

facts—we are the children of God, and God is our Father—make us look very differently at ourselves, very differently at our neighbors, very differently at God. We should be surprised, not at our good deeds, but at our bad ones. We should expect good as more likely to occur than evil; we should believe that our best moments are our truest. I was once talking with an acquaintance about whose religious position I knew nothing, and he expressed a very hopeful opinion in regard to a matter about which I was myself very doubtful.

“‘Why,’ I said to him, ‘You are an optimist.’

“‘Of course I am an optimist,’ he replied, ‘because I am a Christian.’

“I felt that as a reproof. The Christian must be an optimist.”

Men and brethren, I set these words over against those of his Master with which I began, and the two in essence are one. “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” There is a life nobler and diviner than any that we have dreamed of. To the poorest and meanest of us, as to the best and most richly-dowered, it is alike open. To turn toward it, to reach up after it, to believe in its ever-recurring nearness, and to glorify God in attaining to it, this is the calling of a human soul.

Now then, what, I ask you, is all the rest of religion worth in comparison with this?—not what is it worth in itself, but what is its place relatively to this? This, I maintain, is the supreme question for the Episcopate, as it ought to be the supreme question with the Ministry of any and every order. And therefore it is, I affirm, that, in bringing into the episcopate with such unique vividness and power this conception of his office, your bishop rendered to his order and to the Church of God everywhere a service so transcendent. A most gifted and sympathetic observer of our departed brother's character and influence has said of him, contrasting him with the power

of institutions, “His life will always suggest the importance of the influence of the individual man as compared with institutional Christianity.”

In one sense, undoubtedly, this is true; but I should prefer to say that his life-work will always show the large and helpful influence of a great soul upon institutional Christianity. It is a superficial and unphilosophical temperament that disparages institutions; for institutions are only another name for that organized force and life by which God rules the world. But it is undoubtedly and profoundly true that you no sooner have an institution, whether in society, in politics, or in religion, than you are threatened with the danger that the institution may first exaggerate itself and then harden and stiffen into a machine; and that in the realm of religion, pre-eminently, those whose office it should be to quicken and infuse it with new life should themselves come at last to “worship the net and the drag.” And just here you find in the history of religion in all ages the place of the prophet and the seer. He is to pierce through the fabric of the visible structure to that soul of things for which it stands. When, in Isaiah, the Holy Ghost commands the prophet, “Lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid: say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!” it is not alone, you see, his voice that he is to lift up. No, no! It is the vision of the unseen and divine. “Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!”

Over and over again that voice breaks in upon the slumbrous torpor of Israel and smites the dead souls of priests and people alike. Now it is a Balaam, now it is an Elijah, a David, an Isaiah, a John the Baptist, a Paul the Apostle, a Peter the Hermit, a Savonarola, a Huss, a Whitefield, a Wesley, a Frederick Maurice, a Frederick Robertson, a John

Keble (with his clear spiritual insight, and his fine spiritual sensibility), a Phillips Brooks.

Do not mistake me. I do not say that there were not many others. But these names are typical, and that for which they stand cannot easily be mistaken. I affirm without qualification that, in that gift of vision and of exaltation for which they stand, they stand for the highest and the best,—that one thing for which the Church of God most of all stands, and of which so long as it is the Church Militant it will most of all stand in need: to know that the end of all its mechanisms and ministries is to impart life, and that nothing which obscures or loses sight of the eternal source of life can regenerate or quicken;—to teach men to cry out, with St. Augustine, "*Fecisti nos ad te, Domine, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te*: Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is unquiet until it rests in thee,"—this, however any one may be tempted to fence and juggle with the fact, is the truth on which all the rest depends.

Unfortunately it is a truth which there is much in the tasks and engagements of the Episcopate to obscure. A bishop is pre-eminently, at any rate in the popular conception of him, an administrator; and howsoever wide of the mark this popular conception may be from the essential idea of the office, it must be owned that there is much in a bishop's work in our day to limit his activities, and therefore his influence, within such a sphere.

To recognize his prophetic office as giving expression to that mission of the Holy Ghost of which he is pre-eminently the representative, to illustrate it upon a wider instead of a narrower field, to recognize and seize the greater opportunities for its exercise, to be indeed "a leader and commander" to the people, not by means of the petty mechanisms of official-

ism, but by the strong, strenuous, and unwearied proclamation of the truth; under all conditions to make the occasion somehow a stepping-stone to that mount of vision from which men may see God and righteousness and become sensible of the nearness of both to themselves,—this, I think you will agree with me, is no unworthy use of the loftiest calling and the loftiest gifts.

And such a use was his. A bishop-elect, walking with him one day in the country, was speaking, with not unnatural shrinking and hesitancy, of the new work toward which he was soon to turn his face, and said among other things, "I have a great dread, in the Episcopate, of perfunctoriness. In the administration, especially, of Confirmation, it seems almost impossible, in connection with its constant repetition, to avoid it."

He was silent a moment, and then said, "I do not think that it need be so. The office indeed is the same. But every class is different; and then—think what it is to them! It seems to me that that thought can never cease to move one."

What a clear insight the answer gave to his own ministry. One turns back to his first sermon,—that evening when, with his fellow-student in Virginia, he walked across the fields to the log-cabin where, not yet in Holy Orders, he preached it, and where afterward he ministered with such swiftly increasing power to a handful of negro servants. "It was an utter failure," he said afterward. Yes, perhaps; but all through the failure he struggled to give expression to that of which his soul was full; and I do not doubt that even then they who heard him somehow understood him.

We pass from those first words to the last,—those of which I spoke a moment ago,—the address to the choir-boys

at Newton,—was there ever such an address to choir-boys before? He knew little or nothing about the science of music, and with characteristic candor he at once said so. But he passed quickly from the music to those incomparable words of which the music was the mere vehicle and vesture. He bade the lads to whom he spoke think of those who, long ago and all the ages down, had sung that matchless Psalter,—of the boys and men of other times, and what it had meant to them. And then, as he looked into their fresh young faces and saw the long vista of life stretching out before them, he bade them think of that larger and fuller meaning which was to come into those Psalms of David, when he,—was there some prophetic sense of how soon with him the end would be?—when he and such as he had passed away,—what new doors were to open, what deeper meanings were to be discerned, what nobler opportunities were to dawn, as the years hastened swiftly on toward their august and glorious consummation! How it all lifts us up as we read it, and how like it was to that “one sermon” which he forever preached!

And in saying so I do not forget what that was which some men said was missing in it. His, they tell us who hold some dry and formalized statement of the truth so close to the eye that it obscures all larger vision of it,—his, they tell us, was an “invertibrate theology.” Of what he was and spoke, such a criticism is as if one said of the wind, that divinely-appointed symbol of the Holy Ghost, “it has no spine or ribs.”

A spine and ribs are very necessary things; but we bury them as so much chalk and lime when once the breath has gone out of them! In the beginning we read “And the Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.”

And all along since then there have been messengers of

God into whom the same divine breath has been, as it were, without measure breathed, and who have been the quickeners and inspirers of their fellows. Nothing less than this can explain that wholly exceptional and yet consistent influence which he whom we mourn gave forth. It was not confined or limited by merely personal or physical conditions, but breathed with equal and quickening power through all that he taught and wrote. There were multitudes who never saw or heard him, but by whom nevertheless he was as intimately known and understood as if he had been their daily companion.

Never was there an instance which more truly fulfilled the saying, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” They reached down to the inmost need of empty and aching hearts and answered it. They spoke to that in the most sin-stained and wayward soul which is, after all, the image of the invisible God,—spoke to it, touched it, constrained it. “What has this fine-bred Boston scholar,” plain men asked, when we bade him come to us and preach in our Trinity—“what has such an one to say to the business men of Wall Street?” But when he came, straightway every man found out that he had indeed something to say to him,—a word of power, a word of hope, a word of enduring joy and strength!

A kindred thinker of large vision and rare insight, New England born and nurtured like himself,¹ speaking of him not long after his death, said:

“There are three forms pertaining to the Christian truths: they are true as facts, they are true as doctrines intellectually apprehended, they are true as spiritual experiences to be realized. Bishop Brooks struck directly for the last. In the

¹The Rev. Theodore T. Munger, D.D.

spirit he found the truth; and only as he could get it into a spiritual form did he conceive it to have power.

"It was because he assumed the facts as true in the main, refusing to insist on petty accuracy, and passed by doctrinal forms concerning which there might be great divergence of opinion, and carried his thought on into the world of spirit, that he won so great a hearing and such conviction of belief. For it is the spirit that gives common standing-ground; it says substantially the same thing in all men. Speak as a spirit to the spiritual nature of men, and they will respond, because in the spirit they draw near to their common source and to the world to which all belong.

"It was because he dealt with this common factor of the human and the divine nature that he was so positive and practical. In the spirit it is all yea and amen; there is no negative; in the New Jerusalem there is no night. We can describe this feature of his ministry by words from one of his own sermons: 'It has always been through men of belief, not unbelief, that power from God has poured into man. It is not the discriminating critic, but he whose beating, throbbing life offers itself a channel for the divine force,—he is the man through whom the world grows rich, and whom it remembers with perpetual thanksgiving.'"

And shall not you who are here to-day thank God that such a man was, though for so brief a space, your bishop? Some there were, you remember, who thought that those greater spiritual gifts of his would unfit him for the business of practical affairs. "A bishop's daily round," they said, "his endless correspondence, his hurried journeyings, his weight of anxious cares, the misadventures of other men, ever returning to plague him,—how can he bring himself to stoop and deal with these?"

But as in so much else that was transcendent in him, how little here, too, his critics understood him! No more pathetic proof of this has come to light than in that testimony of one among you who, as his private secretary, stood in

closest and most intimate relations to him. What a story that is which he has given to us of a great soul — faithful always in the greatest? Yes, but no less faithful in the least. There seems a strange, almost grotesque impossibility in the thought that such an one should ever have come to be regarded as "a stickler for the canons."

But we look a little deeper than the surface, and all that is incongruous straightway disappears. His was the realm of a Divine Order,—his was the office of his Lord's servant. God had called him. He had put him where he was. He had set his Church to be his witness in the world, and in it, all his children, the greatest with the least, to walk in ways of reverent appointment. Those ways might irk and cramp him sometimes. They did: he might speak of them with sharp impatience and seeming disesteem sometimes. He did that too, now and then,—for he was human like the rest of us! But mark you this, my brothers, for, in an age which, under one figment or another, whether of more ancient or more modern license, is an age of much self-will,—we shall do well to remember it,—his was a life of orderly and consistent obedience to rule. He kept to the Church's plain and stately ways: kept to them and prized them too.

But all the while he held his soul wide open to the vision of his Lord! Up out of a routine that seemed to others that did not know or could not understand him, and who vouchsafed to him much condescending compassion for a bondage which he never felt, and of which in vain they strove to persuade him to complain,—up out of the narrower round in which so faithfully he walked, from time to time he climbed, and came back bathed in a heavenly light, with lips aglow with heavenly fire. The Spirit had spoken to him, and so he spoke to us. "The flesh profiteth nothing: it is the Spirit

that quickeneth. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

And so we thank God, my brothers, not alone for his message, but that it was given to him to speak it as a bishop in the Church of God. We thank God that in a generation that so greatly needs to cry, as our "Te Deum" teaches us, "Govern us and lift us up!" he was given to the Church not alone to rule but to uplift.

What bishop is there who may not wisely seek to be like him by drawing forever on those fires of the Holy Ghost that set his lips aflame? Nay, what soul among us all is there that may not wisely seek to ascend up into that upper realm in which he walked, and by whose mighty airs his soul was filled? Unto the almighty and ever-living God we yield most high praise and hearty thanks for the wonderful grace and virtue declared in all his saints who have been the chosen vessels of his grace and the lights of the world in their several generations; but here and to-day especially for his servant, Phillips Brooks, sometime of this Commonwealth and this diocese, true prophet, true priest, true bishop, to the glory of God the Father.