

hundred persons, half of whom were living some twenty-five years afterward. But were the Jews as a people convinced?

On the contrary, they set themselves at once to get rid of this stupendous miracle, intended though it was to convince them that he to whom their whole history pointed had really come, by every explanation they could devise. The disciples, they said, had stolen the body. The disciples had conspired to palm off an imposture on the world. Our Lord might as well have remained in his grave, as far as the great men in Jerusalem were concerned. They began, you see, by refusing to hear Moses and the prophets; they were not persuaded, though he, their true King, had risen from the dead.

Remember this, brethren, when you are tempted to think that faith would have been easier in the days of the apostles than it is now. "If a miracle could only be worked before my eyes," it is sometimes said, "I should have believed without difficulty."

Would you? The probability is that the very temper of mind which makes you ask for the miracle would kill belief in the presence of the miracle. Miracles are intended to assist those who are already seeking God. They are not intended to inflict the sense of God's power and presence and truth on those who do not wish to know more about him. A miracle cannot force a soul to believe: it does not act like a machine or like a chemical solvent, producing the specific effect whether men will or not.

There are many ways of neutralizing this proper effect; and if we have heard Moses and the prophets,—if we have listened to evangelists and apostles, and to the Lord of life himself, to no real or lasting purpose—we should not, of necessity, be persuaded, though the floor of this abbey were this evening to break up beneath our feet, and the buried

dead were to come forth to tell us that the world to come is an awful and overwhelming reality.

And next, Abraham's reply to Dives teaches us how far circumstances can be presumed to determine conduct. What a miracle is to faith, that favorable circumstances are to duty. As a miracle makes faith easy, so favorable circumstances, good examples, encouraging friends, the urgency of great opportunities, the inheritance of a noble name—these make duty easy. But duty is no more necessarily forced upon us by circumstances than faith is forced upon us by miracle.

Yet if there are hundreds who say, "I should be a sincere believer in Christianity if I could only see a person who had come from the dead," there are thousands who say, "I should be a better woman or man than I am if only I were differently circumstanced—if I were not tempted by poverty or tempted by wealth,—if I had religious and high-minded friends about me,—if I lived near a church, or knew a good clergyman,—if I had lived in other ages, the ages of faith, as they are called, when all the controversies that fill the air in modern times were quite unknown, and everybody was of one mind as to the best way of getting to heaven."

My brethren, it is not the same thing to any one of us whether we have good friends or bad—whether we have religious privileges at hand or are quite without them,—whether we can resort at will for counsel or comfort to the servants of Christ, or are debarred from doing so,—whether we are exposed to the temptations of luxury or to the temptations of want, or are blessed with that amount of competency which saves us from these temptations.

Circumstances are judgments, or they are blessings, from God; and when he surrounds us with such circumstances as

to make it easier for us to live for him and to attain the true end of our existence, we have, indeed, great reason to bless him for the blessings of this life, since, like all other good things, they come from him, the Fountain of all goodness.

But these blessings do not of themselves make a moral, religious, beneficent, Christian life necessary. They do not act upon us as the rain or the sunshine or the atmosphere act upon plants. Under favorable circumstances a plant cannot help growing. It obeys the law of its kind by an inevitable necessity. But under favorable circumstances,—nay, under the most favorable that we can possibly conceive — a human soul can refuse to grow — can remain resolutely stunted, dwarfed, misshapen — can resist triumphantly, aye, to its final ruin, all the blessed influences that might draw it upward and onward,— all that might purify, invigorate, transfigure, save it.

Felix was not compelled to be a Christian by the Apostle's burning words about righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, though he felt their awful force. Demas was not cured of his love of this present world by the sight and friendship of Christ's aged servant Paul, now in chains at Rome, and on the eve of his martyrdom. Nay, if circumstances were ever favorable — so we may well think — to the well-being and growth of any human soul, they were the circumstances of the unhappy Judas, blessed as he was with the daily visible divine companionship of the Saviour of the world. They did not arrest the commission of two tremendous crimes,— first, that of betraying the Most Holy into the hands of his enemies, and next of rushing by his own act, impenitent, into the presence of his Judge.

Certainly let us admit that if favorable circumstances do not force holiness upon us, they may and do often protect

us against monstrous vice — against the outcome of passions and dispositions which, it may be, are still unsubdued within us, though kept more or less in check. When we read of a great crime how rarely does it occur to us to ask ourselves, with Augustine, whether, but for God's protection and grace, we too might not have been the criminal.

We read in boyhood the histories, no doubt, of the early Roman Emperors — of Caligula, of Nero, of Domitian, of Commodus; and we said to ourselves that it was wonderful that men so lost to the better instincts of our common nature should have been permitted to cumber the high places of the earth.

But should we have been better in their circumstances? With unlimited power of gratifying our own selfish instincts, and of making all others with whom we came into contact the slaves of our will,— without the fear of another world before our eyes, the fear of judgment, the fear of God,— without the light which streams — more or less of it — upon the most benighted consciences in Christendom from the radiant Figure of our Lord Jesus Christ, should we have been better than they? Should we have been capable of unselfishness, or disinterestedness, or largeness of heart, or self-discipline, in that place of dizzy, awful elevation, with all the world at our feet,— with every incentive to indulge the whims and passions of self at the cost of others? Should we have been capable of the splendid natural virtues — I will not say of Antoninus or of Marcus Aurelius, but even of Trajan — even of Hadrian?

In our Lord's day the Jews of Palestine used to compare themselves with their forefathers who had a hand in murdering the prophets. They said that had they been there they would not have killed the prophets. But he who knew what

was in man saw them through and through. He knew that they would have done just what their fathers had done before them. He looked onwards a few months into the future; he knew what was coming; he saw the Jewish mob which would arrest him in the garden; he heard the insults in the house of Caiaphas; he witnessed the long tragedy of the Way of Sorrows — the hours which he would spend on the cross of shame.

“Fill ye up, therefore, the measure of your fathers. Do not criticise men whose conduct would have been — whose temper and principles were — exactly your own.”

Yes, circumstances have an immense restraining power, but they have of themselves no active power to change the heart. Dives and his brethren knew that divine code, the tenderness and mercy of which for the suffering and the poor had been so fully drawn out by the great Jewish teacher Nimonides. They were flooded with the light of God's moral law. Israel was the very home of the traditions of compassion and mercy that were to be found in the ancient world. Its higher conscience — this, as always, was on the side of the suffering and the poor.

“Be merciful after thy power. If thou hast much, give plenteously; if thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little.” “Give alms of thy goods, and never turn thy face from any poor man; and then the face of the Lord shall not be turned away from thee.”

These were among its later utterances. The synagogue could name teachers famous for their tenderness, famous for their generosity and compassion; but Dives thought that these examples and motives were quite insufficient. We marvel at Dives; but, brethren, is it otherwise with ourselves? Do we not dwell on the difficulties of serving God in this as in other

matters, and forget the grace, the light, the strength, the examples, the encouragements, which he has given us in the kingdom of his Son?

What might not heathens have done with our measure of opportunity — with our measure of light? There were towns in Israel of old the streets of which were trodden by the feet of the Saviour of the world, and he pronounced with his own blessed lips their condemnation on this very ground: because pagan cities with their advantages would have been very much more responsive to his presence and his words.

“Woe unto thee Chorazin! woe unto thee Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.”

No, it is something else than circumstances which makes us do God's will, just as it is something else than miracle which makes us believe his word. Miracle and circumstances do their part. They assist the heart; they make the task of the will easier; they do not compel obedience. He who has made us free respects our freedom even when we use it against himself — even when we resist his own most gracious and gentle pressure and choose to disbelieve or to disobey him. If Moses and the prophets are to persuade us — if we are not to be beyond persuasion, though one rose from the dead — there must be that inward seeking, yearning after God, that wholeness of heart, that tender and affectionate disposition towards him who is the end as he is the source of our existence, of which the Bible is so full from first to last — which is the very essence of religion — which he, its object and its author, gives most assuredly to all who ask him.

My brethren, few of us, it may be, are exactly in the case of Dives. Probably at least nine tenths of those who hear

me have something to give, if they will make an effort at self-denial, in order to meet the claims of Lazarus. And to-day is a great occasion for discovering how far we are capable of persuasion by the love of God, by the chains of humanity, by the example and precepts of our divine Lord and Saviour, to say nothing of Moses and the prophets.

We have many of us, it may be, in our time, had before our minds visions of doing splendid deeds of benevolence — visions which belonged not to our actual means or circumstances, but to those of others, or to a fancy world. We have said to ourselves, "If I had the fortune of such and such a nobleman at my command, and if such and such a catastrophe were only to occur, how I should delight at laying out a hundred thousand pounds or half a million of money for the relief, the pure relief, of human suffering."

Oh, admirable aspiration! But the worst of it is that the occasion and the means of meeting it are alike hypothetical; and this purely hypothetical benevolence is like a certain sort of novel: it taxes our sympathy without resulting in any real good either to our own characters or to other people.

Do not let us wait to do what good we can till some one comes from the dead: do not let us wait till our circumstances change. Ere they change all may have ended with us, in this life of probation. "Though one rose from the dead."

A Lazarus has risen before now in history, not to persuade the selfish possessors of property to recognize their responsibilities towards human want and pain around them, but to judge. He has risen from the oppressions, from the neglect of a thousand years; he has risen, it may be, more than once in history amid scenes of blasphemy and violence and blood, but he has risen in the name of a forgotten justice to plead

the cause which has been pleaded in vain by his open sore for ages, lying as he was at the gate of Dives.

The spectre of a social revolution has been happily unknown in England — unknown for this among other reasons — that the duties of the wealthy towards the suffering classes have been — I dare not say adequately, but largely — recognized among us for a great number of years. But the immense disparities of our society — its masses, its increasing masses, of poverty — its vast accumulations of wealth — present a contrast which year by year may well cause, as it does cause, increasing anxiety; and this anxiety can only be lessened, if those to whom God has given wealth and influence lose no opportunity at their disposal of supplying the wants and bettering the position of their poorer fellow countrymen.

Here is Hospital Sunday upon us, — a great, a blessed occasion for the fruitful exercise of pure benevolence. All the common objections to charitable effort are silent here. The social and political economists do not warn us to-day that we demoralize the poor when we bring them the highest medical skill and knowledge as they lie on their bed of pain. The financiers do not suggest that our alms are spent partly or wholly on the way to the object for which we give them. And at the gates of the hospitals, those true temples of compassion, our controversies are silent. Those who know most of our Lord and Saviour — those who know less or least about him — those even who do not own the empire of his ever blessed name — agree as to the urgency of his precept and his blessing, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Lazarus is close to us. Hundreds of thousands in this vast city have succeeded to his inheritance; and if we, the servants of Christ, would not be as was Dives here and hereafter, we must not wait for larger means, for more striking

occasions, for more commanding motives to self-sacrifice than we have.

We must enter now the secret chambers of our own hearts. We must listen to all that God has taught us individually of his own astonishing mercy to us in Jesus Christ — of our utter need of it. For us Christians, Christ is Lazarus to the end of time, coming to us from the dead to warn us of our duty, receiving in the persons of his poor what we give as given to himself. Surely no social catastrophe, no unforeseen providence, no palpable miracle, could restrain us more effectually than his boundless, his patient, his unmerited love — than those divine words of his which faith, it seems to me, must trace over the door of every hospital: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

ROSCOE CONKLING



ROSCOE CONKLING, American republican statesman and jurist, was born at Albany, N. Y., Oct. 30, 1829, and died at New York, April 18, 1888. The son of a congressman, and minister (1852) to Mexico, he was educated at New York, and after pursuing the study of law at Utica, N. Y., was admitted to the Oneida County Bar in 1850. Here he soon became conspicuous for his abilities, and was especially noted for his successful management of criminal cases. He took an active interest in politics and was mayor of Utica in 1858. In 1859, he entered Congress as a Republican representative and after the outbreak of the Civil War stoutly upheld the Union cause. He failed of reelection in 1862, and practiced his profession in Utica until in 1864 he was again returned to Congress. In 1867, he was elected to the United States Senate. He took a leading part in the debate on reconstruction measures, opposing the policy of President Johnson with vigor, and deplored the failure of the impeachment proceedings against him. He was a zealous supporter of the administrations of President Grant, over which he exerted considerable influence in certain directions, and in 1880 zealously championed the nomination of Grant for a third term, but was finally persuaded to acquiesce in the nomination of Garfield. Soon after Garfield's inauguration, Conkling and his colleague Platt withdrew from the Senate on account of the President's assumption of the control of official appointments in New York, which the Senate confirmed. This rebuff closed Conkling's political career and returning to New York city he spent his last years in the exercise of his profession. In 1882, he declined the offer of a seat on the Supreme Bench of the United States as associate-justice, tendered him by President Arthur, and refusing all inducements to return to public life remained unreconciled till his death. Among his noted speeches are the oration in the Senate in 1867 on the proposed impeachment of Henry Smythe, and a brief speech at the Cincinnati convention of 1880 nominating Grant for a third term in the Presidency. Conkling was a man of fine powers, but hot-headed, autocratic, and self-willed.

SUMMING-UP IN THE HADDOCK COURT-MARTIAL¹

DELIVERED AUGUST, 1865

MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT,— Happily for the honor of the military profession, and for the fair fame of our land, prosecutions such as this have, until of late, been unknown in our history. In olden time, and

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