

The influx of settlers in the last decade has done little or nothing to give a more inviting aspect to this region. One can now follow wheel-tracks or fire-guards where once he steered his course by the cattle-trail. The further side of the slope may reveal a bunch of picketed horses instead of a fleeting herd of antelopes. From some spot which, for no perceptible reason, offers a coign of vantage, you may count from three to six sod houses on the horizon. They may, indeed, serve to guide you on your journey, but will inevitably lessen your desire to pursue it further. The sod house springs from the bosom of the prairie, and may fairly be called its blossom of homeliness. When provided with a shingle roof and plastered inside, it lasts an indefinite time and makes a comfortable dwelling. But when partly below the level of the ground, or partly excavated from a side of a slope, with a brush and dirt roof, and the earth for flooring, it possesses only the merits of warmth and immediate availability. Inside there may be from one to three or four rooms; possibly a loft above. The arrangement of rooms and the character of the furniture will depend largely on the taste or judgment or nationality of its owner; still more on the amount of money he brought with him and the number of good crops he has had since he settled on his claim. At times consider-